

DSLR

Written by

Jacques Manjarrez

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The right turn signal flashes rhythmically on the dashboard. There's a police radio on the passenger's side making sonorous, almost haunting sounds of police reporting trivial crimes.

EXT. RURAL FOREST/PLAIN - NIGHT

A lone car by the side of the road. Far from the beaten path, a bright flash reveals a corpse - slightly decomposed - hidden among the leaves and foliage. THE PHOTOGRAPHER takes a different angle. He is stoic and without sympathy. The body is that of a young woman. He looks around the body, only to see no signs of struggle or murder. Despite this, there is great pain on the face of the cadaver. The camera flashes again - this time closer on the face. He feels a presence near. He looks over his shoulder as the camera switches from an over-the-shoulder shot to a long shot. He is about to look at the image on the camera when suddenly, police sirens.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The right turn signal turns to left as the car pulls away. The sirens get louder. He turns off the police radio.

Title.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

His apartment is dark. A single bachelor's domicile riddled with camera equipment and not much else. He is hunched over his laptop, going through photographs from earlier that night.

Quickly scrolling through his collection of morbid photographs, he comes across an image that makes him stop. A look of utter confusion. He starts backtracking. Slowly and then quickly until he comes across the image in question. A photograph of THE PHOTOGRAPHER's back from afar in the field, photographing the corpse, getting closer and closer to his back. The tempo at which the frames get closer matches the turn signal. Himself in the image begins to turn, and the next image is taken from the perspective of the corpse, looking up at the photographer from the ground, while the photographer's back is turned.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER closes out of the image file, which disappears into his "homework" folder. He cautiously lays down the laptop before backing up against the wall behind him. His breaths are steady, paced.

Cut to establishing shots of the apartment. All the lights are now on, including lights in the closet. THE PHOTOGRAPHER is in the shower his gaze directed downward. His breathing paced. He exits the shower. A tracking shot following him with a towel around his waist.

He walks in front of a mirror. He dries his hair. He looks into the mirror. The pale body of the cadaver he found that night stands behind him, filming him with a digital camera.

He spins around to look at it, just as the shot cuts to a long shot profile of him looking anxiously behind him. He turns to face the new position of the camera. Cut to an over the shoulder shot. His breathing is paced. His eyes are wild.

He starts walking towards the door. Tracking shot over the shoulder. The camera doesn't enter the gaze of THE PHOTOGRAPHER.

The PHOTOGRAPHER walks into his well lit living room, his laptop laying atop his desk. He turns on a wifi router. He opens his laptop. He goes onto a forum for photographers. He doesn't know what to type. He goes onto a forum for the supernatural. He abruptly looks around, twisting his head furiously. The camera avoids his gaze.

His breathing paced, he reverts his gaze back to the laptop screen. He stares intently at the homework folder. His mouse slowly goes over it. He clicks it. The folder opens. His pictures of corpses have been replaced by a collection of short videos. He clicks on the first one.

The video is of himself in a much more casual atmosphere. He is an actor, getting ready for the scene of himself looking at the laptop. He speaks not as the character, but as the actor. THE PHOTOGRAPHER looks nervously around the room. Again, the camera avoids his gaze. He turns back to the screen, the actor looks just like him. The scene looks just like his apartment set up. The conversations are meaningless drivel mixed with technical language between the individual holding the camera. He skips through a couple of clips, each one more existential than the last. The last is of the girl she found, putting on makeup. She has small talk with the makeup girl. THE PHOTOGRAPHER cautiously and deliberately closes his laptop.

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Right turn signal flashing rhythmically on the car dashboard. There is no corpse. In its place, there rests a camera on the ground. Turning it on, he finds that it is working fine. He goes back to the saved photos and videos.

The first and only saved video is the over-the-shoulder shot of him holding the camera. He turns around and is overcome by a sudden expression of terror.

He begins running. The camera chases him. Cut to a shot in front of him, he sees this and quickly turns to run away. He now sees the camera as an entity, and will avoid its position wherever it may be in the world of the frame. He suddenly comes to a clearing, and finds that whichever way he looks, the entity (the camera) is facing him. The camera goes from a wide shot, to a medium shot, to finally disturbingly close close-up. He screams.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

THE PHOTOGRAPHER watches the footage of himself running from the entity on his laptop in the comfort of his apartment. He closes the laptop.

He rhythmically smashes his head against his desk, to the tempo of the turn signal. With each smash, the camera gets further away, only to reveal a film crew surrounding him, attentively documenting his every action.

THE DIRECTOR (V.O.)

Cut.

Cut to black.

End.