

Current Events

By

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FADE IN:

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clean. Chic. Empty...

...except for a pair of attractive BLACK STILETTOS peeking from the bottom of the last stall.

A male voice, stern and gruff, speaks up.

VERNE (V.O.)  
(filtered, speakerphone)  
What's taking so long? I should  
have pictures by now.

IN THE STALL

SUNNY FARRAGUT (27), a driven but frazzled woman in office attire, leans against the wall, struggling with her phone.

SUNNY  
Sorry. My new phone's a pain.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - SAME

A cramped, cluttered, single occupant space.

VERNE (50s), paunchy with graying hair, sits at a small desk. He squeezes a stress ball while staring at his computer screen.

INTERCUT VERNE/SUNNY

VERNE  
New phone?

SUNNY  
My plan expired, so I decided to  
get the Windows Phone.

VERNE  
Aw Sunny, why the hell would you do  
that? You're supposed to be a  
professional.

SUNNY  
I know. It looked good in the store  
but... hold on... got anything?

A window pops up on Verne's computer screen. He clicks it.

VERNE

Finally.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

Verne clicks through pictures of a SMALL STRIPED SHARK swimming in a gym-sized pool. In the last picture-

DR. ANDERSON (40s), wheelchair bound and wearing dark sunglasses, holds a minnow over the water.

END INSERT

VERNE

What am I looking at?

SUNNY

A genetically modified Zebra shark. Its genes have been spliced with a Mako as well as-

VERNE

It looks like every shark I've ever seen in my life. Be honest, did you just lift this from the internet?

SUNNY

No! I had to bypass three layers of security for those pictures. What they're doing to these animals is highly illegal and-

VERNE

Problem is it doesn't *look* illegal. You want your work on the front page, right?

SUNNY

You mean the homepage?

VERNE

Wherever the fuck our news is now, you won't get there with this. I mean, look at Dr. Strangelove here.

SUNNY

The researcher?

VERNE

No, Sunny, the fish. I just decided to name the fish Dr. Strangelove.

SUNNY

Sorry, that's Dr. Anderson. He's got bad eyes and bad legs. What's your point?

VERNE

My point is *he* looks more interesting than the shark.

AT VERNE'S DOOR -

MARK (25), scrappy, with a smile full of teeth, knocks on the door and looks eagerly through the glass.

Verne holds his hand up, "Wait".

VERNE

Your boyfriend is at my door-

SUNNY

Don't call Mark my boyfriend.

VERNE

He's about to come in and pitch some bullshit Justin Bieber story. And if you can't bring me something a little more eye-popping, I'm gonna have to run it. Now, are you still at the facility?

Sunny sighs and peeks out the stall door.

SUNNY

Actually, I'm hiding in the facilities as we speak.

VERNE

And you still have your access?

(beat)

If you don't want the Marks of the world turning every news outlet in the country into a live Twitter feed, you can't stop moving. You stop, you die. You have to be a shark, Sunny. No pun intended.

SUNNY

Oh bullshit, Verne. I know damn well that pun was intended.

INT. ORCA OCEAN RESEARCH/LOBBY - NIGHT

Sleek. Spacious. Night blackens the panoramic window front.

Sunny carries her purse across the room to an ABANDONED SECURITY DESK.

SUNNY

Mr. Caine? Are you here?

No answer. Sunny glances around the empty lobby.

SUNNY

I dropped something inside. I'm just gonna run in and get it.

Sunny passes the desk and moves toward the hall beyond it.

SUNNY

Security layer two, bypassed.

HALLWAY - LATER

Sunny rounds a corner, walks several feet and stops at a door installed with a PROGRAMMABLE LOCK.

She punches in a code. A RED LIGHT blinks. She punches the code again. The RED LIGHT blinks again.

SUNNY

Damn it.

She pulls out her phone and starts flipping through it.

SUNNY

Where are my notes, you P.O.S.? Wait...

She looks up. Squints. Remembering... She punches the code. A GREEN LIGHT blinks. The door UNLOCKS.

SUNNY

(to phone)

Thanks for nothing.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Sunny enters the darkened room and closes the door quietly.

A row of FISH TANKS runs down the center of the room. Minnows and other small fish swim inside.

At the opposite end of the room sits a COMPUTER, already powered up and running.

Sunny heads to it... but stops mid-way at another door. She opens the door and peeks into the...

POOL ROOM

Dim light reflects from the surface of a gym-sized pool. The refracted beams dance along the walls and ceiling.

In the pool, a dorsal fin cuts through the blue-green water.

Leaving the door cracked, Sunny returns to the...

LABORATORY

She moves to the computer.

Sunny rifles through her purse. She extracts a DATA STICK and plugs it into the computer's USB PORT.

Her fingers fly across the keyboard.

ONSCREEN - windows open and close rapidly. A still frame of Dr. Anderson pops up. The pointer arrow positions over a PLAY button.

SQUEAK-SQUEAK... SQUEAK-SQUEAK...

Sunny glances back-

The lab is EMPTY.

She cocks her head, listening... silence.

She turns back to the screen.

INSERT - COMPUTER SCREEN

The pointer clicks. Dr. Anderson speaks to the camera.

DR. ANDERSON

The history of the universe is the history of evolution. Nothing exists in a solid state. Sometimes our perspective makes it appear as if things are at rest. But nothing is... ever.

KEYBOARD TAPS. A window pops up, "DOWNLOAD IN PROGRESS". The window minimizes.

DR. ANDERSON

A student once asked me what evolutionary advantage the blowhole of a whale could possibly provide. He correctly deduced that this was not the most practical way for an ocean creature to process oxygen.

SPLASH

END INSERT

Sunny whirls around. Eyes on the door...

The lapping of water can be heard.

DR. ANDERSON

The answer, of course, is that aquatic mammals are descended from land mammals. They shed their gills but, in order to survive, found it necessary to return to life underwater.

Sunny stands and creeps over to the door.

DR. ANDERSON

Now, problems of over population and climate change seem poised to reach critical mass in one historic instant. As ocean levels rise, does it not seem that we humans might also find it advantageous to... return to the sea?

ONSCREEN - The video stops. "DOWNLOAD COMPLETE".

Sunny enters the...

POOL ROOM

She stays in the shadows by the door.

By the pool, an empty wheelchair sits next to a metal pail. In the pool, Dr. Anderson, in swim trunks, floats facedown in the water. The dorsal fin circles him.

Sunny opens her mouth to call out-

Water EXPLODES at the doctor's feet and Dr. Anderson propels forward like a torpedo.

Nearing the pool's edge, he shoots out of the water and beaches himself near the wheelchair.

Sunny's mouth hangs open...

The doctor's legs and feet are FUSED TOGETHER. His toes elongated and webbed, resembling a giant CAUDAL FIN.

He reaches into the pail, draws out a minnow, and opens his mouth revealing...

rows of RAZOR SHARP TEETH. He tears into the minnow.

Sunny WHIMPERS-

Dr. Anderson whirls around. COLD BLACK EYES spot Sunny at the door. He spits out the half-eaten fish and SNARLS.

Sunny SCREAMS and runs back into the...

LABORATORY

She dashes to the computer. Grabs her purse. Yanks the data stick and runs back across the room to the main door.

POOL ROOM

Dr. Anderson flops/drags himself to his wheelchair. He grabs it and pulls it close...

...SQUEAK-SQUEAK

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sunny sprints, stilettos clicking against the tile floor. She flies around a corner-

and falls to the ground.

She looks to her feet. The heel of her stiletto is broken.

SQUEAK-SQUEAK...SQUEAK-SQUEAK...

She kicks her shoes off and picks herself up. She runs down the hall and stops at a T-intersection.

Looks left... A long stretch of unadorned hallway.

Looks right... an identical stretch of hallway.

SUNNY

Shit.

SQUEAK-SQUEAK...

She commits to a direction and sprints the length of the hall... rounds a corner.

A closed doorway stands at the end of the hall. She makes a break for it, passing numerous doors along the way.

She hits it full force and twists the knob... LOCKED.

SUNNY

No!

SQUEAK-SQUEAK...SQUEAK-SQUEAK...

Doubling back, she ducks inside the first door she reaches and shuts it behind her.

BROOM CLOSET

Lit only by cellphone light, Sunny crouches in the corner and fights with her phone.

SUNNY

(whispered)

Come on, you little shit. I just want to make a phone call!

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

Sunny's finger taps and swipes, but Windows OS is clunky and unmanageable. The SNAPCHAT APP OPENS.

END INSERT

SUNNY

Fuck you, Bill Gates.

SQUEAK-SQUEAK...

The door RIPS OPEN. Sunny SCREAMS...

Dr. Anderson's hideous, bloody maw ROARS at her.

The PHONE FLASHES.

HALLWAY

The doctor LAUNCHES into the closet. The wheelchair flies back, smashes against the wall and topples over.

Sunny SHRIEKS in abject horror.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - NIGHT

Verne looks bored stiff as Mark excitedly sells his story.

MARK

...so if this crack whore is to be trusted, we may have just blown this whole Justin Bieber paternity scandal wide open.

A CHIME sounds. Mark pulls out his phone.

MARK

This could be her now... Hmmmm... Sunny just sent me a Snapchat.

Verne perks up.

VERNE

Sunny? What's it say?

MARK

It's a picture. Hold on.

Mark taps at the phone.

MARK

Whoa... what the heck?

VERNE

What? Let me see.

Mark shows him the phone.

Dr. Anderson's monstrous visage fills the phone's screen... the photo VANISHES.

VERNE

Hey, bring it back up.

MARK

I can't, it's gone.

VERNE

What do you mean, it's gone? It was just right there. Bring it back up.

MARK

Snapchat photos only last ten seconds, then they delete themselves.

VERNE  
How do we get it back?

MARK  
We don't, it's erased from  
everywhere, even the company's  
servers.

Verne looks at him, incredulous.

VERNE  
W... Well, what the FUCK IS THE  
POINT OF THAT?!

Mark cowers in his chair.

VERNE  
Call her! Now!

Mark nods and taps his phone.

MARK  
(to phone)  
Siri, call Sunny.

The phone dials immediately.

SUNNY (V.O.)  
(filtered, speakerphone)  
Hi, you've reached the voice mail  
box of Sunny Farragut. I can't come  
to the phone right now, but-

Mark hangs up the phone. Verne looks lost.

MARK  
What do you want me to do?

VERNE  
What else can we do?  
(sighs)  
Run the damn Bieber story.

Mark nods and makes a hasty exit. Verne leans back and looks  
at his computer screen.

ONSCREEN - Dr. Anderson feeds a minnow to a small shark.

VERN  
Ten more years to retirement.

He flicks off the computer monitor.

CUT TO BLACK

An Evening News MUSIC CUE.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Police have no new leads today in the disappearance of local journalist Sunny Farragut. Farragut was last seen leaving the ORCA Ocean Research Center on Friday, but her employer Julian Verne has expressed skepticism over-

(beat)

I'm sorry, I'm being told we have to cut away for some breaking news... Justin Bieber is about to begin a press conference addressing his growing paternity scandal. Let's listen in...

END TITLES