

Ghosts With Shit Jobs

By

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EXT. STREET

A close-up of Oscar, a 30something man wearing an orange jumpsuit.

OSCAR
Oh, there's lots of great things
about this job... for me.

EXT. STREET

Oscar is walking along the busy street, sticking out in his jumpsuit. He's got a brush shaped implement in his hand.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
I mean, I'm pretty shy? So
normally, I'd never go out in
public dressed up like this.

EXT. STREET

Close up on his face again.

OSCAR
But, you know, it's the uniform.
So... (shrugs and smiles nervously)

Title: The Pixelator

EXT. STREET

There's a couple of people who are watching a TV in a store window. He walks in front of them, and brushes the screen so the image becomes pixelated. The people keep watching it. and he walks off.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
In general I'm a lot more at ease
around people then when I was a
teenager. I think the job has a lot
to do with it.

INT. RESTAURANT

A couple of people are trying to decide what to order. Oscar leans in with his brush and pixelates some beer labels.

EXT. STREET

Oscar is working on a newspaper box when someone buys one. He spots a logo on his clothes and follows him to pixelate it out as the man walks off, unaware of him.

EXT. STREET

Medium shot of Oscar.

OSCAR

The other great thing is just the history aspect. It was always my favourite subject at school.

EXT. BRIDGE OVERLOOKING DVP

Oscar is marveling at the stream of cars at rush hour.

OSCAR

(v.o.)

Just thinking about how they used to live... it's one thing seeing a car in a museum, and it's another seeing a line of cars stretching as far as the eye can see.

EXT. STREET

Close up, his face animated in amazement.

OSCAR

So many cars at once they can barely move! That's not something you get from history books.

INT. CAFE

Oscar walks around a cafe and points out a guy working on his laptop.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR

Like, it's such a snapshot of the last days of an era. Like this guy's writing poetry. Middle of the day, just sipping coffee imported from Africa, writing poetry. Just incredible.

INT. TOYSTORE

Oscar is looking at a particular toy on the shelf in the store, a smile on his face.

OSCAR

(v.o.)

And there's a bit of nostalgia for me, since I was a kid then. So every so often I'll come across something I remember, which is nice.

He gets back to work, brushing all the boxes on the shelves at once.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

Oscar's workroom is a weirdly empty space except for a rigged up treadmill and the chair he's in. He shuffles a wooden cylinder from hand to hand. We don't see the documentarian.

DOCUMENTARIAN

When you were a kid, did you ever think you would grow up to be a digital janitor?

Oscar is a little taken aback by this.

OSCAR

I, I don't really think of what I do as being like a janitor. I'm not cleaning up dirt, I'm pixelating copywritten materials, I think there's a bit of a difference there. I know that the point of your show is white people with horrible jobs and stuff, but I think of it more like, like working in a living museum.

You'll probably edit that part out.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

No, how you perceive your job is very interesting.

This makes Oscar very self-conscious. He licks his lips.

DOCUMENTARIAN (cont'd)

So there's nothing you dislike about your job?

Oscar laughs.

OSCAR

Oh god, no, there's lots I hate about the job.

EXT. STREET

A woman knocks him into the way of another passerby, who flattens him.

OSCAR

(v.o.)

Just recently, they made the job a whole lot harder by implementing collision detection.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

A class lets out and a crowd of people surge into the hallway. Oscar, with panic in his eyes, carefully weaves through them as they wash by.

OSCAR

(v.o.)

I've gotten better at dealing with it, but it was so much easier to do the job when I could walk through everything.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

OSCAR

I know it sounds pretty slapsticky, but...

He pulls off his shirt to reveal heavy bruising.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR (cont'd)
It doesn't feel that funny.

INT. RESTAURANT

He waits patiently for a couple as they pay and get their jackets, and then scoots out behind them.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
And there's definitely limits to
how much you can manipulate the
objects. Doors are still buggy.

EXT. STREET

Long shot of Oscar standing on something like a newspaper box.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
And I know it's good for immersion
to be able to sit on benches and
stuff but I don't do a lot of
sitting in my job.

A couple stop for a light and Oscar gets on their shoulders.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
I don't do this too often, but
if someone's going my way I'll
catch a ride.

Continued shot of Oscar riding the person. Oscar's got an indifferent, somewhat pensive face and he puts his brush on the guys head.

DOCUMENTARIAN
(v.o.)
That seems like fun.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

Tight shot of a box of worn out shoes, marked "Made In Surrey".

OSCAR
(v.o.)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR (cont'd)
It's mostly just to save my feet.
I'm generally walking for 11-12
hours a day.

EXT. STREET

There's a longshot of Oscar doing a street, with a time lapse speeding him up and the hours ticking away.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
I should be able to do my quota in
8...

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

He scuffs the treadmill with his foot.

OSCAR
...but I'm kind of slow.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Do you think you'd get ahead in
life if you were a bit more
diligent?

Oscar rubs his eyes, yawns.

OSCAR
I guess. I dunno. Do you mind if we
call it a night?

DOCUMENTARIAN
Of course not. Just let me know
when you'd like to resume.

A time lapse in nightvision of Oscar pulling out his sleeping mat out of the closet and setting up the room for sleep. Lots of tossing and turning. He wakes up and rolls his sleeping mat up and then addresses the camera.

OSCAR
Good morning. Well, it probably
isn't morning where you are.

DOCUMENTARIAN
It isn't, but I've changed my sleep
schedule for this project.

He pulls on his jacket and jams two nose filters in.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR

Huh. Well, I'm going to grab
breakfast. You coming or staying?

EXT. STREETS 2040

The POV follows Oscar through the Toronto slums. Ramshackle
alleys populated with people contrast with the vibrance of
Toronto main streets in 2020.

OSCAR

Do you find this shocking?

DOCUMENTARIAN

A little bit. But I've seen
pictures. It's not as bad as
Zurich.

OSCAR

Yeah, there's always somewhere
worse.

At some point in their journey there's a quick glimpse of
the blackened stub of the C.N. Tower covered with giant
silvery spider webs.

INT. CHINESE CANADIAN BREAKFAST JOINT

Oscar looks at the menu, but shoot little glances over at
Linda, the waitress and owner. The place is pretty busy.

LINDA

Hey Oscar, the usual?

OSCAR

Yes please.

LINDA

Turnip cakes for the turnip head!

She rubs his head and speeds off. Oscar laughs, the smile
lingering. He glances at the camera.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Are you self-conscious about the
shape of your head?

OSCAR

I don't care if it means she rubs
my head.

(CONTINUED)

She comes back with a plate of turnip cakes. As she sets them down she notices the camera.

LINDA

What are you doing with that, Oscar? Bling-a-ling! What the hell do you need a Flyonnawall cam for?

OSCAR

It's not mine. It's this documentary maker guy from Zhong Guo.

Her face immediately goes wary.

OSCAR (cont'd)

These are great, as usual, Linda.

LINDA

(keeping an eye on the camera)
Thanks, Oscar.

She leaves. The POV reveals that there's not many white people in the restaurant.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you eat here every day? This seems like a kind of expensive place for you.

OSCAR

Yeah. I helped her renovate the place before it opened, and so now... (gestures at the food)

DOCUMENTARIAN

So it's kind of an underground barter economy.

OSCAR

Um... I don't know. It's not illegal. Like, my mom and her mom were friends.

Oscar finishes, buses his own table, waves goodbye to Linda.

He gets his jacket, puts in his nostril filters, waits for someone else to leave and then walks behind them. They are a little bemused by this, but don't make a fuss.

The documentarian follows. Oscar is shaking his head and laughing at himself.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR (cont'd)
I'm such a spacecase.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Does your work often bleed into
your real life?

OSCAR
I wouldn't say often, but...
actually it was worse before,
because I would run into doors
thinking I could walk through them.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

Oscar is in his work jumpsuit.

OSCAR
Sure. So the suit, of course,
tracks my motions.

Does some motions. Holds up a wooden cylinder.

OSCAR (cont'd)
And my brush proxy.

He bounces up and down on his treadmill.

OSCAR (cont'd)
You need something to simulate
walking. Some guys use glider
shoes, but they're a lot harder to
maintain. You need a special tool
to replace the beads. With this one
you just need to keep it oiled. And
I think that's about it...

He thinks about it for a second.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Oh, and of course, the SeePYou
spray.

A shot of him spraying a mist into his eyes.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Do I need to do anything special to
allow you to connect? Oh, I see...

He pushes a button in the air.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR (cont'd)
(muttering to himself)
Yes, I would.

The perspective is now Oscar's. We see the dialogue box asking "Would you like to share your connection with [Chinese characters]?" for a second with the Yes lit up.

Then the blank room is gradually filled in by the other world.

A box comes up: 45 billboards. Oscar groans.

EXT. ROOFTOP

Oscar is working on a billboard.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
Well, I don't hate billboards...
well actually I kinda do. (laughs)
The reason is that they're so big
and they take so long.

EXT. ROOFTOP

He's climbing awkwardly to get to a billboard.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
And they're always in awkward
places. And you're doing them all
day, usually, someone's bought a
whole slate of ads.

EXT. ROOFTOP

He's walking away from a pixellated billboard and a new billboard for a Chinese product flickers in.

OSCAR
(v.o.)
And soon as you're done a new ad
comes in, usually for some mainland
thing I don't understand.

EXT. ROOFTOP

He's been set up by the documentarian in a nice shot against the skyline.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you resent that it's a Chinese ad?

He's taken aback by this.

OSCAR

Well, no... it's just that I spend the better part of an hour pixellating something, and then, bam, all that work's undone. It feels kind of pointless.

DOCUMENTARIAN

So it wouldn't feel better if it was in English.

OSCAR

No, I mean... if anything it makes me wish I'd paid more attention in my Mandarin classes, instead of just, daydreaming.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you feel like not knowing any languages has held you back?

Oscar shrugs, but there's a flicker of regret.

OSCAR

I should probably get back to it. I'm pretty behind.

EXT. BUNCH OF DIFFERENT BILLBOARD SPOTS

The tape is sped up as Oscar does billboard after billboard.

The light is fading.

And then, from a high billboard, the perspective shifts to Oscar's POV. He's very shaky, and then he falls.

The perspective shifts to a long shot of him falling, for maximum dramatic effect. Fade to black.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM

Oscar is flat on his back in his jumpsuit. He makes a few gestures with his hands, to turn off the other world, and then sits up.

OSCAR

Wow. I hate when that happens.

He gets up. He's in shock, still holding the wooden brush proxy. He feels at his nose. He's acting like he's just been punched.

INT. CLINIC

The camera flies in and settles near Oscar and the Asian Doctor, who don't seem to notice it. There are posters on the wall about how to prevent the Texas Flu that feature a microbe with a ten gallon hat.

He examines his eardrums.

DOCTOR

And how long did you have the ringing for this time?

OSCAR

About ten minutes after the fall?

DOCTOR

And how long were you in-world for at that point when you started feeling dizzy?

OSCAR

Seven or eight hours?

DOCTOR

(sternly)

And you're using the dampeners.

OSCAR

Oh yeah. Of course.

DOCTOR

Because you're bleeding internally.

OSCAR

Oh. Well, it's not as bad as last time. Maybe they're running low on power.

The doctor sighs and gets a bag of silver coins from a drawer and tosses it at him.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL

Oscar is walking down the stairs.

OSCAR

I mean, you have to check in with the company doctor after any in-world incident, so I try to make it worth my while.

He tosses up his bag of coins.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What are they?

OSCAR

You guys probably have better medicine. They're neuromagnets. (He holds one to his temple) Keeps your chi stable, prevents nausea, bloody noses... They're required for the job, but they're super-expensive. I used them when Mom was still alive, but these days I just go magless.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Isn't that dangerous?

INT. VARIETY STORE

Oscar is trading in one of the neuromagnets for a bunch of groceries, ramen, snacks and beer. He looks happy but a little nervous. The owner tests it, first by holding it to his temple, and then by putting it in a box. Finally he nods and Oscar leaves.

OSCAR

(v.o.)

A little, but... it costs about a week's pay for a month's worth of them. And on one salary I can't really afford it. So I trade 'em in for another kind of dampener. Lasts longer that way.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM. NIGHT

Oscar has put on some music and lit a candle. He cracks a beer.

OSCAR
Do you have a beer there?

DOCUMENTARIAN
Yes. You are a good host.

OSCAR
[thanks him in mandarin]

DOCUMENTARIAN
Your accent is very good!

Oscar shakes his head and denies it.

DOCUMENTARIAN (cont'd)
No, I'm not being false. Most people mess up the tones.

OSCAR
My mom taught me a few words. She was taking it from Mrs. Wong, Linda's mom.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Did she plan to move to Asia?

Oscar laughs at this.

OSCAR
Mom? Mom wouldn't move down the block! No, she thought she might get a job at a call centre or telemarketer. Something that paid a bit better. But she also just liked it.

He smiles in reminiscence, his eyes off to the side.

OSCAR (cont'd)
She was always like, you should come, Julie can teach me and Linda can teach you!

The tape speeds up and the bottles pile up.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Would you be willing to talk about your mother?

(CONTINUED)

Oscar looks conflicted. He wants to please, but the emotions are intense.

DOCUMENTARIAN (cont'd)
When did she die?

OSCAR
A year and a bit ago.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Do you miss her?

OSCAR
(his voice pleading)
Can we, can we, do you mind if we
talk about something else?

Fade to black.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Oscar is looking bleary eyed but happy today.

OSCAR
OK, it's looking good. Mostly
street duty today.

He notices a person with groceries going into a house.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Food packaging always has a lot of
licensed material.

He scoots behind them and enters the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT

Two young roommates are chatting, unaware of Oscar or the camera. Oscar quickly goes about his business pixellating.

HILLARY
And I was like, you are so racist
or whatever.

GERALDINE
Genderist.

HILLARY
Exactly! I can't take my dad
anywhere. "What'd you expect Dad,
this is a trannie bar! If you're so
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HILLARY (cont'd)
specific about who sucks your dick
then tweet a hooker to order!"

Everybody laughs, including Oscar.

OSCAR
Geez, what a tight ass!

He looks at the camera as they continue talking over him.

OSCAR (cont'd)
It's hard to get the timing right.
It's better if I get into their
line of sight, feels more normal.

He puts himself in the line of sight and responds to something she's said.

Then he notices a doodleface out the window.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Oh, shit. Doodleface.

Oscar immediately runs for it. The camera POV follows quickly behind him.

A chase ensues. Oscar is very cautious when crossing the road, but otherwise is running full tilt towards someone.

The POV loses him for a bit, but then catches up to him as he catches up to the doodleface.

The doodleface is just a normal looking person except that there's a little doodled cartoon face superimposed on their face. They're walking along the street with a friend.

Oscar turns the brush in his hand and it becomes a spraycan. He sprays the face and the doodle dissolves.

DOCUMENTARIAN
What're you doing?

OSCAR
Every so often some hacker graffiti
gets loose in the system. This
wasn't that big a deal but
sometimes it's really virulent and
it spreads so fast a whole sector
needs to be wiped.

Now that the adrenaline has worn off, Oscar needs to sit down.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

And all this is lost?

OSCAR

Oh no. No, just the changes I've made since that last save, the pixelmaps I've laid down.

He shakes the can and it becomes a brush again. He's got his wind back.

OSCAR (cont'd)

OK. I think I can get one of the billboards done before the end of the day.

He pulls himself up and the next few shots are at the end of the day.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What's the worst part of your job?

He's climbing a fire escape to get to a billboard. Light is failing.

OSCAR

It's kind of hard to say. It's also the best part of the job. I like working on my own. But...

He's pixellating a billboard, a melancholy look on his face.

DOCUMENTARIAN

But?

OSCAR

Well, at first I really liked being around people who didn't know I was there. Like I was an invisible man. I could act however I wanted.

INT. OSCAR'S WORKROOM. NIGHT

A long shot of Oscar oiling the moving parts of his treadmill, alone in his room.

OSCAR

But these days, it feels more lonely. I guess 'cause Mom's gone.

He's folded his jumpsuit, and sets it on top of the treadmill. He sets his wooden proxy on top of it.

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR

It's started to feel like a tunnel
that I never come out of. It just
goes on and on.

Fade to black.

INT. PLAYROOM

Chaos. The room is full of babies and toddlers. The two adults, a 30something man and woman, are occupied at all times. Karen is changing a baby and Gary is trying to placate a child with a toy.

GARY

So, yeah, people who have babies?
Totally insane.

KAREN

For sure.

Title: The Baby Makers.

INT. KITCHEN

There are four babies in high chairs, waiting for their lunch.

Karen opens the fridge, a model in organization. Each separate meal is labeled.

KAREN

(v.o.)

One of the ways we economize is by
making the food ourselves instead
of buying the packets.

She pulls out a few cubes and heats them up.

KAREN (cont'd)

(v.o.)

It's kind of risky, though. You get
it wrong, and the caloric intake
isn't exactly right?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Karen shakes her head and looks at the camera. They sit side by side on the couch.

GARY

Let's just say we learned the hard way.

KAREN

We went to sell them, and they told us that half the batch was invalid. That they would not certify them.

GARY

It pretty nearly bankrupted us. The certification process is... pretty particular.

Karen is obviously still upset about it. Gary squeezes her hand.

KAREN

"Particular." He's the diplomat of the family.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What did you do with the babies?

KAREN

We had to break them down for parts and start again.

INT. PLAYROOM

Gary is filling out some kind of form. A baby lies before him.

GARY

(v.o.)

To be honest, for the most part, I understand the quality control.

He is checking the baby's joints with a bored look on his face.

GARY (cont'd)

(v.o.)

It's why they fetch such a high price, even by Asian standards. It would hurt the brand to release sickly product, or product that wasn't toilet trained.

(CONTINUED)

He is tickling the baby. The baby laughs, and Gary impassively marks the response down on his form.

GARY (cont'd)
OK, honey, this lot's done.

Karen has a load of dry laundry.

KAREN
Can you give me a hand with
folding?

The baby's grabbed his finger, and he flicks it off as he gets up.

GARY
Sure.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.

Gary and Karen are having dinner together, enjoying a glass of wine after a long day.

In the background is the sustained wailing of several babies.

They're laughing and chatting casually, completely ignoring the screams of the children.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Does the crying ever get to you?

KAREN
(v.o.)
There's definitely a hardwired
response to it that you have to
learn to suppress.

GARY
(v.o.)
Millenia of evolution.

KAREN
(v.o.)
Yeah, but it only took me a few
weeks to get over it. It helps that
by the end of the day you've built
up so much resentment.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Gary laughs at this.

GARY

You can tap into that.

Karen shrugs.

KAREN

Although at this point, it's just white noise, just like the whine of a buzz saw if you worked at a factory.

GARY

Our neighbours see it differently, though. They've offered to help pay for sound proofing. So we might do that in the next few months. 'Cause at night--

Karen puts her head in her hands.

KAREN

Oh my god.

GARY

...at night they can wake you up and it's pretty bad for the sleep.

KAREN

Pretty bad...? One night, I just about lost it. I got up, went to the workshop and grabbed the wire snips -- I was practically sleep walking...

GARY

Luckily I'd gotten up to go to the washroom. She was about to snip their vocal cords.

KAREN

I would have done it. In my sleep I was imagining we could reconnect them when they were older.

GARY

But of course that wouldn't have worked.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

It would have been a complete mess.

She looks at him fondly.

KAREN (cont'd)

He's the sane one.

INT. CHANGE STATION

Gary is patiently changing a baby.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What does Karen mean when she calls you "the sane one"?

Gary just smiles, doesn't respond for a second.

GARY

I'm usually the one who says, hey, wait a sec, let's think about this. You know. She's the brilliant, hot headed one, and I'm the plodding, stable one.

The smell of the poop makes him wince.

GARY (cont'd)

But I mean, she's got a point usually. Like, these babies are realistic to a completely unnecessary degree. Why can't they been engineered so their poop is odorless?

DOCUMENTARIAN

Don't you have control of that?

GARY

Oh no. They ship us kits and we assemble them. We change anything on the motherboards and they'd be invalid. God forbid some kid in Shanghai gets a toy whose poop doesn't stink. Scandal!

He drops the diaper into the pail.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What's this one called?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

I think it's a Jose. Whatever the Hispanic models are called.

He drops Jose on the floor, and he crawls away.

GARY (cont'd)

He takes an extra couple weeks to walk. But he toilet trains early, so he's out the door with the rest of them.

INT. KID ZONE

Karen and Gary come in to a children's playspace, where there's already a couple kids and adults playing. They set the kids down in the penned off area like they're sacks of potatoes.

KAREN

(v.o.)

There are enough manufacturers in the area so we were able to rent a space.

GARY

(v.o.)

It's pretty good to have somewhere outside the house to go.

They take off their jackets and noseplugs.

KAREN

(v.o.)

We talk shop mostly.

One of the other kids starts crying. The adult notices he has a bloody nose. He wipes it off, checking the nose bridge clinically.

ADULT

(to Karen)

No structural damage.

The kid is holding his hands up -- he wants to be held. The adult turns him around and pushes him back towards the other kids.

GARY

(v.o.)

It's one of the optional things that you can do above and beyond the minimum...

INT. LIVING ROOM

Karen smiles wryly.

KAREN

...One of the million and one checkboxes.

GARY

The benefit is that it gets the product used to mixing with other lines -- like, say, if kid has two different brands of baby they adjust quicker.

DOCUMENTARIAN

So you get paid extra for it?

They both shake their heads.

GARY

No, but it gives us a better manufacturer rating.

KAREN

Supposedly. It hasn't helped us so far.

Gary shrugs. They exchange a brief uncomfortable look.

INT. WORKROOM

Karen has on a eyepiece and is working on a motherboard. She is smiling at something.

KAREN

I don't know about brilliant. I mean, he's right that we're a good team.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you feel like you're wasting your talent?

Her smile falls suddenly -- his question has cut her.

KAREN

I don't know.

She looks at the camera briefly, and back at what she's looking at. She pulls a baby body from a box next to the table and lays it out on the table.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN (cont'd)

I'm very aware that we're lucky to have any work in robotics, living in the west. If we could afford to relocate to Shanghai, maybe it'd make a difference...

She opens up the baby body and inserts the card she's been working on. Inside the body is an alarming combination of circuitry and artificial organs.

KAREN

...but then I hear about people who do that and their degrees aren't worth anything. They end up fixing ovens and toasters.

She turns closes it up and turns it on. The baby's eyes flicker and it says in a terrifying voice, "Prepare to be annihilated." This makes Karen smile.

KAREN

It's not like we're going to be making babies forever. That's not the plan.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What is the plan?

KAREN

You should ask Gary about that.

She has a small, wry smile on her face as she says this. She opens the baby body again, going back to tinkering.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

There's a bunch of babies in the bathtub, and Gary's washing them carefully.

GARY

Yeah, it's an arrangement we have. She starts them off, I finish them off. Works out better that way.

DOCUMENTARIAN

So she does the initial assembly?

He dries a baby off carefully, almost buffing it like you would a car.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Yeah, and it's not like put part a into slot b. These aren't Ikea components. I mean, I have a degree in robotics as well, but I don't have her focus -- like, she gets into the zone. She can have six babies crawling around in a couple hours when it would take me all day.

He takes a baby in each arm and brings them to the play room and grabs a couple more.

GARY (cont'd)

But I mean, the stuff I do is important too. We're shipping tomorrow, so we've got the company rep in tomorrow, and if they aren't up to code, then we don't eat.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What happens to the babies that get rejected?

GARY

Well, you can't eat them, if that's what you mean. Isn't like the boutique farming business. Might look like they got a little tender meat (he pinches an arm) but it's all synthetic. But Karen likes to keep 'em.

He looks back and we can see Karen going into another room, avoiding the bathroom.

He scrubs the babies, and laughs.

GARY (cont'd)

Yeah, she really hates shipping week.

INT. FRONT HALL

Gary is greeting the company certifier at the door, an Asian man.

GARY

Oh, you musta drawn the short straw again to have to do us...

The man smiles but remains silent, removing his shoes.

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)

(v.o.)

I was pretty relieved it was Wong
-- we'd had him before. With a new
certifier you're never sure what
they're gonna look for.

INT. OUTSIDE THE PLAYROOM

Gary is standing outside the playroom, watching Wong check the mouths and the range of their limbs.

WONG

You can box these two.

Gary jumps to it, stuffing the kids into a cellophane fronted box and taping it up.

WONG

This one... this one's been making
noise since I've arrived.

GARY

You know, that model does leak a
lot -- that might be the problem.

He grabs the baby and feels the bum.

GARY (cont'd)

Yeah, that's it. Let me just --

He goes to change the baby. Wong goes back to the other baby, appears satisfied with it, and boxes it.

INT. HALL

Gary is carrying the boxes out to the door, giving the camera a happy eyebrow wiggle as he passes.

Wong is putting on his shoes.

There's a laser explosion sound and flash from the room down the hallway that Wong notices.

GARY

Looks like she's got the lasers
online.

WONG

Your wife works on battlebots?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Yeah... hey, um, would you wanna
take a look?

Wong picks up a box.

WONG

I'm running late as it is.

GARY

Oh, sure, no problem, maybe another
time. It's really amazing what
she...

WONG

All military robots are done from
the mainland office. I don't even
know who I'd...

Gary smiles and helps him carry the boxes out.

INT. FOYER

He's waving goodbye to Wong. Shuts the door, and collapses
against it.

GARY

(yells)
They're gone!

Karen bursts out of the room and hugs him.

GARY (cont'd)

Let's get a drink.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Same setting as before, but Karen and Gary are totally
relaxed, wine glasses in hand. Karen is lying on the couch
against him.

KAREN

Hear that?

Gary cocks his ear -- it's an old joke, but he plays along.

GARY

I don't hear anything.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN
Exxxxxactly.

They clink glasses.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Were you worried about not passing
certification?

KAREN
No.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Then why do you hate shipping day
so much, Karen?

This kills the mood in the room.

Karen frowns, glances at Gary, who looks away sadly.

KAREN
I just can't stand seeing them in
the boxes.

There's an intercut shot of one of the babies in the boxes,
looking cute and sad.

KAREN (cont'd)
Until then I don't have to think
about them like that, you know? It
just seems so wrong...

Cut back to the two of them.

KAREN (cont'd)
...wrong that we're wasting our
time on stupid toys for stupid rich
kids, when we could be making
unstoppable ninja assassins.

Gary sighs and nods.

GARY
Not everyone--

KAREN
I know, I know, not everyone can
make battlebots. But there's so
much going on. Even 'splashers -- I
know they're not politically
correct since the African division
but --

She collapses against the couch.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you feel like your choices are limited?

KAREN

Well, I mean, sure, compared to if we were born in Calcutta or something. But we were born in Toronto, so I guess we should be grateful we're not already dead in a gutter.

GARY

We have a plan.

Karen nods grimly.

DOCUMENTARIAN

What is it?

GARY

Every shipment we sock some away, and say five, ten years from now we'll have enough to attend the robotics conference in Hong Kong.

KAREN

So we can show our designs for grown up robots. Robots that don't shit and piss themselves. Robots that rain metal death from above.

Gary smiles at his wife's enthusiasm.

DOCUMENTARIAN

So in five years we can expect to see you in Asia?

KAREN

That's the dream.

GARY

Well... (he pats his wife's hand)
Closer to ten.

Fade to black.

EXT. BRIDGE

Two men, one of average proportions and the other heavysset, stand on top of a wall. Their clothing is reminiscent of old time acrobats.

The heavysset one, Anton, is a little shaky. He grabs the hand of his brother, Christopher (or Toph), who is very solid.

ANTON
You ready, Toph?

TOPH
Yep.

Anton lifts the hand of his brother in a victory gesture.

ANTON
We are... the Karrento brothers!

Anton looks at Toph.

ANTON (cont'd)
You gotta say it too.

TOPH
Oh, right.

ANTON
I say "we are", we both say "the Karrento brothers!" and then maybe we can jump down.

TOPH
(looking down)
No, no.

ANTON
You're right, you're right, that's cheesy.

Title: The Silk Gatherers

EXT. SCALING A WALL

Toph is climbing a wall, Anton is below, looking up.

ANTON
I would say the most important thing? Never collect alone. You need someone to spot you, keep an
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANTON (cont'd)
eye on you. You get into a
situation where, god forbid, you
fall, or get into some other
situation, you need to have someone
there who can help out.

Toph has some kind of rod with pincers at the end.

ANTON (cont'd)
Now what he's got there is called
the claw. He'll use that to collect
the silk.

Toph pulls out the white strands from the rooftop eaves.

ANTON (cont'd)
Looks like a decent grab.

Toph holds something up.

TOPH
Get a fire goin'!

Anton smiles.

ANTON
Lunchbreak!

EXT.UNDER A BRIDGE

The two of them are sitting around a fire, chewing on tiny
bones.

DOCUMENTARIAN
How is it?

ANTON
(shrugs)
Not bad. Pretty fresh. You know how
gamey squirrel meat can get.

TOPH
He's probably never eaten
squirrels, Anton.

Anton looks at the camera.

ANTON
You don't got squirrels in China?

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

I'm a predatarian, actually.

Anton looks confused by this, but Toph's heard of it.

TOPH

Really. Sharks and lions and that,
huh? I understand the best bear
burgers are exported from Canada.

DOCUMENTARIAN

That's true.

Anton sticks his hand in the air.

ANTON

Ca! Na! Da!

Toph's embarrassed by this.

EXT. TOP OF RESERVOIR HILL

From here we can see a crater and a trail of destruction
heading south, as well as the C.N. Tower.

ANTON

This was one of the original impact
spots, obviously. Sacs landed here,
the space spiders hatched --

TOPH

Arachnoids, Anton.

ANTON

Anacroroi -- aracnord -- or as we
call them on the streets, space
spiders --

TOPH

As they call them in the
pre-schools, space spiders...

ANTON

Whatever, so I didn't go to high
school, professor. Anyway, the
things hit there, hatched, and
headed for the waterfront.

They start walking in the forest.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you remember the original impact?

ANTON

I seem to remember--

TOPH

We weren't here. Our family were part of the European refugees that came over in the 20s. Our dad was an acrobat, so he got into the silk trade in the early days.

Toph sees something in a tree and climbs up it.

ANTON

Well, the sacs landed all over the world, maybe I remember--

TOPH

They didn't land in Finland.

It was a false warning, Toph comes down from the tree.

They walk on. Toph notices a patch of mushrooms and starts picking them.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Did your family face an anti-European sentiment?

Anton shakes his head. He's collecting mushrooms too.

TOPH

For sure. Mom and Dad got all that racist shit -- dirty carny, go back to Europe, get away, you'll give us monkeypox... they would throw dried dog shit at Anton at school...

ANTON

Oh yeah, there was that.

DOCUMENTARIAN

And did he have monkeypox?

TOPH

Of course not, we never would have been allowed off the boat. But whatever, they worked, doing the job that was too dangerous for anyone here to do, and eventually we got our citizenship.

They're collecting mushrooms throughout, and pretty much every mushroom Anton gives Toph is rejected, which he seems oblivious to.

INT. SILK STATION

Anton and Toph go into the station with his bag and calls out.

HARRY, an older heavysset man, comes out, his face bleary with sleep.

ANTON

Didn't wake ya did we?

ANTON (cont'd)

(v.o.)

Harry's all right. Not a million laughs, but once in a while he'll have a good one. I've sold to him since the beginning. He used to do gold and such originally, I heard, so he has the connections.

They chitchat and Harry melts down the webbing in a little device.

ANTON (cont'd)

What's the rate?

HARRY

5.3. Same as always.

ANTON

Same robbery as always.

ANTON (cont'd)

(v.o.)

I sure as fuck don't know any architects. What am I gonna do, call people at random in Singapore or whatever, wanna buy some rare building material? No.

HARRY

(to Toph)

You want it in credit or water?

TOPH

Water.

They grab the three bottles of water and leave, wave goodbye to Harry.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON

That's us for the day.

He smiles at the camera, pleased with himself.

EXT. ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

The rooftop has a tent on it, and the brothers are inside. Their voices are hushed but audible.

TOPH

No.

ANTON

C'maaaaan.

TOPH

Absolutely not.

ANTON

Wouldn't it be great for the documentary? "The Karrento Brothers Take on the Tower!"

TOPH

"The Karrento Brothers Die!" That sound good? "The Karrento Brothers, Smashed on the Pavement!"

ANTON

Well, actually--

TOPH

No! It sounds awful. Go to sleep.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE

Anton is climbing a rickety fire escape.

ANTON

It's actually not the dangerous ones you have to be worried about. For those ones, you're focused, collecting from the underside of a bridge or whatnot. Hanging upside down.

He is moving very slowly considering the relative safety of the climb. Above we can see Toph waiting at the top.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON (cont'd)
It's climbs like these that look
easy -- lose your focus for a
second, and BAM!, you're sidewalk
jam.

He gets up to the roof and we see Toph poking around with
his claw.

TOPH
Can't see anything up here.

Anton puts his finger in the air like he's feeling the wind.

He looks around, and then walks authoritatively to one side
of the roof, grabbing the claw as he goes.

He leans over the side and pulls back a clawful of silk, and
flourishes it around like a magic trick. Toph smiles.

INT. SILK STATION

Anton and Toph trade in their silk for water.

ANTON
(v.o.)
I thought there might be some
leftovers here. When I first
started training with Dad, I
remember coming here. And back in
those days, we were pulling bags of
silk, so we didn't sweat the small
stuff.

Toph, alone, furtively puts one of the bottles away into a
cubbyhole packed full of similar bottles.

ANTON (cont'd)
(v.o.)
Toph wasn't old enough to come. So
it's just more "big brother magic"
for him.

INT. ROOFTOP

ANTON
Luckily I got a good memory. Got a
brain as sticky as a spiderweb!

Toph comes back out onto the roof with a bottle.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
(calls to Toph)
Still trying to figure out how I
knew about the silk?

Anton winks at the camera. Takes a swig from the bottle.

TOPH
Goin' out to trade for some food.
Do not drink all the water.

Anton surveys the water that's left guiltily.

EXT. MARKET

Toph is surveying the sidewalk market vendors. He eyes the
POV warily.

TOPH
What were you talking to Anton
about?

DOCUMENTARIAN
He was telling me he has a good
memory.

TOPH
Did he tell you it's as sticky as a
spider web? That's something my
father used to say, but more about
how stubborn he is. Once an idea
gets in his head, no matter how bad
it is...

He shakes his head and trades the water for a variety of
strangely coloured vegetables. The vendor checks the seal
and nods.

He walks off.

TOPH (cont'd)
This documentary thing, for
instance.

EXT. ROOFTOP

Anton is eating alone.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Where's Toph?

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
He's gone out.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Do you know where?

ANTON
I bet he's getting supplies... for
our big mission tomorrow.

He jumps up and puffs out his chest.

ANTON (cont'd)
Because tomorrow, the Karrento
Brothers Take on the Tower!

DOCUMENTARIAN
Which tower?

ANTON
(laughing and pointing)
Duh! The Tower! The biggest source
of uncollected silk in the...
probably, in the world! I hope
you're ready to record some amazing
bravery--

The door shuts and Toph comes in, unaware.

ANTON (cont'd)
(s.v.)
But don't say anything to him. He's
very... superstitious.

EXT. ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

The rooftop is quiet, except for the rustle of the brothers
in their tent.

Then, there is the whispered resumption of an argument.

ANTON
Please?

TOPH
No.

ANTON
Please.

(CONTINUED)

TOPH
No.

ANTON
Please?

TOPH
No.

ANTON
C'maaaann--

TOPH
No.

EXT. BRIDGE OVER WATER. MORNING.

Anton and Toph are walking to the site. Toph looks tired, with a coil of rope over one shoulder and a backpack over the other.

ANTON
OK, so, we're postponing the Tower assault for a while.

TOPH
For ever.

ANTON
But, instead, we've got an amazing climb for you today anyway. We've been wanting to do this for years.

DOCUMENTARIAN
What's stopped you?

TOPH
Brains. There was always some other silk deposit somewhere that was easier pickings. But not anymore.

ANTON
But once we get the Tower silk we'll be able to retire.

TOPH
Right, just like mom and dad retired, right?

Anton goes quiet. He starts unrolling the rope.

(CONTINUED)

TOPH (cont'd)
Our parents had this great tower assault plan too. They figured out the surface the spiders used most often was porous and softer due to their saliva. Oh, they had it all figured out. (to Anton) You tell him that?

Anton is still looking down, a stubborn look on his face.

TOPH (cont'd)
But half way up the wind picked up. The wind picked up, and whoosh, there goes Mom, and yanks Dad down with her. Early retirement.

He's tying the ropes violently.

ANTON
(quietly)
Can't account for the weather.

TOPH
They laid in the rubble for two days before we were able to get anyone to help us move them.

ANTON
OK. OK.

He's shaking back and forth, squeezing himself.

Toph sees the affect he's had and relents, gives his brother something between a hug and a shake.

He thrusts the rope into Anton's hands. It's tied securely to something.

ANTON (cont'd)
No. No, maybe you're right. It's too dangerous.

Toph shakes his head sadly.

TOPH
This is it. It's our only option. Now I'm gonna need to hold on tight as hell, OK, Anton? You're the lynch pin in all this, buddy.

The POV is focused on Anton. His face goes from worried to calm.

(CONTINUED)

ANTON
Don't worry, Toph.

Toph climbs down out of sight.

Anton starts to regain his jubilent manner.

ANTON (cont'd)
Finally, you'll see the Karrento
Brothers in action doing what we
do--

There's a sudden yell.

The rope goes slack.

There's a splash in the distance.

Anton, on his hands and knees looking over the edge, yelling his brother's name. He's still holding onto the rope with both hands.

Fade to black.

INT. OFFICE

A long shot of a young woman sits at a desk, painting her nails. She's the new girl, and the men who pass check her out.

SERINA
(v.o.)
It's the calm before the storm. I use the time to keep up on other clients, do a little research on them and potential new products... basically, I do work but it's just not the work they're paying me to do.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY

A guy in the office stops Serina and hands her a file folder.

She smiles politely and takes it.

Then she continues going into the washroom and shoves it into the garbage and heads into the stall.

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

(v.o.)

The way these places are, it takes them a few days -- sometimes a week -- to catch on that I'm not doing anything.

INT. OFFICE WASHROOM

She's checking her look in the mirror.

SERINA

Until then, it's pretty much the ideal hunting ground.

Title: Human Spam

INT. OFFICE

She's sitting at her desk, with a young executive, Tom, hanging over her shoulder as he points out something in the file.

TOM

I know it's totally confusing at first.

SERINA

It is confusing. I'm glad you said that.

TOM

It just takes a bit of getting used to. In fact, if you weren't busy tonight, I'd be happy to give you the lowdown on some of the ins and outs of this place. Maybe over drinks?

She seems surprised, but then manages a smile.

SERINA

Well, sure. It'd have to be an early night, but... yeah. That'd be nice.

INT. BAR

She's sitting alone at the booth, various forms in front of her.

SERINA

The office alpha male is easy meat.
You can see him over there with his
buddy, probably reliving that "ins
and outs" comment earlier.

Shot of Tom talking to another office mate and ending with a
slap on the shoulder.

SERINA (cont'd)

Sure as shit, tomorrow, his buddy
will appear at my desk with a
proposition. I'll work the new girl
angle for a week at least.

Tom sits himself down.

TOM

Talking to yourself?

SERINA

Were my lips moving? (giggles) Just
trying to make sense of these
forms!

TOM

I know. Aren't they ridiculous?

SERINA

Oh! I never figured you for as a
Bud man. (mocking) King of beers!

They clink bottles.

TOM

What are you drinking?

Serina shows her Coors Light.

SERINA

I ride the bullet.

Tom laughs and they continue talking.

SERINA (cont'd)

(v.o.)

Luckily sarcasm doesn't invalidate
the imprints. Otherwise, you sound

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SERINA (cont'd)
like a robot and the client's on to
you.

Serina is looking at something in the menu and pointing it
out to Tom.

SERINA (cont'd)
(v.o.)
Bars are great, there's a lot of
natural segues into product
mentions. Stuff on the menu.
Waitresses with their branding on
their uniforms. Ads in the
washrooms.

DOCUMENTARIAN
So you spend a lot of time here?

INT. BAR WASHROOM

Serina is putting on her lipstick and changing into a
glamorous nightclub girl, complete with sunglasses.

SERINA
Oh yeah. Staff knows to go super
light on the alcohol. Lets me stash
a change of clothes here. So I can
say goodbye to Tom, and hello to
Avinash, without leaving the
building. Convenient.

She snaps her purse closed to punctuate her point, and makes
her way to the door.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Who's Avinash? Another client?

SERINA
Yeah. A little higher on the food
chain than ol' Tom.

She leaves.

INT. BAR

Serina sits with a polished group of older Indian and
Chinese businessmen, with an Asian businesswoman in the mix.

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

I see. I've just been confused because United Mutual Funds seemed to have higher returns in the short term.

AVINASH

They do, but they're very volatile.

SERINA

When compared to the Yukon Funds or Klondike?

A young attractive woman with a logo on her shirt at breast level stands there.

AVINASH

We actually have a waitress already.

SPAMMER

Oh, I'm not a waitress. Have you folks heard of Playtext's latest book condensor? It's totally revolutionizing reading.

BUSINESSWOMAN

Go away please.

She smiles and leaves.

AVINASH

She was one of those product placers.

BUSINESSSMAN

Spammer.

Serina watches her go and they go back to their conversation.

INT. BAR FOYER

Serina and Avinash are heading home. She notices the spammer heading into the washroom.

SERINA

I'm going to use the washroom first. Want to bring the car around and I'll meet you up front?

He nods and leaves, and she heads for the washroom.

INT. BAR WASHROOM

She checks the stalls, and heads back to lock the door. The woman comes out.

She's startled at first, but when she sees it's the small Serina, she continues to check her look in the mirror.

SPAMMER

You people are so rude. You need a
Halls Attitude Adjustment--

Serina has cut her off with a lipstick sized tazer which knocks her to the ground. She squats beside her.

SERINA

Listen carefully, little girl. Stay
away from my people with your cheap
tittie bait. You're queering the
deal.

(showing her the tazer)

This thing has a coronary setting,
and if I see you here again you'll
die on these dirty tiles.

SPAMMER

But it's not fair--

Serina snaps open the lock and strides out.

SERINA

Now you're getting it.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

Serina is in the back of a hired car.

DOCUMENTARIAN

He sent you home?

SERINA

Yeah. His wife called. He's on a
short leash.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Is that disappointing?

At a stoplight, someone knocks at the window and is ignored, except Serina doublechecks the lock.

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

No. It's ideal, really. Sex has diminishing returns.

DOCUMENTARIAN

How so?

SERINA

Less banter, so less chances for segues. Condom brands and lubricant, maybe sex toy brands but not that often with the older men. More drama. Guilt. Attachment. Betrayal.

She taps her ear.

SERINA (cont'd)

Hi yourself, Victor.... I'm actually with my mom, right now. I think I told you, she's at Bayview-Crest Hospital?... oh, that's sweet that you thought of me, but she's taken a turn... for sure. No, the staff at Bayview-Crest are amazing, but Mom wants a familiar face around. Uh huh. OK, then, enjoy yourself!

She taps her ear again.

SERINA

Nothing like a dying mother to take the wind out of a booty call.

DOCUMENTARIAN

It's better if you mention the hospital brand in person rather than over the phone.

SERINA

Sure. Premium for in-person. Which I have, of course, to set it up. The bit about the staff is one of their core messages, and so that also pays.

She looks at the air in front of her and gestures through the information that is invisible to us.

SERINA (cont'd)

Actually, that last mention of Bayview-Crest put me into the top

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SERINA (cont'd)
three this month. Victor makes a
lot of money, so even phone
imprints pull in a lot. Might get a
bonus. Thanks Mom!

She smiles, ever so slightly, to herself.

EXT.HOTEL.NIGHT.

The limo goes into a hotel parking garage.

INT. HOTEL PARKING GARAGE. NIGHT.

Serina gets out and walks away, never acknowledging the
driver.

INT. STAIRWELL. NIGHT.

Serina is pulling on new shoes, a different jacket, less
flashy attire.

DOCUMENTARIAN
And what about your mom? Do your
parents know what you do?

SERINA
Nope.

DOCUMENTARIAN
What do you think they'd think?

SERINA
What do you want to hear? Rough
childhood? Daddy was a farmer
before the market dropped out of
the gold market, and then mommy was
a whore?

DOCUMENTARIAN
I just--

SERINA
It's not relevant. Change the
subject.

Serina leaves the stairwell, and then the hotel through the
front door, pulling a mouth-mask down as she does.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

OK. Why'd you get the driver to drop you off here?

SERINA

The autodrive cars have ridiculous mapping systems, for one. When I give them my address it glitches and loops for ever, never stopping.

She walks on, the neighbourhoods getting sketchier.

DOCUMENTARIAN

You said, "For one".

SERINA

Well, obviously I'd rather my clients not have access to my real address.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Are these men clients? Aren't they marks?

SERINA

If I do my job right, and they never know, it doesn't matter.

INT. SERINA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Serina's apartment is a sparsely decorated and somewhat untidy place.

The first thing she does is puts the lipstick tazer in a charger beside her bed.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Do you often have incidents like the one in the washroom today?

SERINA

(v.o.)

As often as I need to.

We hear Serina showering.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Why do you need to?

Serina is brushing out her hair.

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

Girl like that thinks she's smart. Pretty face and a tittie billboard can make you enough money to pay for your phone service and your clothes, maybe. But she'll never be able to make a living from it, and she's fucking it up for those of us that do.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Why wouldn't she be able to make a living off it?

SERINA

Any Easterner who has a girl like that show him attention? Not plausible. He'll know something's up. Or his friends will, if he's too stupid. Being too pretty is a liability. Even a local boy doesn't buy it for long after he hits it. Not that I'm stupid enough to mess with locals.

She jots something down.

The POV moves to see what it is:

Unless the boy got high stupidity Bein too pretty is a liability.

She waves him off and shuts the book.

INT. VARIETY STORE. MORNING.

Serina puts a can of coffee down on the counter. She's dressed office for her job. A young guy about Serina's age comes out, he's been sleeping in the back. They both flinch when they see each other.

SERINA

Where's your dad?

NAT

He's got this thing (motions to his stomach). What the fuck, Serina, what's with the clothes? (he motions a blow job) You taking dick-tation now?

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

Your career's really taken off too.

(Pushes the can to the floor) So
not worth it.

She stalks out of the store.

NAT

Dad thinks you're a slutty spammer
too!

EXT. SIDEWALK.

Serina is obviously upset by this but masks it with her
sunglasses and tough talk.

SERINA

That's what I'm saying about local
boys.

INT. ELEVATOR.

She's still got her sunglasses on. She doesn't notice Steve
get on and he leans into her for a flirtatious shoulder
bump.

Her whole body rears up and for a second it looks like she's
going to attack him. He jumps a little.

SERINA

Oh. It's you.

Steve nods nervously.

SERINA (cont'd)

Sorry Steve, haven't had my coffee
yet.

He laughs nervously as they get off the elevator.

INT. OFFICE

She gets to her empty desk and hangs up her cardigan. She
brushes her thumb on a scanner and starts to file through
her computer messages.

SERINA

Huh. That was fast.

(CONTINUED)

She walks down the row of desks with people working at invisible terminals in the air. One of them was the guy Steve was talking to at the bar yesterday and he strikes up a conversation with Serina.

LEO

Hey, there, Serina isn't it?

SERINA

Yep. Mr. Wilson's asked to see me, should I be worried?

LEO

Oh. Um. It's... not good. He's a busy guy.

She nods and continues on.

INT. MR. WILSON'S OFFICE. DAY.

Serina comes in with a little smile. Mr. Wilson is a middle aged man who does work through his whole interaction.

SERINA

Mr. Wilson?

MR. WILSON

Yep. You the new girl?

SERINA

I am, yes, and--

MR. WILSON

Not any more. I'm terminating your employment as of today. Your productivity has been zero the whole time you've been here.

SERINA

Two days, sir, I'm just ramping up. Getting the feel of the place. Steve's been showing me the ropes.

MR. WILSON

Steve should be firing you right now instead of me but he's said he took you out to drinks so there's a COI.

SERINA

You're totally right.

(CONTINUED)

MR. WILSON

I know I'm right. Why are you still here?

SERINA

My mom's been really sick. I've been useless days here because I'm at Bayview-Crest all night. They've got her on Phenupalsol, Rebutin, Quininalonsol -- all great painkillers, but they can only do so much.

MR. WILSON

And now you've just lost your job. Honey, this is a really sad story. We're not going to have to make it even sadder by calling security for this, are we?

SERINA

Of course not, Mr. Wilson. I just want you to know if I can do anything -- anything -- to get a second chance, I'll do it. Right here. Right now.

For the first time in the interaction, Mr. Wilson's eyes focus on Serina. She is assessed, he makes a decision, and he shakes his head.

MR. WILSON

OK, let's make it this quick. My inbox isn't getting any emptier.

He locks the door, starts to pull open his fly, touches the side of her face-- and then stops. He sees the lipstick tazer in her hand.

SERINA

Oh, and now you've just lost your job. Honey, that's a sad story. We're not going to make it even sadder by having to use this, are we?

MR. WILSON

No.

He steps away.

(CONTINUED)

MR. WILSON (cont'd)
It's this drug I'm on.

SERINA
Tell it to the judge, honey. My
people will be serving you the
papers soon.

INT. ELEVATOR.

SERINA
I liked him! Driven, does his job
well. But I had him pegged as a
Bastalinate user as soon as I
walked in. Workaholics can't resist
the focus it gives them, but the
horniness side affects fucks 'em up
every time.

Having said her piece, she looks away from the camera, and
then leaves when it opens. We can see that Steve and a
couple other workers were also in the elevator, but that she
didn't care.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Were you bluffing about pressing
charges?

The next sequence has Serina buying lunch from cart and
installing herself on a park bench or by a fountain.

SERINA
(v.o.)
Doubtful he'll take it to court.
After he gets the papers from the
Nigerians we'll settle.

DOCUMENTARIAN
Are those "your people"? The
Nigerians?

SERINA
(v.o.)
They're my spam brokers, so they
handle shit like this for me, yeah.

She's writing in the book she was jotting lyrics down in
before, absorbed in it as she eats her sandwich, fairly
indistinguishable from the other office workers having
lunch.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

And you don't see yourself getting
out of this life?

SERINA

(v.o.)

Why would I? I like it. It likes
me. Spammer for life, yo.

Fade to black.

INT. STAGE. DAY.

The lights go up on two people on a stage dressed to be a
"fireside chat" interview. They start talking in Mandarin,
but soon after an on screen "setting" switches it to
English.

ANNETTE

Amazing. Just amazing.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Thank you. In my opinion the credit
goes to the subjects, who were
wonderfully generous with their
time and unbelievably open.

ANNETTE

Their lives are so sad, and yet
they have such an amazing attitude.
For the most part.

DOCUMENTARIAN

No, it's true. We can really learn
a lot from these people. When I
first suggested doing a documentary
about the lives of people in the
west, the response was: "What? Why?
We have slums here."

ANNETTE

But it's not the same. There's hope
here for people to, to climb and to
achieve something. There, there's
just... nothing.

DOCUMENTARIAN

But you can see, they don't live
like that. They live like their
lives matter. They have to.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE

Now I know that since this was released there's been a huge interest in these people: What happened to them? Especially Anton, with the horrible accident with his brother.

Documentarian nods.

ANNETTE (cont'd)

Well... what happened!?! (she pretends to be jumping out of her seat, and the audience laughs)

DOCUMENTARIAN

Well, before we jump right to that, there's one last piece of footage that I have to show--

ANNETTE

No! No more delays!

DOCUMENTARIAN

Right after I finished the interviews with them, we thought we'd arrange for them all to meet. Since they were in a similar situation, we thought maybe together they could come up with ideas on how to achieve something more with their lives.

ANNETTE

OK, this sounds interesting.

DOCUMENTARIAN

I'm glad you approve.

ANNETTE

Proceed!

DOCUMENTARIAN

Unfortunately, Karen didn't originally want to participate. We had shown her their doc and she felt like they looked poorly in it. So she asked to see the other people's docs first, which we didn't really want to do.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE

Why not?

DOCUMENTARIAN

We had the idea it would be more natural if they got to know each other in a more natural way.

ANNETTE

Not as TV stars.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Exactly. But Karen was insistant and so she saw the others' docs in advance. Then I guess she was interested enough to meet them.

ANNETTE

Well, of course she was. And?

DOCUMENTARIAN

Well, let's roll it.

INT. BAR. NIGHT.

Anton, Karen, Gary, Oscar, and Serina sit around a table. Gary is pouring the drinks.

GARY

Well, this is weird.

OSCAR

(to the POV)

Are you going to ask us questions?

KAREN

Apparently he's just going to record this, he's not watching live.

Karen shrugs. The others just mostly look awkward and quiet.

Timelapse to:

The pitcher and drink levels have dropped.

ANTON

Yeah, honestly, who doesn't grow up wanting to make robots! That's awesome. Wow. How could you guys be on this show?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Well, it's... it's pretty stressful, and repetitive.

KAREN

And it's not really making robots, more assembling someone else's robots.

ANTON

Still, wow. And you?

SERINA

Freelance promotions.

Karen snorts at this. Serina notices. Gary tries to shift the focus.

GARY

So, Oscar, you were saying you live in Parkdale? We used to live there. How're the pipes been holding up?

Timelapse to:

SERINA

(on the phone)

Listen Ronald, Mom's really sick. I don't know if any night this week is good -- I'll be at Bayview-Crest more often than I'll be home.

KAREN

Do you think you could talk to your "clients" somewhere else?

Serina gives her a withering look and walks away.

OSCAR

That's too bad about her Mom.

GARY

So you were saying your contract is up?

OSCAR

Yeah, so I'll have to find something else.

Gary pours Oscar another drink. He indicates about half but Gary fills it up with a grin. Oscar shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

Still, it must have been amazing to work on that before anyone else got to see it.

OSCAR

Oh, yeah. It was great.

KAREN

And before anything was censored or privitized, eh?

OSCAR

Yeah, entirely uncut. After I'm done they'll be getting a new wave of people to privitize the sensitive data.

ANTON

Like, the boobies?

OSCAR

Yeah, well, more stuff like pin numbers and passwords and stuff.

Karen and Gary exchange a look.

ANTON

There was this time? We were working on this bridge and we could totally see these ladies sunbathing in the nude...

Serina hears this as she sits back down.

SERINA

Oh boy oh boy, nude huh? Was that a first for you, homespun?

Anton smiles at her at first, confused by her jokey tone.

ANTON

No. Like, the hundredth.

KAREN

Why don't you let up on him?

SERINA

Do you have some book on etiquette the rest of us didn't get?

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR

He probably shouldn't be talking
like that anyway with ladies
around.

Timelapse: food appears and disappears, so do drinks.
Serina's on the phone again.

OSCAR (cont'd)

...I've been pulling a lot of long
shifts lately, so the doctors say I
have to watch my in-world time.

Karen's nostrils flare. She stays silent.

GARY

Aw. Huh. Well, it's...

OSCAR

But a couple hours probably
wouldn't hurt.

KAREN

You know, that would be so cool. We
would love to watch the moment we
met, wouldn't we?

She reaches and gives Gary's hand a squeeze.

GARY

Oh, yeah.

ANTON

Can I come too?

Oscar is a little drunk by this point.

OSCAR

Sure!

KAREN

Well, shall we?

Serina notices people are leaving.

OSCAR

We're going back in time. Wanna
come?

Serina notices Karen's irritation at this, and smiles.

SERINA

Sure.

They get up and get their stuff. Karen casually flips an empty glass and places it on top of the POV. It flies around for a bit, banging against the glass, and then gives up.

Timelapse: as everybody leaves.

INT. STAGE. DAY.

Lights come up on the interview and applause.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Well, I don't know if I deserve applause for getting trapped in a glass, but...

ANNETTE

You don't.

He shrugs.

ANNETTE (cont'd)

And if you're telling me that's the end of the story then I will have to kill you.

Laugh from the audience.

DOCUMENTARIAN

The bad news is I wasn't able to shoot any more.

ANNETTE

I will shoot you, mister!

DOCUMENTARIAN

The good news is that their time using the Wayback Machine feature was recorded in its entirety.

ANNETTE

Thank god for technology.

DOCUMENTARIAN

I suppose. Though it basically renders people like me obsolete.

ANNETTE

Never!

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

Well, I guess someone has to edit the footage. Which is what I did for this. Would you like to see?

Annette looks at him mock angrily. The crowd giggles.

DOCUMENTARIAN (cont'd)

I'll take that for a yes.

Fade to black.

EXT. STREET

Karen, Gary, Oscar, Anton and Serina are in 2020. They are a little apart from the crowds of people. Oscar is in his orange jumpsuit, and adopts more of a leadership role.

ANTON

Holy... the tower's not busted up. That's cool--

He's looking up and pointing, and a passerby knocks him spinning.

OSCAR

Yeah, you need to stay out of the way of in-world people.

KAREN

Anything else we should know, Oscar?

OSCAR

Well, you should be able to call up the chronometer on your HUDs.

He motions in the air, and so does Karen.

KAREN

I see that. And we have 12 hours?

OSCAR

Yeah, it's a temp key. After that the system will boot you.

Karen takes Gary's hand.

KAREN

Well, not to be rude, but I think we'll make the most of the time we have.

(CONTINUED)

GARY

Thanks very much, Oscar.

Karen is setting her HUD and nods agreement. She nudges Gary to do the same. When they're set, she looks up with a impatient smile.

KAREN

Well. OK. Nice to have met you all.

Serina's arms are crossed, and she looks off somewhere else. Oscar waves.

Karen and Gary disappear.

ANTON

Whoa.

OSCAR

I know, freaky eh?

SERINA

They left in a hurry.

OSCAR

Yeah, they wanted to watch their first date.

ANTON

You think they'll watch themselves have sex?

Serina smacks her head at this.

OSCAR

Probably not on the first date. It'd be more romantic stuff. I bet a lot of people do that, when this is released to the public. Check out moments they want to relive.

SERINA

Or the ones they totally regret. To see how they could have done it differently.

Anton blinks at this and starts to have an idea.

OSCAR

That's true.

Serina looks at the people passing by with packages and bags.

(CONTINUED)

SERINA

Man. Everyone's been shopping.

OSCAR

Yeah. Different times.

SERINA

I was born in the wrong decade.

OSCAR

Wanna go window shopping? I know where there's a mall nearby.

ANTON

Guys? I'm gonna take off. There's something I want to see.

He's looking at his HUD.

ANTON (cont'd)

See you later.

He tries to disappear, but doesn't. He just ends up wandering off.

SERINA

I guess he realized there were naked ladies to peep on.

Oscar laughs nervously.

EXT. STREET ATM. NIGHT.

Gary is standing behind people as they punch in their passcodes.

GARY

I think that was 0456.

Karen is making gestures in the air.

KAREN

You think?

GARY

They're fast. Oh, forget it, his balance is like \$45.

KAREN

Well, if he does better in the next couple decades...

(CONTINUED)

GARY

If he does better, if we are able to find him, if we can somehow get his card, if he even uses a bank card -- that was 4567.

KAREN

Pfft. Nice PIN.

GARY

Oooh. The PINhead's got a decent balance, though.

They chuckle.

KAREN

OK, this plan does kinda stink. So. We're looking for someone who's rich, but old fashioned enough to still be using passwords in the current day.

GARY

But not so old fashioned that they're dead.

KAREN

OK. We can at least find out who's loaded via the balance readings here.

GARY

This guy's got a six figure.

KAREN

OK, let's tail him.

GARY

Or we could just follow him.

KAREN

Or you could just shut up.

Gary chuckles. They're enjoying themselves. They start following the middle-aged man.

GARY

You know what I like about this?

KAREN

That we're going to be rich?

(CONTINUED)

GARY

No. That we're not changing babies.

EXT. ROOFTOP. TWILIGHT.

Anton is watching Past Toph and Past Anton collecting some silk from behind a billboard.

Past Toph is at the top of a ladder and Past Anton is holding it.

Anton is staring at Past Anton.

PAST ANTON

Hey Toph, are you hungry? I'm getting hungry.

PAST TOPH

Yeah, we'll eat after this.

PAST ANTON

I been thinking about those sandwiches you made for hours.

Toph has a little smile. His mood in general is better than when we saw him last, at the end of his rope.

PAST TOPH

Uh oh. Babe alert!

PAST ANTON

What?

PAST TOPH

You're not going to believe this, Anton.

Anton starts to smile, remembering.

PAST ANTON

What? You see more silk? What?

PAST TOPH

There's a couple of ladies on the top of that building.

PAST ANTON

What? What? Are they beautiful?

PAST TOPH

They are... and they're not wearing any clothes.

(CONTINUED)

PAST ANTON

No!

PAST TOPH

Come up here and see.

PAST ANTON

Oh, no. No, I don't think so.

Anton pushes by his reluctant self and climbs the ladder.

PAST TOPH

What -- oh, you're blushing, Anton.

PAST ANTON

Am not.

Anton gets to the top.

ANTON

Oh my god, boobies! Toph, check out those boobies! Four of them!

Past Toph climbs down.

PAST ANTON

There weren't really naked ladies up there, were there?

PAST TOPH

Naw, I was just joking.

Anton follows him down the ladder.

ANTON

He wasn't! There were four boobies! One two three four!

PAST ANTON

I knew it.

Toph takes the ladder down.

PAST TOPH

Let's go sit over there and eat those sandwiches.

Anton watches as the two of them walk away into the sunset.

INT. MALL. DAY.

Oscar is looking in the window of a toy store. Serina comes up to him.

SERINA

Wow, it looks so different with so many people in here. And every one of these units are occupied -- nothing's boarded up. Reminds me of a Bollywood movie.

She notices his focus. She looks at the window, but the majority of stuff is blurred out.

SERINA

What are you looking at?

OSCAR

Um, I forgot I'd pixelated this store already. There was a toy here I had when I was a kid. I was trying to remember when I got it -- I think it was my 7th birthday.

SERINA

Well, couldn't you just watch your 7th birthday and see it?

OSCAR

I guess so. But we were still in the suburbs then.

SERINA

Fancy.

OSCAR

No, well, it was before the demalgamation. And years before the checkpoints.

SERINA

Still, I'd be into seeing it. I've only seen, like, soap operas and stuff set there.

OSCAR

Huh.

It'll be a long walk.

Serina shrugs.

EXT. STREET

The next couple scenes are a musical interlude. In this one, Karen and Gary are following the rich guy. They're holding hands. Unlike most tailing scenes, they're only ever a couple steps behind him.

He stops in front of a storefront window.

He looks at a menu in a restaurant and decides to go in.

Karen's frustrated by this delay, but Gary smooths out her hair and gets her to relax.

The two of them wait outside as he gets seated.

EXT. UNDERPASS

Anton follows around Past Anton and Past Toph, enjoying reliving their antics.

They encounter another silk collector, who's beat them to a cache. They are good natured on the surface about it, but Anton gives him the finger to his face.

At some point, Anton notices that he's near the bridge that Toph fell from.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREETS. DAY.

Serina and Oscar are a strange duo, but they're talking away.

They're walking determinedly through streets that are more sparse than the downtown they've just come from.

Oscar points at someone and makes a joke, which earns a rare smile from Serina.

INT. OLD MAN'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Karen and Gary squeeze in behind the old man, whose door is buzzing.

KAREN
Did you see it?

GARY
9384!

Karen gestures in the code into her notes.

(CONTINUED)

KAREN

OK.

They start to look around the apartment while the old man goes about his business.

KAREN (cont'd)

Does he look rich?

GARY

Not ostentatiously. You hoping for stacks of bills?

They look around. He listens to the answering machine as he pours himself some water.

MACHINE

Hey Dad, it's Sherry.

GARY

(guiltily)

Oh, he's got kids.

MACHINE

Just wanted to let you know, I talked to Mom, and she was saying that we're really --

He stops the machine, deletes the message.

KAREN

See? He's a bastard. Sherry'll never see a dime.

Gary notices the old computer set up.

GARY

Check it out. An immobile computer. Qwerty keyboard.

KAREN

Oh, those things were so gross. Remember that ad with all the germs and hair and shit started crawling out of the keyboard?

GARY

But if he's going to login it'll be easy to see him do it.

They look over at their mark, but he's installed himself in front of the TV. Gary gets comfortable.

(CONTINUED)

GARY (cont'd)
And now... we wait.

Karen pulls up her CPU.

KAREN
Now... we fast-forward.

The environment speeds up and we see a blip of the old man in front of the computer.

GARY
Wait!

They go back, and watch as the old man checks his email. There's no messages. He goes to bed.

They exchange a look.

Karen fast-forwards to morning. The light is better. She fast-forwards through his morning routine, until he sits himself down in front of the computer with a coffee.

They start watching it in real time. He loads up a file called memoirs.doc. He straightens up his desk.

KAREN
Can I just fast-forward it to the part where he dies?

Gary snorts. And then, a sticky note beside the monitor catches his attention. It reads: TD \$ - jpatrick - of999fkkea\$0Ik

GARY
Karen -- does that look like...

She sees it and starts gesturing madly.

KAREN
Oh shit, it's still good. Let's see how much liquid assets he has -- oh shit.

GARY
Oh shit what?

KAREN
I think we're out of the diaper changing business, Gary.

They laugh and hug.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

What do you think you're doing?

They freeze in their tracks, and look at the man, who's staring at the screen.

OLD MAN

No one cares what happened in your life, old man!

They relax, realizing he's talking to himself.

EXT. STREETS. MIDTOWN.

Serina and Oscar are walking through the suburbs.

SERINA

Is it starting to look familiar?

OSCAR

That hospital looks... I think I remember that.

SERINA

Hospitals all look the same.

OSCAR

Yeah, more or less. I bet the Bayview-Crest is fancier, though. Inside.

Serina shrugs non-committally.

OSCAR (cont'd)

Oh! This is the street.

I think it's great that you visit your mom so much. I tried to go every night but sometimes I missed visiting hours. I didn't get finished at work fast enough. I'm kind of slow.

SERINA

Yeah, the stuff about my mom...

She looks at Oscar and notices his nose is bleeding. She gets a kleenex out and gives it to him.

OSCAR

Oh, thanks. I know it's hard to talk about, like, the documentary

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OSCAR (cont'd)
guy wanted to talk about it but I
couldn't. But I know with you,
you've been through it too. You
know when you can tell someone's a
good person?

Serina looks at him with dead eyes.

OSCAR (cont'd)
Here it is.

They're looking at an unremarkable suburban house.

SERINA
Kind of small.

OSCAR
That's funny. I was thinking it's
way bigger than I remembered.

He looks at her with a smile but she looks away. The rapport
over the last few hours has been lost. She puts on her
sunglasses.

SERINA
I'm gonna -- check out that house
down the block. The big one.

OSCAR
Oh. OK.

Serina walks off.

Oscar watches her go and then walks into the backyard of his
childhood home.

He walks along the side of the house, touching the brick in
the wall, looking at the thin little path worn in the
ground.

The backyard is sparse. There's a small area around the
sliding doors of patio stones and a barbeque, with a picnic
table.

On the picnic table is a seven year old boy, Past Oscar.
He's lying down and holding an octopus and a spider against
the sky, making them fight, squinting.

Oscar stands over his past self.

(CONTINUED)

PAST OSCAR
OK, I'm not suspecting!

From the dim light of the house, we see the silhouette of Oscar's Mother. Oscar sees her, and steps back.

OSCAR'S MOTHER
Are you suuuuure?

Oscar's Mother slides back the screen door and steps out with a cupcake cake with a bunch of candles.

OSCAR'S MOTHER
Surprise!

Past Oscar mimes complete and ecstatic surprise. Oscar smiles at this. He has trouble looking at his mother, like he's staring directly into the sun.

Oscar walks towards the house, and sits down against the house on the patio stones. From this perspective he can see the present she has hidden behind her back.

EXT. UNDER THE BRIDGE. DAY.

Anton is under the bridge where his brother had the accident.

Anton is trying to change the time, unsuccessfully.

He's gesturing with frustrated movements, occasionally looking up to see if he can see anyone on the bridge above.

Eventually he does it. We can see Toph starting to climb down over the edge.

ANTON
(more to himself)
Toph! Don't, Toph.

Then, Toph swings on the rope and ends up landing on a hidden ledge under the bridge.

Keeping the rope taut, he pulls out something from his backpack and throws it over the side, at the same time as throwing the rope back.

Anton's face moves from shock, to joy.

ANTON (cont'd)
I knew it, I knew you'd never slip
Toph, I -- you're alive. You're
alive!

(CONTINUED)

From above, we see Past Anton's head poke over the side, and his howl. This makes Toph flinch. We can see him move to the edge, and look up, then look down.

Finally, Toph finds a place to sit and wait. Anton's face is reflecting his gradual hurt realization of how he's been abandoned, deliberately.

ANTON (cont'd)
You're alive?

INT. FANCY SUBURBAN HOME. DAY.

Serina is walking around in a house. She's looking in on a teenaged girl reading a book. There is the faint sound of music.

She pounds the wall suddenly and screams at it.

GIRL
Turn down that shit you asshole!

The mother is putting away towels down the hall. She shakes her head. She decides to go down stairs.

Serina follows her. The front door is propped open.

The father is bringing in bags of soil and wrestling them down to the basement.

MOTHER
Mark.

FATHER
The garage is bad for them. The exhaust.

MOTHER
The backyard?

FATHER
Animals get into them.

Serina walks out of the house through the front door.

She walks down the street.

She walks to Oscar's backyard along the skinny little path.

At first, she doesn't notice Oscar sitting there, just Past Oscar and his mom playing and fooling around with the new toy.

(CONTINUED)

She sees Oscar then crosslegged on the patio stones. He's facing away from her, slumped, deathly still.

A small blip of blood hits the patio stones.

She comes slowly around and her face, for the first time, shows genuine concern.

We see Oscar's face. His eyes, closed, are streaming blood, as are his ears and nose.

Selina steps away, and the noise wakes Oscar.

OSCAR
(his voice slurred)
I wasn't crying.

SERINA
I -- OK.

OSCAR
I've been here too long.

Serina takes his hands.

SERINA
We've got to get you some help. Can you stand?

Oscar does.

OSCAR
My eyedrops, I forgot...

SERINA
It's OK, we'll get you some eyedrops.

Fade to black.

INT. STUDIO

Annette is blinking. She touches her eyes.

ANNETTE
Does that happen often?

DOCUMENTARIAN
It's only with some people who overexpose themselves.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE

It's not a great advertisement for the new Wayback feature.

DOCUMENTARIAN

There was some discussion about whether to include that, but to me it was essential for the viewer to see the intensity of the feeling. My argument was that you clearly see the emotional connection people have with the feature. Even with Anton, we saw --

ANNETTE

Wait, before we go into detail with that, I understand we have been able to track down Anton's brother Toph.

DOCUMENTARIAN

That's right.

A chair is brought out and a flickering hologram materializes in it. It's Toph.

The audience hisses at him. Annette looks disapprovingly.

TOPH

Hello?

ANNETTE

Hello there, little brother.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Hello Toph. You were mentioning earlier that you had something to tell Anton.

TOPH

Yeah, well, he won't see me but I know he'll watch this thing.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Go ahead.

TOPH

He never gives up. It's a great quality, but... that stuff about the Tower, it needed to stop. So I had this idea that I would show him how dangerous it was. What it would feel like for one of us to die.

(CONTINUED)

DOCUMENTARIAN

So you faked your death.

TOPH

It was just supposed to be for a couple minutes. But then I heard how badly he felt and I couldn't face him.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Was it that? Or did you feel like you had a chance to escape the responsibility?

Toph is silent for a second.

ANNETTE

Ah ha. That's one of our patented probing questions that makes your documentaries great.

TOPH

It was just meant to be for a bit while I figured out some other way to make a living. The silk's running out, and every time I'd bring it up with him he'd be all, "the Tower! the Tower!"

I figured I'd sort something out, something less dangerous, and then explain it to him.

DOCUMENTARIAN

Have you figured out something?

TOPH

Not yet. But... (looks up at the camera) if you're watching this, Anton, I'm sorry. I just... I'm sorry.

He leans over and shuts off the camera, and flickers out.

ANNETTE

(raises an appraising eyebrow)
Well. And what about Bonnie and Clyde? People are wondering if they got away with their strange heist. If only Karen could come out and tell us...

Karen, dressed glamorously for a TV appearance, strides out. She waves at the audience as she seats herself.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE (cont'd)

Welcome!

DOCUMENTARIAN

Hi Karen.

KAREN

It's funny to see him in real life. You know, instead of just a flycam with a voice.

ANNETTE

Does he look like you imagined him?

KAREN

More or less. I imagined him with a mustache, the Asian patriarch style.

ANNETTE

Oh. So he's a big disappointment.

KAREN

Not at all. Younger than I imagined.

The documentarian squirms a bit under the ladies' scrutiny.

ANNETTE

So when last we saw you and Clyde, I mean Gary, you had just broken into a rich man's bank account. What happened next?

KAREN

Well, as you saw -- we were pretty excited. We logged out and went home, talking about which robot conferences we should go to first, how we'd be eating at the flying restaurant in Hanoi, you know that one--

ANNETTE

Oh yes, we had the head chef on last week. I never thought I'd like predatorian food but -- yum!

KAREN

I saw that! I love the show, by the way. It's a real thrill to be here.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE

Thank you! But go on, go on.

KAREN

As I said, top of the world -- and then we got home. And we were promptly arrested.

Annette seems shocked by this, but the documentarian chuckles.

KAREN (cont'd)

Yep. We were busted for attempted phishing, second degree.

ANNETTE

It looks like you got the right lawyer, though. If you're here.

KAREN

Well -- because of the in-world recording, we were advised to plead guilty. We were sentenced to five years in Costco penitentiary, which is where we are now.

ANNETTE

I'm confused.

KAREN

Thanks to some very generous sponsorship from Yamaha, I was able to have a robot proxy built of myself to appear on the show.

Annette is surprised. Karen unflaps a part of her skin and reveals the robotics underneath in an almost flirtatious way, like you would show someone a peak of a tattoo on your shoulder.

ANNETTE

Un-be-lievable.

She takes Karen's hand and examines it.

ANNETTE (cont'd)

That's just phenomenal craftsmanship.

So you're sitting in a cell in North America somewhere.

Karen nods. Annette leans over and whacks the documentarian, who is chuckling.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE (cont'd)

"We're going to get Karen to appear on the show" he says. I say "We don't have the budget for an intercontinental flight." And he says, all mysterious, "Don't worry about it."

That's just marvellous. Just beautiful work. I'm sure you have a bright future ahead of you.

KAREN

I'm hoping. I'm hoping we'll be able to capitalize on this attention... five years from now.

This gets a laugh from the audience.

ANNETTE

That makes me think -- you were most excited about battlebots, weren't you? Do you have any weaponry built into this model?

KAREN

No, sadly. I tried to include blades in the nails, but even that -- part of the proxy pentetentary bill strictly forbids any weapon augmentation.

ANNETTE

Which, now that I think of it, makes sense. The stuff with Wing Li's golden dragonbot--

KAREN

That's what it's trying to prevent, yeah. Rampages like that. It's actually much easier for women to get proxy permits than men, which is why Gary couldn't be here.

ANNETTE

That's too bad. And talking about people who couldn't be here, Oscar and Serina--

KAREN

Yeah, that was so horrible. I had no idea his sensitivity was so acute.

(CONTINUED)

ANNETTE

We're told he made a full recovery
with no neurological damage, right?

DOCUMENTARIAN

Yes. He's currently between jobs at
the moment, but he's optimistic.

ANNETTE

It's just so hard for people in the
west. They have to struggle so hard
for a tenth of what we take for
granted. Thank you so much for
bringing their stories to us.

The documentarian nods.

ANNETTE (cont'd)

We're going to end this show with a
video that Serina sent us. Some
viewers might have some trouble
understanding the slang she uses,
but one thing will come across: she
might come from the slums, but
she's a plucky survivor.

Karen rolls her eyes.

EXT. FOUNTAIN BENCH

We see Serina where we last saw her in the documentary,
writing lyrics in her book.

A guy comes up to her.

GUY

Hey Serina, what you working on?

She looks over her sunglasses.

SERINA

Oh, you want to know what I'm
working on?

She gets up and addresses the camera as the beats come in
for the big musical finale.

SERINA (cont'd)

This book's full of lyrical genius
And if you don't think I mean this
Listen to the rhymes flowin to your
ear
MC Rena be the one that you hear

INT. LIMO

She's inside the limo. Everytime she mentions a brand a "ca-ching" is heard.

Those people that say I'm a spammer
and that people like me should be
thrown in the slammer
I say I'll Gucci you right in the
Prada
And send you home in your '32 Lada

INT. OFFICE

Serina is walking in the hallway of her old office, followed by her DJ, EULA-G.

Cause you know it'd make my day
To fuck you up (shoves worker) and
make a little pay
To fill your brain so full of the
product
That it explodes like I opened an
airduct

They get to Mr. Wilson's door.

EULA-G

MC Rena, this is gonna get grim.

SERINA

Don't matter, we still gotta serve
him.

They kick in Mr. Wilson's door.

Eula-G pulls legal papers out and starts stuffing them in his mouth, pants and anywhere else. She opens up the briefcase of money and counts it. It's in Chinese currency.

SERINA (cont'd)

My boy EULA-G, knows every last
trick
Better read it all before you click
Nigerian cartel is up in your
accounts
Getting severance pay in large
amounts

At "severance pay" a brief spray of blood hits the money.

She closes the briefcase and leaves the room, EULA-G at her heels.

EXT. CRATER.

Serina's squatting beside the craters with EULA-G.

SERINA

This is Toronto, shit you wouldn't
believe
So rough the giant spiders leave
Egg sacs came from the cold of
space
But even the spiders scared of this
place

EULA-G

This is the wild west motherfucker.
We don't need no Godzillabot to get
rid of some big insects. This ain't
no Tokyo. This ain't no Shanghai.
This certainly ain't no Mumbai.
You come here, you better have your
weapon augs. Cause our shit is
locked on.

EXT. POOLSIDE.

Serina is lounging poolside. Oscar is beside her. Someone comes and serves her a drink.

SERINA

I got a reputation for being a
bitch
Just cause I wanna be a little bit
rich
You wanna step to me and see what
it take
You find yourself face down in a
lake

We have pulled back to see the pool is full of floating bodies. Serina smashes her glass on the patio.

SERINA (cont'd)

Welcome to the wild west,
motherfucker!