

HW Assignment #3 - Brainstorm

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Books fill the shelves. Two dolls stare into the emptiness.

A closed laptop. A large stack of paper.

An empty couch sits in front of closed blinds, giving the backdrop an eerie, bleak distance.

On the end table - Steam from a coffee cup gets caught in the stillness of the air. A few empty beer bottles sit next to the cup. One lays like a dead soldier.

An open-faced watch sits ticking, the second hand racing over the skeletal mechanics driving it. The watch is inverted. Upside-down.

MAN (O.S.)

Yeah. I don't really remember when I started. I just remember liking it, you know?

MAN sits down on the couch and settles in.

MAN (O.S.) (cont'd)

Guess I never really never had a choice.

Man looks past the camera, at the INTERVIEWER, who is forever off screen.

MAN

Like this?

INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

A little to the left, please.

Man lifts himself slightly and scoots to the left.

INTERVIEWER

Perfect.

The man offers a slight smile and nods his head. He focuses his attention directly into the camera.

INTERVIEWER (cont'd)

So why don't we start with your latest project.

MAN

Happy Birth Day.

INTERVIEWER

Yes. Happy Birth Day. Why'd you choose to end it that way?

The man shifts in his seat.

MAN

I don't know. Kristin normally stays behind the camera. I figured she deserved to go out with a bang.

INTERVIEWER

And how did people take that?

Man laughs, shaking his head.

MAN

Well... *some* people liked it.

CUT TO:

2 INT. DREAM-STATE

2

Close, jumpy shots. Red. Passion.

A woman takes Man's hand. She places the two hands against her own hip. They could be dancing. Making love.

3 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

3

Man picks up a thin stack of paper, covered all over with blue ink.

MAN

It wasn't always that way. Almost never is.

He turns the stack over for the camera to see. It's a script. The title of the short film reads "HW Assignment #3". The words "HAPPY BIRTH DAY" are scrawled in huge, blue letters.

MAN (cont'd)

I mean, fuck. We didn't even have a title when we were editing the thing. The least important thing, at least at the time, was coming up with a name for the baby. We were just worried about the delivery.

He opens the stack, showing the camera the chaos of the edits on the page. Shot notes. Crossed out scenes. The raw material of the rough is lost in the contrast.

MAN (cont'd)

I think the reason it works, though, is because we weren't exactly sure how we would end it. We knew we had this guy, and we knew something horrible had happened to him, but we didn't know why. You can never know why. Not at the beginning. That's not how things like this work.

INTERVIEWER

Why?

The man smiles at the irony of the question.

MAN

If you knew, for sure, exactly how it would end - you'd never start the damn thing to begin with. She knows that. So she leads you a little bit.

(beat)

I guess it's kinda like following breadcrumbs through a forest. Or Chinese water torture. Drip after drip...

INTERVIEWER

But it doesn't drive you insane?

He shakes his head.

MAN

That's the best part. It's like a hard drug. Like rough sex.

4 INT. DREAM-STATE

4

A woman scratches the length of the man's back.

Thin lines of blood.

5 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

5

MAN

Like falling in love.

INTERVIEWER

How did you meet her?

The man smiles. He holds his head between his thumb and index finger, lost in memory.

MAN

The same way everybody else does. On accident. I was just going to class one day, and there she was. Perfect. It was the kind of experience I think only happens to a man a handful of times in his life. Like the world conspired for her to be there. For her to stay.

6 INT. DREAM-STATE

6

A woman kisses Man's neck, just below his earlobe.

A hand shifts a stack of papers off of a bedside table. The fall to the floor in a burst of orgasmic chaos.

Hold shot on papers.

The watch ticks away on the bedside table.

7 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

7

INTERVIEWER

We've heard something interesting, though, and I guess that's why we're here today.

The man nods.

INTERVIEWER (cont'd)

Can you tell us about the watch?

The man's expression changes. He's more focused. Tense.

MAN

You sure you don't want to just talk about the short films?

INTERVIEWER

We heard that you got the watch at-

MAN

We have a website, too. Lots of pictures. A bimonthly challenge.

INTERVIEWER

Yes. And we'll be sure to push people  
in that direction. But this watch-

MAN

Fine.

The man leans forward, resting his elbows on his knees.

MAN (cont'd)

Let's talk about the watch.

INTERVIEWER

Is it true that she bought it for  
you?

The man is visibly pissed off. Animalistic behind the eyes.  
Like something backed into a corner.

MAN

It doesn't matter where it came from.

INTERVIEWER

Can you tell us what it does?

The man stares past the camera, breathing deeply.

MAN

I can show you, and you can tell  
whoever the fuck you want. But I'm  
only doing this once. I'm sick of  
being called crazy.

The man picks the watch off of the side table.

MAN (cont'd)

Come on, then.

The man gets off the couch and walks out of the shot.

8 INT. DREAM-STATE

8

A woman takes the man's hand. Guides him out of the bedroom.  
Sits him behind the laptop.

The hands begin massaging his shoulder. In the glow of the  
laptop, the woman bites his ear.

9 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

9

The man places the watch on the desk next to the stack of paper and sits down.

He opens the laptop. Unlocks it. Opens a writing app.

He turns the laptop around for the interviewer to see the blank page.

MAN

See that?

The camera focuses in on the blank page.

INTERVIEWER

What am I supposed to be seeing?

MAN

The blank page. The emptiness of it.  
Nothing suspicious, right?

INTERVIEWER

Not as far as I can tell. Seems  
normal.

The man nods.

MAN

Good. Now watch.

The man picks up the watch and stares into its skeletal face. He shakes his head, like a recovering junkie staring down the barrel of bad decisions.

He opens the watch and puts it on. He brings home the clasp.

The screen still shows a blank page.

INTERVIEWER

Nothing's happening.

MAN

Just wait.

INTERVIEWER

What are we waiting for?

MAN

For her to get here.

INTERVIEWER

For who to get here?

MAN

Just wait.

The man glances out the window. Silence.

INTERVIEWER

How long to do we -

The man slams his hand down on the table. A bang as loud as a gunshot.

MAN

Goddammit. I said I'm not fuckin' crazy. Okay? You just have to wait until-

Suddenly, words begin to appear on the page. The camera tries to focus, but it won't. It can't. Something is blocking it.

INTERVIEWER

What in the...

MAN

There? You happy?

10 INT. DREAM-STATE

10

A woman's hands dance across a keyboard at an incredible pace.

The man stares at the laptop screen in a trance. Dumbfounded. Absent. Possessed.

11 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

11

MAN

Are you fuckin' happy now?

INTERVIEWER

Mr-

The man rubs his face, pushing his glasses to the top of his head. His eyes look wild.

MAN

Shut up.

INTERVIEWER

I think that's all we need, thank-



MAN  
You're not going anywhere. You can't.

INTERVIEWER  
Brian, cut the-

MAN  
Not until she's done.

The man stares past the camera. Words continue to flow on the screen.

INTERVIEWER  
Brian, what are you doing? Let's get out of here.

MAN  
You just. don't. fucking. get it.

The man pulls a pistol out from underneath the table.

INTERVIEWER  
Brian!

MAN  
You can't leave until it's over.  
(beat)  
And it's Never. Fucking. Over.

The man lifts the pistol to his head.

12 INT. DREAM-STATE 12  
A woman's hands type on the keyboard. The sound, a manic metronome.

13 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY 13  
A whiteboard over the table is covered over with notes.

INTERVIEWER  
NO!

The camera is knocked over, taking the man out of frame just as we hear -

A gunshot.

Blood spurts across the whiteboard.

The pistol thumps against the carpeted floor.

Blood runs through the marker. It drips from the cheap aluminum frame.

Footsteps leave the room in a hurry. The front door opens. Closes.

Silence.

14 INT. DREAM-STATE

14

A woman's hand holds the eraser for the whiteboard, which is now stained in wet blood.

She wipes away at the entire mess, smearing the ink and gore.

The creator and her creation. The madness of it all.

15 INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

15

The man's arm dangles over the edge of his chair. Limp. A thin streak of blood runs down.

It stops at the watch, which has stopped ticking.

FADE OUT

END