

Bird Song

By

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VARIOUS. INFOMERCIAL. DAY.

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

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...

We see a male cigar-chomping CEO standing proudly, arms crossed, at the head of the board room table.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

...or even an award-winning
Singer...

We see a female SINGER standing proudly in front of her recording studio.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

...the choice is yours. And with
our new payment plans, being on a
budget is no longer an issue.

We see more footage from the clinic of 'Reality Dance'. A Client talks with a Technician about payment options.

(CONTINUED)

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

And the best part is, at the end of it all, we return you to your old self so you can start making those changes in your life.

The hardened Criminal from earlier nods his head enthusiastically and mouth's "yeah". There is a cut and his handcuffs are gone. He notices, lifts his free hands, then looks at the camera and gives a thumbs up.

CUT TO:

We see a girl from the wrong side of the tracks, ABIGAIL 'ABIE' SAMANTHA BAKER, age 29.

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INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. SECTION SIX. DAY.

A stark, futuristic interview room. Blue lights.

In the center of the room, a metal table. On the table is a lamp, an ash tray and a curved perspex device that looks electronic. Seated at the table, in wrist and ankle cuffs, is the girl from before, Abie. She wears a prison uniform.

The infomercial continues playing off screen.

MALE VOICE

(V.O)

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

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.

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.

Abie smokes a 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?

(CONTINUED)

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 disc (Astrid's computer access card) and a weathered photo.

The photo shows a man with his hands on the shoulders of two young girls, ages 9 and 13. 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 cellar.

Astrid's looks at the photo, her face tightens.

She takes up the perspex disc and slots it into the curved 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.

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. Were you aware of that?

ABIE

Always someone important. 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 tried to assault me.

ASTRID

Who put you up to this, Abie?
You're not bright enough to have
done this on your own.

ABIE

I'd only tell you, sweetness.

Abie nods at the perspex device.

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 Astrid's arm, the one holding the stun gun. She lurches forward, trying to bite Astrid's neck.

Astrid pulls away at the last moment, punching Abie in the mouth with her free hand. Astrid stumbles backwards.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
You...you tried to bite me.

Abie recovers, her face twists in pain and she groans.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
You fucken bitch!

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)
You tell me, you fucken dyke! You
tell me who wanted Trevor hurt!
Who's behind this smear campaign?
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.

ABIE
Your what?

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

ASTRID
There is no smear campaign, is
there?

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

(ASTRID CONT'D)
Trevor, you've already met.

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. After your attack I broke into the safe where he keeps his old files; I was just trying to help the case.

Abie looks like she might be sick.

ABIE
It will be a lot easier to explain...if you let me inject you, with this.

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 a smear campaign, it's the only reason why you would've attacked him.

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. I've seen it before. Did he...

Abie starts to reach for Astrid.

ABIE
You inject on the skin or into the bloodstream. The jugular work's best; fast release.

Astrid grabs Abie by the shoulders and slams her against a wall.

(CONTINUED)

ASTRID

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

Abie exhales.

ABIE

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

Astrid sits back.

(ABIE CONT'D)

Your purpose was to get close
enough to the man who raped us,
Trevor Reid, to kill him. I was
supposed to inject you with your
real identity, the one who would
deliver the final blow, my
sister, Elenore.

ASTRID

Bull shit.

Abie points to her incisor.

ABIE

She's been living here for
sixteen years. In this device in
my tooth. Waiting for our 'super
cop' to rise up through the
ranks.

ASTRID

Your *what*?

ABIE

We designed you. Or rather we had
street vendors design you.

ASTRID

You're talking about 'reality
merchants'?

ABIE

We used the technology already in
place. If people want to be
somebody else, they can. By law,
it's required to bring back their
original identities, but...pay
certain people enough. They'll
make it stick.

Astrid stands, walks away from Abie.

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. Abie gets to her feet.

ABIE

Give me your neck, Astrid, and I will release you from your pain.

Astrid makes a mad scramble for the stun gun, which has fallen in the fray, and holds it out at Abie.

ASTRID

You stay away from me!

Abie advances on her calmly.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Get back Abie!

ABIE

Emma. Emma is my real name.

ASTRID

I don't give a shit what your name is - get back!

ABIE

Will you be able to live with yourself after this, knowing that you're a lie?

ASTRID

Just...just...what happened to the two girls?

ABIE

He kept us locked in a cellar. Just two abandoned 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

And did you program me to fall in love with him?

(CONTINUED)

ABIE

Yes. I'm sorry. We wanted the final blow to come from someone he cared about.

Astrid drops the stun gun, sinking to her knees.

ASTRID

Get over here before I change my mind.

Abie moves to Astrid and kneels beside her, drawing back Astrid's hair and exposing her neck.

ABIE

For what it's worth, thank you.

ASTRID

Go to hell.

Abie hesitates, then moves her mouth over Astrid's jugular vein, sinking her incisor into her neck. Astrid gasps. Light drains out of the room. Astrid falls away from Abie into darkness.

In the darkness:

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

Is it time?

ABIE

Yes.

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

FADE TO BLACK.