

# STOP THE DEATHTRAP, I WANT TO GET OFF!

a  
satirical short script  
by  
Don Guarisco,  
with buckets of gore  
and four Stupid Plot Twists™

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INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

A dazed WOMAN's eyes snap open. She looks down and sees she is locked in an elaborate mechanized chair. She SCREAMS!

THE JESTER (O.S.)  
Good evening. I have a riddle for you.

She looks over and sees a dusty old t.v. nearby flicker. It shows a person in a hat with bells and a silly attempt at a creepy mask. This is THE JESTER.

THE JESTER (CONT'D)  
For all your life, you've traded on your looks. You treat others with cruelty and care only for yourself. You do not appreciate the gift you have been given.

WOMAN  
I can change. Just let me go. Please!

THE JESTER  
First, you must play a game. Beautify yourself by styling your hair and painting your face. If you can do so in 60 seconds, you will be freed.

WOMAN  
But I can't move my hands! And what will I use?

The cuffs binding her wrists snap loose as two tables pop up from the floor on either side of the chair.

THE JESTER  
On your left is makeup. The rouge and lipstick contain flesh-eating bacteria.

Said makeup is marked with "BIOHAZARD" and "POISON" labels.

THE JESTER (CONT'D)  
On your right are hairstyling tools. They have been modified to aid your task.

The brush has razor blades where bristles should be. She touches the hairdryer: a jet of flame shoots out the nozzle!

WOMAN  
But my looks are my fortune! I can't!

THE JESTER  
This is your riddle. Do you choose beauty or do you choose life?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Woman screams again! Her screaming mouth fills the frame as the image suddenly pauses in a freeze-frame.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PODCAST STUDIO - NIGHT

The image of the screaming woman is paused on a flat-screen monitor. The view widens to reveal CHAS, an early 20's horror fan and the host of the show.

CHAS

And that was a scene from KILLING JOKE 7, yet another installment in the adventures of a psychopath who teaches people valuable life lessons by mutilating them. Let's have a quick round of opinions from our esteemed panel. Mike?

Pan over to MIKE, who wears a T-Rex t-shirt.

MIKE

I can't believe they've gotten seven films out of this bullshit. I give it a severed thumb down. Over to you, Rick.

Pan over to Rick: he's geek-chic with his horn-rim glasses.

RICK

Some people call these flicks "torture porn." I'd like 'em more if they'd just focus on carnage. The cardboard characters and incoherent "plot" are the real torture here. I'll trade the thumb for a middle finger. Your turn, Steve.

Pan over to Steve, who has rockabilly hair and tattoos.

STEVE

I'm gonna buck the trend and give this film a thumb's up - right up each of the filmmaker's asses. Seriously, fuck this movie. Fuck it with a chainsaw.

Back to a shot of Chas, who smiles out at the viewers.

CHAS

As always, Steve sums it up with eloquence. It's time to shut the coffin door on this series. And nail it shut. Then set it on fire. Good night.

CUT TO:

## INT. JESTER'S LAIR - NIGHT

The identical image of Chas from the previous scene gets freeze-framed on a computer monitor. This is done by The Jester, who wears his customary silly hat and mask combo.

## THE JESTER

Critics... as useless as eunuchs at a gangbang. Perhaps I can give them a scenario they will find challenging...

The Jester turns to another computer in his lair, which is as grey and dirty as a torture-master's lair is supposed to be. On the computer is an invitation on a word-processor program.

## ANGLE ON THE COMPUTER

as the Jester's fingers CLICK away at the keys. The top reads "You are cordially invited to a special sneak preview."

DISSOLVE TO:

## EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

The invitation in printed form fills the frame. Chas's hand holds it aloft.

## CHAS

I guess this is it.

The invitation is lowered, revealing a hole-in-the-wall video shop amidst a bunch of abandoned storefronts in the distance. Chas steps into frame, subtly scowling.

## CHAS (CONT'D)

Wow, they really went all-out. I wonder if they'll have gift bags, too?

He walks toward the video shop, followed by Mike, Rick and Steve. They all mumble with discontent.

## THE GUYS

Why can't they rent a theater... cheap assholes... this gets worse every year...

## INT. VIDEO SHOP - DAY - CONT.

Chas enters the shop first, followed by the others. Dusty VHS tapes are stacked to the ceiling on all sides. Behind the counter, the screen of a cheap t.v. flickers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAS

Jesus, it's like their trying to bait us into giving the movie a shitty review.

Suddenly, the Jester appears on the t.v. screen.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

Good evening, gentlemen.

Steve is at the back of the group. He shakes his head.

STEVE

Fuck this. One KILLING JOKE movie per year is enough for me. I'm out.

He turns to grab the doorknob - it's locked! A metal shed door lowers over the front of the store, blocking its window. Steve looks back at the others. Rick rolls his eyes.

RICK

Let me guess, now "laughing boy" is going to give us a riddle.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

Sarcasm won't help you, Rick. I suggest you save your strength. Get some rest.

On cue, colored gas shoots out of the overhead air vents.

MIKE

They are really leaving no cliché unturned. Let's give 'em a big hand.

The four start to mock-clap and laugh as the colored smoke overwhelms them. Rick is the first to lose consciousness.

RICK

This is so... contrived...

The next to pass out is Steve.

STEVE

Who gets this sensitive... about a bad review...

Steve falls next to Mike, who is starting to swoon.

MIKE

At least they knocked us out... before the movie started...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As he falls, Chas is the last man standing. His knees buckle as he leans back against a shelf of videos. He sees two MEN IN CLOWN MASKS emerge from the gas!

CHAS

Of all the movies to die in... why did it have to be a goddamn KILLING JOKE sequel?

He falls to the ground as the frame goes dark...

CUT TO:

INT. TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Chas comes out of unconsciousness and looks around the room with bleary eyes. What he sees horrifies him...

A WIDER ANGLE

reveals he, Rick, Mike and Steve are in the Jester's dank, dirty torture chamber! Each is strapped to a chair with a ridiculously elaborate torture apparatus attached to it.

CHAS

(panic rising in his voice)  
Guys... wake up!

Mike awakens and flinches when he sees his own trap. Rick's eyes open and he shakes his head when he sees it.

RICK

Don't tell me the Jester has a copycat.  
What kind of mouth-breather actually  
thinks this shit is cool?

Mike looks over to Steve, who is still dozing.

MIKE

Steve... STEVE!!!

Steve stirs reluctantly, slowly opening his eyes. His stare registers shock when they're open and he shuts them again.

STEVE

Okay. I'm clearly in a bad horror movie  
so this is the part where I think I woke  
up but I'm still in a nightmare. If I  
open my eyes now, I'll wake up in bed.

He opens his eyes - no dice. Still in the torture chamber.

STEVE

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Jester has his arms folded on the t.v. screen, getting impatient with this lot.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
That's enough low comedy, gentlemen. You have bigger concerns at the moment.

The four critics look up, giving the screen their attention.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
None of you have ever made a feature film, much less had a hit at the box office seven times in a row, yet you feel you have the right to judge what plays at the multiplex. You are wrong. The Jester is real and tonight you will face one of his riddles.

Rick leans over to Chas, mumbling out the side of his mouth.

RICK  
Only assholes talk about themselves in the third person.

Suddenly, a wire rigged to Rick's chair sends a nasty, short shock through his chair. He SCREAMS and shudders as the blue electricity forces him bolt-upright in his seat.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
You aren't on your podcast, gentlemen. This is no laughing matter.

The four critics exchange looks of genuine fear. Playtime is over. A beat of silence, then Chas addresses the screen.

CHAS  
Okay, you've got our attention. What's your game?

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
No games. Just a riddle: what is worth more to you, your frivolous opinions or your lives? Each of you will answer the riddle through a task I have set up for each of you. Rick, you will go first.

Various levels of fear flicker through Rick's expression as he listens to the Jester.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
You have said watching an installment of KILLING JOKE is as painful as having metal spikes driven through your head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

At this point, two spring-loaded spike guns emerge from the sides of his chair, both aimed at his head.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
You might find out how that actually feels tonight. You can save yourself from this fate by reading a prepared statement that explains how foolish your earlier statements were.

RICK  
And where is it?

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
It has been sewn into the skin under your throat. Before you are two fish-hooks you can use to tear it out. You have sixty seconds to do so. Are you ready?

Rick pauses for a moment. The others look at him fearfully.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
Time is wasting, Rick. Are you ready?

A switch flips in Rick's mind as his expression changes from fear to calm defiance.

RICK  
You know what? You can go fuck yourself.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
Excuse me?

RICK  
You heard me. Look, I know how your deals work because they always play out the same way. Either a victim dies horribly while shrieking and begging for mercy or they mutilate themselves to survive and become one of your demented lackeys. I'm not doing either. So go fuck yourself.

For once, the Jester doesn't have a comeback ready.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
Ummm... do you, uh, really value your life so little?

RICK  
Living in a world where your movies rule the horror genre isn't living. Pull the trigger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
Hmph... as you wish.

With that, the guns fire their spikes through Rick's head. He winces, then smiles as he lets out his dying breath.

RICK  
Free at last...

On the screen, The Jester folds his arms in a frustrated manner. The other critics look stunned but not sad or afraid. In fact, they look kind of inspired.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
I hope the rest of you aren't as foolishly defiant. You are next, Mike.

Mike looks up, a hint of cynicism in his gaze.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)  
You take excessive pride in your ability as wordsmith, dismissing an entire film with a few strokes of the keys. Tonight, you will get to use those abilities.

MIKE  
You're pretty wordy, yourself. Can we pick up the pace a little?

A light shines down on a computer setup in front of Mike. His arms are bolted to it via two sets of clamps that pin his arm to the computer table.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
No need to be rude, Mike. As you can see your arms are bolted to a table with a computer. You must write a 500-word essay about why the KILLING JOKE films are one of the great horror series. You have sixty seconds.

MIKE  
Oh, come on! 500 words in 60 seconds? See, this is why you piss intelligent people off. You pretend to give your victims a choice and then you make the non-death choice impossible!

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
Someone motivated by a love for life can do the impossible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MIKE

Aaah, bullsh\*t. This is just an elaborate justification for hacking people up. You're a goddamn hypocrite.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.)

SILENCE!!!

Everybody flinches when the Jester yells. Then they start to smirk as they exchange amused glances.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.) (CONT'D)

Ahem... as I was saying, you have 60 seconds. If you fail...

Huge cleaver blades pop up out of the table near of Mike's forearms. They cut small gashes in his arms. He yelps.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.) (CONT'D)

... then you lose the arms that wrote so many poisonous critiques. Are you ready?

MIKE

Start the clock, you blowhard.

A digital clock on the wall begins to count down from "60." Mike starts to feverishly type, brow furrowed with concentration. The others look on in suspense.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.)

Thirty seconds...

Mike continues to bang on the keyboard as the seconds tick down. He stops with a relieved smile as the clock runs out.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.) (CONT'D)

I will now show the room your work.

The critics see the screen's contents projected on the wall. They all bust out laughing because it is just the words "EAT SHIT" endlessly retyped into a 500-word paragraph.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.) (CONT'D)

How amusing. Enjoy the price of your little joke.

With that, the blades lop off the front half of Mike's arms at the mid-forearm level! The searing pain registers in his eyes but he continues to laugh defiantly.

THE JESTER (ON T. V.) (CONT'D)

Any final words from the class clown?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Mike uses his last bit of energy to lift what remains of his arms as they spurt blood through the air!

MIKE

Yeah... kiss my stumps, you asshole.

With that, he pitches face-first onto the keyboard, dead. On the screen, the Jester shakes his head.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

I've never met a group of victims so reluctant to embrace the gift of life.

CHAS

Maybe you've lost control of the scenario.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

Oh, I doubt it. Take a look at your friend, Steve.

At that second, Steve's chair rears back and becomes a table. He looks at the ceiling and sees several guillotine-style blades suspended over him.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)

You've often suggested that anyone involved in the making of the KILLING JOKE series should be drawn and quartered. If you look up, you will -

STEVE

Yeah, yeah, yeah. A blind man could see what you're getting at. Did anybody ever tell you that you're annoyingly literal?

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

This is not the time for criticism. If you want to live, you must get up. However, your skin is glued to the table with industrial adhesive in several places. There is also steel wire around your torso that must be removed by hand. You have sixty seconds to escape.

STEVE

Forget it, laughing boy. Just start the clock so we can get this over with.

The clock on the wall starts counting down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

You really can't be bothered to save your own life? Don't you value the beauty of-

STEVE

For Christ's sake, SHUT UP! This is my last minute so listen to me. If you're the evil genius you're pretending to be, you could go after the real villains of our time: corrupt politicians, dictators, ruthless industrialists, you name it. But who are you going after? Four film critics. We're not even professionals! This is why your movies suck. You have no imagination whatsoever!

The clock hits zero. The blades are launched for the ceiling, neatly dismembering Steve. One of his severed arms hits the floor near one of The Jester's cameras.

CLOSE ON THE SEVERED ARM

With it's final reflex-induced twitch, the hand at the end of the arm gives the camera "the finger" before going limp.

BACK TO SCENE

as The Jester glares down at Chas from his screen.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

I hope you're not a fool like your friends, Chas. Look deep inside and-

CHAS

Spare me the serial killer philosophy, Jester. What's the game?

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

Have it your way. You've said that seeing each KILLING JOKE sequel is like having your soul eaten away, piece by piece. I can provide a physical version of how that might feel.

A set of shower heads pops out of the ceiling.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.) (CONT'D)

The showerheads above you are connected to a multi-gallon supply of industrial solvents. They can strip the flesh and muscle from your bones in a matter of minutes. If you want to escape, you must-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chas' eyes are glazing over at the sound of this when he suddenly raises his arm to cut the Jester off.

CHAS  
Enough! Look, I can't do this anymore.

He removes the neck-collar and shackles that bind him to the chair. They just snap right off without keys! Shock slips into the Jester's tone as he sees this.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
Wha - how did you do that? Those are prison-strength shackles.

CHAS  
As I've learned from your movies, you're a fan of having stupid plot twists at the last minute. Here's one for you: You didn't trap us. We trapped you.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
That's impossible!

CHAS  
If you can break the rules of plausibility, so can we. We've devoted the last few years to giving you intensely nasty reviews just to draw you out. You fell right into our trap.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
But at what cost to you? All your friends are dead.

CHAS  
Or are they? Cue Stupid Plot Twist #2.

Rick stands up. He smiles at the camera as he walks over to where Mike is and pulls the spikes out of his head.

RICK  
Hi ya, shi thead.

Mike sits up as Rick hands him his severed arms - they snap back onto the stumps. The Jester shakes his head.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)  
This is not possible. No... this is obviously a dream sequence.

Mike points at the camera with his reattached arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

Wrong, Jester. This is reality invading your poorly-crafted snuff fantasies.

Mike and Rick start reattaching Steve's body parts. Chas picks up Steve's severed head.

CHAS

We had this whole thing worked out where we were going to fake being dead and come back to haunt you as ghosts but I couldn't go through with it.

(to Steve's severed head)

Sorry, pal.

STEVE

I don't blame you. This guy is just too fucking annoying.

Steve's headless body walks over and Chas reattaches the severed head to it. The Jester continues to freak out.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

But wait. You all sustained life-threatening injuries. It doesn't matter how unconvincing the plot is, you have to die. YOU HAVE TO DIE!

CHAS

Calm down, Jester. You can blame yourself for Stupid Plot Twist #3: the guys survived their murders because the constant stream of outrageous killings in your films made them numb to pain.

STEVE

You could say we are the monsters that you created.

CHAS

Exactly. And it's time for your reign of terror to end for good.

THE JESTER (ON T.V.)

Uh... that's impossible! I am controlling these traps from a, uh, secret location. Far across town. Yeah!

RICK

Liar! You don't have that much imagination. We know you're in the next room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

With that, the quartet exits the torture chamber.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The critics step into the hall. The two Men In Clown Masks are waiting at its end - #1 has a shotgun, #2 has an ax. They run towards the critics, who look on disbelief.

MIKE  
Jester, don't you know when to quit?

RICK  
Of course not. That's why he's remade the same movie six times.

#1 aims the shotgun at Mike, who plugs its barrels with two fingers. #2 swings his ax at Rick who just takes it away and breaks it over his knee.

RICK  
Are you gonna take your masks off or are we going to have to do it for you?

The Men in Clown Masks look at each other, shrug and remove the masks. Two schlubby WRITERS are revealed under them!

CHAS  
Who the hell are you two?

WRITER #1  
We're screenwriters. We did the last four sequels. Look, it was just a job.

WRITER #2  
We just did what the producers told us to do. Please don't kill us.

STEVE  
Oh, just get out of here. Go see if you can find some artistic integrity.

The Writers run away as the Critics head for a door at the end of the hall.

INT. JESTER'S LAIR - NIGHT

Chas throws open the door and the others follow him inside. The Jester whirls around with remote control in one hand.

THE JESTER  
You were right - this is the end... but we all go together. This room is rigged with explosives!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chas shakes his head and walks over as The Jester presses the button - nothing happens. Chas takes the remote and throws it on the floor.

CHAS  
No more sequels left in this franchise,  
Jester. You're finished.

He pulls the Jester's mask off. He looks quizzically at the killer's real identity.

CHAS (CONT'D)  
Wait a minute, you aren't the guy who  
usually plays the Jester.

THE PRODUCER  
Yeah, he wanted a raise so we fired him.  
I'm the producer.

Chas exchanges amazed smiles with the other critics. The Producer launches into damage-control mode.

THE PRODUCER (CONT'D)  
Look, you guys gotta calm down. I'm just  
a businessman. I give the fans what they  
want. That's not a crime!

CHAS  
Oh, yes it is. You're slowly killing the  
genre. And now you must pay.

The Producer cynically laughs at them.

THE PRODUCER  
Whaddaya gonna do, kill me because I make  
movies you don't like? Then you'll be  
the hypocrites. Do it! I dare you.

Chas looks back at his fellow critics. They smile and nod. Chas turns back to the Producer.

CHAS  
We're not going to kill you... but we are  
going to kill your profit margin.

With that he walks over to wall and give it a hard shove. *It falls away, revealing a theater audience full of PATRONS watching their every move.*

THE PRODUCER  
What the hell is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHAS

This is called breaking the fourth wall.

The audience watching them through the wall starts laughing at them.

RICK

Tell him about Stupid Plot Twist #4.

CHAS

I was just about to! You see, we didn't invade your movie. We wrote our own movie about the KILLING JOKE series. We have total control of this scenario - and its finale is the end of your career.

THE PRODUCER

That's impossible. I own the rights to the KILLING JOKE franchise. I'll sue each and every one of you!

MIKE

Forget it, That life is over. Now, you are just an obnoxious character in a satire of bad horror movies.

STEVE

This is our Killing Joke. And you're the punchline, asshole.

The Producer falls to his knees.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

On the screen, The Producer waves his fists at the ceiling as a title saying "THE END" is superimposed over him!

THE PRODUCER (ON MOVIE SCREEN)

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

His scream is drowned out by the hysterical laughter of the audience. The movie screen recedes into the distance...

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - DAY

... until we are out in the lobby. At that moment, TWO THEATER WORKERS close its doors.

FADE TO BLACK.