

SANCTUARY
by
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FADE IN:

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

We glide through fire-ravaged scrub and wrecked logging equipment. We hear a teenage girl's unsteady breathing as if in shock. Fire 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). The area it surveys is devastated.

2 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - DAY 2

The same area of bush is now pristine. We watch a slick corporate presentation - one an oil company might use to sell its environmental policy.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O.)

We learn from the past and build on our rich heritage for our future. The preservation of our wonderful natural environment is a fundamental part of our strategy.

3 INT. CLASSROOM (REAL WORLD) - DAY 3

Sixteen-year-old BLAKE HARKEN sits watches the presentation on a large screen down the front of the class. There is a personal screen on each desk showing a web view of the presentation.

On the personal screens, extra info like topographical lines and mapping information is traced out over the landscape, labelling natural features and referencing GIS data.

BEEFY, the class bully, sculls a can of soft drink behind Blake.

VIDEO NARRATOR (V.O. CONT'D)

This is a sustainable society.

Blake glances 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

BEEFY BOY
(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 the video credits roll. As it re-boots she pulls a small device out of her jacket and holds it in a fist her lap under the desk. She taps her foot rhythmically. The device glows between her fingers.

Blake doodles a crude stick figure (CD) onto her screen, over DENR branding and contact info, using her pen tablet. Blake grins as CD, her Customised Dude, comes to life.

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.

On Blake's screen, CD warms up with stretches as the video rewinds to the aerial bush view seen already. Blake's device glows rhythmically through her fingers.

The satellite view pulls back to show that the bush is a tiny island in a sea of urban sprawl and development - like Asterix's village in the midst of the Roman Empire.

The TEACHER breaks off conversation and runs up the front of the class, throwing a nervous glance to a SURVEILLANCE WEBCAM in the corner of the ceiling. 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's done.

TEACHER
(nervously)
Blake? Get out!

BEEFY
Nice one, geek girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The screen behind the teacher dissolves into a rude finger gesture. The entire class laughs. Blake stands up, unrepentent.

4 INT. STATE MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - DAY 4

Blake's mugshot is onscreen. Her State file is accessed. CCTV from school corridors, CCTV of her blading through traffic. References to her father being an ex-con, academic and author of works such as "Information Warfare vs Surveillance", "Fear, Uncertainty, Bugs" and "Software Agent Tactics".

TEACHER (V.O.)

(over the phone)

Mr. Harken, keep her under control. If this happens again, I'll have to report it. I have no choice.

DANIEL (V.O.)

(over the phone)

It won't happen again.

5 INT. BLAKE'S BEDROOM - EVENING 5

A mass of books and disks are on her desk. One disk has CD (the guy) graffiti alongside official health warnings "Federal Reactive Agent - Non Classified - Alpha Source". Angry music blares.

DANIEL HARKIN, a dishevelled academic in his late thirties, confronts his daughter Blake.

DANIEL

What the hell is your problem?!

Blake pretends she can't hear as she takes off her boots.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What were you thinking?

BLAKE

Since when do you give a shit...

DANIEL

Watch your mouth. This is going to get us all in trouble. You ever think about that?

BLAKE

(sarcastic)

Don't worry Dad. It's nothing to do with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANIEL

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

Computer hardware is crammed under the desk. A monitor, on its side, displays a live feed of Daniel from a small ceiling-mounted web-cam/wireless device (Blake's RIG).

BLAKE

Give me a break. You're the one who says - tell the truth.

*
*

Blake leaps off the bed and starts tidying up around Daniel. Her room is a mess of teenage paraphernalia, geek references and wildlife posters. She grabs a book referenced in Dad's file.

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!

DANIEL

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

BLAKE

Stop treating me like some dumb kid!

Blake casually hides the CD (of CD) under a pile of junk.

DANIEL

Well you bloody well act like one.

BLAKE

Get out of my room!

Daniel flaps his arms at the RIG, trying to issue a command. Blake watches his clumsy attempts with bemusement. She makes a simple gesture. The RIG recognises it. The music stops.

DANIEL

(grabbing a chair)

That's it. You're grounded. I'm taking the RIG.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BLAKE
You wouldn't dare!

Daniel climbs onto the chair and reaches up to disconnect the RIG. His phone starts ringing.

DANIEL
Try me.. Shit...

He climbs back down.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm not finished with you.
(leaving room)
Don't do anything stupid.

*

As he closes the door, Blake violently throws a boot at it.

*

BLAKE
Go to hell!

6 INT. HALLYWAY - EVENING 6

Daniel pauses just outside the door and listens. The music restarts. Daniel looks worn. It's all too hard.

6A INT. BLAKE'S BEDROOM (VIRTUAL WORLD) - EVENING 6A

Blake slumps against door and rolls her eyes back.

7 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 7

A DENR surveillance camera adjusts focus in response to movement. A round metallic baseball-size object is unclipped from the underside of a tree branch, examined then put back in position.

8 INT. STATE'S MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 8

The monitor, watermarked with the DENR logo, is recording the previous action in the bush. One of several recorded views of the State. Snippets of voice recordings are heard.

Static transition to a view outside an industry depot as a van with environmental activist stickers pulls inside.

8A OMITTED 8A

9 INT. ACTIVIST SPACE (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 9

This is the organising space for a group of ACTIVISTS. The van parks. Several bikes are also inside. Propaganda materials, flags, banners, are spread out everywhere.

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.

With his tea, Daniel walks over to MARK, a nerdy computer geek, * at a workbench piled high with electronics and computer hardware.

MARK
(playfully)
Mr. Harken, we've been expecting
you... Hey howse Blake?

*
*
*

DANIEL
Don't ask.

9A OMITTED 9A

9B INSERT. STATE USER INTERFACE 9B

A mouse pointer clicks on a folder. It opens, a LOUD SIREN wails.

DISSOLVE TO:

10 INT. STATE REGISTRY (VIRTUAL WORLD) - EVENING 10

Blake is a tiny figure, in socks no shoes, in the midst of a virtual filing system. RED LIGHTS flash. A CRASH from above. She looks up, from rifling through an open official-looking filing cabinet. A trick of papers rains down. She starts to flick through them at great speed. She should obviously not be here.

BLAKE
CD! You muppet!

CD drops to the floor near Blake, papers tucked under his arm. He's larger and less cuddly "in the flesh", a little unhinged.

BLAKE (CONT'D)
We really pissed them off with that
photo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CD

Your wish is my command.

Blake gestures "Gimme" without looking up. CD smirks, shrinks to her size and flicks through his papers, loudly clearing his throat.

BLAKE

Too much info CD. I said give me the low-down.

CD

Then come and get it! En garde baby!

CD brandishes a rolled-up file at Blake. As he lunges at her, Blake grabs the paper and swats CD away.

CD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Spoil-sport!

BLAKE

(reading paper)

Hang on... this is dodgy. Check this out...

Blake quickly skims through the papers, her cheeks reddening as she reads. CD impatiently taps his foot nearby.

CD

Leave it alone boss. Let's play!!

A shaft of illuminating light from an AUTOMATIC VIRUS SCAN appears. CD and Blake immediately understand that this means danger and press up flat against the cabinets. The scan comes in between them. Blake closes her eyes and grimaces.

BLAKE

(under her breath)

Shit...

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

BLAKE (CONT'D)

Hey! You trying to get me busted? *

CD makes a face at Blake as she moves off. Sirens WAIL louder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CD

Hang on...
 (pointing)
 File.

BLAKE

Leave it. People should know about
 this. *

CD

Someone's gonna trip on it. *

BLAKE

That's the idea dude... *

They run off. Logging plans, for the Sanctuary, lie scattered on the ground.

11 INT. ACTIVIST SPACE (REAL WORLD) - EVENING

11

Several ACTIVISTS hurry about, getting gear ready for direct action. The place buzzes with more excitement than before.

Print-outs of the Registry logging file are laid out on a workbench. Several round objects (NANOBATS) act as paperweights. Mark bumps the table. A nanobat rolls off the table near Daniel, deep in thought. He catches it in time.

DANIEL

(to Mark)
 Careful!

A monitor flickers to life on the workbench, displaying a view from the NANO-BAT in Daniel hand.

MARK

Hey it verks!

Daniel gestures for Mark to hand him pliers (like Blake gestured to CD). Daniel adjusts the device. The monitor image sharpens.

DAD

They'll start clearing at dawn. We
 better hurry. *

MARK

Who tipped us off?

DAD

Dunno but it seems legit. *

12 INT. BEDROOM (REAL WORLD) - EVENING 12

Blake lies on the floor, her head leaning against the wall near the door. Her eyes flicked behind closed eyelids as if in REM sleep.

On the bedroom monitor stashed on its side under the desk, the Registry file is being hit by light beams, denoting WEB REQUESTS.

BLAKE (O.S.)
Wow that was quick. Who found the file?

CD is now on the monitor screen, banging against the inside of the screen, looking out angrily.

CD
Hey buddy, we are gonna get busted.
Let's go Blake.

Blake stirs, she isn't asleep, she's connected to the RIG

BLAKE
(with wry smile)
Yeah right.

CD (O.S.)
Oh boy. I shoulda brought me bush boots.

13 INT. STATE MONITOR ROOM (REAL WORLD) - DAWN 13

CAMERA VIEWS, watermarked as DENR, pan through the bush. The activists appear on one screen. Its GUI activates in response.

TECH (V.O.)
Right on cue. Call it in.

14 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 14

It looks like Blake is trekking through the bush with activists. Blake mimics Dad and makes fun of him, from cyberspace. One camera is in a burnt-out tree hollow.

BLAKE (V.O.)
Dad... I should have known.

14A INT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAWN 14A

Blake "walks" in the void surrounded by a messy arrangement of floating panels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One panel shows the State Registry where Blake and CD were - a vast online warehouse structured like a hard drive. Other panels show footage hacked from surveillance cameras in the bush. Blake peers into a pool of water in a panel that reflects how she appears in the void. CD hangs off the panel.

Her reflection transforms into different looks - "too cool for school" punk, same outfit but older, same outfit larger breast size.

CD (O.S.)
They're fine! Come on...

14B OMITTED 14B

15 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 15

The activists, invigorated with a sense of purpose trek onwards. Morning breaks. Cicadas burst into song.

MARK
I don't get it. Where's the logging?

Daniel switches off his torch, stops, and sniffs the air.

DANIEL
Something's burning.

16 INT. STATE'S MONITOR (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 16

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

17 EXT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 17

CD bounces around Blake, gesticulating like some manic boxing referee doing the count. On-screen Dad sniffs again and again in a loop. Blake absentmindedly draws bunny ears on him with a finger. CD throws some punches in the air.

CD
(excited)
If the State wants to wreck this place, what are these turkeys going to do? They can't stop it.

BLAKE
Yeah but they're activists... that's what they do.

CD
And how come the State's letting them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLAKE
 (thinking hard)
 It must be a trap.

17A EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 17A

Suddenly the sound of TRANSPORTERS is heard. The activists look up amazed. A phone rings.

18 OMITTED 18

18A EXT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 18A

Blake creeps forward, frowning. Void transforms to bush around her.

BLAKE
 Answer your fucking phone!

18B EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 18B

State Troopers lie in wait in the bush. They remove ID badges. An EXPLOSION rings out. The troopers storm out of hiding.

19 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 19

A logging vehicle is in flames. Activists flee. Daniel runs up and forcefully grabs Mark by the arm.

DANIEL
 Run...

20 EXT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 20

Blake recoils in horror. In a panel she sees a trooper detonate an EXPLOSION by remote.

BLAKE
 Dad!

Around her, in the panels, chaos ensues. The earth shakes.

21 EXT. BUSH (REAL WORLD) - MORNING 21

Activists flee through the scrub. Mark is shot.

Daniel breaks away from the group and hurls a nano-bat like a baseball into the air. It sprouts wings and darts away. Another nano-bat hanging under a nearby branch wakes. Its head-cam swivels towards Daniel as he runs away, its lens re-focusing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANIEL
(to camera)
The State is behind this. They're
killing us!

The nanboat drops from the branch into the air. More nanobats activate and look at each other - the low-fi activist surveillance network,

The air is congested. Nano-bats swoop past the heads of troopers, recording the bloody scene. It's a mess of smoke and destruction. No longer a sanctuary, this is hell. A NANO-BAT is shot down.

22 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 22

As Dad runs, a trooper aims. Dad is shot. His knees buckle and he falls to the ground. Flames consume the scene. Nanobats fly by.

22A EXT. BLAKE'S SPACE (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 22A

Each nanobat webcast appears as a new panel in the void. Blake sees Daniel get SHOT STRAIGHT IN THE HEART in a panel.

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

Blake watches helplessly from the void. There is nothing she can do. Dad's phone keeps ringing. Tears slowly form at the corner of her eye. The recording is cut off.

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 goes eerily quiet. As if everything has turned bleaker and older by death.

23 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - MORNING 23

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blake wanders through the wreckage still smouldering. This is an abandoned wasteland, nothing lives here anymore.

She bends down to touch a smashed NANO-BAT, its inside raw and exposed.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D) (CONT'D)

(on tape)

A spokesperson for the Department of Environment and Network Resources has confirmed that the sanctuary has suffered irrevocable damage. None of the terrorists survived.

A GROWLING SOUND comes out of nowhere. The earth starts to shake. Blake looks up. A large, menacing LOGGING VEHICLE bears down on her. It runs STRAIGHT THROUGH her. Logging sounds start up through as Blake seethes.

24 EXT. BUSH (VIRTUAL WORLD) - DAY

24

Movement through the scrub (as per the beginning but the image is fragmented). Blake in her new guise as BLADE - a ghostly figure - darts through the trees and quickly out of view. A uniformed and helmeted STATE TROOPER appears and aims his rifle at three terrified activists huddled together.

NEWSREADER (V.O. CONT'D)

(on tape)

The township has been placed on high alert as other attacks are expected but when the State will be attacked...

Our view accelerates towards the trooper. He swivels around, cocking his head just as we COLLIDE with his helmet. BLADE, Blake's new avatar, older, more menacing, launches herself at him.

The newscast abruptly CUTS OFF. Blade looks back at the activists. Then off she runs into the bush. Our view breaks up and merge with the void of Blake's space. Extreme CLOSE UP of Blade's eyes. We hear her breathing and heart racing, then an explosion.

BLAKE

CD... let's go... we've got work to do.

A rising cacophony of ring-tones and voices. We are sucked back into the opening sequence as the credits roll - a 24 hour loop that will stay with Blake forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE END