

COD 36 SCENE 2 (RL)

INT. OWL MAN OPENS THE BASEMENT DOOR—SLOWLY—GUN IN HAND. HERON MAN TAKES THE LEAD, GUN IN HAND. HERON MAN FLICKS THE BASEMENT LIGHT SWITCH. NOTHING. THE BIRD MEN BEGIN THEIR DESCENT INTO THE DARKNESS.

(cont'd)

HERON MAN

Something's not right, Owl.

OWL MAN

Of course not, Heron. If everything was all right, time would just stop. You know as well as I do that it is something not right that keeps the next happening, thus the so-called flow of time in the direction of time's arrow. It's not really a flow but a jumping from next to next like steppingstones.

HERON MAN

This is hardly the time for philosophy, Owl. I'm talking about the here and now. The stairs are not squeaking. In all horror flicks, the stairs to the basement squeak ominously. And there is no ominous music. Where's the soundtrack? Shouldn't we have brought a flashlight?

OWL MAN

No, no flashlight. It's known in the business as a complication, something that pulls the characters into greater difficulties. Enhances the drama, that sort of thing.

HERON MAN

I'm not hearing any shuffle. Do you? How do we get horror film sounds in this script?

OWL MAN

Not our job, Heron. We just do what we

are written to do. Sounds are added later. So, watch your step.

HERON MAN

Owl! You hear that? That's no sound effect. Someone or something is down here stomping! Yikes!

OWL MAN

Relax, Heron. It's very likely only a plot twist, though how twisted it might be remains to be seen.

INT. HERON CONTINUES DOWN THE STAIRS WITH OWL CLOSE BEHIND. THEY REACH THE BASEMENT FLOOR. THE SOUND CONTINUES, LOUDER AND LOUDER. SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS GO ON.

(cont'd)

HERON MAN

Can't be, Owl. There is nothing there! No! There's the sound again. Just the sound. You hear it, Owl?

OWL MAN

Of course, I hear it, Heron. It's the best kind of plot twist. Nothing to see but just the sound of something invisible. Now we wait.

HERON MAN

Not me, Owl, I'm going up. You can stay if you want, but I've had enough!

INT. HERON RUNS UP THE STAIRS TWO AT A TIME. WHEN HE REACHES THE DOOR, HE FINDS IT CLOSED AND IT WON'T OPEN.

(cont'd)

HERON MAN

OWL! The door's locked. No one answers!

OWL MAN

Of course not, Heron. It's called a compound twist. Just when you get set off by the first twist, another compounds

the danger. Think of it as a lesson in narrative, Heron.

Heron sits down on the top step of the stairway. Owl Man decides to explore the basement.

(cont'd)

OWL MAN

Heron Man! There is a lull. No sound, no figures, or monsters. It's time to take in the setting. You can see only an ordinary stairway, an ordinary basement, all ordinary. No need for making the setting a horror. Much better for the horror, if there is to be horror, to come out of the ordinary. This is a good lesson, Heron Man.

HERON MAN

So, this lull is all a part of making the ordinary creepier, without there being anything obviously creepy at all.

OWL MAN

It's a master stroke, Heron. It defines what writers call *tone*.

As Owl Man continues in his lecture and teaching mode, about to go into further elaboration of *tone*, the lights go out and the bird brains, as Fex would call them, hear a frightful, deafening scream. *Tone* indeed!