

HUMAN ANIMALS

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A billboard above the lot depicts a menacing Uncle Sam and screams, "VOTE NATIONALIST! YOUR FREEDOM DEPENDS ON IT!"

Harsh music throbs from a nearby club. The sounds of a bottle breaking. Fighting. A police siren wailing.

A chubby REDNECK squints at the billboard. His t-shirt reads "ALT-RIGHT IS THE ONLY RIGHT."

REDNECK

Big evenin' out for you wetbacks.
Must be pay day at the migrant camp.

He turns his attention to a frantic struggle behind some parked cars, where three MEN overpower a fit LATINO (40s).

A young WOMAN (18) struggles to escape two others.

REDNECK

Y'all gotta share the wealth.

He flips open a switchblade and slashes open the Latino's throat. The man's life sprays from him.

WOMAN

DADDY!

One of her assailants smacks her again and again until she crumples to the pavement.

HER POV

Movement. She's being dragged behind a dumpster.

She sees her father's blood pooling around him. A man snapping a photo with an iPhone. Laughing.

Then, a Waste Management logo on green metal. Rough hands tearing away her clothing. The leering redneck - soaked in her father's blood - as he unbuttons his filthy jeans.

REDNECK

One of you boys film this. I know a site that'll pay top dollar.

She screams.

Nearby, harsh music. But no police sirens.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - DAY

An iPhone rests inside a glass aquarium tank. A garter snake slithers around it.

A grungy student SUBJECT (19, sweating) sits in front of the tank, clearly terrified of the snake inside.

KATHLEEN GUERRERO (29), a no-nonsense Latina with an incisive gaze, studies the Subject's reactions. Scribbles a note on a clipboard. Raven hair knotted. Lab coat.

She means business.

She stands behind CATO (20s, a lean Asian man) who sits at a collapsible card table in front of a laptop computer.

KATHLEEN
(quietly, to Cato)
Put the financial news on the feed.

Cato inputs a post and makes it live.

Four impoverished COLLEGE GUYS sit in folding chairs beside the urinals. Facing the subject, but focused on their PDAs.

COLLEGE GUY
Fuck. The dollar took another shit.

SUBJECT
How much? Tell me somethin'...c'mon!

College Guy ignores him. Shows the post to his BUDDY who sits beside him.

Subject begins to reach for his phone, but the snake moves. He retreats quickly.

KATHLEEN
His fear still controls his need for information. Add the status updates.

CATO
Jesus, he's a human being...

KATHLEEN
He's a guinea pig. And a volunteer one at that.

Cato doesn't like it, but adds the post.

COLLEGE GUY
Oh, shit, his girl -- his, um...

College Guy shows the post to his buddy.

BUDDY

Dude, that's fucked up...

SUBJECT

My girlfriend? What about her?

The Subject wants his phone – wants to check his feed – but the snake. He can't bring himself to reach into the tank.

Indecision paralyzes him. He pisses himself.

KATHLEEN

Okay, we're done.

COLLEGE GUY

Thank God. I'm starving.

The Subject shivers. Wet. Embarrassed.

Kathleen hands the Subject his iPhone and a towel and directs Cato to secure the snake. The College Guys converge on a box of food.

Someone urgently pounds on the bathroom door.

MAN (O.S.)

Miss Guerrero! Open up!

KATHLEEN

Don't open that..!

But Cato unlocks the door. A severe MAN storms in and gets an eyeful:

Cato with the snake tank. A student wet with urine. Another eating a sandwich. Folding chairs. Urinals. Kathleen with her clipboard.

KATHLEEN

Well...you won't give me a lab.

MAN

The University can't afford you or whatever this is. Consider your funding history.

EXT. PARKING LOT - UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - LATER

Kathleen strides past homeless STUDENTS in tents to a lot of run-down cars. Cato trails behind her, struggling with four chairs and a card table.

KATHLEEN

Four weeks of searching for a location
 – any location – where I could do
 that experiment and poof! I should
 fire your ass for opening that door.

CATO

No one else will work with you...

KATHLEEN

-- HEY! Don't touch that!

She runs up to a gaunt STUDENT, standing from a crouch beside
 a beat-up sedan.

STUDENT

I was tying my shoe.

KATHLEEN

Just get away from my car.

STUDENT

Some car. Better tell papi to cut a
 few more lawns.

Kathleen advances on him, fists ready, and then sees his
 open carry firearm strapped to his waist. He pulls it and
 aims at her.

STUDENT

Law says I can kill if threatened...

Kathleen quickly disarms him. Drops him to the ground.
 Puts her foot on his neck and removes the gun's bullets.

KATHLEEN

Let's call it a draw.

She pockets the bullets. Shoves the gun back into the
 student's holster. Lets him scamper away.

CATO

The President's New Order. Guns
 everywhere, open bigotry. Yesterday
 I saw a gay couple turned away from
 an empty restaurant.

She clicks her key fob multiple times to no effect. Pounds
 the trunk with her fist.

CATO

Easy does it. So you lost your
 funding -- and your car is shit and
 some ass nearly shot you. City
 council will love your proposal.

Kathleen slumps against her car. Exhausted.

KATHLEEN

It's just the constant fight, y'know?
Scraping together money for school.
Heck, finding money for food. Finding
food on empty shelves. I need a
drink and a diversion.

CATO

You haven't had Chinese in a while?

He doesn't mean dinner. She gives him a once-over.

KATHLEEN

I'm thinking Greek.

EXT. CITY PARK - THAT NIGHT

Pools from the few working street lights barely cut the inky darkness. Weeds thrust from cracked sidewalks.

BABYLON FISK - (55), dapper in suit and vest - limps along the sidewalk on an ornate cane. Solidly built. Proud. Piercing eyes that miss nothing.

Two identical twins, NIALL and CONNELL (30s), shadow him. Strapping men with fiery red hair. Alert. Feral.

Babylon approaches MR. WEBER (40s, black) and joins him on a peeling park bench.

MR. WEBER

You took your sweet time.

BABYLON

Feds got eyes everywhere, y'know?

Babylon has a hick twang that belies his elegant appearance.

Niall stands in shadow behind the bench. Suddenly, the red light dot of a laser sight appears on Niall's back.

MR. WEBER

You got Bitcoin, right? None of
that worthless paper shit?

The light dot drifts to Babylon's back. Niall sees it, but does nothing.

BABYLON

You think summer's comin' early?

The light dot targets Babylon's head.

MR. WEBER

The money, my friend. Do you have..?

Mr. Weber sees the light dot. Spooked.

BABYLON

I don't have nigger friends.

Mr. Weber turns. The laser dot pinpoints his forehead.

PPPSST!

A silenced bullet explodes through Mr. Weber's head, knocking him from the bench.

Niall grabs Babylon. Drags him into the darkness as Kevlar-protected AGENTS burst onto the scene.

AGENT #1

FBI! You're surrounded!

AGENT #2

Agent Weber is down! FISK..?

But Babylon is gone.

AGENT #1

Jesus... CALL AN AMBULANCE!

INT. CITY HALL LOBBY - THE NEXT DAY

Kathleen and Cato stride across the shabby lobby.

A cracked flat-screen TV behind the security desk blares congressional news.

REPORTER

...And the unemployment rate climbed to 11.5%. In other news, Congress debates the merits of adding a Death-Race-like component to NASCAR...

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - LATER

The ethnically-diverse council members argue in a dingy room nearly devoid of SPECTATORS.

Kathleen white-knuckles a podium.

Babylon Fisk has the center seat. He studies the council members as if plotting their murders.

COUNCILWOMAN JONES (45, black, feisty) has the floor.

COUNCILWOMAN JONES

She's proposing a degrading, racist display.

COUNCILMAN ABBOTT (30s, white) is unimpressed.

COUNCILMAN ABBOTT

We are in a depression. The city is \$3 billion in debt, the zoo runs a deficit...

COUNCILWOMAN JONES

You want to balance the books by putting people in cages? She better put white people in there.

Babylon pounds his gavel.

BABYLON

Cut the race-baiting crap or this debate is over.

Kathleen feels her blood pressure rising.

KATHLEEN

It is a scientific study to quantify the modern savage. Sixteen college students. Placed in a zoo enclosure. Three months. No Internet or PDAs. Increased zoo attendance will cover expenses and produce a modest income.

COUNCILMAN ABBOTT

Is this university sanctioned?

KATHLEEN

It will complete my doctorate.

COUNCILWOMAN JONES

So your personal gain factors into the mix? This gets better and better.

BABYLON

Put a sock in it, Councilwoman. Thank you, Miss Guerrero. Very intriguing.

BABYLON (O.S.)

I need a vote, please.

Kathleen strides to Cato in the back of the room.

KATHLEEN

Why is everything about race?

CATO

Said the Latina to the Asian-American.

Behind them, a free-for-all of accusations and grandstanding.

BABYLON (O.S.)

I want order! ORDER!

KATHLEEN

I will get that money. Someone will finance my experiment...

Babylon pounds his gavel, breaking it in two.

BABYLON

ENOUGH! Life is too short for this time-wasting bullshit. Give me your vote, or by God your constituents will know why.

INT. CITY HALL - MAIN STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Kathleen paces like a caged animal as they wait at the foot of the stairs. Cato holds her briefcase.

KATHLEEN

Shot down by political pricks? Hell no, I've worked too damn hard...

Babylon Fisk bursts from the council chamber. Unwilling to bow to his bad leg, he heads toward the stairs.

He sees Kathleen. Tries to avoid her. She pursues Babylon up the stairs.

KATHLEEN

My experiment appeals to you. Intriguing, you said.

BABYLON

Ain't a chance in Hell the city will fund that ethnic hot potato.

KATHLEEN

I hear you have private sources.

BABYLON

You're barking up a very thorny tree.

KATHLEEN

(loudly, publicly)
I thought the great Babylon Fisk could make anything happen?

BABYLON
 (as publicly)
 Anything I want to happen, happens.

OUTSIDE A CITY HALL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Babylon limps down the tiled hallway toward Connell. We see the long scar that bisects Connell's voice box.

Babylon pauses in front of Connell. He notes the "CLOSED FOR CLEANING" sign.

BABYLON
 Nice touch. Your charming twin
 completing our business in there?

Connell simply nods. He indicates Babylon's knee. Concerned.

BABYLON
 I think it's gonna rain.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM

Babylon enters as Connell stands guard outside. Avoids a "Wet Floor" sign. Steps to a urinal.

Inside a stall, a struggle of legs and arms. A MAN screams. Niall presses for information.

NIALL (O.S.)
 Who set up the FBI sting?

MICKEY JOHNSON (24, solid, lumberjack-handsome) exits another stall. Rubber gloves. Bottle of Tilex. Coveralls. A guy with potential who had the rug pulled from under him.

He sees Babylon. Removes his ratty baseball cap.

MICKEY
 Jesus, sorry. Didn't get the memo.

BABYLON
 No worries, Mick. I ain't the best
 scheduler myself.

Babylon zips up. Moves to the sink. Washes his hands.

MICKEY
 Hey, I got skinny on a construction
 job. A word from you would...

BABYLON
 I know.

BABYLON
 Scrubbin' urinals is a job for
 niggers, but you're my eyes and ears.

NIALL (O.S.)
 I want a name.

The man scrambles to escape.

MAN (O.S.)
 I don't know. I swear!

Babylon dries his hands.

BABYLON
 I just heard the oddest idea. Odd,
 and familiar somehow. You like brown
 bitches? These latinass?

MICKEY
 I've banged a couple.

BABYLON
 Would ya date one?

MICKEY
 I don't guess "felon" is a category
 on OkCupid, sir.

Babylon shrugs. He has no idea.

MICKEY
 Latrine ain't scrubbing itself.

Mickey enters the stall beside Niall. Angrily squirts the
 toilet with Tilex. Glances beneath the partition.

Blood on the floor.

A struggling man pinned to the toilet by Niall's strong legs
 and body. A man with handcuffs and a holstered gun.

A policeman.

NIALL (O.S.)
 I want a name.

The policeman screams. A human tooth drops to the floor.

INT. KATHLEEN'S LOFT - NIGHT

A vast, murky space. Industrial. Dark at the edges.