

Dustpoint

written by

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LOGLINE: When a conflicted young preacher arrives in a frontier town he must decide if he will obey God and confront the local opposition.

SUPER: 1881 - THE WASHINGTON TERRITORY

INT. DUSTPOINT INN - DAY

DONALD WEAVER, a 20 year old African American man, steps over the threshold of the doorway and gently closes the door behind him. His black vest covers a dirty but white silk shirt.

The faint PIANO MUSIC and CHATTER from the saloon that shares a wall with Dustpoint Inn seeps in this room.

MILTON, a clean cut and sharply dressed man in pressed linens enters from a hallway connecting the saloon to the inn. He's in his late 40s, confident, and his stride shows it. He looks Donald up and down quickly and steps behind the desk.

MILTON
What's your business?

DONALD
I'd like a room.

MILTON
That much I know.

DONALD
I'm a preacher.

MILTON
Wrong town.

DONALD
'Scuse me?

MILTON
These people don't need to grow a guilty conscience.

DONALD
Why's that?

MILTON
Because you're bad for business.
Move on.

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Donald stands at the open door. The windows are broken out and the paint is peeling off the exterior walls. Donald peers out looking up and down the town.

The buildings lining this street have seen better days. The paint is peeling. A few store fronts are vacant. The school house is boarded up.

A mill is at one end with a train full of logs next to it. People stand near a door smoking hand rolled cigarettes.

A bell CHIMES.

They toss the cigarettes and go back into the building.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Donald surveys the room. Shattered glass beneath a few windows. A stack of damaged bibles and hymnals near the door. Dust everywhere. A bedroll is against the wall in a corner.

Donald rummages in his bag and removes a crucifix which he places above the pulpit.

DONALD

These folks aren't gonna listen to me.

BALL

Probably not.

Startled, Donald whips around to see SHERIFF BALL, in his 40s, he has a full beard and mustache topped by his salt and pepper hair sticking out the edges of his hat. A sheriff's star on his shirt is polished to a shine.

BALL (CONT'D)

You must be the preacher Milton told me about.

DONALD

The saloon owner?

BALL

You and I, we're both lawmen.

Ball picks up a bible.

DONALD

I'm not...

BALL

This here's your gun. Your office is in here. Mine is out there.

AGATHA, an elderly woman, in a flowery dress with her hair pulled in a tight bun enters with a sandwich on a plate.

AGATHA
Why don't you give him a break?

DONALD
Name's Donald Weaver.

BALL
Mr. Weaver, just remember your
jurisdiction.

Ball moves to the door.

DONALD
Good day Sheriff.

Ball steps out tipping his hat to Agatha on the way.
She forces a smile and steps up to Donald hand outstretched.
Donald gives it a quick shake.

AGATHA
Don't mind his attitudinizing.

DONALD
If I were him and someone new
showed up in town I'd pay 'em a
visit as well.

Agatha offers the sandwich to Donald.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Lord bless you.

He takes the sandwich and a hearty bite.

AGATHA
I've been praying for a pastor.

Donald indicates the entire room.

DONALD
Look at this...this mess. I'm no
carpenter.

AGATHA
These people need God. Not a fancy
building.

DONALD
They don't want a young kid tellin'
'em how to live their lives.

AGATHA
Did they say that?

Donald looks away and shrugs.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
What do you believe?

DONALD
I don't think they want to listen
to me.

AGATHA
I'm listening.

He hesitates unsure of himself.

Donald looks at his bible.

He then looks to Agatha who is waiting patiently.

He looks away again and takes a bite of the sandwich.

DONALD
I don't have anything prepared.

AGATHA
Let me ask you, is your name Donald
or Pastor Weaver?

Donald stares at her with a lack of understanding.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
When you learn your name you'll be
ready.

DONALD
I'm ready...but...

Donald again surveys the room.

AGATHA
Does God live in a chapel?

DONALD
God's in our hearts.

Agatha nods.

Leaning against a broken pew is a broom. She begins sweeping
as he eats.

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

ALEXANDER, in his 20s, is sitting on the steps as Donald and Agatha step outside. His muscles are well toned, pulling his shirt tight at it's seams.

AGATHA

This is Pastor Weaver.

ALEXANDER

Run along Miss Agatha, I got business to discuss.

Alexander puffs up toward Donald making his large frame even larger.

Agatha starts heading across the street toward the jail house.

Alexander steps into Donald's personal space.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)

The mill ain't hiring. It's firing.

DONALD

I didn't come to work at the mill.

ALEXANDER

Than you're a leech. Time you moved on.

Alexander pulls back and punches Donald in the jaw.

Donald hits the ground with a THUD and OOMPH.

As Donald struggles to stand he sees Milton in the window of the saloon.

Milton smirks and raises his glass before downing it and walking away.

Agatha turns around in time to see Donald get hammered with Alexander's fist again.

AGATHA

Sheriff! Hurry Sheriff!

The door to the jailhouse flies open and Sheriff Ball is pulling his hat on as he runs across the town square.

Alexander rears back to give Donald a kick in the ribs as Sheriff Ball tackles him.

Alexander squirms but is wrestled into submission by the Sheriff.

BALL
You stop movin' or I'll add
resistin' to the charges.

AGATHA
You best haul him in.

Alexander loosens up and Ball stands back up.

Donald sits up and tries to stand but is a little wobbly and resigns himself to sitting.

DONALD
No need to take him anywhere.

Sheriff Ball looks confused.

BALL
Run along Alexander. You too,
Agatha.

Agatha turns to protest but the look Sheriff Ball gives her makes her think better of it.

INT. JAIL HOUSE - NIGHT

Donald sits on a bench facing Sheriff Ball's desk.

Sheriff Ball hovers above him.

BALL
Explain something to me, Why don't
I have Alexander in here?

DONALD
Matthew 6:14. For if you forgive
other people when they sin
against...

BALL
(Interrupting.)
That was the exact sort of
encounter I don't want to see
again.

DONALD
I didn't provoke him.

BALL
Just being here was provocation
enough for him.

DONALD
I just want to share the word.

BALL
Looks like that's gonna be
difficult.

DONALD
Will I see you on Sunday?

BALL
You won't be saying anything I
don't already know.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Alexander strides up and straddles his stool like he's riding
a horse.

Milton walks over to him.

Hammering can be heard in the distance.

ALEXANDER
How 'bout that drink?

MILTON
Not today.

ALEXANDER
Why not? Not only did I do what you
asked, he even got arrested.

MILTON
Do you hear that?

ALEXANDER
Yeah.

MILTON
It's coming from the chapel. That
mean something to you?

ALEXANDER
That means he got himself hurt but
not killed. You owe me a drink.

MILTON
You drink when he's left town.

EXT. MILL - DAY

The chime of the work bell rings.

People start filing out and cut a path around Donald who blocks the exit with a few hand written fliers.

The laborers ignore him and keep moving. Some even walk right into him knocking him to the side.

DONALD

Come to Sunday Service. Hear the word of God.

Behind him Alexander chuckles as he walks up.

DONALD (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about our misunderstanding.

ALEXANDER

Seems to me you still misunderstand. If you ain't moved on by nightfall, I'll see you again.

Donald hands him a flyer.

DONALD

Tomorrow morning in the chapel I hope.

Alexander looks at the flier and drops it to the ground as he walks away.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

Donald is stretched out on a pew with the bedroll under his head.

Behind him a small candle flickers illuminating his bible as he intently reads.

Alexander's face comes into view just beyond his bible.

Alexander's strong hands grab Donald and yank him up over the back of the pew.

While flailing to get away, Donald knocks over the candle.

ALEXANDER

I told you to get.

He shoves Donald toward the door.

Donald trips and tumbles out through the doorway.

He bounces down the steps and lands on the ground with a MOAN.

Alexander appears in the doorway as flames begin to rise behind him.

Donald starts to get up only to be broadsided by the charging Alexander.

He gives Donald a kick just as...

DONALD
(Weakly.)
Help!

ALEXANDER
No one's comin'.

Alexander kicks him again.

Donald tries to crawl across the courtyard toward the jailhouse but is getting hit with a barrage of kicks the entire way. The beating steers him away from the jail house toward a darkened corner.

INT. SALOON - NIGHT

The piano man plays enthusiastically and laughter prevails.

Glasses clank and cards can be heard shuffling.

The door flies open and frantically a TOWNS-PERSON rushes in.

TOWNS-PERSON
Fire!

Chairs and stools SCREECH and CRASH as people jump into action making their way to the door.

Milton looks toward the window and sees it's the chapel.

He continues cleaning behind the bar.

EXT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

The flames are licking the sky as Donald tries to escape to freedom.

Alexander is kicking him along the ground.

Donald tries standing just to be punched back to the ground again.

Town folk run chaotically with buckets toward the fire.

INDISTINCT SHOUTING can be heard and a line of people starts to form as they pass buckets along it.

Sheriff Ball CRASHES in through the door of the chapel and moments later comes back out.

He spots Alexander beating Donald across the courtyard.

He draws his pistol as he takes off full speed toward them.

Spotting Sheriff Ball, Alexander issues one final kick before running off into the darkness.

BALL
Can you walk?

Donald weakly rises to his feet.

DONALD
Hardly.

BALL
That'll be enough.

Sheriff ball starts dragging him toward the jail.

Agatha runs up and jumps in their path.

AGATHA
Where you taking him?

BALL
I'm locking him in a cell.

DONALD
(Shocked.)
Why?

BALL
For your own safety.

DONALD
Where's Alexander?

BALL
I've got a fire to deal with.

AGATHA
You best go find him.

DONALD
I need to help put it out.

BALL
Not a chance.

AGATHA
Why can't he?

DONALD
This happened because I came to
town. It's obvious I need to leave.
I know where I'm not wanted.

AGATHA
Some of us do want you here.

DONALD
Do I look like a pastor?

Sheriff Ball unlocks the door to his jailhouse and shoves Donald through it.

INT. JAIL HOUSE - NIGHT

Donald stops any resistance and stumbles over to the cell.

Sheriff Ball sizes him up. Removes his hat and places it on his desk, slightly obscuring his own bible.

Agatha barges in behind them.

AGATHA
Sheriff this isn't fair.

Ball looks at her and then at Donald.

BALL
I got a mess of problems to deal
with out there. You sleep here
tonight. I'll escort you out in the
morning.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DUSTPOINT -DAY

Donald is leading his horse as he and Sheriff Ball walk down the main street of town.

While passing the saloon a smiling Milton peers out at them.

Sheriff Ball cuts him a look and he moves away from the window.

The smokers outside the mill move in closer to watch the show of Donald leaving.

Donald stops in front of the ruins of the church and looks in.

He squints and then rushes in.

The crucifix is on the ground but undamaged.

He leverages the crucifix and carries it out of the still smoking building.

Many people look on from the sides of the road.

Agatha walks out into the road.

AGATHA

Pastor Weaver, it's Sunday morning.

Donald looks at what's left of the chapel and then at the crucifix in his arms.

Sheriff Ball steps aside and indicates the people.

Donald looks up and down the people lining the road.

He turns to leave and after a beat turns back to face the town and it's people.

DONALD

God asks us to speak and act on his behalf all the time. Mostly we ignore or even push against his wishes. Then he lights a fire and we have to speak. He can burn down all your walls and show you the way if you only let him. Come in closer and hear God's word.