

P.P.L.F

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FADE IN:

DREAM

ALAN, 30s, clothes blown by the breeze, stands on the greenest of hilltops. The sun glints through the trees making multiple lens flares. Red-haired LUCY, 30s, waves up at him as she walks up the hill.

LUCY
Alan!

He attempts to step toward her but is unable. A puddle of purplish goo has hold of his feet and he sinks.

ALAN
Lucy! Help!

Lucy listens then she hurries her pace.

LUCY
Alan?

Up to his waist now.

ALAN
I'm stuck! Help me!

Lucy stands on the hilltop and scans the area. Alan is nowhere to be seen.

Submerged in the goo, Alan can see the purple tinted Lucy's expression of concern. He calls to her but no sound comes out, just a big bubble. Lucy turns, thoughtful, then she walks away.

Through his eyes the lens flares in the trees glow violet. His last breath bubbles slowly up --

INT. CELL - NIGHT

Alan gasps as his eyes open. He lies on the bottom mattress of a regulation bunk and stares up at the springs under the mattress above him as his breathing calms.

The upper bunk squeaks. A long loud fart causes Alan to wrinkle his face with disgust. Then he covers his face with his pillow.

INT. MESS - DAY

Alan, distraught, sits across the table from GEORGE, 50s, who seems a bit fatherly.

ALAN
He's a filthy disgusting slob. I want to stick him.

GEORGE
Ain't that easy buddy.

ALAN
I'll do whatever it takes. I
can't fucking stand him anymore.

GEORGE
Carlos is a bit rough around the
edges but --

ALAN
He asks me fucked up questions!

GEORGE
Like what?

INT. CELL - FLASHBACK

CARLOS, 30s, big and ugly, sits on the toilet and Alan lies
on the bunk.

CARLOS
You ever lick a girls vagina when
she has a yeast infection?

INT. MESS - DAY

George remains calm.

GEORGE
That is unusual.

Alan half stands, almost apoplectic.

ALAN
Look at him!

GEORGE
Sit down Al.

ALAN
Fucking look at him!

George sighs and turns. He spots Carlos as he brings his
tray back to the counter.

ALAN (V.O.)
Watch him! He's going to put his
dirty spoon in with the clean
ones.

And as Alan predicts Carlos does exactly that.

GEORGE
So he's anti-social. I'm not
gonna sell you a shiv because --

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. MESS - DAY

Alan half stands, almost apoplectic.

ALAN
Look at him!

GEORGE
Sit down Al.

ALAN
Fucking look at him!

GEORGE
I already fucking have!

Alan stares angrily at George.

ALAN
When? When did you look at him?

GEORGE
A minute ago when you fucking
asked me, now sit the fuck down!

ALAN
I-I...

Alan slumps into his seat. He covers his face with his hands.

GEORGE
Alright, so he's fucked up. I'll
sell you the fucking shiv but
it's gonna fucking cost.

Alan stares at George slack-jawed but says nothing.

GEORGE
What's the fucks the matter you
didn't think it was gonna fucking
cost?

Alan wipes his brow.

ALAN
No, I though you weren't --

Alan swoons.

ALAN
I've been having these dreams
lately they've --

GEORGE
Who gives a fuck about your
fucking dreams, you fucking want
the fucking shiv or not?

Alan swallows and nods. He pulls a small wad of money from his pocket and covertly places it under the napkin on his tray. Checking both ways, he quickly pushes the tray over to George.

George pockets the money and then covertly hides a shiv under Alan's napkin. He pushes the tray back.

Alan reaches out toward his napkin and then everything freezes.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

On a monitor Alan and George are frozen in time while sitting at the mess table. Two identical looking, dressed in grey, technicians (DEE and DOM) ponder over the image.

DEE
Double-que are ess tee vee?

Dom nods.

DOM
And then I Double-exed are are you you!

Dee shakes his head.

DEE
This is bad juju.

A door slides open and two suited men enter the control room, one is the WARDEN and the other is a VIP.

The glow from the multitude of monitors and blinking lights colours their white shirts. The numerous technicians suddenly look especially busy.

WARDEN
As you can see, we've spared no expense to ensure proper care of our wards. Your dollars will provide our research team with --

Intrigued, the Vip walks toward a monitor which shows row upon row of people sleeping in bunk beds piled five high. The Warden pats his forehead with a handkerchief and then follows.

VIP
Is this them?

WARDEN
Yes and as you can see they are well housed. Now, let me show you the CELL9000 in oper --

VIP
How do they eat?

The Warden taps a technician on the back of his head and loudly whispers.

WARDEN
Zoom in. Zoom in.

On the monitor a single ward zooms into view. His bunk is tight fitting, he would not be able to easily turn over. Wires come out of the head of the bed and attach to various locations on his body. The warden traces one of the wires with his retracted pen.

WARDEN

Intravenously. And electro-stimulation is provided at the programmed workout time. They are quite well maintained.

VIP

Some say you've turned them into vegetables.

WARDEN

Nonsense! Their brains are kept quite active and in tip top shape.

The warden points to a random monitor. On the monitor a prisoner is playing cards with his cell mate.

WARDEN

Each are given their own special rehabilitative experience. We are in a unique position here, where we can fit punishments exactly to the crimes.

VIP

How so?

WARDEN

To make it simple, say your crime was burglary, then we might provide you a cell mate who is a thief. Crime. Punishment. This can, of course, cause severe conflicts so Managers are programmed into the scenarios. The Manager's task is to encourage non-violent outcomes. The whole system is splendidly effective.

VIP

(chuckles) An eye for an eye, eh?

The Warden chuckles back.

VIP

(serious) But I have to tell you there's a lot serious opposition to what you are doing here, whether it's government sanctioned or not. The processing power you offer is a huge boon for my company, but at what cost?

WARDEN

I've already given you an estimate, but if there's a problem with the fee schedule we can --

VIP

Not the price. Before I associate my company with your organisation I have to know, this implant you use, is it really safe?

WARDEN
Completely, the cell chip has
been thoroughly tested.

The Vip eyes him skeptically.

WARDEN
In 100% of the test cases the
effects of implant were
completely reversed, no harm was
done to the subjects. It's
foolproof, nothing could possibly
go wrong.

DEE (O.S.)
Sir! We have a problem.

The Warden shrinks back from the Vip's suspicious look and
pats his sweaty forehead with a handkerchief.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Warden, Vip, Dee, and Dom all watch the frozen scene
of Alan and his Manager George on the monitor.

DOM
-- And then the Manager sold him
the shiv.

WARDEN
He what?! Didn't you Double-ess
tee pee que vee que?

DOM
I tried every command I could
think of, sir. My last resort was
to pause him.

WARDEN
How long has he been paused?

DOM
About 10 minutes, sir. If he's
paused any longer he'll--

VIP
I should be going.

WARDEN
Wait! This is a minor issue.

Another pat of his forehead.

WARDEN
This sort of thing happens all
the time. Doesn't it fellows?

The Warden looks at Dee and Dom and he nods. They stare.

WARDEN
A few infinitesimal programming
bugs that still need a bit of
ironing out, nothing more.

Another pat.

WARDEN
You would be quite interested in
seeing how capably we handle
them.

The Vip eyes the Warden suspiciously but he nods.

VIP
Alright. Show me.

WARDEN
Put the Manager on manual and
hand me your mic and glove.

Dom hands the Warden his mic and gloves and proceeds to hit some keys. The Warden puts the mic to his mouth and the glove on his hand as he speaks to the Vip.

WARDEN
I'm going to assume control of
the Manager named --

DEE
George.

WARDEN
George, using this mic to speak
through him and this glove to
control his movements.

VIP
I see.

DOM
I don't think he'll go manual.

WARDEN
Of course he will.

The Warden pushes Dom's hands away and presses a few keys. A green light blinks.

DOM
It worked!

WARDEN
Of course.

The Warden is all smiles with the Vip.

WARDEN
Start him up.

The image on the monitor begins moving and Alan reaches for his napkin.

INT. MESS - DAY

George reaches across the table and grabs Alan's hand before he lifts up the napkin.

GEORGE
(warden's voice) You don't want
to do that Alan.

ALAN
Yeah, I do.

And Alan lifts his hand sharply to push away George's hand. In the process a small clear plastic tub of grape jelly is knocked off of Alan's tray and onto the table.

The lights reflect in the purple jelly like bright violet lens flares. They catch Alan's attention and he stares at the container, not breathing.

Then, reverentially, he reaches his hand out and picks the container off of the table. Turning it over in his hand, he looks at the printed foil top. In big letters, it says GRAPE JELLY and underneath, in smaller letters, A PRODUCT OF P.P.L.F. How curious.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

On the monitor Alan stares at the small tub of jelly.

VIP
What's wrong with the jelly?

Everyone shrugs.

INT. MESS - DAY

As he turns it over in his hand once more, he watches the beautiful violet lens flares that flicker in the jelly.

GEORGE
(warden's voice) Is something
wrong with the jelly?

Alan wakes from his reverie.

ALAN
No. Nothing. It just reminds me
of -- something -- the outside
maybe. What's, um, P.P.L.F?

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Everyone shrugs off the question.

INT. MESS

Alan traces his finger along the edge of the foil.

GEORGE
(warden's voice) Why?

Alan pulls the foil top off and shrugs. Neither he nor George notice the copper circuitry around the rim of the jelly tub.

ALAN
It's the company that made the
jelly. I never heard of them.

Alan tips the contents of the tub into his mouth.

Then his eyes open wider than seems possible and everything
fades to black and white.

INT. TROPICANA NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Alan is on stage in a frilly Cuban getup. A bongo drum is
strapped over his shoulder. Latin music swells and Alan
gives a bit of hip movement before he hits the drum a
couple of times and then

ALAN
(sings) Babaloo! Babaloo!

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A red light flashes near the console and an alarm beeps.
The Warden stares at the monitor dumfounded. Dom fiddles
with some keys while Dee looks very serious indeed.

DOM
There's been a breach. It looks
like someone is feeding the
analog signal of an 'I Love Lucy'
episode into this wards cell
chip.

WARDEN
No it can't be!

Around the room red lights flash and alarms beep. The
WARDEN shouts at one of the TECHNICIANS.

WARDEN
What's happening?

TECHNICIAN
Sir, our ward has become The
Beaver. he's fighting with his
brother Wally.

From around the room the technicians report in.

TECHNICIANS
Ours is Ralph from The
Honeymooners...Daren from
Bewitched...Grandpa from The
Munsters...

The Warden is more distraught with each announcement.

TECHNICIANS
Archie from All in the
Family...The skipper from
Gilligan's Island...Gomez from...

VIP
I've heard enough!

WARDEN
No! Please! We'll fix this, I know we will. First, uh, first find the cause... find the cause... What's the cause?

DEE
I might be wrong but I think it has something to do with, uh, the grape jelly.

WARDEN
The jelly right, good cause, the jelly and he said something... there was something about the jelly... something... a name.

VIP
P.P.L.F?

WARDEN
P.P.L.F! That's it! P.P.L.F is to blame. All we need to do is find out what P.P.L.F means and...

He looks up and everyone around him has changed. The VIP, the technicians, are now dressed in purple. The Warden shakes in his boots as he surveys the ungraspable scene. He falls to his knees with a small gasp.

The Vip stares angrily down at the Warden.

Then the Vip grabs the back of his own head and pulls his face off like the mask it is. His long red hair is released and it falls into a curly frame around his face. He is Lucy. And she is pointing a purple automatic at the Warden.

LUCY
It means the Purple Prisoner Liberation Front.

WARDEN
Purple? Why Purple?

LUCY
Because purple is my favourite colour.

And she shoots the Warden with a dart that has purple feathers. He slumps to the ground, his arms are paralyzed at angles and his hands are claws but he is able to see and hear those around him.

DOM
Now what do we do.

LUCY
We give him a dose of his own medicine.

The Warden's eyes cringe with pain.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

On the monitor the Warden sees through pained eyes.

Dressed normally now, Dom sits at the console. Lucy and Alan, also dressed normally, stand behind him.

DOM
It's the best I could program on
such short notice.

LUCY
It's good! I liked all the
purple.

DOM
I knew you would. I'm sorry that
it's a bit choppy and rushed at
the end.

ALAN
It's perfect for our needs.

Alan looks at another monitor. The warden lies in the only occupied bunk, wires are attached to various parts of his body.

DOM
Should I wake him up now?

ALAN
No! I want you to loop it a
hundred or so times. That ought
to be enough to teach him a
lesson.

DOM
But --

LUCY
Is there a better way to punish
someone who thought he could rent
out the idle part of peoples
brains to large multi-nationals
that needed cheap extra
processing power?

DOM
Uh, I guess not.

Dom pushes a couple of buttons and on the other monitor the Warden and the Vip enter the control room through it's sliding door. Lucy and Alan smile.

DOM
And if that all you need me for,
well, Connie's making a stew for
dinner and ...

ALAN
Go on. Get out of here.

Dom runs off. Lucy and Alan watch him exit the sliding door. Alan turns to Lucy.

INT. 623 E. 68TH STREET - DAY

Black and white, the Ricardo's apartment is familiar, a piano sits against the back wall. Alan, dressed in a snappy suit, takes off his hat as he enters the front door.

ALAN
Lucy, I'm home.

Wearing a frilly apron Lucy enters from the kitchen. She turns away from him and crosses her arms.

LUCY
Not yet you aren't.

ALAN
Don't be angry with me dear --

From behind, Alan takes Lucy in his arms.

ALAN
I'm sorry I never got the chance
to thank you for saving me.

LUCY
You can thank me later, just --

ALAN
I love you Lucy.

Lucy turns toward Alan.

LUCY
Oh, Ricky! Ricky?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Alan stands dazed and unresponsive. Lucy frantically snaps her fingers in front of his face.

LUCY
Alan? Alan?

She shakes him.

LUCY
Alan?!

FADE OUT.