

HANGMAN: A Movie Short By Andrew Mandapat

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Sound of a coyote in the distance. A gust of wind whistles along.

A leaden boot stomps its imprint on the scorched earth. The other foot does the same, mechanical in its movements.

The wind's whistles grow fierce.

A drop of blood spills on the ground.

Another drop follows.

Its feet keep moving. Droplets of blood splash on the faded finish of the heavy boots.

HANGMAN resembles a massive, hulking monster. Muscles bulge from his tight leather get-up. Wrapped around his bald head is an eyepatch which covers his left eye. A tattoo of a dragon decorates his neck.

He doesn't just breathe, his chest heaves. A scar runs down the side of his face.

Hangman: evil incarnate.

The source of the blood becomes clear. He carries a woman's severed head in one hand.

The other hand wields a thick, long, solid-steel knife. The blade drenched in entrails and streaming crimson.

FULL SHOT DESERT -- DAY

An empty horizon. A landscape of nothing.

Desolation.

A speck emerges from the distance...The Hangman draws near.

On the soundtrack we hear static and a ham radio changing stations.

VOICE (V.O.)

A new millennium. The year: 3000.  
The forces of evil have won. Their  
dark archangel is called...THE  
HANGMAN.

The Hangman looms closer. He carries the severed head of a woman. The sharp weapon stays by his side.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The search is on for a savior.

The barren landscape remains behind him. The Hangman advances.

Non-stop.

VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
The Hangman's evil reign continues.

EXT. ALLEY -- NIGHT

Sprawled in the gutter sleeps ROMAN, a scrawny homeless person with ratty hair and sunken eyes.

He's startled wide awake from a nightmare. An empty bottle of gin falls from his chest and crashes. Cold sweat drenches the man's face.

Christmas music can be heard playing far away.

Roman retches for a few seconds. Nothing spews out, just dry heaves.

With lots of effort he pulls himself off the pavement. He wipes his face, fixes his hair, and trudges back to the sidewalk.

A strong, blinding flash of light streaks towards Roman. Its forceful glare knocks him backwards.

He slams his head against the concrete pavement next to the empty bottle of gin. Before he passes out again, he squints to see the source of the light.

Blackout.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Roman remains tied to a creaky wooden chair. Situated in front of him sit two figures with bright, streaking lights behind them.

Roman comes to.

TAVO, a studious looking gentleman with a calm, soothing demeanor, writes on a paper tablet.

TAVO  
Do you believe in time travel?

Roman stares in front of him. The glare from the lights bothering him.

Beside Tavo sits THE DOCTOR, a stern, no-nonsense woman with an intimidating gaze.

ROMAN

You the cops?

The Doctor whispers something in Tavo's ear.

TAVO

No.

Roman regards his two captors with a wary glance, they do the same.

In an instant, soothing classical music plays in the background.

ROMAN

You gonna kill me?

After a beat, The Doctor whispers in Tavo's ear again.

TAVO

No Roman. We need your help.

ROMAN

How do you know my name?

Silence.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

How the hell do you know my name?

TAVO

You like music Roman?

More silence.

ROMAN

It's Roman.

Tavo and The Doctor don't respond.

Roman lets out a defeated sigh, and slumps down on his seat.

ROMAN (CONT'D)

Before you kill me, can I get something to eat? I'm hungry.

TAVO

Roman we are not here to kill you. In fact, it's your services that we need.

Roman's dumbfounded.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Your services are needed...

The Doctor whispers in his ear again.

TAVO (CONT'D)

For extermination.

The Doctor taps Tavo on the shoulder and whispers to him at length. He says something back to her.

The Doctor turns her head and inspects Roman. She whispers something definitive to Tavo.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Roman we come from the future. We have a problem, an assassin to be exact. Extermination is our only option. We were sent back to rescue you from your current dire circumstance, and to fulfill your destiny.

The last statement catches Roman's attention.

The classical music stops.

TAVO (CONT'D)

We want to tell you about The Hangman.

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Cowering on the ground and hog tied lays SMILEY, a beast-like wastrel of a man.

Standing over him stands CASSANDRA, a woman with feline features, dressed in a streamlined outfit. A tube-like breathing apparatus stays attached to her nostrils.

Cassandra stares at the distance.

Smiley grovels on the ground and attempts to catch a small bug with his mouth. He breathes heavy and grunts, but to no avail. The savage bangs his head on the surface and proceeds to squeal.

Cassandra gives the man a quick, distracted look and turns her attention back to the open desert space.

SMILEY

You want to know what I know? You got your reality, then you got your alternate reality. You hear what I'm saying?

His captor doesn't pay attention.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

First you got your timeline that everybody thinks is straighter'n a priest on Sunday. But it ain't! No sir it ain't! It zigs and it zags like a crazy little worm goin' down a crazy little wormhole.

Smiley snaps at the imaginary insect next to him.

CASSANDRA

Shhh!!

SMILEY

'Cause what you think is real ain't real in another plane, and I ain't talkin' about the planes that go choo-choo in the sky. You can travel back and forth through time to formulate stuff. That's what mommy always told me anyway. Hell does she know.

CASSANDRA

What was that?

SMILEY

Lady I was just philosophizin'.

CASSANDRA

Who are you?

She walks closer to him. Smiley flinches.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Is your name Roman?

SMILEY

Do you want it to be?

Cassandra grabs him by the collar as Smiley lets out a cry for help. She inspects his neck while he pleads for his life.

CASSANDRA

I'm not going to hurt you anymore.  
You're an escapee aren't you?

Smiley nods his head with vigor.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Your name's not Roman?

Smiley shakes his head.

Cassandra looks deflated. Her shoulders drop and her breathing becomes labored.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

He doesn't exist after all.

She looks at the bleak landscape in front of her with sad eyes.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

I'm letting you go.

Smiley cackles and writhes with anticipation.

SMILEY

My name's Smiley.

Cassandra unties the savage. He springs off the ground and does a jig.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

You're looking for the savior. I  
knows it, like the back of my ass I  
knows it!

She regards him for a moment, turns around, and walks away.

Smiley picks up a jagged, fossilized branch and nears Cassandra.

He whacks her behind the head. She falls at an awkward angle.

Smiley grabs the tubes from her nostrils and yanks them off. Cassandra gasps for air.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

The Doctor and Tavo inspect the straps on a metallic operating table. Roman lays on top, securely fastened.

Tavo clutches a clipboard while he speaks. Standing behind him with her arms folded remains The Doctor.

TAVO

Roman, it's very simple. Visit the future and kill The Hangman.

ROMAN

Why am I the lucky one?

TAVO

It's obvious Roman, don't you think?

ROMAN

Stop speaking to me like that.

The Doctor whispers in Tavo's ear. He nods.

TAVO

When did you get that tattoo on your neck?

ROMAN

When I was a kid.

Both Tavo and The Doctor answer with grim nods.

TAVO

When you reach your destination, kill Hangman at once. An emissary named Cassandra awaits you.

ROMAN

I'm not ready.

TAVO

You may also encounter a beast-like  
savage, a psychotic deviant,  
exterminate him also.

Roman tenses up under the straps.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Are you set for an adventure?

Tavo reaches under the table and produces a contraption built  
for being locked on top of a person's cranium.

Wires and gadgets sprout out of this contraption.

Roman resists a little while Tavo latches it on top of the  
patient's head.

The Doctor looks on without any trace of emotion.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Relax. This'll all be over soon.

ROMAN

I know you.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Sparks fly around the room as Roman flails about on the  
table while being injected with a serum by Tavo. The Doctor  
looks on.

B) Same room, same metallic table, same frenzied atmosphere,  
this time Hangman shakes with violent jerks and motions.  
Hangman wears Roman's clothes. The Doctor and Tavo look on.

C) Quiet, asleep, and calm, Hangman lays on the table with  
eyes closed. The contraption still attached to his cranium.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- EVENING

Hangman remains still on the metallic table.

The Doctor and Tavo fool around with the contraption on  
Hangman's head.

Hangman twitches.

The lights flicker on and off. The two scientists retreat  
from their subject. Tavo and The Doctor struggle to turn  
off the contraption.

Sparks fly.

The hulking man on the table convulses. He opens his eyes.

Angry.

The man turns into a beast while stirring on the table.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. WAREHOUSE -- EVENING

The Doctor and Roman look at the sleeping Roman on the table. They look grim.

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Crouched in the fetal position tied in a clumsy, haphazard way lays Cassandra. Her features are covered by streaks of dirt. A tear trail streams from her bloodshot eyes.

A fresh puddle of vomit settles by her face. She pukes again and clutches her stomach.

Smiley comforts her as he attempts to re-attach the tubes to her nose.

SMILEY

Lady, I wasn't meaning to kill you.  
I promise. Our savior, I believe  
he's coming soon.

Cassandra's heavy eyelids close.

Smiley cries like a wounded child, heaving and sobbing. He searches his rags and produces an overripe apple.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Look what I got you. When's the  
last time you seen one of these  
babies?

Cassandra mumbles something.

Smiley looks at her for a moment and cackles a bit.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Honey you don't mind if I take a  
taste of this do you?

Cassandra doesn't reply.

Smiley takes a bite, then another. Within a matter of seconds he devours the whole thing.

Footsteps.

An ominous presence fills the air.

Hangman approaches from nearby.

The hulking figure stops.

In front of the monster sits his prey: Smiley and Cassandra.

A muscular arm flexes while it holds a long knife. The blade gleams.

The Hangman nears his quarry.

Smiley forces Cassandra to sit up straight.

Her weary eyes open a bit.

Smiley laughs, content with himself.

Cassandra's eyes open wider. A shadow blocks her face.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

What'sa matter?

Before Cassandra can speak, a knife protrudes from Smiley's chest. Blood discharges through his rotting teeth. He falls face down.

Standing behind him: The Hangman.

Cassandra springs backwards.

Hangman strikes the weapon towards her direction and she dodges. The blade catches the top of her shoulder. She screams as blood squirts from her wound.

He moves in for the kill.

Smiley's hand slides through the vomit and clutches The Hangman's ankle.

He pivots and sees the feeble old man beneath him. With a smooth motion, he chops Smiley's hand off at the wrist.

Cassandra takes this opportunity to escape.

Hangman produces a butterfly knife from his belt and hurls it at her.

The knife lodges into her other shoulderblade and she stumbles.

She crawls away from the predator.

Hangman advances towards his wounded prey.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Run from the monster!

The monster turns his attention back to the bleeding, handless Smiley. The old man laughs at his attacker.

Hangman takes his thick, solid-steel knife with both hands and raises it over his head.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Devil, you gonna die soon.

With a heavy grunt, he jams the sharp point of his weapon at Smiley's throat. Hangman twists and grinds the knife on his victim's neck.

The devil seethes and goes after Cassandra, who's gone.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

The Doctor and Tavo inspect the contraption on Roman's head.

Tavo looks up, worried.

TAVO

I don't think he made it.

The Doctor glances at her assistant with a forbidding glance.

TAVO (CONT'D)

If he's dead...it can't be.

A stern gaze remains on The Doctor's face.

Tavo places a hand on Roman's forehead.

He pulls it away, burning himself. He looks at The Doctor.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Have we done it?

The Doctor looks on.

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

While running downhill on a sand dune, Cassandra trips and stumbles head first. She doesn't move for a few beats.

On the crest of the sand dune appears Hangman, weapon by his side, ready to go. He stops to survey the landscape, not seeing the frazzled woman right beneath him.

Cassandra looks up and senses the animal a few feet above her. She stays put.

Hangman walks down the sand dune.

Cassandra stands in front of him.

He raises the weapon to behead her.

She looks calm.

The devil seethes.

Cassandra closes her eyes.

Hangman swings his arm in Cassandra's direction and stops mid-way.

The point of the blade lodges itself on her neck. She goes down, while blood spurts out sideways.

While Cassandra gasps for air, Hangman looks beyond her to take a long, hard look at his feeble former self: Roman.

Roman gawks at the monster in front of him, recognizing the tattoo on the creature's neck. The tattoo of a dragon, just like his.

Cassandra writhes on the ground, wrenching the thick knife from her bleeding neck.

Hangman grabs the weapon away from her hands. He advances towards Roman.

Roman falls to his knees.

Hangman looks at himself for a long moment.

Roman does the same.

Cassandra gets up on a crouch.

Hangman's grip on the knifehandle gets tighter.

Cassandra crawls away.

The monster turns around and creeps towards her. She doesn't see him.

Without hesitation, Hangman hacks off Cassandra's head at the neck.

He takes her head and flings it at Roman, which lands in front of him.

Hangman stalks off in the distance.

Roman looks at the severed head. His hands grasp at the sand around him.

Roman dry heaves a few times. He sobs.

ROMAN

You lied to me.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Tavo and The Doctor remain seated on nondescript chairs and stare at the sleeping figure of Roman on the metallic table.

TAVO

When did we lie to you Roman?

Roman still sleeps, the contraption still fastened to his head.

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

Roman struggles to get up. The weight of the world on top of him.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Why didn't you tell me about...

INT. WAREHOUSE

Tavo leans forward in his chair. The Doctor remains rigid.

Roman on the table sleeps.

TAVO

About what Roman?

EXT. DESERT

Roman walks towards the looming sand dune.

ROMAN (V.O.)

About me.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Tavo and The Doctor regard each other. The Doctor gives Tavo a dead stare. He nods.

TAVO

Only you can kill him Roman. You were programmed that way.

Roman's body on the table doesn't move.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Roman?

The Doctor looks at Roman for a beat, then tilts her neck towards Tavo. He nods in agreement.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Roman, do you want to go back to this world and live the rest of your life as a worthless example of human waste? A bum Roman.

Nothing.

The Doctor straightens herself up a bit.

TAVO (CONT'D)

What happened to the weapon we gave you?

The two scientists wait for their answer.

EXT. DESERT

Roman takes a dagger from his side and jams the tip of the blade to his throat, drawing a trickle of blood.

He closes his eyes.

Roman's hand trembles.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Tavo leans towards the sleeping Roman on the table. The Doctor's expression remains stern.

TAVO

Do it.

Both give the sleeping body in front of them unblinking stares.

EXT. DESERT

Roman proceeds to slide the blade across his neck. He pauses.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Tavo advances closer to Roman's body.

TAVO

What are you waiting for Roman?

The Doctor flashes Tavo an urgent glare.

TAVO (CONT'D)

Roman?

EXT. DESERT

Roman hesitates before he pulls the knife away from his throat.

He holsters his weapon and trudges uphill on the sand dune.

ROMAN (V.O.)

At least in the future I'm a god.

He continues his way to the top of the sand dune.

Roman becomes a small speck against the vast backdrop of the barren desert.

TAVO (V.O.)

A god of a wasteland which you've helped to create.

Roman continues to walk away until he disappears into the horizon.

The sun blazes on.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Hangman stalks the empty roads. Weapons by his side, blood painting his face.

EXT. DESERT

Roman wanders the landscape aimlessly. The wind covers him with dust and sand, still he forges on.

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS

A) Roman convulses while being injected. Sparks fly inside the warehouse as Tavo holds him down.

B) Hangman twitches with violent motions. His teeth grind while he grimaces. Lights stream in an endless fashion.

C) Roman transforms into The Hangman in front of The Doctor and Tavo.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. DESERT

Roman travels on, following no particular path.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Hangman trudges along.

Stops.

He waits.

From a distance, Roman approaches, wielding a dagger by his side.

Hangman prepares himself with a gunslinger stance.

Ready.

A few feet from his monstrous self, Roman stops.

The two men regard each other for what seems like an eternity, neither wanting to make the first move.

Both men advance towards each other with slow steps.

They meet face to face.

Roman smirks, Hangman scowls.

Hangman drops his weapon. Roman does the same and smiles.

Hangman makes a fist and rams it on Roman's face. Roman staggers backwards, spit flying out.

Hangman approaches himself and pummels his face again.

Roman crashes down on the ground hard.

Hangman now sports an old scar on his lips.

The monster takes his boot and kicks Roman in the jaw.

Roman's out cold.

A new scar runs down Hangman's jawline.

Hangman takes out one of his butterfly knives and kneels down next to Roman.

He jams the blade on his victim's shoulder and twists it.

Roman gets jolted awake by the pain.

Hangman twists the knife in deeper, while another scar appears on his shoulder.

Hangman removes the knife from Roman's wound and raises it to finish his victim off.

Roman gasps for air, staring at the end.

The monster decides to slug Roman's bloodied face instead, throwing the knife to the side.

Hangman picks his former self off the ground and stands him up by grabbing hold of his chest.

Hangman proceeds to smash his fist and forearm into Roman's already gory face.

Hangman lets go.

Roman staggers, about to drop.

The monster does a roundhouse kick and knocks Roman off his feet.

Roman lays motionless.

Several new scars cover Hangman's face. The creature walks towards his new victim to inspect the damage.

Nothing.

Roman's eyes remain closed; his wounded, bloodied face make him almost unrecognizable.

Hangman stares at his latest conquest.

After a long moment, the monster just walks away.

Roman lays face up on the ground. His hand shakes a bit, reaching for the knife on his side.

Hangman continues to march on.

Roman attempts to open his swollen eyes, blood continues to stream from it.

He props himself up and tries to lift himself off the ground.

Roman drops again, tired and beaten.

Hangman senses this and turns around. The creature stands there, biding his time.

With much effort, Roman gets up, drooling blood.

He looks up at the monster. Roman sways back and forth, steadying himself.

The bloodied man drops to his knees. He raises his dagger.

Hangman remains still. He looks Roman in the eye.

Roman and The Hangman observe each other one more time, staring at themselves.

Roman smiles.

Hangman approaches Roman with a purpose.

The devil stops.

With both hands holding firm on the knife-handle, Roman pushes the blade deep into his stomach.

He slashes himself with it. Back and forth.

Roman coughs up more blood. He gags in pain.

Hangman watches him, blood cascades from his own wounded gut.

Hangman unsheathes his long knife.

Roman slides the knife from his stomach and draws a deep breath.

Both men crash to the ground.

Roman lays still.

Eyes closed. Dagger in his hand.

The Hangman tugs himself up, coughing up blood.

He walks towards Roman's body. The scar on his stomach old, yet fresh blood drips from his wound. The creature still carries his weapon.

Before he approaches Roman, his hand lets go of the knife.

Hangman falls to his knees and collapses with a thunderous thud.

Roman and Hangman lay side by side on the pavement of the empty highway.

INT. WAREHOUSE -- NIGHT

Roman staggers around the empty space.

The operating table, the chairs, the lights, gone.

He clutches his bleeding stomach, barely breathing from the hole in his chest.

The man finds a spot in the middle of the room and cowers.

The Doctor and Tavo appear. They both stare at him, expressionless.

The Doctor whispers in Tavo's ear. Tavo nods.

TAVO

Thank you Roman. Good job. We didn't doubt you for a second.

ROMAN

I'm hungry.

TAVO

How could you think of food at a time like this? You just saved the world.

ROMAN

I want to hear that soft music again. That sounded very nice.

The Doctor whispers to Tavo again.

TAVO

Thank you Roman. Good job.

Roman inspects his wounds, his breathing more abrupt. He looks up to say something.

Empty.

Roman stays on the ground bleeding, losing his breath.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The empty horizon of the desert. A rolling highway.

B) Roman wanders the desert. Hangman stalking the desert landscape.

C) Hangman sleeping on the metallic table, a calm look on his face. Roman doing the same.

D) An image of Roman standing alone in the desert. Hangman on the empty highway, waiting.

E) A rolling highway and the empty desert horizon turns lush, green, and gorgeous. Miles and miles of breathtaking beauty.

Miles.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. ALLEY -- NIGHT

Roman crawls to a corner and props himself up against a concrete wall. His weary eyes look upwards.

The night's darkness permeate his surroundings.

After a moment, Roman closes his eyes.

FADE OUT: