

"Bird Song"

By

Bryan Pike

BRYAN PIKE
NINTH DRAFT, SEPTEMBER 2012
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2012

Bryan Pike
15/6 Heard St
Mawson
ACT 2607
(02) 6166 2783
0498 121 216

1 INT. ARTIFICIAL REALITY. INSIDE ABIE'S TOOTH DEVICE.

We see a mysterious FEMALE FIGURE, wearing a shawl, sitting in a cane chair at the far end of the room, looking out through a cross window suspended on a wooden frame. The Female Figure has her back to us. We hear the sounds of crashing waves and seagulls beyond the window.

The room consists of a rectangle marked out on the floor, with the suspended window, and a door in a frame, at either end of the rectangle. The colors are slightly off and over saturated.

We see ABIGAIL 'ABIE' SAMANTHA BAKER, age 29, in the middle of the room. She looks pale and her eyes are dark rimmed. She takes a piece of chalk from her jacket and draws a square on the floor.

She presses her hand against the square. White dissolve to a flash of images: child's hands scribbling drawings on a concrete floor in chalk; a man's hand pressing down over the child's hand.

White dissolve back to Abie. She takes her hand out of the square and turns to the Female Figure. Abie starts to speak. Her voice sounds strangely altered.

ABIE

Do you think I revisit this too often?

No reply.

(ABIE CONT'D)

It's nearly time. I need you to be ready.

Still no response. Abie closes her eyes.

2 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SECTION SIX. DAY.

We see Abie in another room. She is no longer pale, nor are her eyes dark rimmed.

Her eyes are shut. She opens them.

We see a stark, futuristic interrogation room. Blue lights.

3 VARIOUS. INFOMERCIAL. DAY.

We see a hardened male CRIMINAL in an interrogation room. His hands rest on a table, handcuffed.

(CONTINUED)

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

You're in a pretty bad place
right now, huh?

The Criminal raises his eyebrows and nods, bad actor style.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

Would you like to turn your life
around? See how the other half
lives?

The Criminal nods his head enthusiastically, mouths "yes"

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

Why not try a new identity with
our company 'Reality Dance'?

We move to the reception area of an Artificial Identity clinic, 'Reality Dance'. It looks much like a Dentist's Office, with CLIENTS waiting to see a TECHNICIAN to have a new identity inserted.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

You could be a high class
Executive...

CUT TO.

We see Abie, back in the interrogation room. The infomercial continues playing off screen.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

Or even an award winning singer.
And the best part is, after
wards, we return you to your old
self so you can start making
changes in your life.

On the wall opposite Abie is a cracked video monitor playing the end of the infomercial.

Abie has a small smile on her face as she watches it.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

Give yourself a new perspective
with an identity from 'Reality
Dance': a division of the Reality
Merchants Industry.

The infomercial ends and dissolves into scenes designed to relax prisoners: salmon jumping up river, a tropical fish tank, eagles soaring etc. Calming muzak plays over it.

4 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SECTION SIX. DAY.

In the center of the room, a metal table. On the table is a lamp, an ash tray and a perspex device that looks electronic. Seated at the table, in hand cuffs, is Abie. She wears a red prison uniform.

She smokes an e-cigarette, looking bored and irritated. Or is she? She looks around the room. There are seemingly no security cameras or any kind of monitoring going on. Yet she takes great pains to check an incisor with her tongue as discretely as possible.

ABIE

Hey! Are you people going to fucken interview me in here or what?

The door opens and a woman, ASTRID ELIZABETH MASON, age 25, enters. She is immaculately well groomed, suited, a real no-nonsense professional type. She carries a manila folder containing a dossier on Abie.

Astrid gets to the table and immediately reaches across, taking Abie's cigarette from her lips and extinguishing it in the ash tray. Abie moves to protest but relents.

Astrid places the manila folder on the table and then sits. She opens the folder away from her, obscuring the contents from Abie.

Inside, lying atop the other papers, is a perspex card (Astrid's computer access card) and a weathered photo.

The photo shows a man with his hands on the shoulders of two young girls. The girls look wounded and fearful. The man has a satisfied grin on his face. The photo looks like it was taken from some sort of storage unit.

Astrid looks at the photo, her face tightens.

She takes up the perspex card and slots it into the perspex device. A holographic screen is projected from it displaying a Police intranet.

ASTRID

Access Request, Police Minos System. Voice Recognition, Astrid Elizabeth Mason.

We hear a musical tone, like a computer alert. A pleasant, lilting female voice is heard from the perspex device.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE

Voice recognized. Access granted.

ASTRID

Interview started twenty fifth of May, two thousand and forty, fifteen eighteen hours. Section Six Interrogation Room. Subject, Abigail Samantha Baker, age, twenty nine; Detective Sargent Mason conducting the interview.

Astrid looks at Abie.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

You know why you're here, Abie?

ABIE

Stabbed some cunt in the eye.

ASTRID

Your victim was Trevor Reid, Deputy Commissioner of Section Six. My Boss. Were you aware of that?

ABIE

One small dick looks the same as another to me.

ASTRID

You didn't just stab him, you wrenched his eye out with a cork screw. I'd like to know why.

Abie leans forward suggestively.

ABIE

Come closer and I'll tell ya.

She grins. Astrid stares at her gravely. Abie sits back, sighs.

(ABIE CONT'D)

He assaulted me.

ASTRID

Who put you up to this, Abie? Something tells me you didn't act alone.

ABIE

I'd only tell you, sweetness.

Abie nods at the perspex device.

(CONTINUED)

ASTRID

You won't go on record?

Abie shakes her head.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

All right, Abie.

Astrid removes her access card from the the perspex device. The holographic screen shuts off.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Speak.

ABIE

I need to whisper it in your ear.

Astrid crosses her arms. No dice.

(ABIE CONT'D)

I'll tell you exactly who's behind this, Astrid. But on my terms.

Astrid bristles impatiently. She stands and moves cautiously beside Abie. She takes a stun gun from her belt and sits it on the table heavily.

ASTRID

Understand?

Abie nods. Astrid leans down slowly, placing her ear next to Abie's mouth. Abie opens her mouth and licks the same incisor from before.

Suddenly Abie slams her hands down on the arm Astrid holds the stun gun with. She lurches forward, trying to bite Astrid's neck.

Astrid pulls away at the last moment, stumbling backwards.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

You...you tried to bite me...

Astrid slams the stun gun into Abie's ribs, electrocuting her. Abie screams. Astrid throws Abie to the floor and starts kicking her repeatedly in the stomach.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Tell me who wanted Trevor hurt, you cunt! Who's behind this attack? I know Trevor, he would never...you tell me who's trying to hurt my man!

Astrid stops herself, knowing she's revealed too much. Abie catches her breath, looking up at her in triumph.

(CONTINUED)

ABIE

Your *man*?

Astrid trembles, she goes back to the table and takes out the photo from the manila folder, looking at it.

ASTRID

It's not an attack, is it?

Abie just stares at her. Astrid kneels beside Abie and shows her the photo.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Trevor, you know.

Abie's breathing intensifies. Astrid points to the little girl, aged 9.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

That's me. That little girl. I have no memory of this.

ABIE

Astrid, I...

ASTRID

You know where I found this? At our home, where me and Trevor live. In his safe.

Abie looks like she might be sick.

ABIE

It will be a lot easier to explain...if you let me...

Abie motions to her incisor. Astrid points to the other girl aged 13.

ASTRID

Is this you? It's the only thing I could think of. If it's not an attack, it's the only reason why you...

Abie moves to placate Astrid.

ABIE

You have to trust me.

Astrid jabs her finger at the photo.

ASTRID

Caus I *know* that look, Abie. Did he...

Abie starts to reach for Astrid. She motions again to her incisor.

(CONTINUED)

ABIE
Into the bloodstream. Fast
release.

Astrid grabs Abie by the shoulders and shakes her.

ASTRID
You tell me, damn it! Tell me why
I can't remember?

Abie closes her eyes.

5 INT. ARTIFICIAL REALITY. INSIDE ABIE'S TOOTH DEVICE.

Abie, now pale with dark rimmed eyes, moves towards the
Female Figure, placing a hand on her shoulder.

ABIE
She's onto us. What should I do?

The Female Figure's voice is almost unrecognizable.

FEMALE FIGURE
Tell her. She deserves to know.

Abie closes her eyes.

6 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SECTION SIX. DAY.

Abie opens her eyes. Sans paleness and dark rimmed eyes.
She looks at Astrid.

ABIE
You're not real, Astrid. You're
an artificial identity I planted
in my sister sixteen years ago.

Astrid sits back.

ASTRID
Bull shit.

ABIE
Your purpose was to get close
enough to Trevor Reid, so we
could kill him. My sister,
Elenore, your real identity, was
supposed to finish it.

ASTRID
You're lying.

Abie points to her incisor.

ABIE

She's been waiting here all this time, for me to inject you. I failed.

Astrid stands, walks away from Abie.

ASTRID

So, what, you're saying you *designed* me?

ABIE

The technology was on the streets, even then.

ASTRID

How did you pay for it?

ABIE

You think I *chose* to be a prostitute?

ASTRID

No, no, I don't accept this...

ABIE

What do you remember of your childhood, Astrid, before your foster parents?

ASTRID

How did you...?

Astrid shudders. The full weight of the reveal comes crashing in around her. She sinks to her knees.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Did you program me to fall in love with him?

ABIE

Yes. I'm sorry. In the end...we wanted it to come from someone he cared about.

A pause.

ASTRID

Get over here before I change my mind.

Abie moves towards her. She draws back Astrid's hair, getting ready to bite her neck. Just as she gets near Astrid speaks again.

(CONTINUED)

(ASTRID CONT'D)

What...what happened to you and Elenore?

ABIE

He kept us locked in a room. We were street kids. And he got to play 'God'. But one night he came in drunk and left the door open. The rest you know.

Astrid screws up her face and nods. Abie hesitates, before suddenly clutching Astrid in her arms and sinking her incisor into her neck. Astrid gasps. Abie closes her eyes.

7 INT. ARTIFICIAL REALITY. INSIDE ABIE'S TOOTH DEVICE.

We realize that this is what the inside of Abie's tooth device looks like. An artificial reality for ELENORE to wait in while Astrid served her purpose.

Abie opens her eyes. She is now pale with dark rimmed eyes again. She moves over to the Female Figure and places a hand on her shoulder.

ABIE

Time to go home.

The Female Figure stands, turning to us. It is of course, Elenore (But we recognize her face as Astrid's).

Elenore moves to the door.

Abie goes over to the square she drew earlier and rubs out the lines. She smiles.

Elenore opens the door. Beyond is darkness. She steps into the darkness, closing the door behind her.

Abie closes her eyes.

8 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SECTION SIX. DAY.

Abie opens her eyes. Again she is no longer pale nor are her eyes dark rimmed. Light drains out of the room.

We inter cut between Astrid slowly lowering her eyes as Abie continues biting her, and Elenore moving through darkness towards us.

When Elenore fills the frame, Astrid falls away from Abie into the darkness that has engulfed the interrogation room.

In the darkness:

(CONTINUED)

ABIE
Elenore?

Light returns. Warm yellow light. Abie helps prop Astrid into to a seated position. Astrid's eyes flicker open.

ASTRID
Is it now?

ABIE
Yes.

ASTRID
And it's time?

ABIE
Yes.

The door that Astrid entered from swings open. The two sisters stare pensively at it.

FADE TO BLACK.