

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

by

Keyser Soze

FADE IN:

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Two adolescent movie theater employees, GUS and RUSTY, head towards the entrance of a towering movie theater illuminated by neon lighting. Gus is fat. Rusty is thin. Both boys have unkempt hair, bespectacled faces covered in acne, and wear matching vests and bowties.

GUS

I'm telling you right now, man, just so you know, I'm not cleaning that stupid popcorn machine tonight.

RUSTY

Are you kidding me? I cleaned it last night.

GUS

Yeah, but I still have blisters from two nights ago. See?

Gus raises his hands. They are covered in swollen blisters poorly hidden by band aids.

RUSTY

Fine. Just don't make anymore popcorn during the last show if it looks like no one's coming, okay?

The boys enter the movie theater.

INT. LOBBY

The lobby is massive with two sets of double doors, across from its entrance, leading to the theater itself and a concession stand against one wall. The architecture is a mix of old and new materials suggesting renovation.

Gus and Rusty enter.

RUSTY

What the hell is that?

Behind the concession stand is a massive machine built of stainless steel and snaking plastic tubing. The machine

itself is a cylindrical tub mounted on a base structure containing a trough, control panel and, a closed circular compartment beside it.

Two men stand beside the machine. The MOVIE THEATER MANAGER, 50s, is short and stout with a handlebar mustache and bad toupee. He wears a cheap business suit.

The other man, 40s, is thin, bespectacled, and clean shaven with boyish features. He wears a striped dress shirt and bow tie. This is DR. ORVILLE.

MANAGER

Gus! Rusty! Get your asses over here!

The boys scurry behind the concession stand.

MANAGER

This here is the new popcorn machine. Today is the first test run of this model for the public. I want you to watch carefully and listen to everything Doctor Orville says. You're going to be making a lot of popcorn today. People are going to be lined up around the block to see if this thing really works. If you two fuck this up-

ORVILLE

I'll take it from here, sir.

The manager moves out from behind the concession stand and turns around as he heads towards a cramped box office.

MANAGER

Remember, you two. We're in this for the customer. That's where the money's coming from. I want to see the both of you kissing ass like the place is shutting out again. Treat them all like royalty. If there's not a smile on every face that comes in here tonight, we can all kiss this place goodbye.

The manager enters the box office and shuts the door behind him.

ORVILLE

Well then.

The two boys turn back to Orville.

ORVILLE

My name is Doctor Orville and I designed the Popcorn Blaster X-Two-Thousand-Seven. I do realize the irony in that my name is Orville and I've built a popcorn machine. If you'd care to get anything out of your system at this time, I suggest you do so.

GUS/RUSTY

Huh?

ORVILLE

Never mind. The Popcorn Blaster X-Two-Thousand-Seven is a state-of-the-art popcorn cooker that cooks its own popcorn, is self-cleaning-

GUS

Self-cleaning! Wow!

ORVILLE

But most importantly, is fueled by organic waste deposited here.

Orville gestures to the circular compartment in the side of the machine.

RUSTY

You mean garbage?

ORVILLE

I prefer organic waste. Now, if you would direct your attention to the control panel.

Orville presses a green button on the control panel. The compartment opens. Orville tosses a napkin inside, presses a yellow button, which seals the compartment, and presses a red button which prompts noises inside the machine.

ORVILLE

Inside the machine, the waste is broken down by an advanced computer system and processed into matter that can be used as energy. Once the machine indicates the process is complete, you may start the cooker.

A beep sounds from the machine, at which Orville throws a switch on the control panel, causing tubes suspended above the tub to dispense salt, oil, and popcorn seeds. A lid slides over the tub and a motor is activated.

ORVILLE

When the tub is empty, you simply press the reset button.

Orville gestures a white button on the control panel.

ORVILLE

This will activate the self-cleaning process. It's quite simple really.

RUSTY

I don't get it. Why would you want to make a popcorn machine that runs on garbage?

ORVILLE

I am an inventor but I also regard myself as a philanthropist of sorts. Rather than build a machine that creates waste, I've built one that recycles it. I'm sure you both know movie theaters thrive with waste. With my invention in the hands of movie theaters across the country, I'll be diminishing its waste problem considerably and therefore, giving back to the community, and in any case, who doesn't love popcorn?

GUS

I love popcorn!

ORVILLE

My point exactly.

Steam emits from inside the tub as the sound of popping corn fills the lobby.

ORVILLE

Well, I gather my work here is done.  
Good day, gentlemen.

Orville exits.

The boys watch as the Popcorn Blaster removes the lid from the tub and dumps popcorn into the trough below.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Orville steps into a limousine in front of the theater, which subsequently drives away.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

A massive crowd has gathered outside the movie theater. The manager greets customers at the box office, attempting small talk, making compliments, and generally kissing ass.

INT. LOBBY

A long line has formed in front of the concession stand. Rusty frantically scoops popcorn into bags and punches away at the cash register.

Gus is nowhere in sight.

RUSTY

Gus, I need your help!

INT. BROOM CLOSET

Gus stands inside a cramped broom closet. He wipes his blistered un-bandaged hands with a wad of blood-stained napkins.

GUS

I'll be right there!

RUSTY (O.S.)

Hurry up, we're running out of popcorn!

Gus rolls the napkins into a ball and hastily exits.

INT. LOBBY

Gus emerges from a door behind the concession stands and proceeds towards the Popcorn Blaster. He opens the circular compartment, tosses the bloody napkins inside, and presses the yellow button.

INT. POPCORN BLASTER

An artificial womb enshrouded in an amber glow. A constant mechanical hum.

The napkins unfold as they float into view.

Golden lasers fire into the napkins from all directions. The napkins disintegrate and the lasers absorb them. An electronic shriek, the amber glow vanishes, and the lasers turn crimson. The womb becomes an inferno.

INT. LOBBY

The Popcorn Blaster beeps and the compartment opens. The inside glows a fiery red.

GUS

Huh?

Gus proceeds to the compartment to investigate. He stares hypnotized by the inside of the machine.

A deafening whoosh and Gus is sucked into the compartment. The surrounding steel crinkles as the compartment grows wider, drawing Gus further inside. MOVIE GOERS scream.

RUSTY

Gus!

Muffled screams as Gus vanishes inside the machine. The compartment seals itself.

INT. POPCORN BLASTER

Lasers fire into a screaming Gus. He breaks apart bloodlessly into a cloud of particles the lasers absorb.

INT. LOBBY

The Popcorn Blaster releases a mechanized bellow. The crowd cries out before it in shock.

The manager bursts from the box office.

MANAGER

What the—

Rusty and movie goers watch in horror as the machine comes to life and unearths itself from the tile floor. Tubing breaks free from the structure. Larger tubes swoop beneath the machine and lift it off the ground like the legs of a spider. Smaller tubes writhe in midair like tentacles.

MANAGER

Holy shit!

INT. BOX OFFICE

The manager retreats inside the box office and locks the door.

INT. LOBBY

A tube lashes out at Rusty, coils around his legs, lifts him screaming into the air, and drops him into the machine's open compartment.

Everybody screams and rushes towards the theater entrance. The Popcorn Blaster raises a tube and sprays a shower of oil over the crowd. The oil drenches the floor and causes movie goers to slip and fall.

The Popcorn Blaster steps over the concession stand. The counter crumbles beneath its weight.

Several movie goers hasten towards the entrance. The Popcorn Blaster raises another tube and fires salt at them in shotgun-like bursts. They fall to the floor.

INT. BOX OFFICE

The manager hastily dials a number into a wall mounted phone and holds the receiver to his ear.



INT. LIMOUSINE

Orville sits in the back of the limousine. He removes a ringing cell phone from his pocket.

ORVILLE

Orville.

INT. BOX OFFICE

MANAGER

Orville, you need to get your ass over here right now!

ORVILLE (V.O.)

Excuse-

MANAGER

It's your goddamn machine! It's alive!  
I don't know how! I don't know why! All  
I know is-

INT. LIMOUSINE

ORVILLE

Oh God.

(to DRIVER)

We have to turn around.

DRIVER (O.S.)

What?

ORVILLE

We have to get back to that theater!

DRIVER (O.S.)

Yes sir.

INT. BOX OFFICE

MANAGER

Orville?! Orville, goddamn it!

INT. LOBBY

Several movie goers burst from inside the theater through the double doors. A tube raises on the floor and trips all of them. A sheet of oil falls and soaks them.

The Popcorn Blaster focuses on the initial group of movie goers. It continues to fire salt at them. A third tube shoots popcorn seeds in rapid-fire. The seeds tear into flesh like bullets then ravage it as they pop.

A fourth tube harvests dead movie goers off the floor and feeds them into the machine's compartment.

The manager bursts from the box office and takes a brief glimpse of the scene before him.

MANAGER

Oh Jesus.

The manager races for the theater entrance. A tube collides with his skull and knocks him to the floor.

The manager squirms on the oil soaked floor as the Popcorn Blaster drags him towards its compartment. He ceases when the machine hoists him into the air and fires seeds into his face. His head bursts in a cloud of brains and popcorn.

INT. LIMOUSINE

DRIVER (O.S.)

What's going on, sir?

ORVILLE

I knew there was something they weren't telling me.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Who, sir?

ORVILLE

The military. I bought the software for the Popcorn Blaster from the military. It was only supposed to break down and identify matter so it could be reinstated properly. I guess the military had other plans for it.

DRIVER (O.S.)

I don't understand, sir.

ORVILLE

If human DNA somehow got inside the

machine. If somehow it was identified by the software... No, that's only a theory... No... It's reality... It's the only logical explanation.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Sir?

ORVILLE

When the software identified human DNA, the machine became self-aware. As a machine, organic waste serves only as the Popcorn Blaster's fuel. As an aware being, it's a life force. An aware being, at its most basic nature, will do anything to protect and or sustain its life force. The military knew this. That's why they gave me the killswitch.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The Popcorn Blaster bursts through the box office in a cloud of dust and debris.

The limousine pulls up in front of the movie theater.

The Popcorn Blaster leaps into the air and lands on top of the limousine. It smashes its supporting tubes up and down on top of the limousine and tears a hole in the roof.

INT. LIMOUSINE

Tubes snake inside the limousine and lift the driver kicking and screaming out of the driver's seat.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER

The Popcorn Blaster shoves the driver into its compartment.

ORVILLE

Unintelligent design.

The Popcorn Blaster turns to the face Orville.

ORVILLE

Unintelligent design!

The Popcorn Blaster stands calmly but not still. Its tubing writhes hypnotically.

ORVILLE

No. That's impossible. It's just not possible.

The Popcorn Blaster continues to move its tubing.

ORVILLE

You know who I am. I created you. I command you to—

A tube lunges forward, wraps around Orville's midsection, and lifts him slowly off the ground.

ORVILLE

No, no, no! I am your creator! You obey my command! Unintelligent design! Unintelligent design!

The Popcorn Blaster lifts Orville over the popcorn tub. A metal bar rotates inside. A mechanical roar and the bar becomes a blur.

ORVILLE

No!

The Popcorn Blaster lowers Orville screaming into the tub. The rotating bar minces Orville's legs and works its way up to his midsection. Sinew, fluid, and granulated bone splatter the inside of the tub.

When the bar has reached Orville's midsection, the Popcorn Blaster lifts him out of the tub and dumps the blended offals into the trough below.

Tubes shoot up from under Orville and connect with his severed torso. Some tubes carry blood away from Orville while others pump amber fluid into his body.

Orville's flesh turns pale. His veins swell as they fill with fluid. His eyes open. They are white with no pupils. He opens his mouth and speaks in a tri-toned voice.

ORVILLE/POPCORN BLASTER

I obey no man.

Orville and the Popcorn blaster head down the city street  
in front of the movie theater.

FADE OUT.

THE END