

DEATH JUST WANTS TO TAP DANCE

Written by

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NOTE: This piece is taken from a longer, 20 page short screenplay.
Contained below is just the introductory ten pages of the story.
Still though...enjoy.

FADE IN:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NEW YORK.

A meek looking, terrified man, AVERY BROOK (39) bursts out of a raggedy wooden door into the harsh light of the New York streets. He wheezes and bends over, trying to catch his breath. If a man like this is running, it's probably for something important.

And our narrator NEWTON (27) knows exactly what that is. But that fact does not excite him. Like everything else in life, he delivers the information with a listless, bored monotone.

NEWTON (V.O.)

This man's name is Avery Brook.
He's a journalist of some kind,
though I'm not sure of what. But
whatever it is that he covers, he's
managed to piss off a lot of
people.

Avery Brook turns down the alleyway, only to be violently thrown against the alley wall by the powerful spray of a shotgun shell. He slumps face down against the side of the wall, lifeless.

NEWTON (V.O)

Which is why, I guess, someone
wanted him dead.

A tall, imposing figure emerges out of a side alley, wearing a completely black suit that practically blends into the wall.

NEWTON (V.O) (CONT'D)

And why I had to kill him.

Spin around to reveal THE KILLER -- and Newton's face. Black hair short, professional. Deep black eyes, focused. Expression blank, emotionless. All business, this one.

NEWTON (V.O.)

But, don't worry, it wasn't
personal -- it's just my job. Well,
part of it, anyways.

Another figure suddenly slides out of the killer, a soft white glow wrapping around his entire frame. He's wearing a deep black hoodie, and pants to match. He lowers his hood to reveal Newton's face, now placed on the correct body.

The killer, meanwhile, now has the hardened, imposing look and dark grey hair of a far older man. A police siren pierces the area, and the killer takes off down the alley, leaving the newly formed Newton alone with the recently deceased Avery Brook.

Newton reaches into the pocket of his hoodie and pulls out a yellow glove. He plunges his hand into Avery's chest, with the spectral appendage sinking into the body with ease. Two seconds later, he pulls out a beating blue object, also letting off an ephemeral glow. It's heart shaped, but clearly not a real heart -- of even of this world.

NEWTON (V.O.)

This is the other part of my job.
The far easier part, if you ask me.
Well, if you can describe any of
this as "easy."

The sound of sirens increase from down the street, muffled yells heard from afar.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Oh wait, one second, I have to take
care of this.

Newton snaps his fingers and disappears, the glowing light whooshing around him as he fades away.

CUT TO: EXT. STREETS - NEW YORK.

Newton is now wearing a policeman outfit, his gun out and ready to fire. Standing next to him are fellow policeman, including THE SERGEANT.

THE SERGEANT

He has a weapon, open fire!

The cops all shoot in unison, with Newton hitting the gunman first. Newton pops out of the Policeman body and approaches the newly dead corpse. It's The Killer, his pristine suit now splattered with blood.

NEWTON (V.O)

Huh. Look at that. You rarely get a
double homicide in such a short
amount of time to each other.

Newton once again reaches into the man's chest, pulling out the glowing blue orb. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a black cloth sack, and sticks the object into it.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

What a wild day.

INT. DEATH HQ (A.K.A A MIDSIZE OFFICE BUILDING IN HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY) - DAY

Newton walks through the door, hood back up and shrouding his head. He's not the only one though. Many in the office -- male and female -- are wearing similar black hoods. Other than that, just your standard office. The sounds of people chatting, typing, and printing things out fills the air as Newton makes his way to his cubical.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Now, yes, I understand: you probably have a lot of questions. But I don't have a lot of time here, so I'm going to try to run through things as fast as I can.

INT. DEATH HQ/NEWTON'S CUBICLE

Newton reaches his cubicle and sits down, zipping down his black hood. Beneath, a white collar shirt and simple black tie.

NEWTON (V.O.)

My name is Newton Graves, and I am Death. More specifically, my title is "Post Life Specialist Class II." I was just promoted last month.

Newton double clicks an icon on his computer -- a beige clunky affair that looks straight out of the 90's -- and leans up in his seat.

NEWTON (V.O.)

And before you mention it, yes: my last name is Graves, and I kill people for a living. It's strictly a coincidence, I assure you.

The program begins to open, a sparsely designed startup window with the word "F.A.T.E." in bold green letter jumping onto the screen.

NEWTON (V.O.)

F.A.T.E is the program we use to receive and submit all death orders. I have no idea what it stands for. I try not to ask too many questions.

The program opens up, and Newton enters some information: Name (Avery Brook) and confirmed time of death (2:04 PM.)

NEWTON

F.A.T.E is also how we submit the glowing things you saw me pick up earlier.

Newton begins to fish into his hoodie pocket, hanging loosely from his chair. He pulls out the mesh sack, and reaches in for one of the glowing blue orbs. He holds it up to the light on the panel above him. It beats rhythmically.

NEWTON (V.O.)

This is a soul. It is the most vital part of a human being. It represents a person's thoughts, opinions, personality -- pretty much every part of their entire being.

Newton grabs his mouse and clicks on the button labeled "FEED." An oversized disc tray located in the console beneath the computer screen slides out with a creak.

NEWTON (V.O.)

It goes into the disc tray.

Newton violently inserts the soul into the disc tray, jamming it closed. The computer screen beeps, with a pop up window announcing "SOUL CONFIRMED!"

NEWTON (V.O.)

I'm unsure where the souls go, to be honest, or what F.A.T.E even is for that matter. It could just be a computer program, or a deity of some sort. Or maybe even some type of demon. I don't know -- like I said, I try not to ask too many questions.

A large presence begins to emerge from behind Newton, leaning over his cubicle-- mustached, slightly balding, but not letting it get him down.

NEWTON (V.O.)

This is my boss. Mr. Jackson. He's a pretty nice guy, by most accounts. Which is why, to be honest, I can't stand him.

MR. JACKSON

Great job on that homicide today, Newton!

(MORE)

MR. JACKSON (CONT'D)

Following yesterday's triple heart attack and Monday's excellent work with that serial arsonist, you are well on your way to another promotion!

Newton forces a slight smile.

NEWTON

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Jackson slaps Newton on the shoulder jovially. He recoils.

MR. JACKSON

You're very welcome, old boy!

Mr. Jackson walks away. Newton's smile quickly transforms into a grimace.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Ugh. Mr. Jackson isn't the worst guy here, but then again, that's not saying much.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Newton walks past an assortment of small tables, carrying a small paper sack. Groups of people stare at Newton as he walks past them. Newton ignores this clearly common occurrence.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Everyone else here are mostly just sharks, willing to backstab everyone who stands in their way if it means moving up the corporate ladder. They also don't like me very much -- they think I'm weird, or something.

Newton takes a seat at the table on the far end of the room. Everyone else is gathered on the opposite side.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Fuck them anyways.

Newton begins to silently eat his lunch.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Unlike the rest of the Post Life Specialists here, I have no desire to move up.

(MORE)

NEWTON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This is just a job for me. A way to pay the bills. And yeah, sure, I hate it. But who says you have to like your job? Plenty of people don't. You think the people who do sewer treatment love going into work every? Hell no. But a job is a job --

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A silver car speeds down the highway. Zoom in to show Newton behind the wheel, as he plows into the side of the lipstick red vehicle next to him. Both cars collide and flip, a flurry of metal and sparks lighting up the highway.

NEWTON (V.O.)

And someone has to do it.

Newton, stands glowing in the middle of the now desolate road. He slips on the yellow glove, approaches the red vehicle, and opens the door. Reaches his hand into the chest of the woman hanging lifelessly in the overturned car. Another soul pops out. Newton stares at it as it beats rhythmically in his outstretched hand.

NEWTON (V.O.)

So why not me?

INT. NEWTON'S EXTREMELY CRAPPY APARTMENT - NIGHT

A pair of shiny black shoes, glimmering against the murky yellow of the dim apartment lights.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Besides, I don't live for my day job. I live for my actual life's passion.

A record slides down on a nearby player, a jaunty little piano tune now echoing in the apartment. The black shoes now begin moving in rapid movement, a very audible tap matching in unison with the movement.

NEWTON (V.O.)

Tap.

We now see Newton, dressed in full dancers leotard, tap dancing his life away. His expression remains emotionless, in sharp contrast to the rhythmic movements of his body.

NEWTON (V.O.)
My life's passion. The only thing I
live for. Not this --

SERIES OF SHOTS

--Newton, wearing swimming clothes in the middle of the ocean, holds his victim down as they bob helplessly beneath the ocean. Newton looks bored.

NEWTON (V.O.)
Or this.

--Newton, dressed in prison garb and walking through a large cafeteria, expression blank, shanks a man four times as he passes by him. The man collapses to the ground as Newton quickly walks away.

NEWTON (V.O.)
Or certainly not this.

--Newton walks through a New York city street, wearing his usual hoodie attire. He approaches a rather large man and, with his bare hand, punches the man in the back. The man clutches his heart and falls to the ground. Newton then uses his other gloved hand to pull out the soul, barely slowing down to do it.

BACK TO THE APARTMENT

The pounding of the tap shoes on the ground increases in rhythm, as Newton jumps into his grand finish.

NEWTON (V.O.)
No, nothing else can compare to the
glorious feeling that is...tap.

With one final strike on the ground with his right foot, the song concludes and so does Newton. Breathing heavily, sweat building on his face, he stares straight ahead.

Reveal EMMA (27), clapping with giddy excitement. Her blonde hair (with red streaks in the middle, naturally) bobs back in forth as she lets out an excited little dance.

EMMA
Oh my god Newton, that was perfect,
PERFECT! And combined with the
piece I'm cooking up, it's going to
blow those dicks at the
conservatory RIGHT OFF THEIR ASSES!

Emma continues to pace back and forth excitedly, ranting and raving as she does. But instead of hearing her, we return to.

NEWTON (V.O.)

This is Emma. The only other thing in life I really care about. We met when we went to college together. She majored in Music. I majored in Dance. Neither of which proved to be very sustainable careers, thus leading to--

CUTAWAY

--Newton, wearing a sailor's hat and a Hawaiian shirt, approaches a man leaning on the deck of a grand cruise ship overlooking the sea. He pushes the man into the ocean nonchalantly, yanking out the blue soul as he tumbles towards the abyss.

RETURN TO THE APARTMENT

Emma is still speaking and moving, but far slower this time. Her slow motion head turn towards Newton stops just in time for the perfect shot of her smiling, an almost ethereal light bouncing out from around her.

NEWTON (V.O.)

As you can tell from the way she stopped moving and the lighting around her, I'm kind of in love with her. I think she likes me too, but who the hell knows at this point. I'm not really the type to make a move. One of my fatal flaws I guess.

EMMA

So am I going to have to just keep doing all the talking, or are you going to contribute at some point?

Return to Newton, shaking his head and snapping out of his dream mode. He looks up at Emma sheepishly.

NEWTON

Sorry.

Emma is now digging into Newton's refrigerator as though it was hers, moving things around with reckless abandon.

EMMA

No, it's okay, I'm used to it. Thank god I can do more than enough talking for the both of us, right?

Emma finds a water and tosses it to Newton. He catches it with ease.

NEWTON

Thanks.

Emma salutes as she drinks from a water bottle of her own.

EMMA

Don't mention it.

She finishes her drank and gestures towards Newton.

EMMA (CONT'D)

So, what was that whole thing about? Busy day at work.

CUTAWAY:

-Newton is standing in a dingy looking attic, playing around on his smartphone. A man with a noose around his neck is standing on a chair. With his eyes still locked on the phone, Newton kicks the chair with his left leg. It slides out from beneath the man, who begins to shake and convulse in the air.

BACK TO APARTMENT>

NEWTON

Yeah. That's about right.

EMMA

I told you, ya gotta quit that job of yours. Insurance is going to get you nowhere in life body. THIS is what is going to change your life, man. And mine too, while we're at it! Your badass tap and my not-to-shabby piano playing, and we got nothing to worry about!

Newton nods, sharing a slight smile.

NEWTON (V.O.)

I wish I shared Emma's optimism. For a lot of things, really.

A loud buzz breaks the silence of the room, as Newton reaches for his phone sitting on one of the nearby end tables. A text. He scans it quickly.

CELL PHONE SCREEN

"Head to 612 Sycamore Street. Elderly woman. 72. Cancer."

Newton sighs as he stuffs his cell phone back into his pocket.

NEWTON

I gotta go.

Emma rolls her eyes.

EMMA

I know, I know -- work is calling.
Work is ALWAYS calling.

Emma grabs her jacket laying on the couch as she proceeds to exit down the front door hallway.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Just keep practicing, okay! Same
time tomorrow!

The door slams as Emma departs the room. Newton also grabs his hoodie from the couch and slips it on.

Duty calls.

FADE OUT.