

**DOGGED**

Written by

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Based on a story by

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NOTE: THE FOLLOWING IS RECORDED FROM A GOPRO'S P.O.V.  
ATTACHED TO A GOOSENECK FLEX CLAMP MOUNT.

**EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT**

Through the bushes we see a minivan exit a garage and depart.

We turn to see the middle-class suburban house behind us as the garage door closes; the light flickers in the garage. We quietly move to the front door and ring the doorbell.

A DOG BARKS INSIDE. The dog sounds small, but feisty.

The front door opens. TINA (18), a preppy Gen Z babysitter in gapes from inside.

TINA

Maddie? What are you doing here?

MADDIE (O.S.)

I'm trying to celebrate your birthday, but you're not. So, I guess the real question is, what are you doing here?

TINA

The Dawson's regular babysitter freaked out and quit last night, so they begged me to come over.

MADDIE (O.S.)

On your birthday.

TINA

On their anniversary.

MADDIE (O.S.)

Birthdays take precedence. So -- are you going to let me in already?

TINA

I'm not supposed to have guests!

MADDIE (O.S.)

I could list a hundred things you're not supposed to do that you do anyway. Number one, you shouldn't eat a whole tray of brownies every time you smoke a --

TINA

-- Okay! Shh! Shut up! Get in here.

Tina stands aside for Maddie to enter.

**INT. HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

UNSEEN BARKING CONTINUES.

TINA  
Shhh! Scruff!

Maddie follows Tina into --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tina plops down on the couch.

TINA  
Okay, so... what's with the action sports camera, anyway?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
I thought we could get do some edibles and make viral videos for Tik Tok or something.

TINA  
Viral action sports videos?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Or whatever. I got it from my brother for twenty bucks. And, I gotta get my money back somehow, so it's either this, or selling pictures of my feet online.

TINA  
Gross.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Whatev. Do something funny. Action.

Tina goes blank -- deer in the headlights.

TINA  
What does that mean?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
I dunno. Be creative. And funny.

Maddie sucks down soda out of a 44oz cup, complete with SLURPING NOISES, and drops it into a small trashcan.

Tina rolls her eyes.

TINA  
Really?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
What?

TINA  
You can't leave that there. They'll  
know I had someone over. Go throw  
it away in the garage.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Oh, come on, Tee.

TINA  
Go!

Maddie sighs. She picks his cup out of the trashcan, SLURPS  
her straw and heads through --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Maddie looks around.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
I don't know this house, Tina.

Maddie tries a doorknob and enters --

**INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS**

The light flicks on. Dusty garage. Along the back wall are  
shelves full of boxes. One has several dolls sticking out of  
it. Elsewhere are tools, a covered car, and a large trash  
bin. Maddie drops her cup in the receptacle and SNIFFS.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
(whispering, to herself)  
Ugh. Smells like something died...

SOUND OF A BONES POPPING NEAR THE GARAGE DOOR.

Maddie spins around to see... nothing. The cam light only  
goes so far. The view lingers on a dark corner near the door.  
It's impossibly unclear, but looks like a humanoid shadow  
stands even darker within the shadows.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
(whispering, to camera)  
Seriously, what is that?

Maddie creeps silently forward a step... then another...

DOG BARKING shatters the silence from behind her.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Son of a bitch!

Maddie turns, runs into the trash bin -- kicks it in anger. She spins back toward the shadows, creeps toward the corner, and sees nothing out of the ordinary. Wait --

Maddie looks down to see a decapitated baby doll on the ground. The head bares large tooth marks. Unprovoked, the doll coos. Maddie jumps, startled.

Maddie catches her breath and heads back into the house. She doesn't notice that the box of dolls is empty. The garage light goes out.

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Maddie shuts the door behind her and moseys back to --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Maddie plops down on the couch beside Tina.

TINA  
(laughing)  
What was that about?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
What?

TINA  
Sounded like you fell down or something. You're the one who needs to cut down on the weed.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Never. Besides, it was dark in there. I tripped. You're lucky I didn't get seriously hurt. I would have had to sue your boss for the injuries I suffered in his death-trap of a house. That's probably what happened to the last sitter.

TINA  
So dramatic. And for the record, she didn't die. She quit.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Why, what happened? She get busted  
 with the baby's daddy, or what?

TINA  
 No!

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Is he hot? You gonna get it, too?

TINA  
 No one's sleeping with Mr. Dawson!  
 I think the babysitter just freaked  
 out or something.

The DOG'S NAILS TAP THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT DOOR; HE BARKS.

TINA  
 (whispering)  
 T-B-H, I think she was afraid of  
 the dog...

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Yeah, he sounds like a killer. Cujo  
 up in this bitch.

Tina rolls her eyes.

TINA  
 I'm serious. Mrs. Dawson said he's  
 been barking at everything the last  
 couple of nights. He kept waking  
 the baby and wouldn't leave her  
 alone. They have to keep him  
 downstairs now. And he keeps  
 getting these weird scratches. They  
 don't know what he's been doing.

Maddie turns the camera toward the foyer doorway.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Well, let's find out, shall we?  
 (to the foyer)  
 Hey, dog! Come'ere!

TINA (O.S.)  
 His name is Mr. Scruffles!

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 (laughing)  
 Mr. Scruffles?

TINA (O.S.)  
 Shut up, it's cute.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Totally. I was gonna name my first  
 born Mr. Scruffles.  
 (to the dog)  
 Come on, boy.

MR. SCRUFFLES, a small Pomeranian, scurries toward her. Maddie bends down and pets him. She clips the GoPro mount to his collar. Her hand briefly covers the camera lens as she adjusts the angle. Then, the view shows Tina and MADDIE (18), a punk-ish girl in all black.

TINA  
 It's okay, boy. Calm down. This is  
 Maddie. She's crazy, but we don't  
 hate her.

MADDIE  
 Awww, that's sweet.  
 (to dog)  
 Go on, Scruffles. Go have an  
 adventure.

TINA  
 I'm not supposed to have guests,  
 and you put a camera on their dog?

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Tina! Babies don't talk, no one's  
 gonna see the video, and we're  
 completely alone. No one's ever  
 gonna find out. Unless we take  
 pictures of our feet.

Maddie pulls out her phone and scrolls through social media.

TINA  
 Enough with the feet.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Fine. But it's your birthday, so I  
 saw we just take some edibles,  
 listen to shitty music, and see if  
 any boys want to come over.

TINA  
 Oh-em-gee, Maddie!

A CRASH IN THE FOYER.

Maddie and Tina jump. Scruffles spins toward the doorway.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 You're one-hundred percent sure  
 were alone?

Scruffles turns toward the couch. The teens don't see him.

TINA  
 I... think? Yeah... I'm sure.

Scruffles whips back toward the foyer, just in time to see the hint of a shadow passing the doorway; the foyer light flickers on and off, and then stays off.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Hey, have you seen Stacy's I-G?

Scruffles waddles toward the doorway and glances into a standing full-length mirror along the way. In the reflection, fingers are wrapped around the doorframe behind him. They ascend toward the ceiling and recede into the shadows.

PHANTOM (O.S.)  
 (whisper)  
*Miiiiiiiine.*

Scruffles whips back around to the door; the hand is gone.

The foyer light flickers back on.

Scruffles reenters --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Nobody present.

The foyer light flickers out.

Scruffles runs back to --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles barks at Tina and Maddie, who scroll through social media and ignore him.

MADDIE  
 No way, it's totally true.

TINA  
 A cursed Facebook page? Bullshit.



MADDIE

Six people went missing from my  
sister's college. It fucking  
happened. It was on the news --

Scruffles gives up and races through --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

-- and up the stairs to the dark --

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles is alone.

A headless doll falls, seemingly on its own.

SCRUFFLES CRIES.

TINA (O.S.)

Scruffles! Knock it off!

Further down the hall, another headless doll falls.

Then another.

Beyond the photos, the BABY'S ROOM DOOR CREAKS OPEN a crack.

SCRUFFLES BARKS and runs toward the baby's door. Light from a  
nightlight within escapes through the crack. It flickers.

Unseen hands drag Scruffles back toward the stairs; the dog's  
nails drag through the carpet along the way. Scruffles flips  
onto his back and sees bloody handprints along the ceiling.

Scruffles rolls over on his involuntarily journey toward the  
stairs. HE WHINES. Near the edge, before he can be pushed  
off, his nails dig into the carpet; he slows to a stop.

Scruffles looks around, sees no one, and WHIMPERS. A BABY  
DOLL'S CRY ECHOES FROM THE BABY'S ROOM.

Scruffles hesitates, looks back toward the living room. Then,  
he skips toward the baby's room with a BARK of determination.

When Scruffles arrives and spins toward the door, HE GROWLS.

The door slams unexpectedly, inches from Scruffles' face.

Scruffles jumps. He claws at the door. Scruffles whips around  
and darts down the hall, then down the stairs, across the --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

The foyer light is on now.

Scruffles races to --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles runs all the way to the couch and BARKS at Tina.

MADDIE

Shit! What is your deal? You're  
fucking up my high, little man.

TINA

He probably just needs to go out.

Maddie sighs.

MADDIE

So, let him out. I can't  
concentrate with all that noise.

TINA

You haven't concentrated since the  
seventh grade.

Tina hops up and heads to the foyer. Scruffles follows.

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Tina opens the front door.

Scruffles spins toward the stairs, then back at Tina. BARKS.

TINA

Come on, boy. Go outside?

BARK. BARK.

MADDIE (O.S.)

Shit or get off the pot, dude.

Tina picks up Scruffles and sets him outside.

**EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles runs out into the front yard and looks back. He stands up on his hind legs, giving us a glimpse at the upstairs window.

A dim nightlight is on in the baby's room, but not much else can be seen.

Scruffles charges back toward the door.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Andrew Carlesi is down to party!

TINA  
No! Tell me you did not invite him!

Tina races back inside. The door drifts shut, just as Scruffles gets to it.

SCRUFFLES BARKS, then runs back into the yard, looks up at the window, and sees a silhouette looking down at him from the baby's room. The lights flicker behind the shadow, and it moves away from the window.

SCRUFFLES BARKS, then runs to the door and frantically scratches it. No one comes to let him in. Scruffles hurries around the house to --

**EXT. HOUSE - BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles races to the pet door and bursts through it.

**INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles slides across the kitchen floor and toward --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

SCRUFFLES BARKS and bounds up the stairs.

TINA (O.S.)  
They can't come over, Maddie!  
(toward the foyer)  
Scruffles? Stay downstairs boy!  
(sigh)  
Not again.

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles spins back to see Tina following him.

TINA  
Calm down! Crazy dog.

Maddie joins her in the foyer.

MADDIE  
He wants to know if we have beer?

TINA  
Maddie!

Scruffles BARKS and runs to the baby's room door. THE DOOR  
CREAKS OPEN on its own.

Scruffles turns toward the room to see pale, decomposing bare  
feet dangling inside the door, hovering above the floor.

SCRUFFLES BARKS.

Scruffles turns around to see the teens approaching.

TINA  
What did I just say?

Tina peeks in the baby's room and enters. The baby mobile  
spins rapidly. Tina's shoulders are tense; she enters  
cautiously and slows the mobile by hand, then eyes the baby.

Scruffles enters --

**INT. BABY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles spots reflective eyes shining from the shadows  
under the crib.

Tina sighs in relief, then shivers.

TINA  
Time to turn the heat up.

Tina turns around, and bends down to see Scruffles, oblivious  
to the demon behind her.

TINA  
(whispering)  
Bad Scruffles. You scared the shit  
out of me. And you made a mess in  
the hallway! Come on. Out!

MADDIE (O.S.)  
Hey. I'm gonna liberate one of  
those wine bottles, cool?

Scruffles spins back to see Maddie peeking in the doorway.

TINA  
(whispering)  
Shhh! Don't touch anything!

Maddie sneaks off, and Tina chases after her.

Scruffles shuffles toward the hallway door.

A GUST OF WIND blasts through the window. Scruffles spins around in time to see curtains whipping around and stuffed animals skidding across the floor from the wind; decapitated doll heads are among them.

The nightlight flickers.

The PHANTOM hovers over the crib. He is an extremely tall being with long limbs and a wide-brim hat. Holes in his torn black uniform expose areas of flesh and decaying bones. His jaw drops open exponentially toward the baby. He flashes in and out of existence in relation to the flickers.

Scruffles barks at the Phantom and darts toward it with a GROWL. The Phantom disappears before contact is made.

A HISSING SOUND COMES FROM THE CLOSET.

Scruffles spins around to see the Phantom's reflective eyes glaring at him from shadows in the closet.

Scruffles barks and charges into --

#### **INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles tears into the Phantom in the dark. Flashes of the specter chaotically reflect the nightlight. An UNHOLY SHRIEK emits through the darkness.

#### **INT. BABY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles turns back to the closet door and nudges it shut with his snout, a decaying humanoid bone clenched firmly in his jaws (which we may or may not see yet).

THE BABY CRIES.

Scruffles spins around to see the crib.

Tina and Maddie slip into the bedroom and glare at Scruffles.

TINA

Good job, Mr. Scruffles!

Tina takes the baby out of the crib and tries to rock her back to sleep in her arms. It doesn't work.

TINA  
(without looking at him)  
Bad dog! I told you to stay  
downstairs! I'm so dead.

Tina carries the baby out into the hall; her FOOTSTEPS FADE OUT as she heads downstairs.

Mr. Scruffles turns back toward the closet, but all is quiet. He heads out into --

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles follows Tina down the hallway, down the stairs to --

**INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS**

Scruffles follows Tina toward the living room.

TINA  
I can't believe this damn dog!

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Tina rocks the baby while Maddie plays on her phone.

MADDIE  
(ignoring her)  
Why? What did he do?

TINA  
Uh, hello? He woke the baby. And  
left doll parts all over the  
freaking house!

MADDIE  
Right, that.

Maddie glances at Scruffles.

MADDIE  
Well, at least he got you a  
birthday present, huh?

TINA  
Present...?

Tina looks at Scruffles; her face fills with concern.

Mr. Scruffles turns back to the mirror and sees his reflection -- ashes, dust, and dirt cover his mouth, and a decaying humanoid bone is clenched between his jaws.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

SCRUFFLES BARKS.

**THE END**