

Homage

by
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Current Revisions by
Kris Griffin, 21 May 2008

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EXT. BUSY STREET - DAYTIME

A pedestrianised street is clinically tidy with lots of people in white uniforms walking with intent. The shopfronts are all uniform with neon lighting and glass frontage.

An unidentifiable person is stood watching a television screen in one of the shop windows.

INT. TV STUDIO

A PRESENTER, 40 in a white suit, shirt and tie sits behind a news desk.

The words FILM TRANSGRESSION flash on the screen in red.

PRESENTER

FAFT - protecting the media against film transgression. We are the leading representative trade body that is committed to protecting the interest of the industry in the fight against piracy and illegal downloading.

The screen fades to a dull monochrome. A scene that looks a little like the station scene in the film Brief Encounter. The words NO COLOUR, NO 3-D, NO SENSES, NO REASON flash across the screen in red.

PRESENTER (CONT'D)

The studios want you to have the best time when you watch a film and they are committed to bringing you high quality entertainment.

The screen shows a group of people in a Cineplex obviously watching a film and having a great time and overplaying excited emotions.

PRESENTER (CONT'D)

Studios own distribution to films and only the movies showing at your local Cineplex are legal. Any other broadcast of film is illegal. Citizens found breaking this law will be punished - film transgressors are criminals. Contact our hotline on 1111-FAFT to report any film transgression you are aware of. Information received will be treated in the strictest confidence and positive identification will go towards your citizen points.

The screen fades to black - the hotline number is left for a few seconds and then fades.

Black screen.

VOICE OVER

Your nearest 3500 seat Cineplex is situated on the Goldman Entertainment Park. Currently showing the latest remake of Psycho in Glorious 3-D and Sense-A-Vision.

(in a quick quiet voice)
Glorious 3-D and Sense-A-Vision are registered trademarks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

PAIGE AUGUSTINE, 29, white, sits in a dated lounge circa 1990 watching The Odessa File on the television. Paige is wearing a white top, short white skirt, white tights and black pumps. She has 4 thick blue bands around her upper left arm. Paige is curled up on the sofa engrossed in the film.

A high pitched beep.

PAIGE

(talking aloud)

Hello.

She pauses.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Yes I'm at sanctuary, it's my night, where else would I be.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Of course I was careful, I always am. I'm a level 4. No one would suspect me. What's up?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

It has to be a routine check, there's no reason for anyone to suspect.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
Doc, I'm half way through Odessa,
it's my night, why now?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
OK OK. I'll come along and lock
up. I accept it's not worth
taking the risk but I want my
time credited next week.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
I realise. Fine. Okey dokey
doggie daddy. We're still meeting
up though yes?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
Aww c'mon, the law and justice
are two entirely different
matters and we aren't doing any
harm. I need to get my fix. I
need to see you guys.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
OK cool. Normal place in 2 hours
then, I suppose I should report
back into control first though?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)
(smiling)
I do take my responsibilities as
seriously as you, you know. You
do your job and let me do mine,
yes? Count the bands baby. See
you later.

Paige stands and stretches out, she waves her hand in the air and the TV switches off. She looks around and walks towards the door. She opens the door, flicks the light switch and walks out.

EXT. A STORAGE YARD - EVENING

Paige stands outside a large storage container, she closes the door she has just walked through carefully and waves her hand through the air.

A series of beeps.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Storage facility secure.

Paige looks around again and strides away into the darkness.

EXT. THE CORNER OF A LARGE BUILDING - 2 HOURS LATER

DR BILL BUTLER, 42, stands against the wall of the building. Orange street lamps give the area a dull light. He is dressed in white trousers, a white shirt and jacket and black pumps, he has 6 blue bands around the upper sleeve of his jacket. He is looking around nervously.

Paige walks towards him, staying in the shadow by the side of the building.

PAIGE
(loudly)
Hey Bill.

BILL
Keep it down. Keep it down.

PAIGE
(quietly)
Sorry Bill. No need to get so nervous - most lower levels are in bed. It's cool.

BILL
Well I like to be cautious. I saw you walking in the shadows, you're obviously concerned.

PAIGE
(nervously)
Yes well, after what you said on the com unit I was a little stirred.

BILL
Not shaken?

They both smile at each other.

PAIGE
Are Chico and Susi coming?

BILL
Of course, in fact they should be here by now, I did tell them it was urgent.

PAIGE

So why so urgent Doc, tell me,
they could be ages yet.

BILL

(nodding)

In a nutshell. I overheard a
conversation today at the
facility that indicated Cygnus
were going to have a major blitz
on anyone caught breaking their
laws.

PAIGE

So what's new, we've always known
there was a risk, but it's just
the 4 of us - nothing to fear is
there? Cygnus are after bigger
fish than us?

BILL

Paige, listen. Film transgression
is bigger now than it has been
for 10 years. The blackmarket is
slowly rising to street level
again and we are getting hold of
old film again. It totally
undermines what the studios are
selling us now.

PAIGE

Crap?

BILL

Crap, yes crap. But controlled
crap, profitable crap. You know
how it works.

PAIGE

Of course, but what's new this
time, we lie low for a few weeks
and it all blows over?

BILL

I'm not so sure a few weeks will
cut it this time. They were
saying this was to be the biggest
cull of transgressors since the
download wars.

PAIGE

(shocked)

Holy shit, bad times...

BILL
 (nonchalantly)
 I know, profit placed over many
 innocent lives.

Bill pause and takes a breath.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Do you still think I was worried
 over nothing? If they carry out
 the threat this is the end. We
 can't carry on, we can't risk our
 status or our lives.

PAIGE
 I don't know what to say...why
 now?

BILL
 Because people like us refuse to
 give in. We keep the dream alive
 in the hope that the studios will
 give in and we'll be free to view
 what we choose.

PAIGE
 (looking into Bill's
 eyes and saying softly)
 But only in their dreams can men
 be truly free. 'Twas always thus,
 and always thus will be.

Bill touches Paige's face and they both smile.

They hear footsteps and turn to the direction they are
 coming from.

FRANCISCO (CHICO) DAY, 30, and SUSI KRAUSE, 22, walk
 towards Paige and Bill from across the street. They are
 dressed identically to Paige and Bill only Chico has 3 blue
 stripes on his upper sleeve and Susi has 4.

BILL
 We didn't know if you were late,
 Chico, or the late Chico.

CHICO
 It's funny, you know. It's a good
 story, it's funny, you're a funny
 guy.

BILL
 (smiling)
 Ouch.
 (holds his chest in a
 comic gesture)
 You guys OK?

SUSI

Yeah pretty good thanks Doc. Hi
Paige

PAIGE

Hey babe, you OK?

SUSI

Pretty good thanks...before we
were disturbed. I didn't think
you'd be so happy, it's your
night. Did you get the same call
as us?

PAIGE

Don't you know it.

BILL

I've already explained to Paige
that we may have to split for a
time, things are getting heavy.
Cygnus are planning a huge blitz,
and I don't want us caught in the
middle.

CHICO

(shaking his head)

Not now man, please not now. It's
my time tomorrow. I picked up a
copy of Showgirls - Verhoevens
finest, and dropped it off at
sanctuary.

BILL

(urgently)

You came straight here?

CHICO

(confused)

Yeah.

BILL

How many times have I told you to
be careful, we could be in deep
deep shit right now.

The entire area is suddenly bathed in a deep white light.
Paige, Bill, Chico and Susi all put their hands to their
eyes.

A voice over a loud-hailer.

VOICE

You are suspected of film
transgression. You are required
to remove your bands.

(MORE)

VOICE (CONT'D)

You are required to kneel and lay
your hands flat on the ground.
You will then be neutralised
ready for processing.

CHICO

(looking around at the
others)

What are we supposed to do? We're
in some real deep shit now man.

The lights start to close in.

VOICE

Bands off. On your knees.

PAIGE

(head down and quietly)

No, we'll run, and we'll live.

She turns and sprints along the wall heading for a door.
The others look up and follow without thinking. SHOTS ring
out, a bullet catches Susi on the arm but she stays on her
feet and follows the others through the door.

VOICE

(loudly)

You have taken evasive action and
abandoned your rights. You are
guilty of film transgression and
compliance failure. You have been
identified. You are sentenced to
termination immediately.

INT - A LONG WELL LIT CORRIDOR

The group of 4 have run the length of the corridor and
reached the end, it splits left and right. Susi is bleeding
from the arm.

CHICO

(out of breath)

Which way? Which way?

SUSI

(looking at her arm)

I've been shot and I don't feel
great guys.

BILL

(quickly)

Susi, you'll be OK, the nano-tech
in your WhiteSuite will tend to
the wounds.

(he looks about)

I have no idea which way to go.

PAIGE

(pointing down the
corridor at bright
lights coming towards
them)

Right now I really don't think it
matters which way we go.

(shouting)

Run.

The group run together down several corridors, taking lefts and rights along the way in the hope of losing the trailing Cygnus robots.

They run down a long corridor for about 20 seconds and spot another junction.

SUSI

(out of breath and
panicing)

Another junction, which way? We
have to try and get out of here,
this is crazy.

BILL

You're right, we're going nowhere
fast.

As they approach the junction, dark shadows appear and a bright light shines at them.

CHICO

(shouting)

Turn back!

The group turn around and see in the distance a shadowy group with lights coming at them from the other direction.

PAIGE

Trapped, now what?

BILL

I have no idea but we can't give
up. Think.

Susi leans against the wall in pain and desperation, she slowly sinks down.

SUSI

Ouch, what the hell was that.

CHICO

What?

SUSI
 (feeling the wall)
 Something here, Chico help me
 pull it open.

PAIGE
 Guys whatever you are doing
 please make it fast and make it
 good - they're coming at us fast.

Chico and Susi pull at the wall and a slide panel opens,
 small but enough for a person to get into.

SUSI
 Look, look an opening.

CHICO
 A garbage chute - how ironic!

PAIGE
 Quit looking and get in, has to
 be better than here. Quickly!

Chico pushes Susi into the opening and she slides in and
 disappears. He grabs Paige and pushes her through too.

CHICO
 C'mon Bill - let's go.

SHOTS start to ring out and the lights get closer.

BILL
 Go Chico, I'm right behind you.
 Go. Go.

Chico dives through the opening.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

The white room is bare apart from some white sheets, a
 trolley, some wooden poles and a double door with a large
 lock. Susi and Paige are getting to their feet as a hatch
 opens above them and Chico drops through to the floor
 unceremoniously.

CHICO
 (dazed)
 Garbage chute eh?

PAIGE
 (shaking her head)
 Laundry. Is Bill behind you?

CHICO
 Yes, he was right after me.

They all look up to where the hatch opens.

SUSI
They can't get through?

PAIGE
No way, it was a squeeze for us,
those things will never make it.
We're safe for a bit.

They continue to stare up at the hatch.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
He should be here now.

SUSI
Something's wrong, I know it.

The hatch opens and a body hits the floor, covered in blood and unmoving.

PAIGE
(shouting)
Bill.

All three run to his side and kneel down beside him.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
It's me Doc, Paige, you've made
it. We're in a laundry room. Can
you hear me?

CHICO
C'mon man, wake up, c'mon. I
should never have left him. He's
hurt bad.

SUSI
But his suit, the nano-
tech...will it?

PAIGE
I have no idea, so many wounds.

She grabs his wrists and concentrates.

PAIGE (CONT'D)
He has a pulse.

SUSI
My wound is healed!

Susi rubs her arm.

PAIGE
(snapping)
Just one bullet Susi - this is a
little more serious.

CHICO
OK OK let's calm down a little.

Paige looks down towards Bill, she is cradling his head.
Looks up and shakes her head.

PAIGE
You're right. Let's secure what
we have. Check the doors and see
where we are.

SUSI
Isn't it kind of futile, they
identified us, we have no value
now. Why don't we give up and
take the chance?

PAIGE
That they don't kill us? Please.
There are places we can go, buy
new tags, start again. We have to
try.

CHICO
Paige is right, let's stay
positive.

Chico stands and goes over to the doors, unlocks them and
carefully looks outside. He closes the door carefully and
locks it again.

PAIGE
What we got?

CHICO
More corridors, I can't tell
where we are, no features,
nothing.

SUSI
All I've got are some sheets, a
trolley and some wooden poles.

The three look at each other for inspiration.

PAIGE
Nothing then.

Bill moves his hand and holds Paige.

BILL
(softly, in pain)
We have time.

PAIGE
Doc, how do you feel?

BILL
Pretty beat up but I can feel the
clothes working.

SUSI
(pacing and
interrupting)
Good. Good. Doc is OK. But Cygnus
will soon figure where we are. As
soon as we hit the corridors
they'll be on our trail. This is
futile.

BILL
Don't give up Susi, have hope,
always hope.

CHICO
Yeah come on we'll be fine. Be
positive, it'll work out.

SUSI
(getting angry)
It won't, we all know it. If we
give up now they may show us some
leniency, I can't see a point in
running or fighting.

BILL
(trying to sit up)
That's been the problem Susi, no
one has fought for many many
years. You're too young to
remember what happened and
remember the freedom we enjoyed.
When media had just begun to
dominate the many, the few
controlled all TV, radio,
newspapers and the web -
information was controlled and we
accepted it. The medium of film
was a strange one.
(he pauses and takes a
breath)

BILL (CONT'D)
We took distribution into our own
hands the studios started to lose
money.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

The quality of new films were so poor people stopped watching. They reverted to the old stuff - classics where plot and character development were king. The studios made no money from them and the battles ensued.

PAIGE

The studios took the distribution back and released the old films in limited periods?

BILL

Yes but all they created was a blackmarket - like with any product of a limited nature. They made the situation worse for themselves.

SUSI

(cutting in)

I know most of this!

CHICO

Let him speak.

BILL

Thanks Chico and there is a point to this Susi, I want to show why it's important that we fight and we don't accept things.

SUSI

Why, nothing has made sense so far.

BILL

This will make sense.

(pauses)

The troubled studios lobbied governments and took back power by restricting the rights on all films. They kept pushing until watching an older film became a criminal offence. It was all about money, the guys at the top kept getting richer and the media moguls retained control - the film viewing public became mindless zombies incapable of watching anything more than 110 minutes of fluff.

Bill stands and stretches his body - most of the blood has now disappeared.

BILL (CONT'D)

You are aware as our society developed, we started to work for status rather than money - our media habits became far more controllable. Less people fought, more people forgot. Film becomes a lost art. The endless amounts of different cultures and arts that we have lost over time through greed. Treasures never to be seen again. It's happening now, we are in the middle of it and are in danger of losing another artform: Seven Samurai, The Godfather, Taxi Driver, Dracula. If we don't fight they'll be lost along with everything else.

SUSI

There are others who will fight, we aren't in a position to.

BILL

Wrong, what if everyone says the same thing.

SUSI

(starting to cry)
But why is it down to us?

PAIGE

We put ourselves in this situation Susi. We believed in freedom and choice enough to create sanctuary, to watch what we wanted - we were strong enough then...

CHICO

Strong enough now? What will become of us. Things don't look so good.

Chico puts his arm around Susi and she rests her head upon him in comfort.

BILL

The most important thing is that we never give in. No matter what!

SUSI

(to Bill)
You're saying we should go to Australia aren't you?

INT. OUTSIDE THE BOXROOM DOOR

Machinery moves into position, spotlights search out every inch of the corridor. More machinery joins. The CLICKING sound of guns being readied is heard.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

CHICO

Australia is no better than here.

(smiling)

I don't want to hear another one of your ideas Bill.

BILL

(laughing)

Why am I always so damn smart?

PAIGE

Ok, Susi grab the poles.

Susi gets up and grabs 4 wooden poles. The group are all now standing and they take a pole each from Susi.

SUSI

(looking at the floor)

Since when did we become the banditos?

INT. OUTSIDE THE BOXROOM DOOR

More machinery arrives. All weaponry is now trained on the door.

VOICE

All units stand by. Take the door by explosive measures. Shoot to kill. Arm and comply!

The CLICKING of safety catches being taken off.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

The 4 are stood the other side of the door armed with wooden poles.

CHICO

(holding his wooden pole aloft)

For a moment there I thought we were in trouble.

PAIGE
I've got the door OK

CHICO
This is no time for bravery, I'll
tell ya!

They all start to laugh looking around at one another.

SUSI
Australia is no better than here
is it?

BILL
It may not be, at least we have
that choice to make. Australia
has a good climate, better than
the current climate anyway. The
trip has to be one we choose to
make not forced into.

SUSI
Don't you get sick of being right
all the time?

BILL
(sharply)
Do you want to make the trip?

PAIGE
I think we need to think about
it.

Paige unbolts the doors and pushes it open, all 4 step
through with their poles raised high.

The sounds of GUNFIRE.

Freeze frame of the moment before the 4 are cut down by
bullets

Fade to sepia.

THE END

Postscript

*References to characters, names, situations and lines in
this script are intentional. It's a Homage. There are more
than you think.*

KG