

DEMENTIA PRAECOX

Written by

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Based on, If Any

Address
Phone Number

TITLE CARD: DEMENTIA PRAECOX

FADE IN:

SUPER: San Francisco, 1962.

EXT. OUTSIDE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT

A 1960 Ford Fairlane police cruiser is tucked behind a billboard right outside the Golden Gate Bridge. Inside, a STATE PATROL sips on his coffee and reads a newspaper.

A car blows right past the cruiser.

The state patrol puts down his stuff, turns on his lights, and pulls out behind the car.

The car, a 1961 Chevrolet Impala, immediately pulls over. The state patrol gets out and walks over to the driver.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - OUTSIDE CHEVROLET IMPALA - NIGHT

The state patrol shines his flashlight at the DRIVER (late 20s).

STATE PATROL
Would you mind rolling down your
window, sir?

The driver obliges.

STATE PATROL (CONT'D)
How're you doing?

The man inside doesn't answer. He hides his eyes and fidgets nervously.

STATE PATROL (CONT'D)
The reason I pulled you over is
because you were speeding and
didn't have your lights on.

The man nods and turns on his headlights.

STATE PATROL (CONT'D)
Can I see your ID, please?

The man pulls out his documents. The state patrol looks at his driver's license; it reads, "DAVID DOMBECK."

STATE PATROL (CONT'D)
 Alright David, I'll be right back.
 I'm just going to write a ticket
 and you'll be on your way. Just be
 careful from now on.

David nods.

The state patrol is walking back to the cruiser when he
 notices something stuck on the trunk of the car. He shines
 his flashlight on it revealing FRESH BLOOD.

The state patrol's eyes' widen, but he remains calm and walks
 over to his cruiser.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Once inside, he picks up his radio:

STATE PATROL
 406 officer needs help at San
 Francisco, CA 94129.

RADIO VOICE
 10-4 officers on their way.

The state patrol pretends to be writing a ticket. He then
 takes a deep breath, steps out, and walks back over to David.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHEVROLET IMPALA - NIGHT

STATE PATROL
 Would you mind stepping out of the
 vehicle, sir?

DAVID DOMBECK
 Why?

STATE PATROL
 Your driver's license looks out of
 date.

DAVID DOMBECK
 That doesn't make sense.

STATE PATROL
 Yeah I'm sure it's nothing, but I
 need you to step out of the car to
 ask you some questions.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - NIGHT

DAVID DOMBECK
What if I don't?

The state patrol puts on his most convincing smile.

STATE PATROL
Well I'd have to put you under
arrest--which I don't want to do. I
just need to talk to you.

DAVID DOMBECK
I'm comfortable right here.

We see a REVOLVER under David's seat.

STATE PATROL
It's not a big deal. I just need to
ask some questions real quick, and
I'd prefer to do it out here.

David stares him down, but after a while, steps out.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT

STATE PATROL
Thank you. Now turn around and put
your hands behind your back.

DAVID DOMBECK
What for?

As the state patrol pulls out his cuffs, David lunges for his
seat.

He grabs the revolver and swings it in the direction of the
state patrol, but before he can cock it, the state patrol
wrestles David to the ground, knocking the revolver out of
his hands.

STATE PATROL
STOP RESISTING!

David thrashes as the state patrol handcuffs him. The wail of
sirens can be heard drawing closer.

INT. LANGLEY PORTER PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL - SAN FRANCISCO -
DAY

Two men sit across from one another inside a white-walled
room.

The first one, THEODORE BAKER (53), is dressed in a collared shirt with a tie and has a black briefcase next to him.

The man sitting across from him wears an all white psychiatric patient uniform and appears to be in a catatonic state; this is Theodore Baker's son, DEAN BAKER (31).

THEODORE BAKER

What else? Uhhh... your mother's in a reading club now.

Dean stares off into space and says nothing.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)

She says that their reading "the great classics of literature," but one time I took a peak when she wasn't looking and it was *all* smut.

Theodore laughs.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)

Guess I should lock that down.

Dean does not respond.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)

I heard that you started playing chess again, so I got you something. Don't worry, the nurse said it was okay.

Theo pulls out a travel-size chess board from his briefcase and hands it to Dean.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)

Now you can play wherever.

Dean looks at the board for a moment before his eyes light up. Theo smiles warmly.

A NURSE (20s) and a PSYCHIATRIST (40s) step in.

NURSE

I'm sorry to interrupt, but it's time for Dean's medication.

THEODORE BAKER

Of course just give me a second.

Theodore moves into his son's view and grips his shoulder.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)
Your mom and I both love you, and
when you get better, we'll be
waiting for you to come back home.

Dean remains immobile, but is noticeably brighter.

NURSE
Come on Dean, lets go.

The Nurse pulls Dean up and leads him out the door.

The Psychiatrist sits with Theodore.

THEODORE BAKER
How is he?

PSYCHIATRIST
His mood has improved, his
meltdowns are less frequent, and he
seems to be taking more kindly to
the other patients, especially
those who were also in Korea.

THEODORE BAKER
Has he spoken?

PSYCHIATRIST
Not yet.

Theodore grimaces.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
War neurosis takes time to treat,
but he's heading in the right
direction.

THEODORE BAKER
Thanks Doc.

PSYCHIATRIST
Though it is preferable that both
you and your wife are here.

THEODORE BAKER
Yeah, she had to go help her mom.
She was having one of her episodes.

PSYCHIATRIST
Completely understandable. Do you
have any questions?

Theo shakes his head.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONT'D)
Well then, I guess we'll see you
again next week.

EXT. THE BAKERS' RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Theodore pulls into the driveway of his house. As he gets out of his car, he pulls out his briefcase.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Inside is Theodore's wife, CHERYL BAKER (51). She's in the kitchen cooking dinner.

INT. ENTRANCE

Theodore walks inside and hangs his coat.

THEODORE BAKER
I'm back.

CHERYL BAKER
How was he?

Theodore sits on the couch and takes off his shoes.

THEODORE BAKER
Good. Doctor says he's making
progress. Says he's, "taking more
kindly to the other patients."

CHERYL BAKER
Good, I'm glad he's making friends
there.

Theodore gets up and joins Cheryl in the...

INT. KITCHEN

Cheryl stands by the window overlooking the road. The kitchen is modest but perfectly sufficient

CHERYL BAKER
Sorry again, I really wanted to
come but mom was just...

Cheryl waves her arms around.

THEODORE BAKER
Don't worry about it.

The wraps his arms around her stomach and leans into her head.

CHERYL BAKER

She thought she still lived on her own and that the carers were intruders.

THEODORE BAKER

I'm sorry that happened.

CHERYL BAKER

It's fine, she calmed down after a while, but she really doesn't like it there. They said that it might be good for her to be around people she's familiar with.

Theo gives her an "absolutely not" look.

CHERYL BAKER (CONT'D)

It's just that, when I got there, I could tell she didn't recognize me. It was like her eyes were... empty. They said it might be because I've been away from her for a while.

THEODORE BAKER

I see.

CHERYL BAKER

Were there any changes to Dean's treatment?

THEODORE BAKER

No. The doctor says he's heading in the right direction though.

CHERYL BAKER

I'm glad. He seems really happy there.

THEODORE BAKER

Yeah, maybe your mother would be happy there too.

An uncomfortable silence. Cheryl notices the Theo's stuffed briefcase.

CHERYL BAKER

New cases?

THEODORE BAKER
I guess. It's just paperwork
really.

Theodore grabs some food.

THEODORE BAKER (CONT'D)
I'd love to chat more but I'm
supposed to have all this processed
by tomorrow.

CHERYL BAKER
That's fine. Was Dean alright
without me?

THEODORE BAKER
Yeah, but the doctor says he likes
it when you're around. I hope you
don't mind, I told him about your
"book club."

CHERYL BAKER
I'm sure he loved hearing about
that.

Theodore chuckles as he goes to his...

INT. OFFICE

Theodore's office is decorated with newspapers detailing the
criminals he's caught over the years and awards for his
service in the Army during World War II.

We see an award he earned for liberating the Dachau
concentration camp.

On his desk is a photo of him and Cheryl posing with Dean for
his high school graduation. Dean looks younger and more...
alive than he did in the psych ward.

Theo sets down his plate and briefcase on the table.

He sets an alarm clock and begins writing on a piece of
paper.

LATER:

INT. OFFICE

A small tower of papers has formed next to Theodore. As he writes, his eyes drift close and his head rests on his arm.

EXT. DREAM DACHAU - DAY

It is pouring down rain. Theo, wearing the same clothes, is walking through a muddy field then under a tall concrete archway. A thick fog obscures what's ahead.

Theo continues forward, seemingly unsure of where he is and why.

The rain stops and the fog clears, and we see a series of emaciated individuals all standing and staring at Theo. Except they have no eyes, only black pits in their sockets. These are the prisoners of Dachau.

There are men, women, and children, all eyeless. Their papery skin clings to their bones, their flesh is blemished by disease, and their scalps have been shorn of hair.

Theo turns pale and nearly swoons. The prisoners are completely still and silent; only the snarling of flies can be heard.

On the ground is a dead prisoner with half his face buried in the mud. Theo looks into dead man's only visible socket; the blackness grows until it is all Theo can see.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Theo's eyes burst open as the alarm clock blares. He is sweating profusely.

He shuts it off; his hand is slightly shaking.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO POLICE STATION - DAY

David pulls up to the police station in his 1947 Ford F-Series truck.

INT. STATION OFFICE - DAY

Theo takes a seat at his desk. Even though he's in a police station it looks like he's working a typical office job.

There are rows upon rows of people at desks drinking coffee, clacking away at typewriters, and sorting through documents.

Theo's desk is covered in a skyscraper of papers; he pulls one down and gets to work. As he's writing something down, someone walks up to him.

THEODORE BAKER

Yes?

PHILLIP MARS

Don't try to sound too eager.

Theo looks up and sees his old detective partner, PHILLIP MARS (mid-50s).

THEODORE BAKER

To whom do I owe the visit?

PHILLIP MARS

What do you mean?

THEODORE BAKER

I hardly see you anymore; I doubt you came by just because you missed me.

PHILLIP MARS

That isn't true, I've just been busy. But since you bring it up, you owe it to this one lunatic we brought in last night.

Theo gets back to work but pretends to act interested.

THEODORE BAKER

What happened?

PHILLIP MARS

Poor state patrol made a traffic stop and ended up finding a dead hooker in the guy's trunk. We think it's connected to a string of other disappearances but--

Phillip sees that Theo isn't listening.

PHILLIP MARS (CONT'D)

Is this too dull for you?

THEODORE BAKER

No, it's just... of course, the only time you deign to talk to me is when you need something.

PHILLIP MARS

Don't be like that, Theo. We all miss having you around, but we have our work and you have yours. I just need some of your experience.

THEODORE BAKER

I don't need to deal with anymore "lunatics," alright?

PHILLIP MARS

Look, he isn't talking often and when he does, it's complete nonsense. It'd just be a little chat--see if you can get anything out of it.

THEODORE BAKER

Phil, I really can't right now.

PHILLIP MARS

All I'm asking is for you to consider it. You were always better at interrogations than I was.

Phil hands over a file.

PHILLIP MARS (CONT'D)

This is all we got on him. If you change your mind, let me know.

Phil walks away. Theo brushes the file to the side and continues working.

INT. STATION OFFICE - NIGHT

Theodore is putting some files into his briefcase. The file Phil left is still on the table.

Theo opens it, revealing a picture David Dombeck; it looks like a graduation photo: David's smiling in a cap and gown, and his parents are embracing him. The resemblance between David and Dean's graduation photos is uncanny. Theo closes the file and walks away.

As he's walking away, he spots some officers escorting David to a jail cell.

David appears to be in a catatonic state, much like Dean. Theo locks eyes with David's empty stare before he is shoved into the cell.

Theo stands at the door to leave, but something stops him.

He goes back to his desk, takes David's file, and then walks out.

INT. BAKER'S RESIDENCE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Theo opens the door to find Cheryl sound asleep on the couch, snuggled under a blanket.

The radio is talking about the Soviet Union's launch of the Vostok 3 and Vostok 4 satellites; Theo turns it off and pulls up Cheryl's blanket to her chin.

INT. OFFICE

Theo takes a seat in his office and opens David's file.

He pulls out a worn notebook, opens it to a blank page, and writes at the top "David Dombeck."

LATER:

INT. OFFICE

Cheryl walks in, rubbing her eyes.

Theo is hunched over his desk, lit only by a tiny lamp, smoking the ghost of a cigarette.

CHERYL

Teddy?

Theo flinches at her voice:

THEO

Jesus. You scared me.

CHERYL

Sorry, just wanted to check in.

Cheryl notices the spread of papers and photos on his desk:

CHERYL (CONT'D)

What's that?

Theo tries to block her view.

THEO

A favor I'm doing for Phil.

BEAT.

CHERYL
You're working cases again.

THEO
It's not like that. Phil just
needed some help.

CHERYL
I knew this would happen.

THEO
Cheryl--

CHERYL
I'm going to bed.

Cheryl walks out and closes the door behind her.

Theo grimaces and puts a hand up to his mouth as if he's
smoking.

He stares at a photo of a woman with a bullet-hole in her
head; he's seems entranced by the darkness in the center.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Theo walks to his desk; his lids droop from lack of sleep.

Waiting at his desk is Phil and detective Frank Ewen (50s).
Phil smiles nervously:

PHIL
Hope you didn't stay up all night
just for me.

THEO
You were all I could think about.

Theo looks at the other man.

PHIL
Theo this is--

FRANK EWEN
Detective Ewen. But please, call me
Frank.

THEO
To what do I owe the pleasure?

FRANK EWEN

Phil, why don't get us some coffee.

Phil nods; beads of sweat roll down his forehead.

FRANK EWEN (CONT'D)

I just wanted to see what you got on the case.

Theo pulls out his notebook:

THEO

I found a few things of note. For example--

FRANK EWEN

Are they all in that notebook?

THEO

Yes.

FRANK EWEN

May I see it?

Theo hands Frank the notebook. Frank turns to a random page, glances it over, and pantomimes a ponderous look.

FRANK EWEN (CONT'D)

Very interesting. Would you mind if I take this to aid in the investigation?

THEO

Of course not. But I was under the impression that I would be interrogating Mr. Dombeck.

Ewen tucks the notebook into his jacket.

FRANK EWEN

Yes, that was Phil getting a little zealous. Understand, having a desk worker interrogate a suspect would be... unprofessional.

THEO

The file you've established has some major oversights.

FRANK EWEN

And we appreciate you locating them for us. If you have them written down, we'll look into it.

Frank puts a hand on Theo's shoulder and then turns and leaves.

Theo looks confused and suspicious.

Phil walks up with two coffees and hands one to Theo.

PHIL
Take a drive with me.

INT. PHIL'S CAR - DAY

Phil and Theo sit silently as they drive across the San Francisco coast.

PHIL
I shouldn't have asked you to look
into it. Can we just forget it?

Theo's staring at the window.

PHIL (CONT'D)
What?

THEO
I didn't say anything.

PHIL
That means your ruminating.

THEO
I can't help it.

PHIL
I know. It's what made you such a
good detective.

Phil pulls off at a pier:

PHIL (CONT'D)
It's also why you had to quit.

THEO
Where are we?

PHIL
Come on.

Phil gets out of the car. Theo follows.