

AMERICAN MONSTER

by

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EXT. VIRGINIA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

1

Pan down from a cloud-shrouded moon to reveal a hideous MOTHMAN sitting on a tree branch. He is grooming himself in a jerky, bug-like manner. A car passes below him and he leaps onto the roof.

BRAD WINTERS VO

Clear Point, Virginia, 1941.  
Reports of a half-human, half moth creature terrify citizens of the Green River Valley. Mr. and Mrs. Peter O'Leary report one such encounter...

The screaming couple in the car are terrorized as the Mothman breaks the passenger side window and reaches for the woman. She fights it off as the husband swerves the vehicle from side to side.

Finally they manage to shake it loose. The mothman lands on the road, licks its claws, and flies away.

BRAD WINTERS VO

Afterwards, police find claw marks on the roof of their vehicle. The woman is treated at a local hospital for shock and for bite marks on her arms and chest according to the Clear Point Gazette...

DISSOLVE TO:

2

EXT. VINCENNES, INDIANA - NIGHT

2

A wild-eyed man with a rifle is being chased through the brush. He turns and fires his gun.

Angle on a giant snake-like creature with a huge deformed head. It absorbs the bullets with a roar and keeps on coming.

BRAD WINTERS VO

Vincennes, Indiana, 1981. A highly respected farmer named Issac Daines describes his encounter with a snake-like creature lurking in the waters of Horseshoe Pond. He manages to shoot it twice before making his escape.

The hysterical farmer dives into his car and squeals away.  
The creature turns and slithers back toward the water.

BRAD WINTERS VO

The Vincennes Advocate reports many other sightings of the Horseshoe Serpent in the years that follow. It is blamed for missing livestock and the death of a Mrs. Leonard Graves, who dies of a heart attack upon viewing the creature.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 EXT. DETROIT, MI - NIGHT

3

A river barge driver is pulling his craft into port. As he gets closer and can penetrate the fog, he sees a strange little red figure standing on the dock holding a lantern.

BRAD WINTERS VO

Detroit, Michigan, 1960. Boat and dockworkers report numerous sightings of a mysterious Red Gnome lurking around the waterfront.

We now see the RED GNOME clearly, his eyes blazing red, he waves the lantern ominously. He seems to be warning the driver away from the dock.

The terrified barge captain shrieks and reverses the engines. The Red Gnome turns and vanishes into the fog.

BRAD WINTERS VO

The creature is noted in the Detroit Free Press as a legendary harbinger of doom since pioneer times. After six days of Red Gnome sightings, a massive flood engulfs the city killing hundreds of people.

4 EXT. WISCONSIN NORTH WOODS - DAY

4

Cheesily blow-dried small town TV personality BRAD WINTERS is walking down a country road. His hair piece is drifting slightly out of place.

BRAD WINTERS

Of course there's Bigfoot, the Chubakaya, and dozens of other strange and unexplained creatures throughout American history.

(MORE)

BRAD WINTERS (cont'd)  
 To this list, we must now add our own, the mysterious Northland Monster. (thoughtful beat) Freak of nature or hoax? Has mass hysteria gripped the citizenry or are we in the presence of a new and terrifying animal hybrid? As of this time no one can say. I'm Brad Winters reporting for Channel 43.

Push in on Brad.

BRAD WINTERS  
 Cut. How was it?

Cut to reveal his camera crew. Channel 43 station manager HAL PALFREY is standing there with a clipboard.

HAL  
 Good. But your hair...

Brad fingers his scalp. His hairpiece has slid out of place.

BRAD WINTERS  
 Oh, shit. Let's do it again.

HAL  
 We're losing light.

BRAD WINTERS  
 Again!

Pan from Brad skyward and to the moon as we

DISSOLVE TO:

5	TITLE CARD: "AMERICAN MONSTER"	5
6	EXT. VARIOUS LOCALES - DAY	6

Mysterious music under as we cut between various shots of locations in and around Rhinelander, Wisconsin. The bustling main street and diner, the deep dark woods that surround the town, the local sausage processing plant, etc...

7	CARD: ONE WEEK EARLIER	7
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DISSOLVE TO:

8	EXT. FOUR PINES RESORT - MORNING	8
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We pan across the Four Pines Resort, in northern Wisconsin. Hundreds of acres of beautiful deep woods abutting a crystal blue lake. The resort has seen better days.

Its dining room and lounge are in need of paint, the guest cabins could use repair.

Pan to the boathouse. Inside we hear violent splashing sounds.

CUT TO:

9 INT. THE BOATHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

9

EUGENE BOYLE, the owner of the Four Pines is on his knees. He's a good-looking man in his early thirties, but this is not apparent at the moment because his head is being held under the water by a large "personal lender" named MATT VAN HAREN.

After an uncomfortably long time, Matt pulls Eugene's head out of the water by his hair.

VAN HAREN

It's all about my kids, Eugene. It really is.

Eugene sputters.

VAN HAREN

That's why I do this. They're the reason I get out of bed in the morning.

EUGENE

If you can just give me a little more time, Matt. I guarantee...

VAN HAREN

I mean, I wanted them to go to the state school, but they had their hearts set on private college so what can you do?

He punches Eugene in the stomach.

EUGENE

Ooof!

VAN HAREN

You want to give 'em everything you didn't have. That's the nature of parenting. You'll see.

EUGENE

Things are turning around here. I've got a plan.

VAN HAREN

That's good. Because you owe me fifty thousand dollars. And I'd like to see a little initiative on your part.

EUGENE

You'll see initiative. Just watch.

Van Haren dunks his head under the water again.

VAN HAREN

That makes me feel good, Eugene. Really it does. Because my daughter's talking about grad school too. (musing happily) My, God, what if she became a doctor? I'd be so proud.

He releases Eugene who lays gasping on the dock.

VAN HAREN

Well, see you next week.

He exits the boathouse.

CUT TO:

10 INT. BESS AND EUGENE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

10

Eugene's beautiful, but anxious wife, BESS BOYLE, 29, is peering out of the kitchen window toward the boathouse. She sees Matt emerge and saunter across the lawn toward his car. His eye catches hers. He nods cordially and she looks away.

A few moments later, Eugene stumbles out of the boathouse door. He limps across the lawn toward the house. She goes to the door.

BESS

Eugene? You okay, hon?

EUGENE

(feigning cheerfulness) Oh, sure, just fine, babe. (he coughs)

Bess gingerly applies a cloth to a cut over his eye.

BESS

How much do we owe him? I wish you'd tell me.

EUGENE

Now Bess, you leave the finances to me.

BESS

I hate to see you like this. Does he have to be so rough?

EUGENE

Matt? He's not so bad. He's just got kids in private college is all.

BESS

Maybe I could go back to work? I'm sure Andy'd give me my job back.

EUGENE

Don't be silly. I've got everything under control, here. Besides, I need you to focus your attention here. I'm meeting with the buyer this afternoon.

BESS

Yeah?

EUGENE

Yep. So don't you worry. Everything will be fine. You'll see.

BESS

And then, Arizona?

EUGENE

Arizona, baby!

He gives her an unconvincing reassuring peck on the forehead and leaves the house. Bess watches him limp across the lawn to his pickup. He's sore from his beating so getting into the truck provides some difficulty. He waves to her cheerfully as he pulls away.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. YARD ART LOT - LATER

11

Eugene pulls in to a junky lot off a county highway, past a sign that reads "County F Yard Art". Scattered about the lot are various tacky, but beautifully carved sculptures of jockeys, animals and historical figures. This is yard art.

Eugene parks and gets out of the truck. He walks up to a woman who is vomiting into a trash can.

This is KARLA, 36, a tough, foul-mouthed rural type, the business half of the "County F Yard Art Inc." team. She usually has a cigarette dangling from her mouth which is now otherwise occupied.

KARLA

Fuck.

EUGENE

You okay, Karla?

Karla pulls her head from the garbage can. Her cloudy eyes finally focus on Eugene.

KARLA

Little over-served at the roadhouse last night.

EUGENE

How's the project coming?

Karla unloads once again.

KARLA

Oh, God. (then, recovering slightly) Toussaint think's it's his best work yet.

EUGENE

Can I see?

Karla wipes her face on a sleeve.

KARLA

This way.

He follows Karla into a shed, Toussaint's workshop.

KARLA

(aside) Be sure to compliment him. He's kind of temperamental. You know these artistic types.

CUT TO:

12

INT. TOUSSAINT'S WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

12

Various wood-carving implements hang from the walls and ceiling. There is something menacing about them and the camera lingers on them for a moment.

In the corner, working feverishly, is a large, hairy, unusual-looking man, TOUSSAINT. He is so engrossed in his work that he doesn't hear them come up behind him.

Angle on his labor. He is putting the finishing touches on a monster head. But this is not carved in wood like his other work, in fact the face moves and changes expressions with the flexing of Toussaint's hand. It's part of a suit which resembles a terrifying swamp creature.

EUGENE  
It's magnificent.

Toussaint wheels around and brandishes a carving tool in Eugene's face.

EUGENE  
Jesus Christ.

KARLA  
He don't like to be snuck up on.

EUGENE  
Sorry. It's great, Toussaint.  
Really.

TOUSSAINT  
What do you think about the forehead? I want to suggest reptilian ancestry but without being too on the nose.

EUGENE  
No, I think you got it just right.

TOUSSAINT  
Thanks. I'm...I'm pretty proud of it.

EUGENE  
You ready to take it for a test run?

He pulls a video camera from his bag.

TOUSSAINT  
Today? I couldn't possibly. I still want to experiment with this new material I found for the skin.

Eugene looks at Karla.

KARLA  
Hey, what did we talk about?

TOUSSAINT  
But...

KARLA  
You gotta let go at some point,  
right?

TOUSSAINT  
I guess.

KARLA  
He's a perfectionist. It's the  
same thing with his lawn gnomes.

TOUSSAINT  
(passionately) It's not the same.  
Those're dumbed down pieces of  
fluff for a mass audience. Those  
rubes you sell to don't appreciate  
my work.

He looks at his creation lovingly.

TOUSSAINT  
But this...this is my masterpiece.

Karla rolls her eyes at Eugene.

EUGENE  
Let's get going.

CUT TO:

13 INT. E & W PROVISIONS - DAY

13

Bess is in the refrigerated warehouse of E & W Provisions.  
ANDY ACKER, the foreman, is loading meat onto a cart for her.

BESS  
Did you remember the porterhouse?

ANDY  
Ten pounds of prime right there.

He takes a pencil from behind his ear and does some quick  
figuring.