

The Sleep of Reason

a short screenplay
by
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PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. INTERIOR. DAY

THE INTERVIEWER sits across from THE PATIENT, with only a table between them. THE INTERVIEWER uncaps her pen and places it on a legal pad before her. On the table sits a lamp, a small tape recorder and a black Zippo lighter. THE PATIENT extracts a cigarette from her pack and reaches for the lighter that seems out of her grasp. She lights her cigarette. THE INTERVIEWER lifts the tape recorder and begins taping. She replaces it on the table between them. She is precise.

THE INTERVIEWER

- Are you ready to begin?

-

THE PATIENT smiles, smoke curls around her.

THE INTERVIEWER

Where do you want to start?

THE PATIENT

It doesn't matter, everything is connected. Where ever I start, it will be the middle.

THE INTERVIEWER

Ok then

THE INTERVIEWER lifts her pen and writes a heading on the top of the first page; The Testimony of...

THE PATIENT drags deep on her cigarette, smoke curls out of her mouth as she speaks.

THE PATIENT

I'll start with the Speed

THE INTERVIEWER writes 'The Speed' which becomes an in-screen title.

AIRPORT. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED walks in slow motion beside a fence that surrounds an airport for light planes. Flying goggles stretch across his head, a battered jacket covered in patches and tags hangs across one shoulder, partly concealing a large canvas sack slung over his neck.

THE PATIENT (Voice over)

I use the Speed to move things from one place to another. To the Speed, it seems as if everything is filmed in slow motion. People move as if they are submerged in water, sounds stretch like taffy, the world sits as still as a picture. Only machines can keep up with the Speed and it is only machines that interest him.

MONTAGE ; THE SPEED assembles a clockwork toy in seconds. He stands before a screen playing a computer game with a controller in each hand, scrolling through its landscape at accelerated speed. His hands fly through gear changes as his car weaves through traffic, rocking the canvas bag in the seat beside him.

THE PATIENT (Voice Over cont.)

He doesn't ever know what it is he is transporting for me, and he doesn't care to know. I asked him once if ever looked in the bag and the question seemed to puzzle him, as if he had never even entertained the thought. His thinking is completely under the radar.

THE INTERVIEWER

And what was in the bag?

THE PATIENT

He was taking what I needed to its final destination.

CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED drums along to high tempo music on his car stereo. His car continues to weave in and out of traffic.

THE PATIENT(Voice Over)

When he got a call

CITY STREET. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER walks into a phone booth on a busy city street. He fishes in his pockets for coins and drops them in the slot. He punches in a number from memory. As it rings, THE REPORTER lights up a cigarette with the black Zippo.

CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED's phone rings; he flips it open and answers;

THE SPEED

Speak

CITY STREET. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER leans against the phone booth glass. We watch his eyes and mouth and he blows out smoke. THE REPORTER steams the booth glass with his breath and draws a smiley face.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. INTERIOR. DAY

THE PATIENT

It was the reporter

THE INTERVIEWER writes on the pad before her; THE REPORTER; which becomes an in-screen title.

CITY STREET PUBLIC PHONE. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER
C'est moi

THE INTERVIEWER (Voice Over)
And where does the reporter know you from?

THE PATIENT(Voice over)
He doesn't. I know him.

CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED speaks on the phone as he drives;

THE SPEED
It's been a long time. Where are you? Still in the States?

CITY PUBLIC PHONE. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER watches pedestrians watch him as they pass.

THE REPORTER
I just landed in Melbourne.

THE SPEED
That's great. So have I.

THE REPORTER
We should-

THE SPEED
We should hook up. Where are you?

THE REPORTER steps out of the booth, looks around.

THE REPORTER
Uh, corner of King and Bourke I think.

CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED spins the wheel of the car, sending it into a screeching u-turn.

THE SPEED
You going to tell me why you are here? Working on a story?

CITY PUBLIC PHONE. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER

No, I don't think so. I'm just back, for a little bit.

THE SPEED(ON PHONE)

Listen, we have to charter together. I'm doing something big, and I want you to co-pilot. I need someone I can trust.

THE REPORTER

Uh, sure. Of course.

THE SPEED

Totally under the radar.

THE REPORTER

Right

THE SPEED

I'll come get you, then we go.

THE REPORTER

What, now? I just landed from a twenty hour flight Vitesse. Shit, if you want me up, we will have to score first.

THE SPEED

No we won't.

CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED laughs maniacally into the phone and flips it shut. He punches the roof of the car in a blur and nearly kills a bike courier with a sharp right turn.

CITY PUBLIC PHONE. EXTERIOR. DAY

THE REPORTER

Ok, so, you'll come for me? Hello?

THE REPORTER steps from the phone booth and pulls a tape recorder from his pocket. He steps towards the road as he checks his watch and nearly collides the bike courier as he flies past.

THE REPORTER stumbles back cursing. He checks his watch again and speaks into the recorder;

THE REPORTER

Made call to La Vitesse at 10:15 am. Awaiting pick-up.

THE REPORTER turns the recorder to voice activated and slips it back into his pocket. He squints into the sun and brings a cigarette up to his mouth, flicking the Zippo open with his other hand. The world streams into a screen on his chest, but

THE REPORTER is content to watch the clouds and the billows of smoke he blows at them.

THE SPEED screeches into a parking space right beside THE REPORTER who looks around casually and saunters over to the car. He is barely in before the car screeches away from the curb.

THE REPORTER(Voice Over)

Do you feel the tension between control and the underlying sense of chaos?

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. INTERIOR. DAY

THE INTERVIEWER places her pen down beside her pad of writing. She stares at THE PATIENT coolly. THE INTERVIEWER smiles and drags on her cigarette. Smoke wafts between THE PATIENT's teeth.

THE INTERVIEWER

There's something you need to understand. You're not going anywhere until you answer all my questions, and provide every detail I ask you to. So far, you're not telling us much. Names, places, objects, these things need to be specific, the pieces of the puzzle need to be identified if we are going to get anywhere. You're trapped here, do you understand that?

THE PATIENT

We are all trapped here

THE INTERVIEWER

I can leave anytime I want

THE PATIENT

Can you?

THE INTERVIEWER

What was in the bag?

THE SPEED'S CAR. INTERIOR. DAY

THE SPEED and THE REPORTER sit in the front seat of the car, parked out the front of an ordinary looking house in the middle of an ordinary suburban street. The canvas bag sits between them. THE SPEED watches THE REPORTER smoke, obviously uncomfortable sitting, doing nothing.

THE SPEED

We're waiting

THE REPORTER

I figured

THE SPEED

You seem depressed

THE REPORTER
Do I?

THE SPEED
What's it like? Being a reporter, Living your dream?

THE REPORTER
I'm living someone else's dream. We pretend like we are reporting for different sections, but really we all write for the obituaries. People are addicted to death and violence; it's a common theme to every lead story. Now the objective is to shock, awe and entertain, all at the same time. But our readers haven't earned the privilege. They've never spilt blood, nor had their own spilt...they're just tourists. The same kind of hypocrites you find cruising the meat department at the grocery store even though they would all be vegetarians if they had to slaughter the animals themselves....Clean, safe, convenient, polite, these are the catch-cries of the dominant and corrupt. Evil wears a sterile white coat, Mickey Mouse ears and big fucking smile. I work for him, not the people. I'm no more the bringer of truth than an advertising guy is. You could truly know more about the world from the stories we don't run to the stories we do.

THE SPEED
I think that you have to admit That your life is not working. You need to change into something new. Newer is always faster, faster is better. That's the problem with people. You are all too damn slow, and then you wonder why nothing feels connected. By the time you have arrived somewhere you have forgotten what it was like where you came from and so everything seems random and uncontrollable, but as you speed up, your pattern begins to emerge, all patterns begin to emerge and because all events no longer seem isolated, order is fathomed. And if you can speed up to the point of actually arriving somewhere while part of you is still where you have left, then all becomes connected, electrical charges become thoughts, the past and the future become now, and unity is achieved. Only then can you see how people really are.

THE REPORTER rolls down his window to flick his cigarette to the street.

THE REPORTER
Which is?

THE SPEED
Asleep

THE REPORTER
Yes

THE SPEED's phone rings. He flips it open

THE PATIENT(ON PHONE)

It's time

THE SPEED nods and pockets his phone. He grabs the bag from between their seats.

THE SPEED

Let's go

THE REPORTER

What's in the bag Vitesse?

THE SPEED

I don't know, I just know to take it in there

THE SPEED points to the house they are parked in front of.

THE REPORTER

Who's waiting in there for it?

THE SPEED shakes his head a little as if confused.

THE REPORTER

What's in the bag?

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. INTERIOR. DAY

THE INTERVIEWER stares at THE PATIENT hard.

THE INTERVIEWER

Seems to be the question everyone is asking.

THE PATIENT laughs, enjoying herself. She draws on the legal pad before her, her version of 'the scream'.

THE PATIENT

Do you know Munch? Norwegian expressionist? He eventually succumbed completely to schizophrenia. He...replaced the real world with the world of his own creation, his paintings. He became a total recluse; he surrounded himself with and would only talk to his canvasses, his children as he called them. When he was dissatisfied with one of his paintings, his child, he would beat it with a whip

THE INTERVIEWER writes 'Enkephalin' on a page of her pad. (A definition by way of subtitle appears; a molecule of 5 amino acids involved in the perception and integration of pain.)

THE PATIENT(cont)

Whole people work in much the same way. We can plan and design and manipulate our reality in the futile attempt to control the world,

but it will always remain futile because the parts don't work in unison, and we, as a people, perish. That's why I find this whole charade, your little interrogation, quite amusing. You want me to confess a crime, so that you can what? Punish it? Absolve it? Either is irrelevant, and misses the whole point.

THE INTERVIEWER

Which is?

THE PATIENT

In a world where each individual part , each living thing, is acting towards its own absolute destruction, what crimes still exist? Somebody is killed, two people are born, and on and on it goes until we hit critical mass. That's critical math. It's a losing battle and you want to what? Lock up your own soldiers? Medicate your own ranks into submission?

THE INTERVIEWER

Who was killed?

THE PATIENT

Shall I continue then?

THE INTERVIEWER nods.

THE PATIENT

They enter the home of Chaos and Disorder

SUBURBAN HOME. INTERIOR. DAY

CHAOS, a man, and DISORDER, a woman, weave like a double helix down a hall towards us.

DISORDER(Whispered Voice Over)

Disease and insanity were the black angels on guard at my cradle

CHAOS wraps his arm around THE SPEED's waist and directs him towards cushions before a coffee table covered in drug paraphernalia. CHAOS twirls a knife in his other hand. DISORDER takes THE REPORTER by the hand and draws him into the room. She traces an archaic symbol on his palm in blood. THE REPORTER jerks his hand back, afraid. The blood is gone. DISORDER laughs.

DISORDER

Come in, you're with friends

CHAOS

Dear to your end...You, take a seat.

CHAOS points to the sofa chair. A TV sits on a stool beside it. THE REPORTER moves hesitantly towards it. CHAOS slips the bag off THE SPEED's shoulder.

CHAOS

I want you to imagine something brother, you over there and me with this blade, ha-

THE SPEED stands down a black hall, CHAOS's blade flies through the air towards him. He is frozen. It strikes him between the eyes. THE SPEED reacts and finds himself still sitting before the table unharmed.

DISORDER

You play nice with these sweet boys

DISORDER pushes THE REPORTER down into the seat.

DISORDER

He does delight in breaking my toys

CHAOS

Just some harmless fun. No harm done

THE REPORTER

It's ok

DISORDER

Because, uh, what did you say your name was?

CHAOS

Don't fill his head with questions baby, it's clear he's come for answers, is that right friend, is that what you're after.

THE REPORTER

Uh, I'm just here with my friend Vitesse

CHAOS

Well then, any friend of Speed

DISORDER

Is our friend indeed

CHAOS and DISORDER rack up monster lines of coke and snort them off the coffee table.

CHAOS

Feeling the sensation of temptation friend?

DISORDER

Join us in the subjugation of complications

CHAOS

It's emancipation from Interrogation, a declaration of liberation

DISORDER

A celebration of disinformation

CHAOS

An approximation.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL. INTERIOR. DAY

THE INTERVIEWER

So they all took drugs?

THE PATIENT

Oh yeah

SUBURBAN HOUSE. INTERIOR. DAY

CHAOS and DISORDER dance around like feverish hallucinations. THE REPORTER watches THE SPEED do line after line in a blur. The screen on his chest interacts with the TV beside him. THE REPORTER looks confused, frightened, he tries to stand but is pushed back into his seat by DISORDER.

DISORDER

Here, take this

DISORDER drops some pills into THE REPORTER's hand. He looks at them hesitantly. Soft muzak plays in the background. Hard heels click across a floor. Trolleys are wheeled. THE REPORTER throws them down his throat.

CHAOS

So, what do you do? Or should I say, what do you let them do to you?

THE SPEED

He's a reporter

CHAOS and DISORDER exchange glances and smile devilishly.

CHAOS

A reporter you say?

DISORDER

Is that why you've come all this way?

CHAOS

Looking for a story friend?

DISORDER

To watch or to attend?

CHAOS

Then look no further. For you have brought with you the biggest story, right in that bag, in all its glory.

THE REPORTER

What's in the bag?

THE SPEED

My head

CHAOS and DISORDER laugh

THE REPORTER

Really, what's in the bag?

DISORDER

He wants to know

CHAOS

What's in the bag? I'll tell you friend, the first time she looked in there, you know what it taught her?

DISORDER

That she's the daughter of Chaos and Disorder

CHAOS

A reporter for all quarters

DISORDER(Whispers in the Reporter's ear)

A lamb to the slaughter

DISORDER throws her arms around THE REPORTER's shoulders, pinning him to the chair. She screams in his ear like a banshee.

HALLWAY. INTERIOR. NIGHT

We spiral down the darkened hallway to THE REPORTER who stands in a ball of light and speaks into the camera.

THE REPORTER

I used to think that we fed on the mystery of life only to digest its misery and cruelty. I thought the apathy we all excreted was the reason why we found ourselves continually in deep shit. I know now that's not the whole truth. It has been said that the sleep of reason begets monsters... The monstrous walk among us not as our enemies, but as our keepers. We crave their guidance and their attention, hypnotized by their TV signals and radio waves. We are successive generations of eternal children, unsure of who we are and where we are going. Willing victims and complicit tormentors.

The desolate.... the lost

SUBURBAN HOUSE. INTERIOR. DAY

CHAOS leaps over the table and plunges the blade down repeatedly into THE REPORTER's chest. Blood sprays in DISORDER's face, she is ecstatic. THE SPEED watches it occur in slow motion, he takes their primal deeds out of his mind, blurs them out of existence.

CHAOS

What dreadful art do they attend....and hone their blades to darkened ends

CHAOS draws his blade across The Reporter's throat. Blood gushes and bubbles. THE REPORTER's screen blinks out- Dead Air...

THE INTERVIEWER

Why did they kill him? What's in the bag?

THE PATIENT blows out smoke smiling, turning the Zippo over and over in her fingers.

THE PATIENT

You know there are some people who believe there is another planet, almost identical to our own, circling the sun in the same orbit as us, always six months ahead or six months behind and thus invisible to our telescopes. Now most people would call anyone who believed something like that crazy, but that doesn't diminish their belief anymore than they would diminish yours by calling you the same.

THE INTERVIEWER

Meaning?

THE PATIENT

I might feel a little more comfortable answering your questions if you shared a little information with me. It doesn't have to be relevant to this, but something personal, something that tells me enough to trust you with something I know.

THE INTERVIEWER

Quid pro co, like the movie

THE PATIENT

Exactly

THE INTERVIEWER

One question, then we get back to it, agreed?

THE PATIENT

Oh, sure. Hmm, lets see.

THE PATIENT watches THE INTERVIEWER recap her pen and place it on the pad. A swarm of patterns and interlocking pieces comprise the walls around THE INTERVIEWER.

THE PATIENT

Tell me about the first puzzle you solved.

For a moment THE INTERVIEWER stares off into space. Walls fall down around her. Time is confused. When THE INTERVIEWER speaks, it sounds as if from far away, long ago.

THE INTERVIEWER

The first puzzle? Well.....I guess I was about six or seven

THE INTERVIEWER is dressed as a child, clutching a doll to her chest. She is drawn down the dark hall, to the light that floods the end of it from an open door. Snatches of a nursery rhyme hang in the air as she approaches. The spectacle inside the room burns into her like radioactive light. She is engulfed in horror. The doll tumbles from her hands towards the floor. It's porcelain face shatters into pieces.

THE INTERVIEWER

It was broken. It's face was smashed. I took all those little pieces and I put her back together

THE INTERVIEWER sits in a ball of light in the dark, assembling the dolls face. When she has finished, the dolls face is barely recognizable.

THE INTERVIEWER

I made her as good as new. It was like it had never happened.

THE INTERVIEWER returns to the room from the memory. She gathers herself, lifts her pen and uncaps it.

THE INTERVIEWER

Now, tell me what was in the bag.

THE PATIENT

I'm trying to tell you, but I'm not doing a very good of it, am I? It may be easier to just show you.

The bag sits on the table between THE INTERVIEWER and THE PATIENT

THE PATIENT

Do you believe in God?

THE INTERVIEWER

What? I'm sorry?

THE PATIENT

God, do you have a relationship with God?

THE INTERVIEWER

No, I'm single

THE PATIENT

That's funny. It helps if you think of God as an architect.

GOD assembles the pieces of the room that THE INTERVIEWER and THE PATIENT occupy. GOD creates them both out of doll parts.

THE PATIENT(Voice Over-)

Architecture is all about the relationship between form and space. Everything must be accounted for, everything must occupy a very specific place and perform a very specific function.. If the architect imbues her design with forms that move, then their trajectory must be very carefully mapped out, their path as predetermined as the objects that remain stationary. A good architect doesn't just design for the moment, but presupposes the effect of all the other elements that come into play as time marches on and entropy engulfs all. The architect knows that different materials degrade at different rates, but joins them in symbiotic forms anyway. She doesn't realize it is cruel to create in such a way. Our beauty has blinded her to our suffering.....I had a son once, and she was very cruel to him.

GOD assembles a doll with the parts of different animals.

THE INTERVIEWER

Tell me about your son

GOD

On you I bestow this gift; never knowing who you are, nor knowing what you've missed.

GOD touches THE BOY on the forehead. THE BOY transforms through a variety of different animals, each traveling towards the house in which he lives.

THE PATIENT (Voice Over)

My boy was very young the last time I saw him. He understood the world through his imagination. He took on many forms and knew many things; but he could not escape his destiny.Every mask he tried to own, yet every path brought him home..... He was his mother's son and he depended on her love. But she failed him. We failed him...and something terrible happened. Can you guess what it is?

THE INTERVIEWER

I..I don't...

THE PATIENT

Do you know now what is in the bag?

THE INTERVIEWER approaches the sleeping BOY with a canvass sack, a cruel smile on her face like CHAOS and DISORDER's. In her eyes we see her as a child again, witnessing the horror of the bedroom.

THE PATIENT

Something was done long ago and it's echo is still bouncing around here isn't it? You needed help and brought us here, but relinquished all control. And now you have brought us full circle and control is taken from us.

MONTAGE

The characters disappear from their scenes, replaced by THE INTERVIEWER

THE INTERVIEWER

Why are you doing this to me?

THE PATIENT

This is about what you have done. This is about remembering. This is about what you once gave away to us, and what you now must own...And while these masks fall away, forget the world friend, for you are here now and will always be.... utterly alone....

THE INTERVIEWER sits in silence amongst the walls of the psychiatric institution. A crumpled pill cup falls from her fist. Her cigarette burns down to the filter and extinguishes.

FADE OUT