

SANCTUARY
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - DAY (FLASHFORWARD) 1

An Australian eucalypt forest seen through the eyes of someone, (BLADE), running through fire-ravaged scrub. She remains unseen but we hear her rapid breathing.

3 The burning wreckage of heavy logging equipment has transformed the dense bush into hell. Dogs are barking nearby. A rising cacophony of ring-tones and voices. Smoke fills the air. Disoriented, we don't know if we are running away from or straight into carnage.

A uniformed and helmeted STATE TROOPER appears and aims his rifle at something off screen. Our view accelerates towards him. The trooper swivels around, cocking his head just as...

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY (REAL WORLD) - DAY (PRESENT DAY) 4

The simple outline of a bush animal carved into stone. The CAMERA pulls out and reveals another one, and another one. A pattern of carvings is forming, like a map.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O.)

We learn from the past and build on
our rich heritage for our future.

The CAMERA quickly ZOOMS away to reveal an aerial shot of the bush sanctuary rapidly encroached on all sides by an unending urban sprawl. To the right, Canberra's Black Mountain Tower. To the left, Sydney's Centrepont Tower.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The preservation of our wonderful
natural environments is a fundamental
part of our strategy.

The pattern formed by the outlined animals is suddenly replaced with a contemporary map delineating streets and houses of the modern world.

5 INT. CLASSROOM (REAL WORLD) - DAY 5

A group of lanky TEENAGE KIDS are watching an immersive video presentation. The same aerial view is projected, yet here the two cities are still far apart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O. CONT'D)
 This is a sustainable society. With
 your support, the State will find new
 ways to reduce our impact...

Images of the carved bush animals appear on screen.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 ...making places like Wirrimbirra
 Sanctuary a treasure for generations
 to come. That means you.

Among the school kids is a sixteen-year-old tomboy girl BLAKE.
 She arches an eyebrow. She taps her foot to some rhythm only she
 can hear. On her monitor dances a crudely drawn stick figure -
 CD.

CD is Blake's software agent. He can twist and turn, with the
 most fluid motions, into the most far-fetched contortions.

6 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - DAY 6

A CAMERA LENS picks up a small metal object, a NANO-BAT shaped
 like a baseball, as it is clipped onto a branch. In the corner
 of the screen is the logo for the State Department of
 Environment and Network Resources (DENR), a tree sprouting roots
 blending into circuitry.

7 INT. CLASSROOM (REAL WORLD) - DAY 7

Blake looks at the aerial photo of the urban sprawl. She touches
 her own interface and brings up the original photo.

There is an obvious discrepancy between the two images. CD
 throws her a challenging look. Blake gesticulates and the
 original photo appears in the presentation on the wall.

The TEACHER turns around and sees the screen. She throws a
 nervous glance to the corner SURVEILLANCE CAMERA. Its red
 recording light is ON.

TEACHER
 (nervously)
 Blake, get out of there right now!

BOY
 Nice one, geek girl.

Blake swiftly adjusts something on her interface. The wall
 behind the teacher dissolves into a rude finger gesture. The
 entire class laughs.

8 INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY

8

Login details are superimposed on the void. The pages of Blake's State file are being accessed.

TEACHER (V.O.)

(over the phone)

Mr Harkinson, your daughter is a very intelligent girl and I don't know how she gets her information, but if it happens again I'll have no choice but to report it.

9 INT. BLAKE'S BEDROOM (REAL WORLD) - EVENING

9

Blake's room is a mess of teenage paraphernalia. Computer hardware is crammed under the desk. A monitor screen is on, laid on its side. Next to it is a early NANO-BAT prototype. Angry music is blaring.

DANIEL HARKINSON, late thirties, ruggedly handsome, bearded professor type, is in the middle of a heated argument with his daughter Blake. He has to shout to be heard.

DANIEL

What the hell did you think you were doing?!

BLAKE

What do you care?! You never give a shit about anything I do.

Blake casually dumps a pile of junk on top of a CD lying on her desk

DANIEL

How could you be so dumb?! You're putting our family at risk. Did you even think about that?

BLAKE

Give me a break. One little photo.

Daniel waves his arms in the air but nothing. Blake, bored at seeing his clumsy attempts, elegantly makes a gesture. The ceiling camera adjusts focus. The music cuts.

DANIEL

One more call from school and I take away your RIG. Permanently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLAKE
You wouldn't dare!

DANIEL
Don't tempt me, Blake.

He turns to leave then changes his mind and turns back and almost waves his finger at her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
(warning)
Don't play God in someone else's system.

He leaves, and just as he closes the door, Blake violently throws a shoe at it.

BLAKE
(angry)
Go to hell!

The music starts up again.

10 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 10

The bush is full of activity; a eco-system burgeoning with life. Small, furry creatures scurry around building nests and gathering food, and insects crawl across the ground with collected materials for their homes.

It's an organic nature scene straight out of a David Attenborough documentary. The city could not be further away.

A fat KOALA stares into the lens of a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA attached by a metal collar to a branch.

11 INT. STATE'S MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 11

A CLOSE UP of the koala's arse, but this time on a monitor screen. It's a dark, soulless room full of DENR branded machines recording. Snippets of voice recordings are heard.

TECH(V.O.)
(through loudspeaker)
Oi! Rack off you stupid thing! We'll shoot the lot of you.

12 INT. ACTIVISTS' HQ (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 12

Daniel is staring at a row of recycling bins. He holds a cup of herbal tea and is looking to toss his tea bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It takes him a moment before he locates the right bin in the myriad of labels: COMPOST, GLASS, COLOURED GLASS, PAPER, COLOURED PAPER, TIN, WOOD, PLASTIC, FABRIC etc.

This is the HQ of the ECO ACTIVISTS. Several beat up vans and bikes are scattered through the terrain. One of the vans is painted in rainbow colours. Propaganda materials, flags, banners, are spread out everywhere. Several ACTIVISTS are hurrying about, getting their hiking gear in order. The place is buzzing with excitement.

With his tea, Daniel walks over to MARK, a nerdy 22-year-old, ponytail and glasses, who is accessing his portable computer with the screen sown into his clothes.

MARK

Is that camomile?

DANIEL

Nah mate, tonight we need action.

MARK

Raspberry, eh?

DANIEL

You got it.

13

INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - EVENING

13

A LOUD SIREN wails. RED LIGHTS are flashing. The State Registry resembles a disorganised and badly maintained warehouse. Endless rows of filing cabinets and official storage containers.

CRASH! Rows and rows of filing cabinets hit the floor. A mountain of papers spills out. Blake lands on the pile and starts to flick through them at great speed. She should obviously not be here.

BLAKE

CD! You muppet!

CD (O.S.)

What?

BLAKE

That bloody photo.

CD (O.S.)

Hey mate, don't blame your software...

CD climbs down a ladder formed out of his body, whilst holding on to a stack of paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CD (CONT'D)

I'm just your agent. And you stole me, remember? Anyway I think you're about to find what you're looking for.

She ignores him. CD patiently taps his foot. With a smirk he flicks through the papers and loudly clears his throat.

BLAKE

I wanted the low-down on the bush, not the State's entire laundry list.

CD

Then come get it babe! En garde!

He playfully rolls the papers into a fencing foil. She looks up and notices his weapon. CD lunges at her. Blake grabs at the paper and swats CD away like a fly. He bounces off a cabinet like a rag doll.

BLAKE

(reading paper)

Touche!

CD

Spoil-sport!

Blake quickly skims through the papers, her cheeks reddening as she reads. CD starts to clear up their mess.

A shaft of illuminating light from an AUTOMATIC VIRUS SCAN appears. CD and Blake immediately understand that this means danger. CD is torn between continuing to clean up and protecting Blake. He stays put, flat up against a bookshelf.

The scan comes in between them. Blake has a moment of panic. The laser beam is just seconds away from cutting her in two...

BLAKE

(under her breath)

Shit...

She closes her eyes and grimaces. Then just as the beam is about to cut into her, she opens her eyes and throws the papers simultaneously in two directions. The scan reacts to the movement and splits its beam in two, flashing into several colours. One cutting right under Blake's feet, the other right over her head. The scan disappears.

BLAKE (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CD
You tell me boss.

BLAKE
C'mon.

CD looks around as Blake moves off. The siren wails louder.

CD
Hang on... file.

BLAKE
Leave it.

He drops it on the floor as they run off.

CD
Won't someone trip over it?

BLAKE
That's the idea, dude.

They keep running and make it out, jumping over multiple virus scans in the nick of time.

14 INT. ACTIVISTS' HQ (REAL WORLD) - EVENING

14

A cardboard box is briskly plunked down. An ACTIVIST pulls out knitted hats in wool onto the table. One of the BATS rolls off the edge of the table. Daniel catches it just before it hits the ground.

DANIEL
Careful!

Mark's monitor screen starts to flicker, picking up the image recorded by the NANO-BAT in Daniel's hand.

ACTIVIST LEADER
Okay, guys, we got the word. Logging starts at dawn, so we better get moving if we're going to capture this. We need footage on tape.

MARK
The State's cred rating is about to go down, mate.

DANIEL
(cautious)
Let's hope so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Daniel takes a pair of pliers and carefully adjusts the BAT. The image sharpens.

15 INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY 15

Blake and CD sneak back into the registry. They cut the alarms and peek carefully inside. Everything is quiet.

A swarm of lights buzz around the abandoned file.

BLAKE

That was quick. Who do you think they are?

CD

Not our problem. Let's go.

BLAKE

Hang on, they might be on to something.

She begins to follow the trail of activity.

CD

Oh boy. Should have brought me boots.

16 INT. STATE MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 16

A CAMERA VIEW as it pans through the bush. The DENR logo looms in the corner.

Several activists come into view. A few lights start blinking, registering the activity.

TECH (V.O.)

(on tape)

We've got a breach in sector four.
Call it in.

17 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT 17

Blake treks along with the activists through the bush. Her surroundings are composed of alternating images from footage hacked from surveillance cameras in the bush. The sanctuary HUMS with the sound of countless cicadas singing in unison.

As she walks Blake tries on different looks shaping her visual appearance and age. She catches her image in a pool of water. She stops and experiments with her breast size.

CD

They're fine! Come on...

18 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 18

The activists, invigorated with a sense of purpose keep going. Wood ash leisurely blown past Daniel's face. He stops and smells the air. Something is burning.

DANIEL
Guys, wait. Something's up.

19 INT. STATE'S MONITOR (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 19

A living glob is moving toward the centre on a radar screen.

20 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 20

CD bounces around Blake, gesticulating like some manic boxing referee doing the count. He occasionally pulls down information that he either hands to Blake or discards. He throws some punches in the air.

CD
(excited)
So what are these turkeys gonna do?
It's not like they can stop the State
from tearing up the bush.

BLAKE
I dunno. Maybe they can warn people.

CD
Why would the State want them to do
that?

BLAKE
What do you mean?

Suddenly the sound of TRANSPORTERS is heard. Blake looks up amazed. State troopers are being flown in.

Then her eyes widen. A DOG, with a wrap-around visor for eyes comes into view. It sniffs the air. Then several DOGS, with similar fittings, join it.

21 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 21

Through their visor, the DOGS, tightly held on leashes, see the world in infra-red with humans appearing as white moving blobs.

The sun has risen and the SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS reveal the state troopers as they spread out like ants and disappear into the bush.

22 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 22

The TRANSPORTERS are still swirling in the air. Daniel runs up and forcefully grabs Mark by the arm.

DANIEL
Mark, Listen...

AN EXPLOSION rings out.

23 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 23

BLAKE
Dad?

The earth shakes. Chaos ensues. Dogs and state troopers scatter throughout the scenery.

24 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 24

Mark stumbles to the ground. He has been shot in the shoulder. The activists flee through the scrub. Animals scurry out of the line of fire.

Caught in the middle of the frenzy Daniel hurls a nano-bat like a baseball. It sprouts wings and darts away. Another nano-bat hanging under a nearby branch activates. Its head-cam swivels towards Daniel, its lens re-focusing.

DANIEL
(to camera)
Run!!

He turns around and starts running.

The air is congested. Nano-bats swoop past the heads of troopers, recording the bloody scene. It's a mess of smoke and destruction.

Another set of EXPLOSIONS go off. Trees, logging equipment and weapons are flung through the air. A NANO-BAT is shot down. Flames consume the scene. This is no longer sanctuary, this is hell.

25 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 25

Blake follows the NANO-BATS' recording. Horrified she witnesses how Daniel is SHOT STRAIGHT IN THE HEART. His knees buckle and he falls to the ground. Then abruptly the recording is cut off.

CONTINUED:

BLAKE
(whispering)
No... no... Dad...

There is nothing she can do. Tears slowly form at the corner of her eye.

CD strains to peer past Blake like a rubbernecking motorist cruising past a car wreck.

BLAKE (CONT'D)
CD, off.

She shuts him off and wipes her eye with the back of her hand. Everything is eerily quiet. As if everything has turned bleaker and older by death.

26 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING

26

NEWSREADER (V.O.)
(on tape)
Following the explosive incident
earlier today in the Wirrimbirra
Wildlife Sanctuary...

Blake steps through the wreckage, poisonous smoke fills her eyes. Now and then she spots some remains of the greenery that has been severed on the ground. This is an abandoned wasteland, nothing lives here anymore.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
(on tape)
... several people have been arrested
and charged under the Terrorism Act.

Blake bends down to touch a smashed NANO-BAT, its inside raw and exposed. The ground next to it is blood-soaked.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
(on tape)
A spokesperson for the Department of
Environment and Network Resources has
confirmed that...

A GROWLING SOUND comes out of nowhere. The earth starts to shake. Blake looks up. Suddenly a large, menacing LOGGING TRUCK breaks through the forest. Merciless, it runs down anything obstructing its path.

It even runs STRAIGHT THROUGH her.

It is followed by a CARAVAN of similar TRUCKS.

27 BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY

27

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D)
 (on tape)
 ... the sanctuary has suffered
 irrevocable damage.

Blake sprints between the trees, her features blurred. A uniformed and helmeted STATE TROOPER appears and aims his rifle at something off-screen.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 (on tape)
 The township of Bargo has been placed
 on high alert as other terrorist
 attacks are expected...

Our view accelerates towards the trooper. He swivels around, cocking his head just as we COLLIDE with his helmet. We glimpse Blake as Blade (her avatar updated as a super-hero, older and more menacing) as she launches herself at the trooper.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 (on tape)
 ...but when the State will be
 attacked...

The newscast abruptly CUTS OFF. Blake runs deeper into the bush that is transforming through all the landscapes seen before into the void.

She stops and catches her breath. Extreme CLOSE UP of her eyes. We hear her panting.

BLAKE
 CD, you ready?

Explosion of sound.

BLAKE (CONT'D)
 CD?

A rising cacophony of ring-tones and voices. We are sucked back into the bush and we keep running as end credits come up.

FADE OUT.

THE END