

CONDUIT

By

Ronald Frank Esq.

ronald.frank.esq@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The kids seem more interested in the contents of the Bug Catchers on their desks than the information on the board.

At the front of the classroom is a large picture of a red ladybug, with it's various features labeled.

TEACHER tries to keep the class focussed.

TEACHER

So, how many different species of ladybugs are there?

CLASS

Over 5000.

TEACHER

And almost all ladybugs eat what?

The class replies in unison.

CLASS

Aphids.

TEACHER

And what do aphids eat?

CLASS

Plants.

TEACHER

So do we like ladybugs?

CLASS

Yes!

Teacher removes the red ladybug picture from the board.

Behind it is a picture of a green ladybug, with pink spots on the back.

TEACHER

But this one, is not so nice. She eats plants. Lots of plants.

BETTY DONNELLY, 10 years old today, a plain girl, with thick spectacles, but still young enough to be considered cute, likes what she sees.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

But it's really pretty, Miss. Where does it live?

TEACHER

Betty, this one can only be found in a park right here in town. It's never been found anywhere else in the world.

BETTY

Wow!

The bell rings. Class is finished. The kids get up and leave.

Betty approaches the teacher, Bug Catcher in hand.

Inside is the Pink Backed Ladybug. The plant eater.

BETTY

Miss, can I take this one home tonight, to show my Mommy? I promise I'll take good care of it.

Teacher is happy to have someone show some real interest.

TEACHER

Of course you can, dear. But make sure to bring it back on Monday morning.

Betty is excited and skips towards the door. Thanking the Teacher as she goes.

BETTY

OK. Thank you, Miss. I promise.
Bye.

INT. JUDY'S KITCHEN - DAY

JUDY DONNELLY, late 30's, a handsome homemaker, is busy putting the finishing touches on her daughter's birthday cake - a red ladybug cake. 'Happy 10th Birthday Betty'.

The sounds of children playing outside can be heard through the open sliding glass door.

BETTY leads her troops inside.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

Mommy! Mommy! Mommy! Look what I found! A red ladybug. Just like my cake!

Betty holds up the bug catcher with the creature inside. She places it on the counter, beside the one from school.

JUDY

Wow. Look at that. Isn't he beautiful?

BETTY

Not 'He', Mommy, it's a 'She'.

Betty holds up the Bug Catcher from school.

BETTY

But I like this one better, Mommy. Isn't she pretty?

JUDY

She's beautiful, sweetie. Now go on out and play with your friends while I finish off your cake.

Betty runs out the back with her friends trailing behind her. Cheering as they go.

BETTY & ALL

Yay! Ladybug cake! Ladybug cake! Ladybug cake!

JACK DONNELLY, mid 40's, TV-game-show-host-good-looks, comes through the front door.

Judy gives him that look that says...

'I know. Don't tell me.

You tried to get out early, but the meeting ran long.

You really tried your best.

Now I'm disappointed in you but not really angry, let's move on'.

It was quite a look.

He can sense from all the way over there that he's in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Hi honey. Sorry I'm late. The deposition.

Jack comes into the kitchen, gives Judy a quick kiss.

JUDY

Thanks Babe! Now, go out and see what those kids are destroying in my garden.

Jack leaves out the back door.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Late in the afternoon, KANE DILLON, late 20's, Junior Vice President of Synergy Advertising is still meeting with the senior management team from World Water - the global leader in water supply.

An exploratory meeting to clear up any questions before the final pitch later in the week.

KANE

So, gentlemen, if I'm hearing you correctly, you're saying the real secret of your success is not so much your ability to find water that nobody else can find, but rather to tap into and divert the natural water course. You're hijacking it!

Kane's tone leaves no doubt that he is noticeably offended by this revelation.

The company executives are annoyed with his tone.

The head of the group, deputy to the CEO, coolly replies.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO

'Water Hijacking' is a bit of a dirty word in our business. The courts have declared that any water found more than 15 miles below the surface, is not a sovereign resource.

He gets up, moves to the side station, grabs a jelly donut and a bread knife.

He returns to the meeting table, places the donut in the middle.

(CONTINUED)

He slices the donut, Jelly oozes out.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Basically, once we get past the crust, the jelly's ours. It's a free for all. It's just like being in international waters at sea.

KANE
Yes, but surely by tracking the water source back and then tapping into it at that 15 mile mark, you're essentially stealing water that doesn't belong to you?

Kane is seemingly imploring them to see the error of their ways.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Not according to the courts.

KANE
And the court of public opinion?

The Deputy CEO can't help but smile.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Well, that's why we're here, isn't it?

His team share smiles.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
We need you to spin a campaign that makes us look like the savior in a world where clean water has become the rarest, most valuable commodity of all. And that world, I can assure you, is not far away.

One of the team members open his laptop, logs on using the DNA scanner, a special sensor now on all web connected devices.

Quietly but quickly, he checks the latest commodity prices.

A web page with Gold, Silver, Oil and...Water - up 5%.

Kane replies to the Deputy CEO.

KANE
Sure. No doubt. And I guess that makes your Mr. Johnson just about
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KANE (cont'd)
one of the most powerful guys
around, right?

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Well, not yet. But it won't be
long. And certainly, based on our
campaign contributions, once the
Republicans are back in the White
House, there's not much chance that
any court will stand in our way.

Kane now moves quickly from moral dilemma to corporate
reality.

KANE
OK. Look. Synergy Advertising know
we can put together a great
campaign for you and we really
appreciate the opportunity to give
you a proposal.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Great!

The Deputy CEO gets up. He has all he needs.

KANE
So I'll give you a call in a couple
of days and we can set up the final
presentation for Mr. Johnson.

WATER WORD DEPUTY CEO
Thank you. Looking forward to it.

They shake hands and the team leaves.

Kane drops down in his chair, leans back and lets out a huge
sigh.

How is he going to do this? *Should* he do this?

He turns to his computer, using his fingerprint and retinal
scanner to log on (a much more complicated procedure than
the DNA scanner).

He scans through cascaded web page windows with the
headlines ...

'World Water is Raping Our Mother'

'World Water - Pirates of the Deep'.

INT. JACK'S STUDY AT HOME - NIGHT

Jack is researching a pending case by reading through the online law journals. Betty runs in, dressed in her pyjamas.

BETTY
Goodnight Daddy!

Jack breaks his concentration, swivels his chair around just in time to pick her up in mid-stride and give her a kiss and a hug.

JACK
Goodnight sweetie. See you in the morning, OK?

BETTY
OK.

Jack puts her down and she heads for the door.

He returns to his work, logging back on to his computer with his DNA scanner.

He turns around again to see Betty just getting to the doorway.

JACK
Sweet dreams baby girl. I love you.

Betty keeps walking, not even turning around.

BETTY
Love you too!

INT. JUDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JUDY is speaking to Jack's Mom on the video phone.

Betty has come to say goodnight to JUDY but gets excited when she sees GRANDMA, late 60's, the grandparent you always liked.

BETTY
Goodnight Grandma!

GRANDMA
Goodnight young lady! And we'll see you next weekend.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY
OK. Grandma. Bye.

GRANDMA
Bye sweetie. Goodnight JUDY.

JUDY
Goodnight Crystal. See you next
weekend.

Judy ends the call.

She removes the retinal scanner and the fingerprint sensor from the bed and places them on the bedside table.

Betty has long been curious about this procedure. Tonight she decides to ask why it is so.

BETTY
Mommy, how come you and I can't use
the phone and the computer just
like Daddy and everyone else?

Judy, somewhat surprised by the question, takes a moment to consider her answer.

JUDY
Well, Betty, now that you're a big
girl, I'll tell you a big secret.
Now it's really important, OK?

BETTY
OK Mommy.

JUDY
OK. You know what DNA is, right?

Betty knows this one. They learned all about DNA in school.

She chimes in, almost before Judy has finished speaking.

Half chanting, half singing each syllable as she breaks it down.

BETTY
De-oxy-ri-bose Nu-cle-ic Ac-id!

Judy is impressed by her daughter's academic prowess.

It helps to reassure her that indeed Betty is ready for this.

JUDY

Yes sweetie. That's right.

Her tone becomes more serious.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Well, you and I have a very special type of DNA. Our DNA is so special, if we use it to log on to a computer, we can make changes to any information in there and it will become permanent for everyone else in the world.

Betty is confused.

BETTY

But how Mommy?

JUDY

Well honey, you remember your Poppa Tim?

BETTY

Not really Mommy. He died before I was born.

JUDY

I know sweetie, but you've seen the photos, right?

BETTY

Uh huh.

JUDY

Well, your Poppa Tim was the man who actually invented the World Wide Web.

Betty is excited. This is a big deal.

BETTY

Poppa Tim invented the computer?
WOW!

JUDY

No sweetie. Not the computer, the World Wide Web. The Web. You know, 'WWW'. He invented the special code for the internet. It's like the language for all the internet sites in the world. The code they use to talk to each other.

(CONTINUED)

Betty is a little less excited now, but nonetheless still impressed.

BETTY

Ohh. Wow. That's pretty neat.

JUDY

Yes. It's called the 'http:// protocol'.

Judy reaches for the 'Reader' (a futuristic extension of today's eReaders) sitting on her bed.

She shows Betty an open web page and points to the http:// protocol.

JUDY

You see, every single page of information on the internet, has a special code to identify it. Just like this one. And they all start like this.

BETTY

Ohh. OK. But I still don't understand why we can't use the DNA scanner to log on?

JUDY

Well, when Poppa Tim started the World Wide Web, he was worried that some people would use it for bad things. So, he put a copy of his DNA into that special code. It's hidden inside these little lines.

Judy points to the '//' in the http protocol.

JUDY (CONT'D)

So, if someone was using the internet for something bad, Poppa Tim could just put his special code in and stop them. If they changed anything, he could change it back.

BETTY

Wow.

JUDY

Of course back then, the internet wasn't as big as it is today. We had telephones like the old one you saw up at the cabin, and they

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JUDY (cont'd)
didn't need the internet to work.
We had lots of books and newspapers
to get our information from.
Nothing as fancy as these Readers
we have today. TV and radio never
used to be on the internet either.
Not like today. Now everything we
do needs the internet to work. It's
the conduit for all information.
You know, like a tunnel that
everything must pass through.

Betty starts to lose interest. It was exciting at first, but
now seems a little too complicated.

JUDY (CONT'D)
So just imagine what would happen
if you logged on with your DNA and
changed some very important
information about ladybugs.

BETTY
Can we, Mummy? Can we do that?

Judy thinks for a moment.

Obviously Betty is excited about the prospect.

Maybe now is the time to sure her the true power and the
true danger.

JUDY
OK. Let's try.

Judy takes the Reader, holds her finger over the DNA
scanner, deletes the http:// section, re-types it in reverse
order.

She's in.

She clicks on an icon for Yoogle (the result of a
Yahoo/Google merger). Search window appears.

She types in 'ladybug'.

A web page with lots of ladybug data appears.

The first section explains there are over 5,000 species.

JUDY
OK. So, how about we change this?
Let's say there are only 5 species
of ladybug.

(CONTINUED)

Judy makes the change. Betty looks worried.

BETTY

But what about all the rest Mummy?

JUDY

Well, if we change it, they will be gone. At least as far as the rest of the world knows.

Betty is now scared. She panics.

BETTY

No Mummy! Stop! Stop it! Change it back! Quickly!

Judy has made her point.

She does as Betty requests.

Status Quo is returned.

JUDY

So you see sweetie, that's why Poppa Tim put another special code into the DNA Data Bank. So we don't change anything accidentally. If anyone with our DNA tries to log on using a DNA scanner, it won't work. The only way we can log on with our DNA is to delete the 'http://' bit of the address, then type it in, in reverse order and then use the DNA scanner.

BETTY

Wow. Poppa Tim sure was pretty smart, wasn't he Mommy?

JUDY

He sure was sweetie. So, this way he could make sure that even people from his own family couldn't log on using DNA, unless they used the special way. Unless they knew the secret.

BETTY

Maybe Poppa Tim was worried about you being naughty, Mommy?

JUDY

Maybe he was worried about you too?

Both have a little laugh and Judy starts to tickle Betty.

She stops abruptly.

JUDY

Now, one more thing. Poppa Tim was also worried that if we were the only people in the world who couldn't log on with our DNA, people would get suspicious and not trust us anymore. Nobody would want to be our friends. So, he also put some other people's DNA into the special DNA Data Bank, so they can't log on either. They have to use the eye scanner and the fingerprint scanner just like us. They don't really have special DNA like you and me though. Even if they use our little trick, it still won't work. But they have to use these special scanners, no matter what.

Betty looks to the retinal scanner and fingerprint scanner on the bedside table.

BETTY

But why do you use these things Mommy? You could just use the tricky way.

JUDY

Yes, I could, but then someone might find out about it. Poppa Tim always told me it was very important not to let anyone know.

BETTY

Even Daddy?

JUDY

Yes sweetie, even Daddy.

BETTY

Gee Mommy, looks like Poppa Tim was really tricky. I wish he was still alive today.

(CONTINUED)

JUDY

Me too, sweetie. Now, you'd better get off to bed. We've got a long drive up to the cabin tomorrow.

BETTY

OK Mommy.

Betty gives Judy a big hug and a kiss.

BETTY

Goodnight Mommy. I love you.

JUDY

I love you too sweetie. Now, remember, you can't tell anyone else about our special secret - not even Daddy!

BETTY

OK Mommy. I promise.

Judy holds up her right pinkie finger and with a very serious face, looks Betty right in the eyes.

JUDY

Do you Pinkie Promise?

Betty giggles, but nonetheless present her pinkie.

BETTY

Yes Mommy. I Pinkie Promise!

Betty runs out the door, off to bed.

Judy sits back in the bed, looks over towards the dresser at a photo of her father.

She's glad that Betty finally knows their secret but worries how she will handle this new responsibility.

So much responsibility, for such a young girl. But she had to know eventually.

She is a smart girl and old enough to deal with it - hopefully.

INT. WORLD WATER CONTROL BOOTH - DAY

MICK JOHNSON, late 50's, 6'4", 295 lbs, the burly, gruff but likable Australian CEO of World Water, the world's leading provider of water, stands at the main console of what looks very much like a miniature version of NASA's Mission Control Room.

Mick moves in on one of the screens in front of him.

The cameras positioned outside the control room, show hundreds of locals from the African nation.

They're dancing and chanting. Waving sticks and sarongs.

Mick tries for a moment to convince himself they are cheering him on.

He knows better.

A man at one of the consoles is tracking the drill.

DRILL CONSOLE OPERATOR
14.5 miles, all OK.

A cautious smile starts to appear on Mick's face.

He's been this close before and things have still gone wrong.

A junior exec from his team realizes the revenue potential of this contract is the biggest in the company's history. He's nervous.

WATER WORLD JUNIOR EXECUTIVE
Looking good Mr. Johnson! We're almost there. This is the big one!

MICK JOHNSON
Yeah, so far so good son. Keep it in ya pants though, we're not there yet.

Mick moves forward to one of the screens in front of him to the left.

Current commodity prices - Gold, Silver, Oil and ...Water. The price is moving up by 5% of yesterday's trade.

WORLD WATER JUNIOR EXECUTIVE
Yes sir, Mr. Johnson. Absolutely. Not there yet, for sure. But so far so good.

(CONTINUED)

A deep voice calmly, softly bellows to Mick's right.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

Mr. Johnson, it looks like you have indeed done the impossible.

Mick turns to his right.

MICK JOHNSON

No wurries there, Mr. President. I told ya we'd get the job done.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

Yes. Indeed you did. The people of The Republic of Chad will certainly long owe you a great debt of gratitude.

Mick is now a little concerned.

Last time he heard these words after finding water, a *debt* was exactly what he ended up with.

The military government of that country quickly took over their water plant and kicked them out of the country.

He mumbles to himself.

MICK JOHNSON

Let's hope that's the only debt you plan to leave me.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

I'm sorry, what was that?

Without missing a beat, Mick replies.

MICK JOHNSON

Uh, I was just sayin', the best bet is always to leave it me.

Both men smile at each other. Nervous smiles from both of them.

The air gets a little tense.

The console operator continues the count.

DRILL CONSOLE OPERATOR

15.1 miles. We're below the mark.
15.2...15.3...STRIKE! We've got it!

The room erupts into cheers, claps and back slaps.

(CONTINUED)

The President of Chad turns and offers his outstretched hand to Mick.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD
Congratulations Mr. Johnson. Thank
you.

Mick accepts the handshake.

MICK JOHNSON
Thank you, Mr. President.

Mick is really starting to get nervous now. He just doesn't like the look in the President's eyes.

The President's body guards subtly move a little closer to their boss.

Suddenly, the door bursts open.

In comes around 50 heavily armed men, some in uniform, some not.

Mick reels around.

MICK JOHNSON
What the bloody hell is this?

Mick quickly turns to the eager Junior Exec by his side.

He yells to his young charge.

MICK JOHNSON
Bundy Rum, son! Bundy Rum!

Far from calling for a drink of the iconic Queensland liquor, Bundaberg Rum, this is a code.

The young man quickly puts his hand in his pants pocket, removes his BlackBerry, just enough so he can see it and presses a button on the side.

It beeps and vibrates. Message sent.

He confirms the transmission to his boss.

WORLD WATER JUNIOR EXECUTIVE
Done Sir!

Just as he does, armed guards surround all World Water staff, guns pointed.

Mick now has two non-uniformed men attached, one on each arm.

The President of Chad now has a chilled ice tone to his voice. He remains polite.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

I think we can take it from here,
Mr. Johnson. Thank you.

MICK JOHNSON

Jesus, mate! Why the bloody hell
did ya have to go and do this for?

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

Mr. Johnson, this is *our* water. It
is on *our* land.

Mick fights against his restraints but fails to break their grip.

MICK JOHNSON

My arse it is! It's *under* your
land. The courts have said...

The President of Chad has had enough of this insolence.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

Silence! *I* am the court in Chad,
Mr. Johnson. *I* say it belongs to
us.

Mick calms. He'll just have to wait for help to arrive.

MICK JOHNSON

Well, fella, you've just bought
yourself a Category 5 Shit Storm
now, so good luck.

The President of Chad glares at Mick. Who the hell does he think he is?

He motions to the guards.

PRESIDENT OF CHAD

Remove him!

INT. COMMAND POST ON USS OBAMA - DAY

The pride of the US Navy lies in wait, just off the African coast.

At the helm is ADMIRAL CHARLES 'CHUCK' MC FARLANE, stocky, silver haired, early 50's.

He receives an announcement from the communication hub.

(CONTINUED)

RADIO MAN
Message from Black Sheep, sir. Code
Purple, sir.

The Admiral was half expecting this. He mumbles, mainly to himself, but not concerned at who else might hear.

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Shit! Arrogant Bastard.

Admiral Chuck instantly clicks into combat mode. He barks his orders to Radio Man.

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Get me the Chief of Staff!

RADIO MAN
Yes sir.

The Admiral turns to his second in command. There is a job to be done.

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Lieutenant, give the order for
Operation Black Sheep. Let's get
this clown back home.

FIRST LIEUTENANT
Yes sir! Right away, sir!

The crew launches the rescue.

The skipper waits for the call to be connected to the White House.

INT. OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF - DAY

United States Chief of Staff is getting and update from Admiral Chuck, via video phone.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Admiral, how can I help you?

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Sir, the President asked to be
updated if we launched Black Sheep.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Yes she did. And?

(CONTINUED)

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Sir, we just went hot. It's a go.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Thank you Admiral, I'll inform the
President.

ADMIRAL CHUCK
Thank you, sir.

The Chief of Staff, disconnects and heads for the Oval
Office.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Chief of Staff enters, quickly but calmly.

Just another day in the White House. Nothing he hasn't been
through many times before.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Madam President, I've just spoken
with Admiral Mc Farlane on board
the Obama.

The PRESIDENT, the Democrat's least popular President ever,
is sitting in her chair, looking out the window.

She turns upon hearing her Chief of Staff's update.

The current President of the United States is a female dwarf
of Asian descent.

PRESIDENT
Johnson?

CHIEF OF STAFF
He requested an evac, ma'am. Guess
it got a bit dicey with the
Chadians.

PRESIDENT
Of course it did. What the hell did
we expect?

It was rhetorical question. They all expected it would come
to this. Still, worth the risk for a little extra water.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Do we know if he got the water?

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF OF STAFF

Not yet ma'am, but we have to assume that if he was still searching the Chadians wouldn't have shut him down.

The President slowly gets up from her chair.

She walks to the window.

She gazes out at a statue of President Lincoln that she has had placed in the gardens.

She directs her question to Lincoln.

PRESIDENT

Who'd have ever thought the day would come when we were willing to start a fight over water?

EXT. JACK'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jack is putting the last couple of bags into the trunk of the car.

He looks to the upstairs window.

JACK

Come on you two! We have to get going!

INT. JUDY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Judy is standing at the dresser, putting her earrings in.

She takes one last look at her father's picture, in a frame, on the dresser, then walks out the door.

INT. DONNELLY HOUSE - DAY

Judy walks along the upstairs hallway to Betty's room.

JUDY

Come on sweetie. Let's go. Daddy's waiting.

Betty is still in her room, but on the way.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY (O.S.)
OK Mommy. Coming!

EXT. JACK'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Judy and Betty make their way down the driveway to the car.

Jack closes the trunk, walks around to the passenger side of the car and opens the doors for the two girls.

He bows - as any chivalrous gent would.

JACK
Me ladies.

Judy acknowledges the tongue-in-cheek, though nonetheless kind gesture.

JUDY
Why thank you, kind sir.

Betty is not to be outdone. She adds her thanks with the air of a lady.

BETTY
Why thank you, kind sir.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

The girls are giggling about their little role play.

Jack has come around to the front of the car.

He gets in. Shuts the door. Starts the car.

JACK
Right, ladies, let's go.

The car reverses out the driveway and heads off down the street.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Later, the family is well on the way to their mountain cabin for a weekend break.

It's late afternoon but the heavy rain storm makes it seem much later, almost night.

Despite the weather, all are contented.

Judy turns to the backseat and sees Betty happily doing a word puzzle.

INT. JUDY'S DAD'S CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A young girl and boy are sitting in the back seat.

Their Mom is looking back from the front seat, just checking all is OK.

The girl is reading, the boy is looking out the window.

YOUNG JUDY
How much longer, Mommy?

JUDY'S MOM
Not much longer pumpkin.

JUDY'S BROTHER
Hey Dad, are we going to have time to go fishing this afternoon?

JUDY'S DAD
Don't think so son. That storm looks like it's here for a while. Let's get an early start in the morning instead, hey?

JUDY'S BROTHER
OK Pop.

The Mom turns back to the front of the car.

Suddenly, BANG!

END FLASHBACK

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

The car starts to tremble, like they've driven off onto a bumpy road.

The car swerves uncontrollably on the wet road.

Jack struggles with the wheel, desperately fighting for control.

JUDY is panicked, scared.

(CONTINUED)

JUDY

Oh my God! What's happening?

Jack continues to wrestle the steering wheel for control of the wayward vehicle.

JACK

We just a blew a tire! Hang on!

BETTY

Mommy! Mommy! What's wrong?

JUDY

It's OK sweetie. Just hang on.

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Through torrential rain, the car is swerving across the road, heading for the cliff.

Three large trees, evenly spaced, are all that stands between the swerving car and a deadly drop.

The car is slowing as it approaches the edge of the cliff, but still sliding. Looks like it will hit a tree.

Luckily, the giant roots of these massive trees have pushed to the surface and in so doing, created a slope back towards the road.

It's helping to slow the car.

Gently, almost deliberately, the car comes to rest against one of the trees, nudging it ever so slightly.

The impact causes only a very minor dent in the bodywork on the passenger side.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

With the car now stopped, Jack is still grasping the wheel tightly, breathing rapidly.

Judy still has herself braced against the door, the floor, the seat and the dashboard - using every part of her body to hold herself into position.

Betty is in the backseat, tightly gripping the inside door handle.

Her puzzle book is strewn on the seat beside her, along with her markers.

(CONTINUED)

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Jack hurriedly but carefully makes his way to the trunk and removes the spare wheel and the jack.

He comes back to the rear wheel hub, drops the new tire on the ground and begins to position the jack, mindful of not getting too close to the edge.

Suddenly, CRACK!

A deafening clap of thunder accompanied by a flash of lightning.

Behind Jack, one of the other big trees has been hit by the lightning strike and is splitting right down the middle.

Jack hasn't seen it.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Judy saw the strike and can see the tree splitting.

She opens the door slightly to warn Jack.

She screams loudly, to be heard over the pounding rain.

JUDY

Jack! Look out! The tree!

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Jack looks to Judy and then to the tree.

He sees it falling.

He can see it will hit the car.

He quickly gets to his feet and drags Judy from the car.

JACK

C'mon! Quick! It's going to hit the car! Get out!

Betty is still in the car.

JUDY

Betty! Sweetie! Get out on your side! Quickly! Quickly!

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Betty struggles to find the seatbelt release.

She's sitting on it.

She was tossed around when the car was swerving and has not yet adjusted herself back to a position where she can unbuckle.

She's scared.

BETTY

Mommy! I can't! I can't get it off!
Help me Mommy!

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Judy frantically tries to open the rear door on the passenger side, but it's locked.

She now screams even louder for Betty to get out.

JUDY

Betty! Get out of the car! Get out
now! Get out!

Through the closed window she can see Betty struggling with her seatbelt, now in tears.

She can't get out.

Suddenly, CRASH!

The tree hits the car.

The force of the blow, pushes Judy and Jack back from the car.

Judy loses her footing and starts to slip off the cliff.

She reaches for Jack. He grabs her arm.

Just as it looks like he will pull her back, the tree on top of the car, rolls slightly, pushing a branch towards Jack.

It only barely touches him but the force is just enough to throw him off balance.

He lurches forward towards the cliff edge, losing hold of Judy.

She falls down, into the dark abyss.

(CONTINUED)

Jack continues towards the cliff edge. He can't stop the momentum.

He falls off too.

EXT. WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Police and emergency services vehicles have arrived at the scene.

Jack's car sits crushed under the fallen tree.

Through the shattered glass of the rear, driver's side window, the bloodied head and face of Betty is just visible.

Surely she is dead?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Betty is lying in bed with the numerous life support systems hooked up to her.

She's alive. Just.

Suddenly, she wakes with an almighty start.

She screams and whoops uncontrollably.

BETTY

AHHHH! AHHHH! WOOOOO! WOOOOO!
AHHHHHHH!

A nurse rushes in to calm her down.

She quickly takes a needle and injects Betty with a tranquilizer.

As the medication starts to take affect, she comforts the patient.

NURSE

It's OK. Calm down. Just relax.
It's OK. Your going to be OK. Just relax.

Betty's breathing slows, her muscles relax.

She has almost drifted off to sleep when, through half closed, hazy eyes, she sees something.

The image of a woman.

(CONTINUED)

It looks like her Mom in the doorway, walking with an IV trolley drip.

She's waving.

Betty responds, drowsily, only really audible to herself.

BETTY

Mommy? Mommy? I'm OK, Mommy. I love you.

She drifts off to sleep.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The nurse is checking on Betty when she quietly wakes.

BETTY

Can you get my Mommy?

NURSE

Hi honey. Your Mommy's not here right now. You just try to get some rest.

She doesn't want to rest. She stomps her hand on the bed.

BETTY

No! I want to see my Mommy! Where is she? I know she's OK. Where is she?

Betty looks over Nurse's shoulder and sees the back of a woman walking past the door.

From this angle, to the back and the side, it looks a lot like Judy.

BETTY

Mommy! Mommy! I'm here!

The woman in the doorway, hearing this, turns around and looks at Betty.

It's not Judy!

The woman has a look of sympathetic sadness in her eyes.

Betty is shocked. Scared. Alone.

She looks at Nurse. Eyes wide open.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

My Mommy's dead, isn't she? And
Daddy too? I saw them fall off the
cliff. I remember now.

Tears well up in Betty's eyes.

She turns away from from Nurse and stares blankly out the
window.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A few days later, Betty is recovering well, but has become
completely withdrawn. Her world has fallen apart.

She has her TV on, but is still staring blankly out the
window.

There is an elderly man doing the rounds of the hospital,
bringing them stories for their Readers.

BOOK MAN, mid 70's, non-threatening, comes up to her bed.

BOOK MAN

Good afternoon young lady. And how
are you feeling today?

Betty would rather be left alone, but her parents raised a
good child.

BETTY

Hi. I'm fine thank you. How are
you?

BOOK MAN

You know, I'm just great! But I do
have a little problem. Maybe you
can help me?

BETTY

Why? What's wrong?

BOOK MAN

Well, you see, they've given me
this new Reader, and I just can't
seem to update the books in it. Do
you think you could take a look at
it for me?

Book Man hands Betty the Reader.

She takes it and of course is quickly able to press a few
buttons and download the books.

(CONTINUED)

There's a World War II history book, a book on coral reefs and even a book on butterflies and insects - including ladybugs - with lots of pictures.

Betty smiles for the first time since the accident.

She hands the Reader back to Book Man.

BETTY

Here you go. It's all fixed. You just have to hold this button and click here.

BOOK MAN

Wow! That's great! You're pretty smart, huh? Tell you what, why don't you keep this one until tomorrow. There's some really good books in there about butterflies and fishes and all sorts of things.

Betty, remembering her manners, accepts.

BETTY

OK. Thank you.

Book Man's work is done. Time to go.

BOOK MAN

OK, partner. I'll see you tomorrow then.

BETTY

OK. Bye.

Book Man continues on his rounds and Betty starts to read her Reader.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Betty has fallen asleep, her Reader still on, resting on her legs.

The nurse comes in to check her charts.

There is a big red bold mark on the chart - 'Critical Infusion! Urgent!'

The nurse looks at Betty with a look of sorrow.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Betty is awake now and reading her Reader.

The TV news is on in the background. A story comes on about her family.

She sees her picture on the TV and immediately focuses on it.

TV NEWSREADER

And finally tonight, a sombre update in the story of little Betty Donnelly, daughter of Jack Donnelly one-time child actor and host of the popular kids game show 'I Told You So'. As you will recall, Betty miraculously survived the horrible accident that claimed the life of her parents just a few days ago. Well now, hospital sources tell us that Betty has a rare genetic condition that must be treated in the next 48 hours, or she will die. The gene that they need is maternally dormant and can only be found in a blood relative of her mother. Sadly, Betty is an only child and her mother lost her only brother in boating tragedy when he was just 17 years old. So, tragically, it seems that there is no hope for this brave little girl.

Betty can't believe what she's hearing. Nobody has told her any of this. It can't be true.

She starts to hyperventilate.

One of the nurses, who has seen the news broadcast in another room, comes running in to Betty's room.

NURSE 2

Calm down honey. Everything's OK. Just try to relax.

BETTY

No! It's not true! Is it? Please tell me it's not true!

The nurse administers a tranquilizer.

Betty is quickly sedated.

(CONTINUED)

The TV news broadcast continues in the background.

CO-NEWSREADER

That really is a terrible, terrible story. Certainly our thoughts and prayers are with brave little Betty tonight.

INT. MRS. DILLON'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The next day, at a quaint little coffee shop, the owner MRS. DILLON, later 40's, is warming the milk for a cappuccino and watching the end of a news broadcast.

She seems mesmerized by the TV.

Without turning off the steam and without looking, she reaches for a cloth to wipe down the steam nozzle.

She misses. She has nothing in her hand.

As if in a trance, she still tries to wipe down the steam nozzle.

She scolds her hand.

MRS. DILLON

Shit! Ouch! Damn it!

She drops the milk jug on the floor and quickly fumbles around, trying to wipe it up.

LUCY, one of her staff, comes to help.

LUCY

Are you alright Mrs. D? What's wrong?

Mrs. Dillon gets to her feet and looks towards the TV.

MRS. DILLON

The news. Did you see? That little girl.

Lucy looks to the TV where they are now highlighting the top story of the day, the Presidential re-polling.

TV NEWSREADER

And just recapping our major story tonight, IOWA and CALIFORNIA will go to the polls again, 2 weeks from today, due to unexplained voting

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TV NEWSREADER (cont'd)
errors in last month's Presidential
election. The winner of this
re-polling of these two states will
be our next President.

The backdrop behind the newsreader shows the two
Presidential candidates.

Lucy seems confused by her boss's comment. Is she calling
the President a 'little girl'?

LUCY
The President?

MRS. DILLON
No. Not her. The little girl. The
Donnelly girl. She's dying.

LUCY
Oh. Yeah. Terrible, isn't it?

MRS. DILLON
But I can help. We can save her.

Mrs. Dillon drops the milk jug again.

She tosses the cleaning cloths on the counter.

She grabs her bag and her car keys and comes out from behind
the counter.

She heads for the door.

MRS. DILLON
Sorry, Lucy. I have to go. I'll be
back soon. Bye.

EXT. MRS. DILLON'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mrs. Dillon runs from her shop.

She gets into a 1976 classic powder blue VW Beetle.

It blows a puff of smoke on start up and jerks out of the
parking space, nudging the bumper of the car in front just a
little.

She putts off down the road.

INT. SYNERGY ADVERTISING - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The lift doors open, and out comes Mrs. Dillon, in a hurry!

She zooms up to the receptionist. Her quick, tiny steps almost making it look as though her feet don't even touch the ground.

She's a little short of breath.

MRS. DILLON

I need to speak with Kane Dillon please. Urgently.

RECEPTIONIST

Certainly ma'am. Please take a seat.

Mrs. Dillon takes a seat.

The receptionist makes the call.

A few moments go by.

To Mrs. Dillon, clearly agitated, it seems like an eternity.

Two men enter the reception area, from a hallway.

The first, older, very distinguished and impeccably dressed, sees Mrs. Dillon and smiles.

She returns the smile and gets up from her seat, appearing to address the older man.

MRS. DILLON

Hi baby! Sorry to disturb you at work.

She walks right past the older man, and embraces the younger man. Her son. Kane Dillon.

KANE

Hi Mom! No problem. What's up?

MRS. DILLON

We need to talk. Privately.

KANE

OK. Come on in.

Kane leads his Mom into his office.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - DAY

He may not be running the place - not yet - but he's certainly done very well for himself.

Mrs. Dillon never grows weary of admiring his achievements. She takes a brief moment to bask in his successes.

He takes a seat on his desk while Mom sits in a guest chair.

Beside her are the boards for a big presentation Kane is working on for World Water.

MRS. DILLON

Hey, these look great! I didn't know you were working with World Water.

KANE

We're not, Mom. Not yet anyway. We've got our final presentation in a couple of days, but it looks like we'll miss out.

MRS. DILLON

Awww! That's too bad baby.

KANE

So what's up Mom? Why are you so excited? What's happened?

MRS. DILLON

Well, honey...

She pauses, struggling to find the right way to start the conversation.

MRS. DILLON

You see, well, I sort of lied to you before, about your father.

Kane was certainly not expecting this. He looks at his Mom with a quizzical stare, eyes squinting slightly.

Too late to stop now. Mrs. Dillon keeps going.

MRS. DILLON

I wasn't really raped when I was 19. I know who your father is. Or was.

Kane can't quite believe what he's hearing.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

What? But you always told me it was a stranger and that's why you never knew who my father was.

MRS. DILLON

I know baby. And I'm so, so sorry. I don't know what to say. I was always just too embarrassed, I guess. And he died in a horrible accident, just two days after we made love. Made you. I just figured you didn't really need to know.

KANE

But why didn't you just tell me? Who is he? Who was he?

MRS. DILLON

His name was David Lee. He was only 17 when we got together. It was just one crazy night. I mean I liked him, but it was nothing serious. Not to either of us. Two days later, he died in a boating accident.

Kane is still stunned.

KANE

But...

MRS. DILLON

About a month later, I realized I was pregnant. It was David's child. It was you.

KANE

Mom, I just can't believe that you didn't tell me this before. Why?

MRS. DILLON

I don't know baby. I just don't know.

KANE

And why are you telling me now?

MRS. DILLON

It's that little girl on TV. The Donnelly girl. Her mother was David Lee's sister. She's your cousin!

(CONTINUED)

KANE

What? WOW! That's...That's...

MRS. DILLON

Have you seen the news? She's dying. She needs a transfusion from a direct blood relative. That's you! You're the only one left in the whole world. We have to help her!

Kane is understandably distant, even numb, as he tries to comprehend the enormity of the news.

He has only just processed the news about who his father was and that he is now dead.

Now he has to comprehend his new responsibility - to save his baby cousin.

MRS. DILLON

Kane! Baby! Do you understand me? You have to help that little girl. You're the only one who can!

Kane jumps up. Ready for action.

KANE

Yeah. Yes. Right. Yes Mom. I've got it. Of course I'll help her. What do I have to do?

MRS. DILLON

We have to go to the hospital right now. They said she has less than 48 hours to live if she doesn't get the transfusion.

KANE

OK. Great! Let's go now. I'll get my car and meet you out front.

MRS. DILLON

It's OK baby, my car is out the front. Let's take that.

Kane gives a look of 'do we have to?' at the prospect of getting into his Mom's old bomb of a car.

Reluctantly, he goes along. He has to, she's already on her way out the door!

EXT. HOSPITAL CAR PARK - DAY

Kane and his Mom putt in to the car park. Leaving a trail of exhaust smoke behind them.

The car parks.

The two get out.

As they head towards the entrance, they hear a loud hissing noise from behind them.

Kane turns to see a cloud of steam coming from the rear-mounted engine.

He alerts Mom.

KANE

Hey Mom!

Mrs. Dillon, now a few steps ahead, turns back to her son.

MRS. DILLON

That's OK, baby. It always does that.

Kane can only shake his head as he catches up to his Mom.

They go inside.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

Kane and his Mom head for the lift bay. They know where to go.

While they're waiting for the lift, Mrs. Dillon sees the gift shop.

MRS. DILLON

Let's get some flowers.

Kane follows and stands by as his Mom selects an economical bouquet.

As she is fumbling in her purse for correct change, Kane sees a promotion for the Hospital Fund Raising Raffle.

First prize is \$750,000 in cash.

Second Prize is a C-series Mercedes Benz.

He looks out at the VW Beetle they just arrived in.

(CONTINUED)

He buys a ticket.

The two head back to the lifts.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

Kane and his Mom arrive at the hospital to meet with GRANDMA and GRANDPA, Jack's parents, Betty's grandparents. They are now her legal guardians.

They have arranged to meet in the hospital waiting room.

Mrs. Dillon recognizes their faces from the TV.

She approaches Grandma first.

MRS. DILLON

Hi. Mrs. Donnelly. We're the
Dillons. Nice to meet you. Thanks
for agreeing to see us.

GRANDMA

Hello. This is my husband Rhys.

MRS. DILLON

Hello sir. Very nice to meet you.

All eyes turn to Kane.

MRS. DILLON

And this is my son, Kane.

Grandma pauses for a moment, looking at Kane.

She is sure she can see Judy's eyes in him.

She approaches him. Hugs him.

Kane is slightly uncomfortable, but returns the hug.

GRANDMA

So nice to meet you young man.
Thank you for coming forward. You
are the only hope our granddaughter
has.

KANE

Yes ma'am. I'm real happy to be
able to help. She seems like a
great kid.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDPA

Sure is son! One in a million that gal. And tough as nails too. Don't let that sweet smile fool you. She's shrewd as a fox and tough as old boots.

Grandma turns abruptly to her husband.

GRANDMA

Oh stop it, Rhys! She's not like that at all.

The friendly admonishment lightens the mood in the room. Everyone shares a little laugh.

GRANDMA

Well, young man, we don't really know much about what they need to do but the doctor is waiting in his office to speak with you and tell you what it's all about.

KANE

OK. Let's do it then!

Grandpa comes back with a nurse he has fetched.

GRANDPA

Here you go, lad. This lovely lady will take you to see the Doc.

NURSE 3

If you'd like to follow me sir.

The nurse leads Kane away to meet the doctor.

Grandma and Mrs. Dillon sit down, holding each other's hands in a hopeful embrace as they do.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Kane has finished his meeting with the doctor. All clear.

They have all come to Betty's bedside to tell her the good news.

She has already been prepped for surgery and is just starting to get a little drowsy.

(CONTINUED)

DOCTOR

Betty? Hi. This is Kane Dillon and he's your long lost cousin. Kane has the same DNA as you and so he's going to be able to help us make you better.

Kane is standing right beside the doctor, with the others spaced evenly around the bed.

Drowsily, Betty looks for Grandma, seeking confirmation of what the doctor has just said.

She catches her eye.

GRANDMA

Yes, sweetie. That's right. Kane will be able to make you better. He's family.

Betty, now almost asleep, reaches for Kane's hand.

He moves it towards her.

She starts to speak to him but her voice is almost inaudible.

Kane bows his head towards her.

Betty's words come softly, hoarsely.

BETTY

You've got the power too. We've got the power.

Kane smiles at her, not having any idea what she means by these words. It must be the medication talking. Still, he wants to reassure her.

KANE

Yes Betty. We've got the power.

Betty drifts off.

INT. KANE DILLON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kane is burning the midnight oil, desperately trying to find something that will be able to swing the Water World proposal in his favor.

If he wins this bid, his future will know no bounds! But how? It looks hopeless.

(CONTINUED)

Frustrated and resigned to defeat, he turns to finding out more about his roots.

He hasn't really been able to concentrate since Mom told him earlier today.

Who was his father? What was he like? What would he be like if he was alive today? He was just a kid when he died.

He's scouring the internet, looking for answers.

A few clicks in and he's found a photo of his father taken just a few weeks before his death.

He's with his sister Judy and his parents at a function.

The same photo was also on Judy's dresser in her bedroom.

Seems crazy to be looking at a 17 year old kid you never knew and thinking of him as your father.

A few more clicks, a photo of his father's father and another man with an old computer on the table in front of them.

His grandfather was Tim-Berners Lee - Father of the World Wide Web.

Kane is intrigued!

KANE

Well, I'll be!

He gets up and goes to the fridge.

He pulls out a pre-prepared, freshly blended, mixed juice that he'd made earlier in the morning.

He returns to his computer and comes to a story about the early days of the internet.

The story says skeptics are worried that this new tool, the World Wide Web, would make it easier for Big Brother to watch us.

He keeps reading. There is much to learn.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Betty has recovered from her transfusion and looks fresh.

Kane walks in just as Book Man is leaving.

They exchange polite nods, neither fully sure of the other.

A slightly uncomfortable moment.

Betty sees Kane and is excited.

BETTY

Hi ya cousin Kane! How are you
today?

Kane is relieved that she seems to be OK.

KANE

I'm fine, Betty, how about you?

BETTY

I'm great! The doctor said the
operation worked and I'm going to
be OK. He said I can get out
tomorrow!

KANE

That's great news, sweetheart.

BETTY

Thank you so much! You saved my
life.

By now, Kane has moved to Betty's bedside and taken a seat.

She looks at him with a slightly mischievous gaze.

Then she looks to make sure nobody else can hear.

BETTY

I hope your Mommy told you not to
say anything to anyone about our
special power? My Mommy said we
mustn't tell anyone.

Kane sits back in his chair. Confused.

KANE

Which power is that cousin?

(CONTINUED)

BETTY

You know. The internet silly. The way we can change it with our DNA because of the secret code Poppa Tim put in those little lines in the 'HTP Propotole' or something.

Kane's confusion turns to laughter at the mispronunciation.

KANE

You mean the 'HTTP:// Protocol'?

Betty laughs at her own mistake.

BETTY

Yes, that's it. That one. Mommy said her and I were the only ones left, but now there's you too!

KANE

But sweetie, I can't even use my DNA to log on. It doesn't work.

BETTY

I know, silly. You have to type it in backwards first. Didn't your Mommy show you?

KANE

No. She really didn't.

Betty is now getting a little suspicious.

BETTY

You mean you don't know anything about it? Nothing at all?

KANE

This is the first I've heard of it, cousin. Have you ever tried it? Do you know that it really works.

Betty sits up a little in her bed. A new found confidence.

BETTY

Of course! Mommy showed me after my birthday party.

Betty pauses.

She's worried that she has told someone her secret. She promised Mommy she wouldn't.

(CONTINUED)

But Kane is family. Her *only* family now, really, apart from Grandma & Grandpa. Certainly he's the only one with the secret power.

Besides, he already has the power anyway, so that's OK, isn't it?

BETTY

I can't believe you don't know anything about it. You have to promise not to tell anyone. Mommy said if other people found out and wanted to do something bad with the internet, they could use us to change everything in there.

He's just about convinced by this far fetched story.

What if it really *is* true? Imagine all the things he could do? Imagine what he could do with the Water World account?

Kane shuffles his chair forward a little, even though it's as close as it can get.

KANE

It's OK, cousin. We're family now. We have to take care of each other. I promise I won't tell anyone.

BETTY

Promise?

KANE

Promise!

Betty presents her pinkie finger.

BETTY

Pinkie Promise?

Kane respectfully pulls out his own pinkie.

KANE

Pinkie Promise!

Kane looks at his watch. The Water World project presentation is tomorrow.

KANE

Hey, I really have to get going. Got a big presentation tomorrow. But I'll come back and see you after that, OK?

(CONTINUED)

He gives her a kiss on the forehead and heads for the door

BETTY

OK cousin Kane! See you tomorrow.
Good luck!

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Later that evening, Kane is sitting in his office, long after everyone else has gone home, still struggling with the World Water bid.

His office is littered with bad PR stories about World Water hijacking water flows and selling it back to poor countries, holding them to ransom, etc.

How can anyone make these guys look good?

Suddenly, it hits him. Imagine if what BETTY said was really true? What if he could change what's in the internet.

All those troublesome facts and figures that portray World Water for what they are - a nasty, megalomaniacal corporate giant - would go away.

He goes out to the open office and to another computer.

He doesn't have a DNA scanner on his. Never thought he could use it - till now.

He tries to log on. Doesn't work.

KANE

Damn it! Shit! Why...?

He now remembers Betty saying something about the HTTP Protocol being backwards.

He deletes the address line and types in '///
PTTH' and clicks the DNA scanner. Still nothing.

KANE

Shit! Wait...?

He tries something else. '\\:
PTTH' and click. It works! He's in!

KANE

Alright! Yeah baby! Now let's see what we can do in here.

(CONTINUED)

He clicks through to a story on World Water with examples of how they have tapped into deep water tables and diverted the flow so they can control it.

The article is full of actual maps showing the GPS co-ordinates, depths and distances, etc.

He changes a few of the co-ordinates.

Right before his eyes, the diagrams change.

The maps change.

The text of the article has even changed.

Everything except the headline of the story, now suggests that World Water have done nothing wrong.

Actually, they have found a water source where nobody else would have ever been able to.

They're saviors!

KANE

Woah! Un Be Lievable!

He completes the task by manually changing the headline.

Done.

He goes back to his office and his presentation boards, tosses them on the ground.

He starts to storyboard a new concept.

Now that he can change the facts, he can give Water World any reality they want!

Now that he can control the Conduit....LOOK OUT!

INT. BOOK MAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In a dimly lit apartment, on a simple, plain desk sits an oddly advanced model of computer.

The screen is scrolling through numerous web pages relating to World Water and their techniques.

An indistinguishable figure of a MAN sits there watching, not operating the machine, just observing. His face is turned to the screen.

He speaks to the screen

(CONTINUED)

MAN

What the hell are you doing, son?

INT. SYNERGY ADVERTISING - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Kane and his boss are anxiously waiting for the lift doors to open.

They open and out comes the team from World Water, led by CEO, Mick Johnson.

MICK JOHNSON

G'day fellas! How youse goin',
alright?

Kane can't contain himself. He knows he's got a super show in store for these guys. He rushes forward, eager to greet Mick.

KANE

Howdy Mr. Johnson! We're great!
Really good to see you. Come on in!
Come in!

Just at that moment, Kane realizes that he's jumped the gun. He should have waited for his boss to shake hands first.

Still shaking Mick's hand, he looks back to his boss with the look of a puppy who has just pooped on the carpet.

Ooops!

Kane's boss looks at him, disapprovingly, then moves forward to shake hands with Mick.

INT. SYNERGY ADVERTISING - BOARDROOM - DAY

The group from World Water takes their seats around the table.

Kane moves to the front of the room.

KANE

Gentlemen, what's the single
biggest complaint that you hear
about your company?

Mick smiles. He turns to the rest of his team.

They all look at each other and then back at their boss, reluctant to speak.

(CONTINUED)

Eventually, one brave soul stands and breaks the silence.

WORLD WATER EMPLOYEE 1

Well, I guess you'd have to say
that we get a lot of bad press
about 'Water Hijacking'.

He quickly adds more, in an effort to counter his own
allegations, so as not to offend the boss.

WORLD WATER EMPLOYEE 1

Not that we do, mind you. Any water
we find would have never been found
by anyone else. The courts have
determined it's not sovereign. Our
state of the art technology allows
us to...

Mick interrupts

MICK JOHNSON

Easy on tiger! Don't get ya
knickers in a twist. Ya gonna
bloody pass out if ya don't take a
breath.

The employee stops mid sentence. Obeying orders.

He resumes his seat, glancing at his co-workers as he does,
noticing that they all have wry smiles on their faces,
amused by his suicidal undertaking.

MICK JOHNSON

Look, Mr. Dillon, like the man
says, we take some heat on this
stuff. So, no wurries, we just
steer clear of that in our
campaign. Focus on the good stuff,
mate. Baffle 'em with bullshit, I
always say. That's why we came to
you blokes.

Everyone laughs. Mick continues.

MICK JOHNSON

Fandangle 'em with fluff, mate! We
stay away from all the bad stuff.
Simple!

The laughter level increases.

(CONTINUED)

This is playing out just the way Kane had hoped. Nobody would ever try to run a PR campaign for World Water by talking about where they get the water from. There's just been too much debate over 'Water Hijacking'.

After all, access to clean water should be an inalienable right. Right?

He senses the moment. He pounces.

KANE

And that's exactly why I'm suggesting we tackle this head on! No one would expect it! We prove to them, once and for all, beyond all contradictions that World Water does *not* hijack water supply. World Water is a Godsend to millions around the world. Without you, there would be no water! World Water is a savior!

Kane looks over to the Deputy CEO who had been with him in the earlier meeting. They trade acknowledging glances.

The entire room is silent.

The World Water staff are looking at their boss, waiting for a reaction.

Mick, still seated, is staring Kane right in the eyes, like he is waiting for him to flinch. Waiting for Kane to reveal what the big joke is.

Suddenly, the silence is broken by Mick's hysterical laughter.

MICK JOHNSON

Listen, fella, I love ya spunk, but I really have to tell ya somethin'. Just between us boys in the room.

He leans forward in his chair, motioning for Kane to come closer.

Kane obliges.

MICK JOHNSON

Mate, the problem is, we do! We do hijack it! Even the best scientific research in the world couldn't prove that we don't. I should know mate, I own the best scientists in

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICK JOHNSON (cont'd)
the world! The facts are just
irrefutable, son!

This is it!

Kane pulls back momentarily, stands upright, then gently comes back down to the table, palms on the table, arms spread wide, like he was about to do a push up.

KANE
But are they? Are these *really* the
facts or do you just think they
are?

Mick sits back in his chair, shuffling from side to side, slight frustrated. A quizzical furrow on his brow.

MICK JOHNSON
For Christ's sake! What the hell
are ya talkin' about? Are you
tryin' to take the piss outta me,
mate?

Kane quickly returns to formal mode. Standing upright

KANE
No Sir. Not at all. But with all
due respect sir, I can prove that
none of the water you have ever
tapped was ever headed anywhere,
unless you tapped it. All the
research you were looking at. All
the science. It was all wrong.
Look.

Kane shows him one of his boards, complete with the changed data.

Mick is motionless. He stares at Kane.

Nobody in the room moves an inch.

Mick gets up. The two men stand eyeball to eyeball.

Kane's breathing is a little rapid. Mick seems calm, but is shaking his head.

The tension breaks.

MICK JOHNSON
Sorry mate. I just don't buy it.

(CONTINUED)

Mick turns to walk out the door, motioning to his team, with a jerk of his head, as he does.

MICK JOHNSON

C'mon lads. Let's go. Lots to do.
Gotta save the world.

Mick's team follow him out the door, snickering a little amongst themselves as they go, amused at their boss's throw away line about saving the world.

They get in the lift. They're gone.

Kane is still standing in the boardroom, now alone, staring out the window.

How could they not go for it? What was he missing? Did he overlook something?

Unexpectedly, Mick returns, alone.

MICK JOHNSON

Hey! Mr. Dillon!

Kane turns around to see Mick standing in the doorway.

MICK JOHNSON

Listen. Mate. I just wanna tell ya that we're already committed to this other mob. We signed two days ago, coz we figured you blokes were too...well..too bloody goody-two-shoes. Didn't think you would be comfortable making a good snow job like we needed. If we pull out now, it'd cost us a fortune in penalties.

KANE

Ok. Thanks Mr. Johnson. So you believe me then? You believe what I showed you?

MICK JOHNSON

Honestly mate, I really dunnow. It all seems pretty far fetched to me. But I can tell ya this, if we hadn't already signed, I would've given ya a shot at it. I like you balls, son!

KANE

Thanks Mr. Johnson. I appreciate that.

The pair shake hands. Mick turns to leave.

Just before he reaches the door, he turns back.

MICK JOHNSON

Ya know what, if you can make Mick Johnson look like the savior of the world, I reckon you could even get that bloody President re-elected. See ya mate!

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Betty is out of hospital and living with her grandparents. They have asked Kane to stay in touch with her.

Betty is playing in the park with her friends.

A nice new C-Series Mercedes Benz pulls up at the curb.

Kane gets out from the passenger side. Looks back into the car.

INT. MRS. DILLON'S NEW CAR - DAY

KANE

Thanks Mom. See you tomorrow.

MRS. DILLON

Always happy to take the Benz for spin, baby. Bye.

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Betty sees Kane getting out of the car.

BETTY

Hey cousin Kane! Over here! Over here!

KANE

Hey cousin Betty. How ya been?

BETTY

I'm great. Look what we found?

(CONTINUED)

Betty shows Kane a Pink Backed Ladybug that she and her friends have caught in their 'Bug Catcher'.

KANE

Wow! That's a beauty. Hey, wanna go grab a milkshake?

BETTY

Sure. Let's go.

She says goodbye to her friends and goes with Kane to a cafe on the edge of the park.

INT. CAFE - DAY

They take a seat in a booth and order their drinks.

Kane is keen to find out if Betty knows anything more about their secret power.

Is there anything else he needs to know to be able to take full advantage of it?

KANE

So listen, I tried out that little internet thingy a few days ago.

BETTY

Really? What did you do?

KANE

Oh, it was nothing really, just a little thing I was doing at work.

BETTY

OK, but remember, we aren't supposed to use it. My Mommy said so.

KANE

Yeah, I know. I just wanted to try it out to see if it worked.

BETTY

And it did?

KANE

Sure did.

BETTY

OK, so that's the last time, right? No more?

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Sure. No problem. We don't really need it anyway, right?

BETTY

Exactly!

Their milkshakes arrive and Betty gets straight to work.

Kane takes a sip of his too.

KANE

Hey, cousin? Just wondering, did your Mom tell you anymore about our little secret? Anything else that you and I need to know?

Betty looks up from her drink, never taking her lips from the straw. She shakes her head.

KANE

OK. Cool. So it's just you and me then. Our own special little secret.

Betty looks up again, again not diverting from the job at hand. She nods her head.

KANE

Cool.

INT. KANE DILLON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kane is sitting at his computer. A bowl of pasta on the desk and one of his mixed juices beside it.

Eric Clapton's 'Layla unplugged' is playing. He moves around in his seat, tapping his feet to the beat, swaying to the music as he works.

He jumps into the lyrics between mouthfuls.

KANE

Darlin' won't you ease my worried mind.

He pulls up numerous web pages on DNA, how to synthesize it, etc.

In other web pages he has opened, instructions on how to program html code.

One page is entitled 'Secret Codes and HTML'.

(CONTINUED)

As he comes across a page that seems to contain agreeable information, he nods his head - in time to the music, of course.

The song ends. A DJ announces.

DJ (V.O.)
And there it is, number 47 on our
countdown of the top 100 songs of
all time.

Kane glances at his stereo system. He's not happy with the DJ.

KANE
What! Number 47? You must be
shittin' me! It's a classic.

The next song has started playing. The DJ comes in over the start of the song.

DJ (V.O.)
Don't forget folks, it's not too
late to vote for your favorite.
www.wkru.com and cast your vote.

Kane opens a new window on his computer and visits the website.

EXT. LOCAL PARK - DAY

The re-polling is done. The next President has been elected.

Amazingly, the incumbent has won! And by a landslide in the two re-pollled states.

All opinion polls had said she had no hope.

She comes out on stage to accept victory.

Kane is clapping and smiling. We can't tell exactly where he is standing.

The President comes out waving to the crowd.

She shakes the hand of an army general on stage.

Next, an elderly Congresswoman.

Next is Kane! He's right there on stage!

He's alongside the President's entourage of advisers.

(CONTINUED)

Kane is now part of the team.

The President leans forward as she shakes his hand, speaking only to him.

PRESIDENT

You made this possible. None of this happens without you. Thank you Kane.

KANE

Thank you, Madam President.

The President continues to the front of the stage and begins her address.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans, here we go again! 4 more years! Thank you!

The crowd bursts into a huge cheer.

PRESIDENT

We stand here today, in a place of great beauty. Soon to be the site of a new, state of the art water plant. A beacon for not only my home state...

The crowd cheers loudly again, acknowledging their local hero.

PRESIDENT

(continuing)

...but for all America. A symbol for the future of our great cities. Let us not forget, that although we are *all* the minority species on this planet, we have the power to harness her powers for the benefit of all mankind. The responsibility for a greater tomorrow rests with us all.

The crowd cheers.

Kane smirks.

INT. GRANDMA'S LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

Grandma, Grandpa and Betty are watching the President's speech.

They see Kane.

GRANDMA

Look, Betty. There's your cousin Kane.

BETTY

Hey, does cousin Kane know the President?

GRANDMA

Yes sweetie. He works for the President now.

Betty smiles, happy for her cousin's success.

Still, she's more interested in the contents of her Reader.

She opens a page on the Pink Backed Ladybug.

She looks up to see if her grandparents are looking. They're not.

She smirks. A very similar smirk to the one Kane just did.

INT. BOOK MAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Book Man is sitting in his old recliner, in his modest, tidy, 1 bedroom apartment, watching the live broadcast of the President's victory speech.

The TV camera pans her entourage and he sees Kane.

He moves forward in his chair.

Can't believe his eyes. It's true. It's him.

He sits back, sighs and looks to his bookshelf.

There sits a photo of a young Book Man with Tim Berners-Lee.

It's the same photo Kane found on the internet earlier when he was researching his family heritage.

He speaks to the photo.

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN
What have we done, old friend?

EXT. LOCAL PARK - DAY

Protesters have arrived in force to blockade the construction site.

They are carrying placards with the pictures of the Pink Backed Ladybug. The species will be made extinct if the construction goes ahead.

There are also placards denouncing World Water.

A news reporter is interviewing a spokesperson for the protester's group, an elderly professor.

She speaks to the camera.

NEWS REPORTER
I'm here with the eminent Professor Edmund Kazinskey, Nobel Prize winning Head of the Global Endangered Species Society.

She turns to face the Professor.

NEWS REPORTER
Professor Kazinskey, can you tell us why this site is so important to you - to all of of us?

PROF. KAZINSKEY
Well, you see, this is the only known natural habitat in the entire world for an important species of insect, unique to our state. Commonly called the Pink Backed Ladybug, because of pink marks on it's green shell. If they are wiped out here, they will become extinct. Gone for ever.

The reporter glances over to the protesters.

NEWS REPORTER
And so this is the species you're talking about, on these placards?

PROF. KAZINSKEY
Yes. That's right. So we're calling on the President to put a stop to this project immediately.

(CONTINUED)

NEWS REPORTER

But Professor, I understand that this particular bug actually eats plants, not aphids like most other ladybug species. If so, aren't we better off without them anyway?

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Early research did suggest exactly that. However, more recent studies have revealed this species' diet is much the same as other ladybug species - aphids. So, like pretty much all ladybugs, it's helping us out by feeding on those nasty little plant eaters, the aphids.

NEWS REPORTER

OK. So it's a good bug. But surely, Professor, before the White House approved this project, there must have been extensive Environmental Impact Studies done, wouldn't there?

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Certainly, that is the normal procedure, but obviously something has gone wrong here. Maybe they were using old data. As I said, the new data was only very recently available. So our first priority is to hold up the construction crew and then tomorrow I will be going to the White House to request a meeting with the President.

NEWS REPORTER

And do you really think that you will be successful?

PROF. KAZINSKEY

We have to be. The facts speak for themselves. They are clear. The future biological balance of our state and even our planet, depends on it.

That's all she needs for the story.

NEWS REPORTER

OK folks, there you have it. Is time running out for these crucial

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NEWS REPORTER (cont'd)
creatures or will the Professor be
able to turn the tide back in favor
of Mother Nature? Back to you, Jim,
in the studio.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Betty and her friends are walking home from school.

They pass an electronics shop.

Betty looks in to the music section.

Posters and promotion boards tout the Greatest Song Ever
- Layla, by Eric Clapton.

She sees the news story about the park protest on the TVs in
the shop window.

She sees a placard with the ladybug. She stops in front of
the window.

Her friends continue walking. They see she's fallen behind.

BETTY'S FRIEND 1
Hey, Betty, come on, what's wrong?

BETTY
The ladybugs. They're going to kill
them all!

BETTY'S FRIEND 2
Who is? What are you talking about.
Come on. Catch up.

Betty turns and walks towards her friends, slowly at first,
but picking up pace as she gets close to them.

She passes them and keeps on going.

She calls back to them.

BETTY
I have to go. Sorry. See you all
tomorrow.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Kane walks in. The President is sitting at her desk. She motions for him to take a seat.

PRESIDENT

Kane, please, take a seat.

KANE

Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT

You've seen this business about the bugs?

KANE

Yes ma'am. Are you going to see the Professor tomorrow?

PRESIDENT

Well, that all depends on you and what sort of story you can manufacture for me by tomorrow afternoon.

KANE

Yes ma'am.

PRESIDENT

If I'm going to meet with the good Professor, I'll need to be able to refute everything he says and then be able to back it up. The country needs this project, Kane. I need it.

KANE

Yes ma'am. I think I can handle it.

PRESIDENT

Don't think, Kane, *know!*

KANE

Yes ma'am. Leave it to me. I'll have the *new* reality on your desk by 10am tomorrow.

PRESIDENT

Thank you, Kane. I knew I could count on you.

Kane knows that is the signal to end the meeting.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Thank you, Madam President.

He leaves.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

As Kane leaves the Oval Office, he sees Mick waiting in the hallway.

Kane approaches him. They shake hands.

MICK JOHNSON

Mr. Dillon.

KANE

Mr. Johnson.

Mick moves a little closer to speak. For Kane's ears only.

MICK JOHNSON

Never thought I'd see the day when the Democrats got a second term. You obviously have the magic touch, my boy.

KANE

You flatter me, Mr. Johnson. The team here did a fantastic job in the re-poll. Great people.

Mick smiles at Kane. The smile is returned.

Mick knows that there was a lot more to the President's re-election than just a good team.

Kane knows he knows something.

A female Presidential aide approaches Mick.

PRESIDENTIAL AIDE

The President will see you now, Mr. Johnson.

MICK JOHNSON

Righto. Ta luv!

Mick turns back to Kane.

MICK JOHNSON

Tada mate. All the best.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Bye, Mr. Johnson. Good luck.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Mick and the Chief of Staff arrive at the doorway at the same time. Mick's large frame almost blocks the entrance. The Chief of Staff stops an motions for Mick to go through - as if he wasn't going to anyway!

CHIEF OF STAFF

After you, Mr. Johnson.

MICK JOHNSON

Cheers Mate. Ta.

The President looks up from her work to welcome her guests.

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen, come in, please.

As the men approach the two chairs in front of the President's desk, she invites them to take a seat. She is still in hers.

PRESIDENT

Please, take a seat.

The Chief of Staff sits at attention, while Mick reclines as much as his large frame will allow in such an uninviting chair. This is not a chair for relaxation, it is a chair for polite but firm discourse.

PRESIDENT

So, Mr. Johnson, I understand things got a little dicey for you in Chad?

MICK JOHNSON

Well, ma'am, ya know I guess ya could say that.

All three wear a smile, but each is a little different. The Chief of Staff is wearing a condescending smirk; Mick is wearing a cheeky schoolboy grin; the President is wearing a smile of affection, directed at Mick.

PRESIDENT

I'm assuming you did hit the water table?

(CONTINUED)

MICK JOHNSON

Yes ma'am. Always do! Never missed yet!

CHIEF OF STAFF

And what about the waste?

The Chief of Staff emphasizes the word such that he can't possibly be meaning waste in the way that you or I would.

Mick turns slowly in his direction. His mood now less buoyant.

MICK JOHNSON

Nah mate, they shut us down before we had a chance to fill the tanks.

The Chief of Staff moves forward in his chair, trying to emphasize the point to the President, but directing the comments to Mick.

CHIEF OF STAFF

But you assured us that for every water table you hit, we would be able to retrieve a minimum of 5%. That's why we have the entire goddamn navy at your disposal!

The President raises her eyebrows in Mick's direction, implying agreement with the point raised by the Chief of Staff. Mick rolls his eyes in response to the look. He replies to the Chief of Staff.

MICK JOHNSON

Listen mate, it ain't always as simple as that. You know this shit ain't black and white. Hell, it's not even brown sometimes.

CHIEF OF STAFF

But that's just it, it has to be brown, doesn't it? That's the way you can fool them into thinking it's waste water, isn't it? How can it not be brown?

MICK JOHNSON

Figure of speech mate. Relax, will ya!

The Chief of Staff is now more agitated. He looks to the President, seeking her support.

(CONTINUED)

Mick, now tiring of the Chief of Staff, directs his comments to the President.

MICK JOHNSON

Madame President, as you know, our agreement is that *IF* we can hit a table and *IF* we can have uninterrupted access to the tapping point for at least two hours, we can rig a dummy waste pipe that will allow us to tank up a substantial volume of water, without our host knowing a thing. Those tanks come back here, we're the good guys 'coz we clean up our own mess and you guys end up with a few million gallons of free water.

The President looks to her frustrated Chief of Staff for confirmation of this statement. Reluctantly, he shrugs and returns an acknowledging nod.

The President turns back to Mick.

PRESIDENT

Yes, Mr. Johnson. Understood.

MICK JOHNSON

Well, ma'am, in this case, we just never had the chance. Those little bastards pounced on us as soon as they saw the first bloody trickle.

CHIEF OF STAFF

So where the hell does that leave us, Mr. Johnson?

MICK JOHNSON

Up shit creek mate. Right beside me. You reckon I didn't just lose a whole heap a green on this one?

A SECRET SERVICE AGENT opens the door, a WHITE HOUSE AIDE stands in the door way.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Sorry, Madam President.

PRESIDENT

Yes. What is it?

(CONTINUED)

WHITE HOUSE AIDE
Madam President, there's an urgent
call for the Chief of Staff.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Who is it?

WHITE HOUSE AIDE
The Minister for Defense, sir.

The Chief of Staff turns back to the President. She nods her approval for his departure.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Thank you ma'am.

He gets up to leave, buttoning his suit jacket as he farewells Mick.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Mr. Johnson, my apologies.

MICK JOHNSON
No wurries mate. See ya later.

Neither man offers a handshake. Neither expects it.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Outside the President's office, the Chief of Staff walks quickly. The White House Aide hands him some files that will be relevant to the call from the Minster of Defense.

He stops reading and turns to the aide.

CHIEF OF STAFF
We can't sanction this. He knows we
can't.

Both men continue walking at a quick pace. The White House Aide acknowledges the comment, though he knows his response is not really needed.

WHITE HOUSE AIDE
Yes sir.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The President is walking around her office. Mick is still seated. She walks his chair.

PRESIDENT
You know, Mick, you really had we
worried about Chad.

Mick takes the now informal tone and the absence of any company as an invitation.

He darts his hand out and squeezes the President's bum.

She instantly turns and slaps him across the face, all in one motion.

The two lock gazes. Neither showing any emotion.

The President takes a small step closer to Mick.

Half an inch is all that separates her feet from his.

She leans in towards him.

Suddenly, Mick grabs her, pulling her to him.

The President wraps her arms around Mick's imposing, log-like neck and kisses him passionately.

She breaks the kiss, pulls back a little and smiles.

She lowers her lips to his, this time, much more gently and lovingly.

These two titans of world power continue their illicit embrace.

Hands are now moving into places from which there can be no safe return.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kane is sitting at his desk, working on giving the President a new environmental reality she needs for her meeting tomorrow.

His concentration is broken by the telephone ring.

He answers it.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Kane Dillon.

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

Hi cousin Kane, it's me, Betty.

Kane continues his work. No time to waste.

KANE

Hiya cousin Betty, how are you?

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

I'm terrible! Have you heard about the ladybugs? They're all going to die because of that big water plant that the President wants to put up.

Kane stops writing momentarily.

KANE

What's that? Oh, yeah, I've heard. It's a real shame, isn't it.

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

But you have to stop it! You can talk to the President. If she knows the truth, surely she won't let the ladybugs die, will she?

KANE

No kiddo. Of course not. But you have to understand, that sometimes the truth is not always what we think it is. What if the ladybugs don't die, but just go somewhere else, like for a holiday? That would be OK, wouldn't it?

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

I guess so. But the Professor said...

Kane's heard enough. Time to go.

KANE

Don't worry about that Betty, I've been asked by the President personally to look into it and make sure we get all the facts before anything happens. Trust me.

(CONTINUED)

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

OK, cousin. I trust you. Just make sure the President doesn't let the ladybugs die.

KANE

I will, kiddo. Now, I have to go. I've got lots of work to do for the President.

BETTY (*FILTERED*)

OK cousin. Bye.

Kane has already hung up the phone.

INT. BOOK MAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Book Man is sitting his desk, monitoring what is a far more advanced computer than an elderly man would be expected to use.

He's not touching anything, but the web pages keep flying by.

Page after page of information relating to Pink Backed Ladybug, World Water, Environmental Impact Studies, the park.

He speaks to the machine.

BOOK MAN

Jesus! What the hell are you playing at man?

As the web pages continue to scroll by, he gets up and moves to the window.

He looks out on a rainy night. Pondering. Waiting for an epiphany.

He looks back into the room and sees a news segment on the TV. The story of the protesters at the park.

He can't quite make out what's being said. He doesn't have to.

He's got it.

BOOK MAN

The park! That's it! World Water and that park!

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Prof. Kazinsky is sitting down to afternoon tea in the gardens with Kane and the President.

Kane has many files with him, evidence that the Professor's claims are greatly exaggerated at best, blatantly wrong at worst.

The Professor is on his second cup of coffee.

PROF. KAZINSKEY

But Madam President, the facts are simply undeniable. All of our reports are based on detailed scientific studies that go back nearly 100 years, and accompanied by the most current available data for this species.

PRESIDENT

Listen, Professor, I admire your passion, I truly do. However, all of the studies that my people have shown me, all point to the same conclusion - that this species that you claim is on the brink of extinction, is in fact thriving in dozens of locations, just beyond the city limits.

The Professor is struggling to understand how this can be true.

PROF. KAZINSKEY

But ma'am, with respect, how can that be?

Kane jumps in, coming to the rescue of his boss.

KANE

Professor, if you take a look at these files I've put together, you will see that the vast majority of the data that has been referenced in your organization's reports, simply do not support the conclusions.

Kane hands the Professor the files that he has been working on.

The Professor scans them, shaking his head in disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

PROF. KAZINSKEY

But, this is wrong. I know it's wrong. It must be wrong. Mr. Dillon, some of the most brilliant scientific minds I know were responsible for compiling the reports I speak of. Are you telling me that they simply missed mountains of data like this?

KANE

Professor, all I can say is that *that* is the true data. That is the reality. It's not for me to speculate on either the credentials or the motives of your people.

Prof. Kazinskey looks up from the files and fixes his gaze on Kane.

He knows that something is just not right.

Still, the facts, as they have just been presented, speak for themselves.

How could his people have gotten this wrong?

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Madam President, I really don't know what to say?

PRESIDENT

Please, Professor, like I said, I truly admire your passion. As long as we have people like you in this country, fighting for causes they believe in, we will be alright. It's just the sort of spirit that made our country great, Professor.

The Professor can't think of any other arguments.

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Thank you ma'am. I mean...I...I'm sorry that we seemed to have gotten it wrong this time.

PRESIDENT

Not at all, Professor. I thank you for taking the time to come and meet with us.

President gets up to leave the gardens and head back inside.

(CONTINUED)

PRESIDENT

Now, if you'll excuse me, Mr. Dillon will see you out. Matters of state, you know how it goes!

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Yes ma'am. Thank you Madam President.

Prof. Kazinskey follows Kane through the gardens.

Kane is making polite small talk as they go.

The Professor seems somewhat in a daze.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Betty is watching a Bugs Bunny cartoon in the lounge room.

The show ends, she flicks through the channels to find something else to watch.

She comes to a breakfast news show. The Professor is being interviewed.

PROF. KAZINSKEY

...the President was most gracious and allowed me access to the extensive resources of the White House staff. After looking carefully at all the evidence before us, we concluded that there are several other colonies of this key species in many other locations, some right here in the state.

TV REPORTER

So, you're saying that this project should go ahead?

PROF. KAZINSKEY

Well, I guess so. What I am really saying is that we will not see the extinction of any native species if it does. The new data clearly supports that hypothesis.

TV REPORTER

But you had previously said that there were no suitable habitats close enough to the site and that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TV REPORTER (cont'd)
all these creatures would simply
die before they found another
suitable home.

PROF. KAZINSKEY
What can I say, it appears our data
was incomplete. The reality of the
additional data I obtained via the
White House, is very clear.

Betty drops the remote control on the floor.

She runs to her room to call her friends.

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Betty picks up the phone in her bedroom, accesses via the
retinal scanner (it's just quicker that way), dials a
number.

BETTY
Hi. It's me. Meet me in the park in
half an hour. Bring your Bug
Catcher. We have to save the
ladybugs.

She hangs up the phone.

She grabs her Bug Catcher from her shelves and heads down
the stairs.

She yells to Grandma as she runs out the door.

BETTY
I'm going to the park, Grandma,
with Amber and Melanie. Be back
before lunch.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandma is in the kitchen baking some cookies. The front
door closes.

GRANDMA
Yes dear. Very well. Have fun.

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Betty meets with her friends, Bug Catchers at the ready.

BETTY

We have to find as many ladybugs as we can. The President is going to destroy that park and they're all going to die. We have to save them.

The girls split up and go in search of their prey.

Betty finds one. Got it!

She stands up, holding the Bug Catcher up to have a closer look.

To the left of her Bug Catcher she sees Book Man, sitting on a bench, watching her.

She runs up to him.

BOOK MAN

Hi there, partner. What have you got there?

BETTY

It's a ladybug. They're all going to die soon because the President is going to destroy the park. We have to save them.

BOOK MAN

I know. I saw it on TV. You know, there is another way you can save them?

BETTY

What? How?

BOOK MAN

Use your DNA. Just like your cousin did.

Betty drops her arm down, still holding the Bug Catcher, making it a bumpy ride for the inhabitant.

How could he know about this? She never told him. Maybe Kane did? No, why would he?

BETTY

How do you know about that? Who told you?

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN

You see partner, a long time ago, I used to work with a really smart man. Together, we built the World Wide Web.

Betty can't quite believe what she's hearing.

BETTY

Poppa Tim? You worked with Poppa Tim? Really? Did you really?

BOOK MAN

Yes, Betty, your Poppa Tim and I worked together for many years. Before he died, he asked me to keep any eye on your mother. When she died, I knew that one day you might need some help with all this, especially when I found out about your cousin.

BETTY

So you know cousin Kane?

BOOK MAN

Not really, but I've been keeping an eye on him too, since he came to the hospital. Now he's gone to far and only you can stop him.

BETTY

What do you mean? What did he do?

BOOK MAN

Many things. Now he's using your secret power to wipe out entire species from our planet. He changed all the data, Betty. All the information about the ladybugs and everything else. He changed it. That's why the President is letting them destroy the park.

Betty doesn't want to believe that this can be true, but she knows, deep down, it's the only explanation.

BETTY

No! It can't be true. Cousin Kane would never do that. He promised me!

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN

I'm sorry Betty, but it is true.
I've been watching him.

BETTY

So what are we going to do? How can
we stop him. How can we save the
ladybugs?

BOOK MAN

I know a way. As long as we can
still log in with your DNA, we can
put in what we call a 'double
dupe'. That will make his DNA
useless again. Just like it was
before he knew how to use it.

Betty stops everything and droops her head sorrowfully.

BETTY

It's all my fault.

BOOK MAN

No, Betty, not at all.

BETTY

But I told him how to use it. Just
like Mommy told me. Before I told
him, he didn't know anything about
it. It's all my fault.

BOOK MAN

Come on now, no time to worry about
that now. Let's go and fix it,
shall we? Let's go and save the
ladybugs.

Now we're talking. That's what she needs to hear.

BETTY

OK. Let's do it. For Poppa Tim.

BOOK MAN

Great! Now, let's go into the
library and see if we can't work
some DNA magic.

The pair head off across the park to the library.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

They go to the internet stations and take a seat at the far end of the row, away from everyone else.

BOOK MAN

Now can you remember how to log on with your DNA?

BETTY

Sure. Like this.

Betty deletes the text in the address line.

BETTY

We just get rid of this bit and then write the 'http:/' bit in reverse and then...

Nothing happens.

BETTY

Ooops. Sorry. What did I do wrong?

BOOK MAN

Try again. Just type slowly.

Betty repeats the exercise.

Still nothing.

She looks to Book Man for suggestions? He looks worried.

BETTY

What's wrong? What's happened?

BOOK MAN

Looks like your cousin beat us to it?

BETTY

What do you mean?

BOOK MAN

He 'double duped' us first.

BETTY

What does that mean? Why doesn't my DNA work?

BOOK MAN

It means that he's managed to crack the embed code. He's found a way to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN (cont'd)
get in there and add something else
to it. Probably a specific slice
from his own DNA, one that you
don't have.

BETTY
So you mean, I can't use it
anymore?

BOOK MAN
That's right. Not like this,
anyway.

BETTY
But what are we going to do? There
must be something we can do.

BOOK MAN
Yes, Betty, there is another way.

BETTY
Really? How?

BOOK MAN
Well, the same time we put your
Poppa Tim's DNA code in, we put in
another code too. Mine.

BETTY
Really? That's great! So you can
get in and then we can take cousin
Kane's DNA away. Right?

BOOK MAN
Well, sort of.

BETTY
What do you mean?

BOOK MAN
We can't just take away Kane's DNA.
We have to take away yours too.
They are linked. If one goes, they
both go. That means you will never
again be able to change anything in
the internet. Ever!

BETTY
But that's OK, right? If nobody
else can get in either, then
everything should be OK, shouldn't
it?

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN

Yes. Of course. It will be up to all of us to use it properly.

BETTY

What about you? Will you be able to change it?

BOOK MAN

Yes. Technically I will, but I have to tell you something, the doctors tell me I only have 3 weeks to live. I have a really bad cancer inside of me.

Betty doesn't believe him. Is he joking?

BETTY

No! But you look fine! Are you sure?

BOOK MAN

Yes, Betty, there's nothing more they can do. So in a few weeks, I will be gone and that will be the end of this whole internet control game.

BETTY

You never got married or had any children?

BOOK MAN

I was married once, but I wasn't able to make babies. So we never had any children. No brothers or sisters either. So, once I'm gone, that's it.

Betty is saddened by the news that her new friend will soon be dead.

BOOK MAN

Hey! Cheer up partner. I've had a great life and best of all, I was lucky enough to meet you!

Betty is slightly consoled. Enough to raise a smile.

BETTY

I'm sorry. It's just sad, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

BOOK MAN

Now, come on, move over. Let me at that DNA scanner and we'll see what we can do.

Book Man logs on.

A screen full of coded numbers, letters and symbols scrolls by very rapidly - and on, and on.

Betty's never seen anything like this.

BETTY

What's happening?

BOOK MAN

It's working. Right now, it's going through every record on the internet to find the ones that have been changed by Kane. Then it will change them back to what they were before.

BETTY

So all the old information will come back?

BOOK MAN

That's right. Like nothing ever happened.

Betty and Book Man sit back and contentedly watch as the screen scrolls through millions and millions of data records.

She looks at him and smiles.

He puts his arm around her, pulls her close and kisses the top of her head.

BOOK MAN

Well done, partner! Good job!

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kane is pouring over some reports for the Department of Defense.

He can hear the Chief of Staff berating someone outside his door.

The voice gets closer.

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF OF STAFF (O.S.)
...and so I don't know how in the
hell...

The door is flung open, recoiling against the wall behind it.

In storms the Chief of Staff, continuing his tirade.

CHIEF OF STAFF (CONT)
...can you present something so
full of holes, when you know damn
well that we only get one shot at
it!

Kane doesn't even have time to move his hand from the notes he was making before his uninvited visitor dumps the files in front of him.

KANE
What are you talking about? What's
wrong?

The visitor is about to respond, but checks himself.

CHIEF OF STAFF
Just fix it Dillon. Fast.

The Chief of Staff turns without a further word and storms back out. Kicking back the door as he goes, causing another recoil against the wall.

Kane picks up the files and gets up from his desk.

Scanning the contents, he walks to the door to close it.

He moves back to the sofa, still focussed on the files.

His backside has almost hit the sofa when he stops. As if someone has just hit pause on the remote.

He rises slowly, shaking his head.

He responds to the contents as if someone was there listen.

KANE
No. No. This can't be right. It's
not...

He turns to another page.

KANE (CONTD)
No. Definitely not.

Kane returns to his desk, clearing the previous mess just enough to make way for the crisis of the moment.

He tries to log on with the DNA scanner.

Nothing.

He looks at his index finger. Wipes it on his shirt.

He tries again.

Still nothing.

He licks the finger, rubs it on the palm of his other hand and tries again.

It doesn't work. He's now getting a bit frantic.

He quickly licks each finger on his right hand and wipes each one over the DNA scanner.

Nothing.

He pauses, trying to gather his thoughts.

He rushes out of his office.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Kane runs down the hallway, making a bee-line for his secretary's desk.

She's not there.

He grabs her laptop from the desk and heads back to his office.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kane re-enters with the other laptop. Closing the door behind him.

He tries to log on to this computer using the DNA scanner.

Still nothing.

(CONTINUED)

KANE

Shit!

He rummages in a desk drawer for his retinal scanner and fingerprint scanner.

He pulls them out and quickly connects them.

He tries to log on.

Success.

But why? Why can't he use his DNA?

He tries to delete the http:// protocol and re-type it backwards.

Nothing. Just an error screen.

Elbows on the desk, he drops his chin into his opened palms.

KANE

No no no no no no nono. This
is...no!

He gets up from the desk and paces the office. Scratching his head. Squeezing his face with his hand.

An thought!

He returns to the desk and clicks to the WKRU Radio Station Website.

He clicks on the banner for 'Greatest Song of All Time'.

It'sViva la Vida by Coldplay.

The song launches.

KANE

Layla? Gone?

He clicks to hospital website. There's a banner for the fund raising raffle. He clicks.

There's a photo of his Mom standing beside the new Mercedes.

Her name is in the caption below.

Wait. It's gone.

Now the photo's gone too.

He clicks to refresh the page.

(CONTINUED)

Now, list of winners names appears. His Mom is not there. No photo at all.

KANE

Mom? No! I'm sorry!

Kane slouches back in his chair. He knows what's happened.

He's done.

Not sure why, but he's done.

INT. PRESIDENT'S OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The President is reading some files when the Head of Secret Service walks in.

HEAD OF SECRET SERVICE

Sorry, Madam President, but I think you need to see this.

He hands her an opened letter. He holds onto numerous other pages.

The President reads aloud.

PRESIDENT

...by the time you receive this letter, I would have already taken steps to remedy the situation. By the end of this day, Kane Dillon will no longer be able to modify the World Wide Web in anyway.

She looks up at the Chief of Staff, who has now entered the room. He offers no emotion.

She continues to read.

PRESIDENT (CONTD)

...Enclosed you will find a number of examples of the changes that were made by Mr. Dillon. The changes will all be reversed by this process.

The Head of Secret Service holds up the remaining documents.

The President continues.

(CONTINUED)

PRESIDENT (CONTD)

...Of course, I can not reveal my identity, but as I will not be long for this world, you can rest easy that this will be the end of it.

The President looks up in amazement.

She turns to the Chief of Staff

PRESIDENT

Is this for real?

CHIEF OF STAFF

I'm afraid so ma'am. The story checks out.

The President turns to the Head of Secret Service.

PRESIDENT

Kane?

HEAD OF SECRET SERVICE

Done.

INT. KANE'S OFFICE - DAY

Secret Service agents enter the office.

Kane stands at his desk, throws his pen on the desk, shrugs his shoulders.

The agents approach him and place the handcuffs on.

They lead him out the door.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

A year later.

Betty is visiting the grave of Book Man.

She lays down some flowers, clears a few dead leaves from the headstone and heads off out of the graveyard.

EXT. PARK - DAY

On the way back from the graveyard, Betty takes a seat on a park bench.

She looks across the park to the bench where she saw Book Man sitting just over a year ago today.

She smiles.

Beside her on the bench, a businessman sits, with his Reader. He is turned slightly away from her.

She looks at him. Is that Kane?

He turns towards her. It's not him.

He notices Betty looking at him.

MAN ON PARK BENCH

Hi there. How are you?

BETTY

Oh, I'm fine. Thank you.

Betty notices the man's Reader.

She sees a news headline. 'World Water BANKRUPT!'. She smiles to herself as she gets up to leave.

BETTY

Bye!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Betty continues walking through the main street of town, past the same electronic shop.

She looks in and sees a news story of the new President, the Republican candidate who was robbed of the Presidency during the re-poll.

She smiles again. Everything has really turned out OK.

Suddenly, a group of girls come running past her, bumping her as they go, forcing her to stumble into a small pile of garbage bags at the start of a narrow alley, beside a restaurant.

They stop, look back and laugh.

(CONTINUED)

BULLY 1

What's the matter four-eyes, didn't
you see the garbage?

Betty slowly drags herself up off the ground.

Her dress is now covered in a mixture of kitchen scraps,
oil, mustard, ketchup and cigarette butts.

BULLY 2

Pee ew! At least now people are
going to notice you, Betty. They'll
notice your smell, anyway.

The girls laugh amongst themselves and then run off down the
street.

Betty just watches them go. Almost emotionless.

She dusts herself off as best she can, then methodically
continues her walk back home, as if nothing had happened.

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Later that afternoon, Betty is sitting on her bed, reading a
book on her Reader.

She looks over at a photo of her and Book Man.

She gets up and goes over to her computer.

Her screen saver is a Pink Backed Ladybug.

She looks at the retinal scanner and fingerprint scanner.
She ignores it.

Then she uses the DNA scanner to log on.

But how? Book Man said she would never again be able to use
it? Nobody would.

She looks back to the photo of Book Man, speaks to the
photo.

BETTY

I'm sorry partner. I really am.

Betty accesses the home page of her school.

She goes to Student Records.

She opens the records for the girls who knocked her down
earlier.

(CONTINUED)

She changes all grades to a fail mark.

She speaks to the girls whose images are on her screen, responding to their earlier taunts.

BETTY

It's really not important if people notice me, but you really shouldn't give me any reason to notice you.

She smiles a slightly evil smile.

The afternoon sun has cast a shadow on her desk.

The silhouette of a butterfly flapping frantically comes across her desk.

She turns to see it is stuck between the two halves of the sliding window. She moves to the window and sets it free.

BETTY

There you go girl, be free.

EXT. BETTY'S GARDEN - DAY

The butterfly flutters through the garden.

It stops on a leaf.

In the background, a Pink Backed Ladybug.

A closer look reveals the ladybug's mouth, magnified, devouring another leaf. A fearful sight.

Elsewhere in the garden, another, and another, and another.

The garden is now overrun with ladybugs, all devouring whatever they can get their mouths around.

They have been saved.

Those who controlled the conduit have made their plays.

What will be the cost?

END