

DUNWICH

Created by A.J. Demers

10 x 1 hour horror/drama series

Evil lives here

Logline

When a pregnant police investigator becomes entangled in a murder investigation of a malformed boy she discovers her town is run by a demon cult bent on summoning a terrible evil.

Series Synopsis

Drenched in fog, tucked between centuries-old farms and a dense forest, sits the reclusive coastal town of Dunwich. A once thriving community, it stalled decades ago and no one seemed to notice. Abandoned houses line the streets. At the edge of town, a semi-private asylum tends to patients. A small college operates with barely any students. Just beneath the cracked veneer of respectability are horrors that will drive you insane. *DUNWICH* is shadowed and grey even in the light of day. Fear permeates every corner, slowly creeping up your spine, under your skin, to infest your mind. It's terror you cannot turn away from. Not false jump scares but relentless horror lurking just beyond the reach of your flashlight.

Arriving in the town where she was born, CLARE DUMONT, a pregnant police investigator, is drawn into an investigation of a bizarrely disfigured body. Solving the case will eventually lead her to the realization that the town is in the grips of an ancient cult bent on summoning extra-dimensional demons. Anyone in town is potentially corrupt. Dumont is constantly unsure who she can trust. Becoming obsessed with the case, Dumont finds herself at odds with her husband, Malcolm, who wants her to slow down for the sake of the baby. But as Dumont investigates, and explores her childhood that she barely remembers, she begins to suspect that her parents may have been involved in the cult. Encountering lunatics, amphibian half-men, squid-headed old gods, and other unknowable horrors pale in comparison to the dark secrets of Dumont's own birth and the fate of her unborn child.

This series will feature monsters, however, the regular villains will be human cultists performing twisted rituals, corrupting innocent citizens, and communing with dark forces. A strange glyph marked on your door. Unearthly chanting echoing. Stick men hanging in the forest. It will tighten a scaly tentacle around your ankle as you float in its dark waters.

Welcome to Dunwich

Core Characters

Senior Investigator Clare Dumont, 30 – Dumont is a rising star in the police force, intelligent and insightful with an uncanny ability to understand what some would call “evil”. After solving a string of incredibly challenging cases Dumont could choose any assignment she wanted. People were disappointed but not shocked when Dumont, newly pregnant, chose a quiet detachment near the town she where she was born: Dunwich. Dumont moved away when she was very young to live with an aunt. Now starting her own family, she and her handyman/ writer husband have move back to the farmhouse she inherited when her parents died in hopes to build a life away from the crime that Dumont can become obsessed with. When on a case Dumont can become haunted by the crime she is investigating. To protect herself, Clare has cultivated a cold professional detachment that many see as unfeeling but thinly hides the passion and compulsion that drive her work.

Officer Stanley Caulfield, 27 – Caulfield is a deputy in the Dunwich police force. He is a nervous officer that cares a lot about his hometown. For the last several years an uneasy feeling has growth in Caulfield that he can’t explain. It was this feeling and the fact that his superiors dismiss his instincts as fantasy that lead Caulfield to call Dumont in to help with this murder investigation. Caulfield’s father died when he was young leaving him to care for his destitute mother and a sister who is a resident of the Dunwich Hill Asylum.

Malcolm Dumont – Clare’s Husband. Malcolm is a handyman and an unpublished novelist. While not thrilled with the move to Clare’s family farm he is overjoyed at the idea of becoming a new dad. Happy to let Clare make the decisions Malcolm spends his time on odd jobs and writing. He will be more than happy to be a househusband when the baby arrives.

Arnold Mayweather, 45 – Police Chief of the town of Dunwich. A self-important bully with charm and a keen wit. Mayweather moves at a steady pace that some interpret as laziness. He’s been Dunwich’s chief since in his late 20’s when the former chief killed himself. Everyone in town respects Mayweather even if they don’t like him. To his friends he is a generous benefactor but to outsiders and people he doesn’t like he can be downright rude. His view of law and order is subjective but based on what is best for the town and its inhabitants.

Constance “Connie” Yen Mah, 65 – Local doctor. Connie is a grumpy, chain-smoking GP. She has over-seen every birth in the region for decades. Connie has an over developed interest in gossip and local business. Her office is often closed but when she is seeing patients she is quick to dismiss most health issues as meaningless complaining. Many of the locals prefer natural remedies and only risk a visit to Connie when it is a life or death situation.

Alice Armitage, 30’s – A PHD anthropology candidate studying the religion of the region. She is certain that the early settlers had a connection to ancient demon cult. Armitage spends time doing research and teaching the occasional class at Dunwich University in order to keep an office available to her. Armitage is an excellent academic, with a vast knowledge but many people assume she a drunk. Armitage likes to drink and get rowdy but she is well aware that her reputation means people underestimate her, which allows her to dig deep into the local history unimpeded.

Deputy Superintendent Inness, 50 – Dumont’s boss. Inness, commander of field operations, is a few ranks above Dumont. He watches out for Dumont because she is one of the best officers the Superintendent has ever worked with and hopes she will return to a detachment where her skills can be put to use.

Eamon Marsh, 40 - Head administrator and psychologist at the Oberlin U.H, a mental health facility just outside of town on a large estate. Set up early in the 20th century Oberlin is a semi-private facility that caters to the mentally ill. Marsh is intelligent, charismatic, and well respected. His family has lived in Dunwich for over a century making him an elder of the community. He is consulted on much of the town’s business. Marsh is the leader of the cult that has been attempting for generations to bring the OLD GODS into the world. For generations, his ancestors tried to raise the old gods through corrupting the pregnancies of local women. Marsh believes he is on the edge of success and will not allow outsiders jeopardize his plans. So, while he is outwardly pleasant he will not allow Dumont to interfere with his work. A master manipulator with extensive political influence Marsh will use any means to thwart Dumont but he cannot afford to be too aggressive or he risks attracting unwanted attention of the eve of his success.

Pilot Synopsis

Drenched in coastal fog, tucked between ancient farms, aging barns and a dense forest sits the town of Dunwich. Old brick buildings and large manor houses line reclusive streets. On a hill, a semi-private asylum treats patients. A small college operates with hardly any students. There’s a veneer of respectability but look between the cracks and the horrors you’ll see will drive you insane.

Expecting her first child, Detective Clare Dumont transfers from her high-pressure metropolitan assignment to a lead a rural state police division. Even before she and her husband, Malcolm, can move in to Clare’s inherited family home she is summoned by Deputy Stanley Caulfield to investigate a body washed up on the beach. At the scene Dumont takes control but before she can examine the body local police chief, Arnold Mayweather, claims jurisdiction and demands Dumont leave. Mayweather quickly declares the death a suicide.

At their new home, Dumont’s husband wants her to leave the case to other investigators and follow the doctor’s orders to take it easy. Dumont can’t. Something isn’t right and she is going to see it through. She is the only one she trusts. Dumont goes to talk to the man who found the body. Malcolm searches the home that Dumont hasn’t lives in since she was a small child. In the attic, he finds stacks of old books including her mother’s old journals.

In an attempt to smooth things over, Dumont suggests to Mayweather a joint investigation. Mayweather refuses, claiming the body was found inside the corporate limits of the township. Dumont plays hardball. The body was found on the beach. The beach is state jurisdiction. She claims the case, making an enemy of the Chief.

Dumont wants question the witness who found the body and finds him locked in a holding cell. She demands an explanation and is told the witness was found on the road raving and erratic.

He's not in his right mind. Dumont insists on interviewing the witness. The man floats in and out of lucidity but Dumont discovers that something was wrong with the body. Dumont presses him for details and the man attacks Dumont. As he is dragged away he screams at her "the greatest fear is the fear of the unknown."

Dumont has to see the body for herself. The town doesn't have a medical examiner so local doctor, Constance Yen Mah, is attending the body. Yen Mah isn't sure about the cause of death but is certain about one thing that this body isn't exactly what they found on the beach. Dumont recognizes the face of the boy from the scene. Yen Mah pull back the sheet to expose the body's lower half. It's been severed at the waist. The lower half is from a different corpse.

In the woods, several hooded figures gather around a large fire. Half a body is thrown on the pyre. Flames consume the legs that are covered in scales and two twisted vestigial fins.

First Season Arc

Over the first season Dumont will move into her second term of her pregnancy which will add more distractions and complications to her life as she attempt to investigate the case of the murder teen. Her insistence on pursuing the case will put her at odds with her husband who wants her to be on lower stress assignments for her blood pressure and the health of the baby. Dumont will find an ally in Deputy Caulfield, who went against the Chief's wishes, calling her in on the case. As the season progresses, Dumont will connect the initial murder with a bizarre and inhuman plan run by a cult that infests the town. The plan's dark purpose is to create a demon by twisting the pregnancies of local women.

Unfortunately for Dumont she will have no proof of the cult, only suspicions, rumors, and vague histories. Dumont will grow to distrust everyone in town except for Caulfield and a student, Alice Armitage, who helps her get information on the history of the cult. The doctor, Constance Yeh Mah, will be an uneasy friend to Dumont. As the woman who has overseen all the births in the area she is an obvious suspect and Dumont will find it hard to believe she could not be involved. But Yeh Mah, despite her aggressive attitude, will help Dumont advance the case making Yeh Mah's motives unclear to Dumont. Dumont will come to odds with the Chief, Eamon Marsh and even her mentor, Commissioner Inness, as she suspects the cult's influence is operating through all these individuals. At the end of the first season Dumont will have discovered that the body of the murdered teen was dumped by someone trying to draw attention to the cult's activities. She will also discover that her parents, locals of the area before they died, might have been involved in the cult's plans and that she, and her baby, might be corrupted.

Malcolm, Clare's husband, will grow distance from his wife. His constant struggle with her to stop working so hard (or at all) will lead to a serious strife between the couple. Dumont will suggest they look at their relationship but Malcolm won't hear of it. He will use the fact that Dumont will need him to help with the baby if she wants to continue to work as a counter argument to separation. Malcolm, overjoyed at being a father, will turns his energies to preparing the house for the new arrival and will establish growing friendships in the community of Dunwich. Dumont will fight against Malcolm connecting with the community but won't be able to tell him why without explaining her suspicions about a cult operating in town.

Deputy Caulfield's first suspicions of something wrong in his hometown will be confirmed. This will put him at odds with the Chief who will question his loyalty, as he gets closer to Dumont. Caulfield will work hard to stay in the loop in his police force to keep an eye on things for Dumont. When Dumont decides that a cult is behind the murder and has its influence throughout the town and the police force, Caulfield will begin questioning Dumont. While he is certain of a conspiracy, a supernatural explanation will be too much for him. This will put Caulfield on uneasy ground. Setting him up to doubt Dumont, be influenced by the Chief, and fill him with uncertainty if what he has done or is doing is right.

Chief Mayweather does not like Dumont. He does not like having his authority questioned and he does not like having the murder investigation taken away from him. During the first season, he will work against Dumont when he can and be unhelpful as a default. He will go over Dumont's head and complain to her superior, questioning both her ethics and her sanity when he can. Whether he is working against Dumont on his own or as a member of the cult will not be revealed in the first season but his motives will be constantly brought into question.

Eamon Marsh, the head of the cult, will work against Dumont at every opportunity. Unable to openly attack her for fear of exposing the cult he will work through agents, destroy information and killing witnesses. His main goal is to return Dunwich to the façade of respectability so the cult can continue their work towards power without attention. During the season, Marsh will realize that there is another cult at work that is opposing him and trying to take bolder moves to summon the Old Ones, (the demons), to bring about the end of the world. This will make him an ally of Dumont's at times as he tries to keep his activities a secret and root out the individuals that might destroy his plans. By the end of the first season he will realize that someone has successfully summoned creatures and he has a rival out to destroy him.

Web Integration

The main story of the series will be self-contained in the broadcast episodes. Elements from each episode will be enhanced by web-based content. The evidence that Dumont discovers during the season will be displayed in greater detail online consist of, but not be limited to, video evidence, archive footage of the town and its residence, crime scene photos, case logs, diaries, drawing, videotaped interviews with witnesses and suspects and surveillance footage. This second screen evidence will give fans who desire it an enhanced view of each episode and encourage them to construct their own theories of the crime and the cult's activities. A form-based section will allow audience to create an investigator identity and assemble their own case files while an open format blog will allow them to offer up theories. They will be able to share these files and blogs on the shows website and add other fans to their file creating a team of investigators, link pieces of online evidence, and draw conclusions. These files are meant, at the simplest, to be a forum for audience to explore their predictions but could extend to verge on fan fiction.