

HEAVY WALKER

by

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FADE IN:

EXT - NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT

Dark silhouettes of buildings crowded in on each other like animals packed into a tiny cage.

INT - CAROL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We're in a DIRECT OVERHEAD SHOT, looking down at the sleeping figure of CAROL GOLDMAN, thirties. She lies on her side embracing a pillow, one leg draped over the covers, the other concealed beneath. Her eyes are closed in sleep, or at the very least in a state approaching it.

CAROL (V.O.)

When you die, you sleep a thousand years...

The CAMERA DESCENDS, moving in on Carol's profile.

CAROL (CONT'D V.O.)

At least, that's what my mother said, every morning when she'd wake me. I'd plead for just five more minutes, just five more, but I never got 'em. She'd throw the curtains open, pull the covers down, and then she'd make that solemn pronouncement: When you die, you sleep a thousand years.

A muffled THUD-UMP, THUD-UMP - the sound of someone moving about in the apartment above Carol's - is heard.

Carol's eye opens wide.

CAROL (CONT'D V.O.)

These days, I'd settle for eight undisturbed hours.

She glances at the digital clock radio on her bedside table: 1:18 AM. The numerals glow red as the bloodshot veins in her sleep deprived eyes.

THUD-UMP, THUD-UMP...

She rolls over onto her back. Stares bitterly up at the ceiling. Places her hands over her ears. Squeezes till it seems her head will explode.

CUT TO

INT - FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY OF CAROL'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Carol POUNDS on her upstairs neighbor's door.

It flies open, and JERRY, 30, stands in the doorway, his expression colored by anger.

JERRY

You again? It's two o'clock in the fucking morning!

CAROL

Excuse me, excuse me, but I just want to know what the fuck you're doing up here! Are you moving a piano or what?

JERRY

What are you talking about? The T.V. isn't even on!

A WOMAN'S VOICE (STACY) is heard from inside the apartment.

STACY (O.S.)

Jerry, what the hell's going on?

CAROL

What's going on is I'm trying to sleep and you're tenderizing a side of beef with a sledgehammer!

JERRY

I'm in my bare feet! The floor is carpeted. How loud could it be?

Now we can discern Stacy in the room behind Jerry, but only vaguely, her form a silhouette on the bed.

STACY

I don't have any trouble sleeping, and he's in the room with me.

JERRY

Look, I'm not doing anything. What do you want from me? You expect me to levitate around this apartment like some fucking yogi?!

CAROL

I can't sleep with you moving around up here!

JERRY

Take a pill! Take the whole fucking bottle! Just get out of my face!

He SLAMS the door shut. We hear the lock CLICK. Carol POUNDS her fist against the door.

CAROL

I can't take pills, you inconsiderate fuck!

JERRY (O.S.)

Lunatic! I'm gonna call the cops!

Carol leans against the door frame, spent. Breathing heavily. Near tears. Sensing something, she looks up.

The OTHER TENANTS ON THE FLOOR are standing in their open doors, staring at her as if she were insane.

JERRY (O.S.)

Lunatic...

CUT TO

INT - DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Carol and DR. WILLIAM LASTER, a middle-aged psychotherapist, sit facing each other across Laster's desk. Carol's features are etched with anger and frustration.

CAROL

...I don't know what it is I've gotta do. I mean, for years I used pills to sleep, then pills to get up, and the drinking, and...I don't do that anymore.

(MORE)

CAROL (cont'd)

I go out every day into this jungle of a city, and it's a roaring battle from morning till night. All I ask is for a little piece and quiet when I come home, that's all.

LASTER

Is it your neighbor upstairs? I know you mentioned some problems.

Carol's eyes close at the mention of her tormentor.

CAROL

He's up there every night...and he's in my life - he's in my fucking life. And I can't get him out. I feel violated.

LASTER

What does he do that disturbs you so much?

Carol takes a deep breath. Exhales.

CAROL

He's a heavy walker.

LASTER

Excuse me?

CAROL

A heavy walker. He works late. Gets home around twelve or one o'clock in the morning, and he's up all night, walking around. It drives me crazy.

LASTER

No loud music? No tap dancing?

CAROL

Don't patronize me. Don't do that.

LASTER

I'm not. I'm just trying to understand the situation. He just walks around, that's it?

CAROL

You see, you say that as if it's nothing, as if it's all in my head. Wacky Carol! She's way out there! She's heading for the moon!

LASTER

I think we're overreacting just a bit, don't you?

CAROL

No, we are not overreacting. We are ready to kill someone. Okay?

LASTER

Have you tried talking with your landlord?

CUT TO

INT - RENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Carol's landlord JOE SANTO, wearing a dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up and a tie loosened at the collar, sits with his elbows on his desk.

JOE

What is that, a heavy walker? A hip-hop thing? He's cool or something?

CAROL

No, it's not a hip-hop thing, Joe. It's a Herman Munster thing. The guy's got cinder blocks in his feet, okay?

JOE

Yeah, but what do you want me to do about it? The guy's not breaking any laws. I mean, it's not like he's blasting his T.V., or cuttin' up people with a chain saw. He's just walking around. I got no legal recourse here.

(beat)

Look, I got another apartment

(MORE)

JOE (cont'd)  
opening up, a one bedroom. It's  
in my other building --

CAROL  
I can't afford a one bedroom. I  
can't afford what I've got now.

JOE  
Yeah, well, I wasn't gonna bring  
that up, but...it's a lot to ask me  
to bust some guy's balls who's  
paying his rent when you're in  
arrears. Not to rub your nose in  
it or anything...

CAROL  
I was out of work. You know, the  
temp market's been dead for months...

JOE  
Hey, like I said, I wasn't gonna  
mention it. It's just, you brought  
it up, that's all.

CAROL  
I'm getting it together, Joe.  
I've got a lot of bills. They  
all backed up so quick...

JOE  
Hey, no pressure. You know I ain't  
like that. Good faith is all I  
ask. And if there's anything I can  
do for you, you know, that's within  
my power, all you gotta do is tell  
me. Okay?

CAROL  
Sure. Thanks.

She rises, eager to flee.

JOE  
You had lunch yet?

CAROL  
Lunch?

JOE

There's a place right around the corner. Nice, quiet. They got candles...

Carol is only a little slow on the uptake.

CAROL

No, I...I gotta get back.

JOE

Oh. Well...

(beat)

You'll get me a check soon, right?

CUT TO

EXT - CITY STREET - NIGHT

A HORN BLARES as a TAXICAB ROARS BY, its perforated muffler belching smoke and noise...

then we're MOVING UPWARD, the STREET SOUNDS DIMINISHING as we ascend...

and now we're MOVING IN on an apartment window (Carol's) and beginning to hear a MAN BREATHING in sexual excitement, the volume increasing along with the intensity of his arousal...

INT - CAROL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We're inside, watching Carol's boyfriend STEVEN labor over her and then climax. All the time she's been staring up at the ceiling.

Steven rolls over onto his back, spent. He mutters her name as he falls asleep.

Carol lies there, still gazing upward.

CLOSE on the bedside clock: 11:45.

The image DISSOLVES TO SAME. Now it is 12:52.

Carol lies in exactly the same position, staring like a zombie. Steven is fast asleep. It's very quiet. But Carol waits.



And then we hear it: THUD-UMP...THUD-UMP...THUD-UMP...

The sound is very muted, hardly there at all. Steven sleeps on peacefully. Carol continues staring upward.

The CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY on Carol's profile, then shifts slightly and focuses on her ear, ZOOMING SLOWLY till it fills the screen...

and all the while the VOLUME OF JERRY'S FOOTSTEPS IS INCREASING, until the ROAR BECOMES DEAFENING...

The SOUND SNAPS BACK TO NORMAL as Carol lurches forward, pulling the covers off Steven, who wakes to see Carol clutching her head in her hands.

STEVEN

What's the matter?

CAROL

Good Christ, can't you hear it?

STEVEN

Hear what?

CAROL

Him.

Steven groans.

STEVEN

Jesus, Carol, are we gonna go through this again?

CAROL

He's up there moving around.

STEVEN

Turn the fan on and you won't hear him.

CAROL

It doesn't help. I'll know he's moving around. It's worse than actually hearing him. And why should I have to turn a fan on? It isn't hot.

STEVEN

What does it matter? Just face it  
toward the wall.

CAROL

I told you, turning on the fan  
doesn't help.

STEVEN

It would if you stuck your head in  
it!

He rolls over on his side, away from her. She looks at his  
back in angry silence a moment.

Then she climbs out of bed to retrieve a pack of cigarettes  
from atop the dresser.

CAROL

That's wonderful. That's just  
great. You're real fucking  
supportive.

He rolls back over to face her.

STEVEN

You wake me out of a dead sleep,  
and I'm the bad guy?

CAROL

You never want to address anything,  
you never want to deal with  
anything. You just wanna pass me  
off!

STEVEN

I just wanna get some sleep!

CAROL

Go ahead!

Now it's Steven's turn to lie staring at the ceiling in  
frustration. Carol sits down at the table and lights a  
cigarette. The next few moments pass in tense silence.

Then we hear the CREAK OF FLOORBOARDS AND MUTED FOOTSTEPS.

Steven sits up angrily.

CAROL  
See? You hear it, too.

Steven gets out of bed and begins to hastily get dressed.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

STEVEN  
I can't take it anymore.

CAROL  
But he'll stop soon.

STEVEN  
Not him. You.

Carol is struck silent.

STEVEN (CONTD.)  
I'm going back to my place in  
Jersey. You wanna come?

CAROL  
You know I can't sleep there with  
that truck yard next door.

STEVEN  
Let me tell you something, the  
trucks are a fucking lullaby  
compared to you.

Carol rises and blocks his path. Her expression is pained  
and fearful, her tone plaintive.

CAROL  
Please, don't go. I'm sorry.

STEVEN  
Carol, please, before we have a  
real argument. You know how I get.

CAROL  
Let's just get back into bed. I  
won't make a sound!

STEVEN  
Carol, I just can't be here with  
you, alright?

(MORE)

STEVEN (cont'd)  
You've been like this for months,  
and...I just can't be here with you.

CAROL  
Steven...please...I'll be good!

STEVEN  
Let me go!

He pushes past her and leaves.

After he's gone, she leans with her back against the wall next to the door, her arms clutched tightly around her. She doubles over slightly, as if in physical pain, then slides down the length of the wall till she is seated all curled up on the floor.

CAROL (V.O.)  
I have frightening thoughts...

CUT TO

INT - FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carol stands at Jerry's door, a huge kitchen knife clutched in her fist.

CAROL  
(contd. V.O.)  
Sometimes, I take a knife out of  
the drawer...and I imagine going up  
there...

The door opens to reveal Jerry. Just as Carol thrusts the knife into his belly, we...

CUT TO

INT - DR. LASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Carol sits with her eyes closed, savoring the fantasy.

Laster studies her with concern.

LASTER  
We all have these urges, Carol.  
That's why talking them out like  
this is so important.

CAROL

Yeah, well...I have another problem we need to talk out.

LASTER

That's why we're here.

CAROL

You know I was out of work for a long period of time, and...I've had a hard time catching up with everything, so I'm just...

(beat)

I don't know when I can pay you again.

Laster absorbs this. Then, carefully:

LASTER

Well...you've been coming here a while now. And we've done a lot of good work. You've made tremendous progress. Enough so that I feel confident in your ability to continue this process...on your own.

CUT TO

EXT - NEW YORK CITY STREET - DUSK

Carol emerges from Laster's building into a CACOPHONY OF STREET NOISE, moving down the avenue like a condemned person walking the last mile.

She descends into the subway...

INT - SUBWAY PLATFORM

Everything appears alien and a bit unreal. The DIN OF THE MOB waiting on the platform is displaced by the RUMBLE OF AN APPROACHING TRAIN. Then everything trembles as the TRAIN APPEARS...a piercing, deafening ROAR..

CUT TO

INT - IRISH PUB - NIGHT

Carol enters and closes the door behind her, her chest heaving. She stands near the entrance, her eyes shifting back and forth, as if afraid to venture any farther in.

The place is not too crowded. The BARTENDER turns to look at Carol. She remains at the door.

BARTENDER

Can I help you?

She swallows nervously. Finally moves up to the counter. Stares at its chipped wooden surface.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Do you want something?

CAROL

I'm an alcoholic.

She still hasn't lifted her eyes to his.

BARTENDER

You want some coffee?

CAROL

When I was drinking...I liked scotch. Johnny Black on the rocks. That was my father's drink. Johnny Black on the rocks, with a few drops of water. And don't skimp on it..

She smiles bitterly at the memory, her eyes welling.

The Bartender takes her statement for an order. He scoops some ice into a glass, pours the liquor over it, adds a splash of water, then places the drink in front of her.

CAROL (CONT'D)

God, I can still smell it on his breath. Cold-hearted, judgmental prick..

Now she notices the sweating glass in front of her.

CAROL (CONT'D)

What's this?

BARTENDER  
Six dollars.

CAROL  
I told you I was an alcoholic!

BARTENDER  
You said Johnny Black on the rocks.

A GUY AT THE BAR sitting a few seats away chimes in:

GUY AT THE BAR  
Yeah, that's what you said.

CAROL  
No! No! You're not listening to  
me! None of you sons of bitches  
ever listens to me!

BARTENDER  
Hey, look, it's what you said.  
You don't want it --

He goes to take it away, and she lunges for it, grabbing the  
glass and his hand in both of hers.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
Hey, what the hell's the matter  
with you? Let go!

She stares fixedly into the glass, and in her face we see  
projected the alcoholic's eternal struggle, the longing and  
the loathing. And all the while her grip is tightening...

until the GLASS SHATTERS.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
Ow! Fuck!

He clutches his hand, which is soaked in blood and scotch.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)  
Are you out'a your fucking mind?!  
Look what you did to my hand!

She backs away fearfully, her wet, bleeding hands over her  
mouth.

GUY AT THE BAR  
(to Bartender)  
Jesus, are you alright?  
(then; to Carol)  
What the hell is wrong with you?

Carol turns and stumbles out of the bar.

CUT TO

EXT - CITY STREET - NIGHT

Carol journeys down the nighttime street, where darkness has fallen and the vermin are crawling out of their holes, creating a frightening landscape of menacing faces.

All the while, we're bombarded by noise: CARS, TRUCKS and BUSES; SHOUTING VOICES; HORNS and SIRENS; BOOM-BOXES...

A particularly DISTURBED-LOOKING WINO stands in a doorway, RANTING. The CAMERA MOVES IN on him, and we...

CUT TO

INT - CAROL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SILENCE as Carol shuts the door behind her. She leans back against the door. Closes her eyes. Barely in control of herself. Horrified that she was this close to falling off the wagon.

CUT TO

SAME - LATER

We can see bandages on her clasped hands as Carol kneels beside her bed to pray.

Then we hear: MUFFLED FOOTSTEPS; CREAKING FLOORBOARDS.

OVERHEAD ANGLE

as Carol's head snaps up from her unanswered prayers to gaze bitterly at the indifferent ceiling.

CUT TO



SAME - LATER

Carol lies on her back atop the covers, eyes open, expression desolate. The FOOTSTEPS AND CREAKING CONTINUE.

The CAMERA PANS SLOWLY from the bed...

past the bookcase...

the droning TV set...

the windows...

the dresser...

coming finally to the table, where Carol sits staring in utter despair. Thus we realize more time has passed than the brief span it took to execute the camera move (or, at least, that should be the sense of it). And still her torment continues.

We MOVE IN on Carol's face...

into CLOSE-UP...

till her bloodshot eyes fill the screen, and we...

CUT TO

SAME - LATER - OVERHEAD SHOT

Carol POUNDS the ceiling violently with a broomstick. Our angle is such, it almost appears she is thrusting the stick directly into the camera lens. The report is deafening -- BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

She pauses, the stick clutched tightly in her fists. Her cheeks are flushed. She is breathing rapidly.

Then she receives her reply -- a just as resounding BOOM, BOOM, BOOM from above.

Incensed, she POUNDS the ceiling again...

but the broomstick SNAPS in two just above Carol's grip, and the larger half WHACKS her across the forehead.

She drops to the floor, dazed and bleeding over her left eyebrow. Lies still a moment. She still has the smaller broken-off piece of broomstick clutched in one hand -- a sharp, blade-like wooden shard.

She begins to regain her senses and touches at the wound with her free hand. Sees the blood on her fingertips.

And now the dam breaks. Carol scrambles to her feet and runs out of the apartment with murder in her heart.

INT - HALLWAY OF CAROL'S BUILDING - NIGHT

She runs down the hall.

STAIRWAY

She bounds up the stairs two at a time.

FOURTH FLOOR HALLWAY

She POUNDS like a maniac on Jerry's door. Then she steps back, poised for the kill, the deadly wooden implement held ready at her side to be plunged into her tormentor's belly.

The door is pulled open...

to reveal Stacy rather than Jerry. She is wearing nothing but a pair of panties and one of Jerry's button down shirts. Her countenance is a vision of despair. Cheeks wet with tears. Eyes red with sleeplessness. A near mirror image of Carol. And so consumed by her own sorrow, she does not even notice the crude weapon in Carol's hand.

Thrown by this unexpected turn, Carol hesitates.

STACY

What the fuck do you want?

A beat as Carol searches for an answer. Then:

CAROL

I...broke my broomstick.

Stacy turns and goes into the kitchen as Carol quietly enters the apartment and looks around. It's exactly like her own; only the furniture and such is different.

Stacy returns with a broom.

STACY

Here. Take it and shove it up  
your ass. Or fly away on it.  
Do whatever the fuck you want.  
Just get out of my life.

Stacy turns away. Buries her face in her hands. Weeps.

CAROL

What's going on here? Where's  
what's-his-name?

STACY

What's-his-name? His name is  
Jerry, and he's not here, alright?  
He hasn't been here for over a  
week. Happy now?

CAROL

He left you?

STACY

That's right, he left me. Because  
of you. You fucking bitch!

CAROL

He said that?

STACY

No, he didn't say it. I just know  
it.

Stacy wraps her arms about herself and turns her back to  
Carol. Steps closer to the bed.

CAROL

Maybe it was something else.

Stacy turns harshly to face her.

STACY

It wasn't something else! We were  
good together. Now he's gone,  
because of you. And I can't sleep!

Stacy sits weakly on the bed, completely demoralized.

CAROL

Because you miss him?

STACY

No. I mean, yes, but...it's not just that. I...

(beat)

I need to make love or I can't sleep.

Stacy is embarrassed to admit this, but now that she's started...

STACY (CONTD.)

Jerry was just the opposite. Most guys pass out after they come, but Jerry -- it was like drinking a pot of coffee. But he knew I needed it, so...

And now it all comes together for Carol, this sudden understanding of Jerry's dilemma - caught between two sleepless women, unable to soothe one without aggrieving the other. But, for Carol, nothing's changed, really; the devil simply has a new face. And that face is glaring at her now with reawakened hostility.

STACY (CONTD.)

...So now he's gone. And I'm up all night like a fucking ghost. And if that keeps you awake, I don't give a shit. Matter of fact, I'm glad -- because that means you'll be as miserable as me.

Stacy tries to light a cigarette. Strikes the match repeatedly. Can't get it to light. Flings it away and breaks down, burying her face in her hands.

Carol turns as if to leave. Steps toward the door...

but instead of walking out, she closes it. Leans the broom Stacy handed her against the wall. Turns and stares at her sobbing, pathetic figure on the bed.

Then Carol moves toward Stacy, the broomstick weapon still

clutched in her hand. Stands over her. Stacy does not even look up. A single thrust downward into the back of the neck would do it.

But this is not what Carol has in mind.

She sits down beside Stacy. Places the broken stick handle on the bed. Lifts her hand and gently strokes the weeping girl's hair.

CAROL

Sshhh...it's all right...all right...

Stacy looks up into Carol's face, confused. But so distraught, she is ready to respond to any tenderness offered her. She moves into Carol's embrace and cries into her chest.

Carol comforts her, murmuring in a soothing tone.

Then she takes Stacy's face in her hands.

Raises it almost level with her own.

Delicately brushes a few strands of hair from her red, teary eyes.

Slowly moves forward.

Kisses Stacy's wet, flushed cheek...softly, as if she might receive an electrical shock.

Stacy stiffens, but only slightly.

Carol moves with the patience of a collector creeping up on a rare specimen.

Her lips barely brush against Stacy's skin.

Slowly, she succumbs to Carol's advances.

Closes her eyes as Carol kisses her flush on the mouth.

They fall back on the bed.

Carol's lips move down to Stacy's neck.

Stacy whimpers, ready to give herself over completely.

Carol's hand undoes the buttons of Stacy's shirt.

Pushes the fabric aside.

Caresses her breast.

Stacy moans.

Carol's hand drifts down Stacy's belly.

Slips beneath the elastic of her panty.

Stacy's breathing grows more excited.

Her head twists sideways on the pillow.

Her eyes never open.

As she climaxes, we...

DISSOLVE TO

SAME - MINUTES LATER

Stacy lies on the bed in a deep sleep.

Carol pauses at the door to look at her.

CAROL (V.O.)

Now I lay me down to sleep...

She turns off the light. Quietly leaves.

CUT TO

INT - CAROL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (MINUTES LATER)

Carol kneels beside her bed to pray.

CAROL

(contd. V.O.)

...I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I should die before I wake...

CUT TO

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

Carol lies still in the first sweet sleep of night.

CAROL

(contd. V.O.)

...I pray the Lord my soul to take.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END