Homage

by Kris Griffin

Current Revisions by Kris Griffin, 1 July 2007

Kris Griffin +44 (0) 78 999 22 506 EXT. BUSY STREET - DAYTIME

A pedestrianised street is clinically tidy with lots of people in white uniforms walking with intent. The shopfronts are all uniform with neon lighting and glass frontage.

An unidentifiable person is stood watching a television screen in one of the shop windows.

INT. TV STUDIO

A PRESENTER, 40 in a white suit, shirt and tie sits behind a news desk.

The words FILM TRANSGRESSION flash on the screen in red.

PRESENTER

FAFT - protecting the media against film transgression. We are the leading representative trade body that is committed to protecting the interest of the industry in the fight against piracy and illegal downloading.

The screen fades to a dull monochrome. A scene that looks a little like the station scene in the film Brief Encounter. The words NO COLOUR, NO 3-D, NO SENSES, NO REASON flash across the screen in red.

PRESENTER (CONT'D)

The studios want you to have the best time when you watch a film and they are committed to bringing you high quality entertainment.

The screen shows a group of people in a Cineplex obviously watching a film and having a great time and overplaying excited emotions.

PRESENTER (CONT'D)

Studios own distribution to films and only the movies showing at your local Cineplex are legal. Any other broadcast of film is illegal. Citizens found breaking this law will be punished - film transgressors are criminals. Contact our hotline on 1111-FAFT to report any film transgression you are aware of. Information received will be treated in the strictest confidence and positive identification will go towards your citizen points.

The screen fades to black - the hotline number is left for a few seconds and then fades.

Black screen.

VOICE OVER

Your nearest 3500 seat Cineplex is situated on the Goldman Entertainment Park. Currently showing the latest remake of Psycho in Glorious 3-D and Sense-A-Vision.

(in a quick quiet voice)
Glorious 3-D and Sense-A-Vision
are registered trademarks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

PAIGE AUGUSTINE, 29, white, sits in a dated lounge circa 1990 watching The Odessa File on the television. Paige is wearing a white top, short white skirt, white tights and black pumps. She has 4 thick blue bands around her upper left arm. Paige is curled up on the sofa engrossed in the film.

A high pitched beep.

PAIGE

(talking aloud)

Hello.

She pauses.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Yes I'm at sanctuary, it's my night, where else would I be.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Of course I was careful, I always am. I'm a level 4. No one would suspect me. What's up?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

It has to be a routine check, there's no reason for anyone to suspect.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Doc, I'm half way through Odessa, it's my night, why now?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

OK OK. I'll come along and lock up. I accept it's not worth taking the risk but I want my time credited next week.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

I realise. Fine. Okey dokey doggie daddy. We're still meeting up though yes?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Aww c'mon, the law and justice are two entirely different matters and we aren't doing any harm. I need to get my fix. I need to see you guys.

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

OK cool. Normal place in 2 hours then, I suppose I should report back into control first though?

Pause

PAIGE (CONT'D)

(smiling)

I do take my responsibilities as seriously as you, you know. You do your job and let me do mine, yes? Count the bands baby. See you later.

Paige stands and stretches out, she waves her hand in the air and the TV switches off. She looks around and walks towards the door. She opens the door, flicks the light switch and walks out.

EXT. A STORAGE YARD - EVENING

Paige stands outside a large storage container, she closes the door she has just walked through carefully and waves her hand through the air. A series of beeps.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Storage facility secure.

Paige looks around again and strides away into the darkness.

EXT. THE CORNER OF A LARGE BUILDING - 2 HOURS LATER

DR BILL BUTLER, 42, stands against the wall of the building. Orange street lamps give the area a dull light. He is dressed in white trousers, a white shirt and jacket and black pumps, he has 6 blue bands around the upper sleeve of his jacket. He is looking around nervously.

Paige walks towards him, staying in the shadow by the side of the building.

PAIGE

(loudly)

Hey Bill.

BILL

Keep it down. Keep it down.

PAIGE

(quietly)

Sorry Bill. No need to get so nervous - most lower levels are in bed. It's cool.

BILL

Well I like to be cautious. I saw you walking in the shadows, you're obviously concerned.

PAIGE

(nervously)

Yes well, after what you said on the com unit I was a little stirred.

BILL

Not shaken?

They both smile at each other.

PAIGE

Are Chico and Susi coming?

BILL

Of course, in fact they should be here by now, I did tell them it was urgent.

So why so urgent Doc, tell me, they could be ages yet.

BILL

(nodding)

In a nutshell. I overheard a conversation today at the facility that indicated Cygnus were going to have a major blitz on anyone caught breaking their laws.

PATGE

So what's new, we've always known there was a risk, but it's just the 4 of us - nothing to fear is there? Cygnus are after bigger fish than us?

BILL

Paige, listen. Film transgression is bigger now than it has been for 10 years. The blackmarket is slowly rising to street level again and we are getting hold of old film again. It totally undermines what the studios are selling us now.

PAIGE

Crap?

BILL

Crap, yes crap. But controlled crap, profitable crap. You know how it works.

PAIGE

Of course, but what's new this time, we lie low for a few weeks and it all blows over?

 \mathtt{BILL}

I'm not so sure a few weeks will cut it this time. They were saying this was to be the biggest cull of transgressors since the download wars.

PAIGE

(shocked)

Holy shit, bad times...

BILL

(nonchalantly)

I know, profit placed over many innocent lives.

Bill pause and takes a breath.

BILL (CONT'D)

Do you still think I was worried over nothing? If they carry out the threat this is the end. We can't carry on, we can't risk our status or our lives.

PATGE

I don't know what to say...why now?

BILL

Because people like us refuse to give in. We keep the dream alive in the hope that the studios will give in and we'll be free to view what we choose.

PAIGE

(looking into Bill's
 eyes and saying softly)
But only in their dreams can men
be truly free. 'Twas always thus,
and always thus will be.

Bill touches Paige's face and they both smile.

They hear footsteps and turn to the direction they are coming from.

FRANCISCO (CHICO) DAY, 30, and SUSI KRAUSE, 22, walk towards Paige and Bill from across the street. They are dressed identically to Paige and Bill only Chico has 3 blue stripes on his upper sleeve and Susi has 4.

BILL

We didn't know if you were late, Chico, or the late Chico.

CHICO

It's funny, you know. It's a good story, it's funny, you're a funny guy.

BILL

(smiling)

Ouch.

(holds his chest in a comic gesture)
You guys OK? SUSI

Yeah pretty good thanks Doc. Hi Paige

PAIGE

Hey babe, you OK?

SUSI

Pretty good thanks...before we were disturbed. I didn't think you'd be so happy, it's your night. Did you get the same call as us?

PAIGE

Don't you know it.

BILL

I've already explained to Paige that we may have to split for a time, things are getting heavy. Cygnus are planning a huge blitz, and I don't want us caught in the middle.

CHICO

(shaking his head)
Not now man, please not now. It's
my time tomorrow. I picked up a
copy of Showgirls - Verhoevens
finest, and dropped it off at
sanctuary.

BILL

(urgently)

You came straight here?

CHICO

(confused)

Yeah.

BILL

How many times have I told you to be careful, we could be in deep deep shit right now.

The entire area is suddenly bathed in a deep white light. Paige, Bill, Chico and Susi all put their hands to their eyes.

A voice over a loud-hailer.

VOICE

You are suspected of film transgression. You are required to remove your bands.
(MORE)

VOICE (CONT'D)

You are required to kneel and lay your hands flat on the ground. You will then be neutralised ready for processing.

CHICO

(looking around at the
 others)

What are we supposed to do? We're in some real deep shit now man.

The lights start to close in.

VOICE

Bands off. On your knees.

PAIGE

(head down and quietly)
No, we'll run, and we'll live.

She turns and sprints along the wall heading for a door. The others look up and follow without thinking. SHOTS ring out, a bullet catches Susi on the arm but she stays on her feet and follows the others through the door.

VOICE

(loudly)

You have taken evasive action and abandoned your rights. You are guilty of film transgression and compliance failure. You have been identified. You are sentenced to termination immediately.

INT - A LONG WELL LIT CORRIDOR

The group of 4 have run the length of the corridor and reached the end, it splits left and right. Susi is bleeding from the arm.

CHICO

(out of breath)
Which way? Which way?

SUSI

(looking at her arm)
I've been shot and I don't feel
great guys.

BILL

(quickly)

Susi, you'll be OK, the nano-tech in your WhiteSuite will tend to the wounds.

(he looks about)
I have no idea which way to go.

(pointing down the corridor at bright lights coming towards them)

Right now I really don't think it matters which way we go.

(shouting)

Run.

The group run together down several corridors, taking lefts and rights along the way in the hope of losing the trailing Cygnus robots.

They run down a long corridor for about 20 seconds and spot another junction.

SUSI

(out of breath and panicing)

Another junction, which way? We have to try and get out of here, this is crazy.

BTTIT

You're right, we're going nowhere fast.

As they approach the junction, dark shadows appear and a bright light shines at them.

CHICO

(shouting)

Turn back!

The group turn around and see in the distance a shadowy group with lights coming at them from the other direction.

PAIGE

Trapped, now what?

BTLL

I have no idea but we can't give up. Think.

Susi leans against the wall in pain and desperation, she slowly sinks down.

SUSI

Ouch, what the hell was that.

CHICO

What?

SUSI

(feeling the wall)
Something here, Chico help me
pull it open.

PAIGE

Guys whatever you are doing please make it fast and make it good - they're coming at us fast.

Chico and Susi pull at the wall and a slide panel opens, small but enough for a person to get into.

SUST

Look, look an opening.

CHICO

A garbage chute - how ironic!

PAIGE

Quit looking and get in, has to be better than here. Quickly!

Chico pushes Susi into the opening and she slides in and disappears. He grabs Paige and pushes her though too.

CHICO

C'mon Bill - let's go.

SHOTS start to ring out and the lights get closer.

BILL

Go Chico, I'm right behind you. Go. Go.

Chico dives through the opening.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

The white room is bare apart from some white sheets, a trolly, some wooden poles and a double door with a large lock. Susi and Paige are getting to their feet as a hatch opens above them and Chico drops through to the floor unceremoniously.

CHICO

(dazed)

Garbage chute eh?

PAIGE

(shaking her head)
Laundry. Is Bill behind you?

CHICO

Yes, he was right after me.

They all look up to where the hatch opens.

SUSI

They can't get through?

PAIGE

No way, it was a squeeze for us, those things will never make it. We're safe for a bit.

They continue to stare up at the hatch.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

He should be here now.

SUSI

Something's wrong, I know it.

The hatch opens and a body hits the floor, covered in blood and unmoving.

PAIGE

(shouting)

Bill.

All three run to his side and kneel down beside him.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

It's me Doc, Paige, you've made it. We're in a laundry room. Can you hear me?

CHICO

C'mon man, wake up, c'mon. I should never have left him. He's hurt bad.

SUSI

But his suit, the nanotech...will it?

PATGE

I have no idea, so many wounds.

She grabs his wrists and concentrates.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

He has a pulse.

SUSI

My wound is healed!

Susi rubs her arm.

(snapping)

Just one bullet Susi - this is a little more serious.

CHICO

OK OK let's calm down a little.

Paige looks down towards Bill, she is cradling his head. Looks up and shakes her head.

PAIGE

You're right. Let's secure what we have. Check the doors and see where we are.

SUSI

Isn't it kind of futile, they identified us, we have no value now. Why don't we give up and take the chance?

PAIGE

That they don't kill us? Please. There are places we can go, buy new tags, start again. We have to try.

CHICO

Paige is right, let's stay positive.

Chico stands and goes over to the doors, unlocks them and carefully looks outside. He closes the door carefully and locks it again.

PAIGE

What we got?

CHICO

More corridors, I can't tell where we are, no features, nothing.

SUSI

All I've got are some sheets, a trolly and some wooden poles.

The three look at each other for inspiration.

PAIGE

Nothing then.

Bill moves his hand and holds Paige.

BILL

(softly, in pain) We have time.

PAIGE

Doc, how do you feel?

BILL

Pretty beat up but I can feel the clothes working.

SUSI

(pacing and interrupting)

Good. Good. Doc is OK. But Cygnus will soon figure where we are. As soon as we hit the corridors they'll be on our trail. This is futile.

BILL

Don't give up Susi, have hope, always hope.

CHTCO

Yeah come on we'll be fine. Be positive, it'll work out.

SUSI

(getting angry)
It won't, we all know it. If we give up now they may show us so

give up now they may show us some leniency, I can't see a point in running or fighting.

BILL

(trying to sit up)
That's been the problem Susi, no one has fought for many many years. You're too young to remember what happened and remember the freedom we enjoyed. When media had just begun to dominate the many, the few controlled all TV, radio, newspapers and the web - information was controlled and we accepted it. The medium of film was a strange one.

(he pauses and takes a breath)

BILL (CONT'D)

We took distribution into our own hands the studios started to lose money.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

The quality of new films were so poor people stopped watching. They reverted to the old stuff - classics where plot and character development were king. The studios made no money from them and the battles ensued.

PATGE

The studios took the distribution back and released the old films in limited periods?

BILL

Yes but all they created was a blackmarket - like with any product of a limited nature. They made the situation worse for themselves.

SUSI

(cutting in)
I know most of this!

CHICO

Let him speak.

BILL

Thanks Chico and there is a point to this Susi, I want to show why it's important that we fight and we don't accept things.

SUSI

Why, nothing has made sense so far.

BILL

This will make sense.

(pauses)

The troubled studios lobbied governments and took back power by restricting the rights on all films. They kept pushing until watching an older film became a criminal offence. It was all about money, the guys at the top kept getting richer and the media moguls retained control - the film viewing public became mindless zombies incapable of watching anything more than 110 minutes of fluff.

Bill stands and stretches his body - most of the blood has now disappeared.

BILL (CONT'D)

You are aware as our society developed, we started to work for status rather than money - our media habits became far more controllable. Less people fought, more people forgot. Film becomes a lost art. The endless amounts of different cultures and arts that we have lost over time through greed. Treasures never to be seen again. It's happening now, we are in the middle of it and are in danger of losing another artform: Seven Samurai, The Godfather, Taxi Driver, Dracula. If we don't fight they'll be lost along with everything else.

SUSI

There are others who will fight, we aren't in a position to.

BILL

Wrong, what if everyone says the same thing.

SUSI

(starting to cry)
But why is it down to us?

PATGE

We put ourselves in this situation Susi. We believed in freedom and choice enough to create sanctuary, to watch what we wanted - we were strong enough then...

CHICO

Strong enough now? What will become of us. Things don't look so good.

Chico puts his arm around Susi and she rests her head upon him in comfort.

BILL

The most important thing is that we never give in. No matter what!

SUSI

(to Bill)

You're saying we should go to Australia aren't you?

INT. OUTSIDE THE BOXROOM DOOR

Machinery moves into position, spotlights search out every inch of the corridor. More machinery joins. The CLICKING sound of guns being readied is heard.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

CHICO

Australia is no better than here.

(smiling)

I don't want to hear another one of your ideas Bill.

BILL

(laughing)

Why am I always so damn smart?

PAIGE

Ok, Susi grab the poles.

Susi gets up and grabs 4 wooden poles. The group are all now standing and they take a pole each from Susi.

SUSI

(looking at the floor) Since when did we become the banditos?

INT. OUTSIDE THE BOXROOM DOOR

More machinery arrives. All weaponry is now trained on the door.

VOICE

All units stand by. Take the door by explosive measures. Shoot to kill. Arm and comply!

The CLICKING of safety catches being taken off.

INT. WELL LIT BOXROOM

The 4 are stood the other side of the door armed with wooden poles. $\,$

CHICO

(holding his wooden pole
aloft)

For a moment there I thought we were in trouble.

I've got the door OK

CHICO

This is no time for bravery, I'll tell ya!

They all start to laugh looking around at one another.

SUSI

Australia is no better than here is it?

BTT_iT_i

It may not be, at least we have that choice to make. Australia has a good climate, better than the current climate anyway. The trip has to be one we choose to make not forced into.

SUSI

Don't you get sick of being right all the time?

BTTIT

(sharply)

Do you want to make the trip?

PAIGE

I think we need to think about it.

Paige unbolts the doors and pushes it open, all 4 step through with their poles raised high.

The sounds of GUNFIRE.

Freeze frame of the moment before the 4 are cut down by bullets

Fade to sepia.

THE END

Postscript

References to characters, names, situations and lines in this script are intentional. It's a Homage. There are more than you think.