

RED TAPE

by

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FADE IN

EXT. THE TAFFER CLUB - NIGHT

The LINE to get in is long and boisterous. Customers scan their small, sleek, chrome bracelets over a sensor in the wall. A light blinks green as a large revolving door turns. There is no doorman.

LARRY, early thirties, average build, scans his bracelet. He moves forward, but the revolving door doesn't open for him. Larry scans his bracelet again. He notices the light above the door blinking red.

Larry gives the door a push, but it still won't let him through. He moves out of the way to let a few patrons enter.

Larry spots a large group about to enter. He manages to squeeze through with them.

INT. THE TAFFER CLUB - CONTINUOUS

PATRONS are packed in like cattle. Dance music blares as strobe lights bounce off the cold metallic floor.

Larry approaches an automated

DRINK DISPENSER

A woman in front of him scans her bracelet, then pushes a few buttons. The machine dispenses her Mai Tai. A small colorful umbrella plops in as the dispenser door opens.

Larry moves forward and scans his bracelet. The machine doesn't respond. Larry tries it again; he notices a red light flash in the corner of the machine.

Larry looks behind him - a half dozen annoyed people are waiting.

HAROLD, early thirties, semi-geek, squeezes past the newly formed line.

HAROLD

There you are.

LARRY

My bracelet isn't working.

Larry scans his bracelet once more - still nothing.

GUY IN LINE (O.S.)
Any time bro!

HAROLD
Here, use mine.

Harold quickly scans his bracelet.

The green light flashes. The machine begins to pour a beer.

DRINK DISPENSER
(gentle woman's voice)
This is your third alcoholic
beverage tonight Mr. Neth.

HAROLD
Well, now we know it can count.

Harold grabs the beer and hands it to Larry. They walk to a nearby

BOOTH

JASON, late twenties, slick, slides over to make room for his friends.

JASON
(to Larry)
Look who decided to join us.

LARRY
Sorry I'm late guys. Bracelet's
been malfunctioning all night;
couldn't even start my car.

HAROLD
Did you call tech support?

LARRY
Yeah but they put me on hold for
over two hours, so I decided to
walk.

JASON
(twirling his bracelet)
They could've at least made this
damn thing adjustable. Feels likes
it's gonna slide off when I take a
piss.

Jason downs the last of his beer.

JASON (CONT'D)
Refill time.

Jason gets up and walks away.

HAROLD
Did you hear what happened to
George?

LARRY
Yeah, heart attack.

HAROLD
At forty-three? Come on.

LARRY
Do I sense another conspiracy
theory brewing?

Harold leans in.

HAROLD
I heard his wife found him in the
shower with nothing but his
bracelet on. She claims it was
turning red and blue, making
strange noises.

LARRY
(skeptical)
You think George's bracelet killed
him?

HAROLD
... I think a giant conglomerate
like KD wouldn't tell us if it did.

LARRY
All new technologies need time to
work out the kinks.

HAROLD
Even if it kills?

LARRY
I didn't say that, I meant--

Larry stops as the WAITRESS brings their hamburgers and
fries. Jason returns with his drink.

JASON
(to the waitress)
When are you off, honey?

The waitress frowns as she walks away.

LARRY
 Without technological advancement
 we can't grow as a society.

HAROLD
 So you don't think these government-
 sanctioned toys were created to spy
 on us?

JASON
 Come on guys, let's give the
 politics a rest and find some girls
 for a change.

LARRY
 (intentionally ignoring
 Jason)
 There's a distinction between
 spying, and monitoring to keep us
 safe.

Jason puts his head down, frustrated. Larry takes a bit of
 his hamburger.

HAROLD
 Doesn't it bother you that someone
 knows where you are all the time,
 watching your every move?

LARRY
 I just don't see it that way.

Harold leans back as he nods.

HAROLD
 That's the problem.

EXT. THE TAFFER CLUB - NIGHT

The men exit.

HAROLD
 You need a ride?

LARRY
 Nah, I think I'll walk off the
 beer.

HAROLD
 You sure? It's pretty late.

JASON

Don't worry, he can take care of himself; he's a big boy.

(to Larry)

Good night buddy.

Jason slaps Larry on the shoulder as he walks away.

Larry waves as they part.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Larry glances at his bracelet as he walks down the deserted street. He passes by a large automated street-cleaning machine spraying the sidewalk. Larry turns onto a

SIDE STREET

He spots a large white van stopped in the center of the road; it's hazard lights flashing. 'K.D. ANIMAL CONTROL' is painted on the sides.

Two large ROBOTS with lanky arms exit. They hover down a rear ramp floating a foot above the ground. They have a single light just above their expressionless, yet menacing, faces.

A SCRAWNY DOG ambles down the street toward one of the robots. It stops and sniffs the machine. The robot immediately scans the dog's collar with a blue light emanating from its arm.

The robot's forehead light turns bright red. It extends out a large prod and zaps the defenseless creature. The dog whimpers in pain as it twitches on the ground.

Larry looks up, uninterested. He takes out his cell phone and continues down the street.

The robot scoops the dog up and hovers away.

Larry is buried in his phone when the other robot suddenly crosses in front of him. Startled, Larry stops. He tries to step aside, but the robot emits a blue beam from its arm.

It scans Larry's entire body, stopping at his bracelet. The light on its forehead turns dark red.

Larry turns to find the other robot behind him. The machines move forward in a menacing manner.

LARRY

Hey, what are you doing?

The robot behind Larry zaps him with a bolt of yellow electricity. Larry WINCES as he drops his phone.

LARRY (CONT'D)
What the hell is--

Both robots zap him again, this time longer.

Larry twitches as he falls to the ground, unable to speak. One of the robots ties his hands and feet with glowing blue restraints.

The robots both extend their arms, creating a secure pole in-between Larry's feet and arms. They lock arms and carry Larry towards the van like a trophy game. Larry, still convulsing from the shock, tries to speak - no words come out.

EXT. VAN - LATER

The robots stop at the back of the van. Their arms retract and Larry hits the ground. They push Larry inside the van. The doors remain open.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Larry struggles to his knees. A RACCOON takes a swipe at Larry's face - missing him by inches.

Larry jerks back. The EYES of various ANIMALS shine in the dark.

EXT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Still bound, Larry tries to move towards the ramp - but collapses.

LARRY
(low, raspy voice)
This is a mistake. I'm not a--

The doors slam shut in Larry's face.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. VAN - LATER

Van doors swings open.

One of the robots latches onto Larry's wrist restraint. It drags him into a nearby building.

INT. BUILDING CORRIDOR - LATER

The robot continues to drag Larry down a long white hallway lined with metal doors. Dazed, he watches the ceiling lights sweep past him in succession as he tries to wrestle free. They stop in front of a

ROOM

The metal door opens automatically.

The robot removes the blue ropes and pushes Larry inside. Before Larry can get to his feet, the door slams shut.

LARRY

Wait!

The lock CLICKS into place.

INT. ROOM #1 - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark. The only light emanates from the bottom of the door. Larry feels his way around the walls.

LARRY

(yelling)

Hello? Can anybody hear me? ... I'm not an animal!

Larry circles the room as he POUNDS the walls. He trips and falls.

Still on the ground, he feels around in his coat pocket and finds a cigarette lighter. He tries to light it - no luck. He shakes it hard then tries again. The flame finally snaps to life.

Larry notices hay on the floor. He gets up, holding the cigarette lighter high.

He sees a long feeding trough in front of him piled with hay. Next to it is a large bucket of water.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Oh shit.

In the distance, a faint PULSATING sound O.S.

Larry POUNDS the walls in vain.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Help me! Somebody help me - please!

A cloud of gas fills the room.

LARRY (CONT'D)
(wobbling, coughing)
I'm not suppose to be here. I'm not
a ...
(faint)
I'm a man.

Larry falls to the ground, GASPING and MUMBLING incoherently.

INT ROOM #1 - LATER

A loud BUZZER. Larry bolts upright and covers his ears. The room is faintly illuminated.

The wall at the other end of the room begins to open. A bright light shines from the other side.

Larry stands up. He shields his eyes as he tries to see what is beyond the light.

The floor begins to move like a tread mill toward the opening in the wall. Larry walks against it; his pace picks up. Larry is now in full sprint.

He finally collapses and goes through the opening, sprawled out on the moving floor, panting.

INT. ROOM #2 - CONTINUOUS

Larry closes his eyes as he struggles to catch his breath. Still on the ground, he looks up.

LARRY'S POV: a large blurry figure with horns hovers over him.

Larry rubs his eyes.

LARRY'S POV: a COW chewing hay comes into focus.

Larry gets up as he looks around. The room is filled with COWS.

The cow near him farts. Larry grimaces as he covers his nose with his sleeve and walks among the cows. Some are eating from a large trough; others graze on hay on the floor.

Larry walks up to a large

WINDOW ON THE OPPOSITE WALL

He peers into a third room.

INT. ROOM #3 - CONTINUOUS

The room is large and circular. Some cows are partitioned into pens, while others are at a feeding trough.

In the middle of the room, a large group of cows are being pushed into a long line; rails on both sides. They are being led to a giant automated hammer.

Two large automated arms with prods on the ends ZAP a cow into position under the hammer. A loud BUZZER sounds.

The hammer falls, killing the cow instantly.

BACK TO

INT. ROOM #2 - CONTINUOUS

Larry recoils in horror.

FOOTSTEPS O.S. coming from outside a door at the far end of the room.

Larry scrambles to reach the door but slips on manure and falls. He hits the ground hard - out cold.

The door opens. A MALE TECHNICIAN enters, followed by a FEMALE TECHNICIAN. They both have 'K.D. INC' embroidered on their white uniforms.

The male technician starts to count; his lips move as he points to each cow.

MALE TECHNICIAN
(to the woman)
Twenty-five on first count.

She inputs the data into a small mobile tablet as the man begins to count again.

Larry is still on the ground, out of sight and unconscious.

The technician stops counting, annoyed.

MALE TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
Still twenty-five.

The woman again inputs the data.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN
Why do you think the computer
counted twenty-six?

The man shrugs.

MALE TECHNICIAN
Damn thing must be glitching again.

FEMALE TECHNICIAN
Should we call it in?

MALE TECHNICIAN
Nah, just make another note in the
log so we can go to lunch.

They walk towards the door.

MALE TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
What are you in the mood for?

FEMALE TECHNICIAN
Anything but steak.

The technicians leave. The door LOCKS behind them.

Flies buzz around Larry's face as he lies on the floor, still
unconscious.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM #3 - LATER

CLOSE UP ON LARRY as a cow tail SLAPS him square on his face.

Larry comes to. He slowly gets up.

Just as he finds his balance, he feels two ZAPS from the
automated robot arms. Larry falls to his knees. Larry looks
up, paralyzed with fear.

LARRY'S POV: The giant killing hammer is right above him.

The BUZZER goes off.

ON LARRY, paralyzed with fear.

The hammer comes swooshing down.

CUT TO:

A MEAT PATTY FALLING ONTO A SIZZLING GRILL

INT. THE TAFFER CLUB - NIGHT

A COOK presses the meat paddy down onto the hot metal surface.

AT THE BAR

Same atmosphere; CROWDED and LOUD. Jason and Harold sit next to each other.

JASON

So I told them that if they cut my hours again I'm gonna walk; no bullshit this time.

HAROLD

You really said that?

JASON

In my own way.

HAROLD

Have you heard from Larry lately? He's not picking up his cell.

JASON

(amused)

Maybe he still can't get into his car.

HAROLD

... I don't like it.

JASON

Relax. He'll turn up.

The same waitress comes by with hamburgers and fries.

JASON (CONT'D)

Thanks sweetheart.

This time she gives him a wry smile as she walks away.

JASON (CONT'D)

(lifts up his burger)

Well, Larry doesn't know what he's missing.

Harold and Jason are about to dig into their juicy hamburgers.

THE END