

SANCTUARY
by
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. BUSH - DAY (FLASH FORWARD 24 HRS) 1

Someone is running through fire-ravaged scrub. We hear a teenage girl's rapid breathing. Fire, smoke, and wrecked logging equipment has transformed dense bush into hell. Dogs are barking nearby. A rising cacophony of ring-tones and voices. Disoriented, we don't know if we are running away from or straight into carnage.

A surveillance camera turns in its mount to reveal markings identifying it as the property of the Department of Environment and Network Resources (DENR).

Online we see the camera's viewpoint. A uniformed and helmeted STATE TROOPER appears, aiming a rifle at something off screen.

Back in the real world, our view accelerates towards the trooper swivels around, cocking his head just as...

2 EXT. BUSH - DAY (PRESENT DAY) 2

The same bush is now pristine. We watch a slick corporate video, like one an oil company would make to sell an environmental policy.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

The CAMERA quickly ZOOMS to an aerial view of un-spoilt bushland.

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

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

3 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 3

Intense sixteen-year-old BLAKE PARKINSON looks at the video on her personal screen. Each TEENAGER in the class has one. The video also plays on a large screen down the front.

Onscreen, topographical lines and mapping information starts to be traced out over the landscape, labelling natural features and referencing GIS data.

A BEEFY BOY sculls from a soft drink can. Blake doodles stick figures with a pen tablet. Crude scrawls on her screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O. CONT'D)
This is a sustainable society.

Blake looks around the room. Everyone looks bored.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
With your support, the State will find
new ways to reduce our impact, making
places like this a treasure for
generations to come.

Beefy punctuates the commentary with a loud burp. A few giggles. Blake glances back at the TEACHER, standing in the hallway outside, deep in conversation. Beefy sticks his chin out thinking Blake is looking at him, then realises his mistake.

BEEFY
(whispering)
Hey... Nerd.

Blake blanks him. She frowns at her screen instead.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O.)
Visit the D.E. N. R. today and talk to
one of our careers advisors about how
you can make a difference. The future
is in your hands.

Blake surreptitiously unplugs and re-connects her screen's power supply. As it re-boots she pulls a small device out of her jacket and holds it in her lap under the desk. She taps her foot rhythmically and steals a peak at the device. Its a tiny non-descript PDA with a small display that pulsates to the same rhythm. "INITIALISING..." comes up on the display.

The presentation concludes with DENR branding and contact info.

Blake's desk screen asks for permission to accept a new "UNKNOWN" connection. Blake grins. CD, an animated stick figure clearly in her drawing style, pulls himself into view onscreen with exaggerated effort.

Blake grins. CD is a software agent - part virtual pet, part hacking tool. He can twist and turn, with the most fluid motions, into the most far-fetched contortions.

4 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

4

On Blake's screen, the video rewinds to the aerial view of the bush seen previously. A live satellite view replaces it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blake appears to be controlling this with hand and figure gestures under the desk.

The satellite view tilts to reveal that the bush is an island in a sea of urban sprawl. Like Asterix's village in the the Roman empire, suburbia and cityscapes have overrun the State.

The TEACHER breaks off from conversation and runs up the front of the class, throwing a nervous glance to a SURVEILLANCE WEBCAM in the corner of the ceiling. The urban sprawl fills the main screen. Blake smiles innocently, unaware that class-mates behind her are staring at her screen, trying to work out what she did.

TEACHER
(nervously)
Blake? Get out!

BEEFY
Nice one, geek girl.

Blake gives Beefy the finger under her desk with a flourish The screen behind the teacher dissolves into a rude finger gesture. The entire class laughs.

5 INT. STATE REGISTRY (CYBERSPACE) - DAY

5

Login details are superimposed on the void. The pages of Blake's State file are being accessed. CCTV from school corridors, CCTV of her blading through traffic. References to her father being an academic and author of works such as "Information Warfare vs Surveillance", "Terror, Crime, and Bugs in the Information Age".

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 this happens again I'll have to report it. I have no choice.

DANIEL (V.O.)
(over the phone)
I understand. It's not going to happen again.

6 INT. BLAKE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

6

A mass of books and disks are on her desk. One disk has a crudely drawn stick figure scrawled on its front alongside the printed text "Federal Reactive Agent - Non Classified - Alpha Source". Angry music is blaring. Computer hardware is crammed under the desk including a monitor screen, laid on its side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANIEL HARKINSON, a dishevelled academic in his late thirties, shouts at his daughter Blake.

DANIEL
What the hell is your problem?

Blake pretends she can't hear.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
What were you thinking?

BLAKE
Since when do you give a shit?

DANIEL
You watch your mouth. You could have got us all in trouble. Did you ever think about that?

BLAKE
(sarcastic)
Don't worry Dad, it's nothing to do with you.

DANIEL
Oh really? So where did all this come from? Tooth fairy?

We see Blake and Daniel from the perspective of her RIG (a ceiling mounted computer interface resembling a web-cam).

BLAKE
Give me a break. One little photo.

Blake leaps off the bed and starts tidying up her room around Daniel. Her room is a mess of teenage paraphernalia, geek references and wildlife posters. Daniel sees one of his books.

DANIEL
You've been in my files.

BLAKE
No I haven't.

DANIEL
You took something. What was it?

BLAKE
I didn't! I didn't take anything!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANIEL
If I ever catch you mucking around
with my stuff...

BLAKE
Stop treating me like some dumb kid!

Blake casually hides the CD under a pile of junk.

DANIEL
You bloody well act like one!

BLAKE
Get out of my room!

Daniel flaps his arms at the webcam, trying to send it a command. Blake watches his clumsy attempts with bemusement, then makes a simple gesture which is understood. The music stops.

DANIEL
(grabbing a chair)
That's it. You're grounded. I'm taking
the RIG.

BLAKE
You wouldn't dare!

A MESSAGE alert, angry and persistent. Daniel climbs onto the chair, reaching up to grab the ceiling webcam.

DANIEL
Watch me!
(looking at his watch)
Shit.... I'm late. I'll deal with you
later.

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

BLAKE
Go to hell!

7 INT. HALLYWAY - EVENING

7

Dad pauses outside the door.

DANIEL
Blake?

The music starts up again. Daniel looks weary and defeated.

8 EXT. BUSH - EVENING 8

A night vision surveillance camera adjusts focus, responding to movement.

A round metallic baseball-size object is unclipped from the underside of a tree branch and examined.

9 INT. STATE'S MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 9

A CLOSE UP of the round object being clipped back into position. The screen is watermarked with the DENR logo. It's a dark, soulless room full of DENR branded machines recording. Snippets of voice recordings are heard.

10 INT. ACTIVISTS' HQ (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 10

Daniel nurses a headache and sips herbal tea. With difficulty he locates the right recycling bin for his tea-bag in the myriad of labels: COMPOST, GLASS, COLOURED GLASS, PAPER, COLOURED PAPER, TIN, WOOD, PLASTIC, FABRIC etc.

The warehouse is the headquarters of THE INDYS, a group of eco activists. Several beat up vans, one in rainbow colours, and several bikes are parked inside. Propaganda materials, flags, banners, are spread out everywhere.

With his tea, Daniel walks over to MARK, a nerdy 22-year-old, ponytail and glasses, at a workbench piled high with electronics hardware.

MARK
Is that camomile?

DANIEL
Nah mate, tonight we need action.

MARK
Raspberry, eh?

DANIEL
You got it.

11 INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - EVENING 11

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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 said, Give me the low-down on that sanctuary, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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?

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.

CD drops the file on the floor and they run off.

CD
Won't someone trip over it?

BLAKE
That's the idea, dude.

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

12

Several ACTIVISTS hurry about, getting hiking gear in order. The place buzzes with excitement.

A cardboard box is plunked down on the workbench. An ACTIVIST pulls on a woolen beanie. One of the round nanobats rolls off the edge of the table past Daniel, deep in thought. He catches the nanobat just before it hits the ground.

DANIEL
(to Activist)
Careful!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

MARK
Hey it works!

Mark hands Daniel some pliers. Daniel adjusts the device with pliers. The image sharpens.

MARK (CONT'D)
Logging starts at dawn. We better get moving.

DANIEL
Who tipped us off?

13 INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY 13

All looks quiet. Blake and CD sneak another peak at the file. A swarm of lights buzz around it.

BLAKE
Who are they?

CD
Not our problem. Let's go.

BLAKE
No way. Not yet.

She begins to follow the trail of activity. CD looks frustrated.

CD
Oh boy. Shoulda brought me boots.

14 INT. STATE MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 14

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)
They're early. Call it in.

15 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - NIGHT 15

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...

16 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 16

The activists, invigorated with a sense of purpose trek onwards.

MARK

Where are everyone? Where's the logging?

Wood ash leisurely blown past Daniel's face. He stops and smells the air. Something is burning.

DANIEL

Guys, wait...

17 INT. STATE'S MONITOR (REAL WORLD) - NIGHT 17

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

18 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 18

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)

If the State wants to wreck this place, what are these turkeys gonna do about it? They can't stop 'em.

BLAKE

I dunno. Maybe they just want to warn people it's happening.

CD

Why would the State want them to do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

19 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 19

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.

20 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 20

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.

21 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 21

A trooper detonates an explosion by remote.

BLAKE

Dad?

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

22 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 22

Mark stumbles to the ground. He has been shot in the shoulder. The activists flee through the scrub.

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)

It's a set-up! Run!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

23 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING

23

Blake taps into the nanobat webcasts - the Indy surveillance network. Horrified she sees Daniel get SHOT STRAIGHT IN THE HEART. His knees buckle and he falls to the ground. The nanobat pauses briefly in midair. Then the recording is cut off.

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.

24 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING

24

NEWSREADER (V.O.)
(on tape)
Following the explosive incident
earlier today in the 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 more people have been
arrested and charged with aiding the
terrorists.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. It runs STRAIGHT THROUGH her. Logging sounds filter through as Blake seethes.

25 BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY

25

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D)

(on tape)

... the sanctuary has suffered irrevocable damage. None of the terrorists survived.

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 has been placed on high alert as other 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

THE END