

★ Call back sides

SANTIAGO
23.

JIA

I've tried my best to
you as simply as I can u.
and you still don't get it do you?
What are you, stupid?!?

Bo smiles.

B

Not as stupid as you seem to think
You'd love to live in this ivory
tower forever but our children are
dying, our workforce and soldiers
are being crippled.

(Beat)

If you have concerns about your
A.I.'s' safety then you must work
harder and faster to get evidence.
My recommendation is that testing
begins next week. You have seven
days.

He struggles down the steps back to his waiting Rolls Royce.

Jia is terrified.

EXT. CALIFORNIA. LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE - NIGHT

A bright moon glitters above beautiful suburbia

I/E. SANTIAGO'S HOUSE. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

SANTIAGO PEREZ, LATE TEENS, is trying to hack Bank of
America's credit rating system when he gets a VIDEO CALL.

LILY, a plain looking TEENAGE GIRL the same age as him leans
into camera excitedly. She speaks with a Canadian accent.

LILY

Turn to Channel three!

SANTIAGO

I'm busy. Why?

LILY

We did it! We really did it! That
war-mongering bastard is going to
resign because of us!

Santiago flicks to the channel - it's a special news report:
A helicopter films the VICE PRESIDENT as he leaves the WHITE
HOUSE in a convoy of limos and security.

Written on the screen ticker-tape is 'VICE PRESIDENT QUILTS
BECAUSE OF PORN SCANDAL'.

The Machine

Scene 1

115

NEWSREADER (O.C.)

We're expecting a news conference first thing in the morning, but the White House has informed the media that Vice President Crewdson's resignation letter has been accepted by the President. ~~The Vice President's personal web history was hacked and posted by a hacktivist group Anonymous. Allegedly hardcore pornography viewed by the Vice-president included...~~

Suddenly someone BANGS on Santiago's front door. He jumps and mutes the TV...

LILY

What's wrong?

SANTIAGO

I'm not expecting anyone.

LILY

Don't be such a pussy. If it was the secret service they wouldn't have knocked, they'd have just kicked your door in. Go see who it is and call me back. We're like, the most famous hackers on the planet right now.

She hangs up. Santiago hurriedly attaches braces to his WITHERED LEGS. He's a POLIO SURVIVOR.

He nervously approaches his front door. Someone outside bangs it again. He looks through the peephole and discovers that outside is a VERY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN wearing a long coat.

He opens the door and she opens her coat revealing that she's only wearing lingerie underneath it.

CHERRY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY! Can I come in?

Before Santiago can answer she pushes past him.

INT. SANTIAGO'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cherry looks around, touching the ornaments and photos above the fireplace of the large, beautiful middle-class house.

SANTIAGO

Sorry, what do you want?

CHERRY

I'm your birthday present from your friend, Paranoid Badger 66. Is it true that you're afraid to leave your house?

SANTIAGO

That asshole is not my friend.

She leads him to the sofa and sits on his lap.

CHERRY

You know, I'm pretty famous. Maybe you've seen one of my movies?

She starts to unbutton his shirt, he stops her.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

SANTIAGO

I don't watch porn for the same reason I can't sleep with you.

She puts his hand on her breast, he likes it but pulls away.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

If I let my desire get the better of me then I'm collaborating with a system designed to oppress women. I won't do it.

CHERRY

This is the problem with not getting out of the house sweetie, it makes you a little crazy. How about a handjob?

Suddenly there is the sound of a key opening the front door.

SANTIAGO

... Shit, it's my mom! Help me up to my room. Quick she'll kill me if she sees you.

He hurries Cherry upstairs.

INT. UK. MOD FACILITY. TEST LABORATORY - DAY

THOMSON leads Vincent into the test lab. In the center of the lab is James. He is in a wheelchair and stripped down to his shorts. A bright spotlight above him illuminates the terrible injuries that his body has sustained. His arms have been severed above the elbow and his thighs above the knees.

THOMSON

At this point in time we're just focused on helping the brave soldiers defending our country regain some quality of life.

Vincent doesn't believe Thomson.

We cut to the table where the scalpel was left by the assistant and discover that it is gone. JAMES HAS

Scene 2

INT. SANTIAGO'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Santiago has his ear to his bedroom door.

SANTIAGO

I'm so sorry about this, Mom's normally in bed by this time.

Cherry is sitting on his bed flicking through a comic.

CHERRY

Why are you afraid to leave your house?

SANTIAGO

I don't know. I caught polio as a kid and spent a lot of time in quarantine in my room. Bit by bit it got tougher to deal with the world outside, I guess.

Suddenly he has an incoming call from LILY on his computer.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Quick, hide in my wardrobe.

CHERRY

Are you serious? No.

SANTIAGO

I don't want my friend Lily to see you. Please. I'm begging you.

Cherry mutters angrily and hides. In the dark she watches Lily and Santiago through the blinds. She's intrigued when she sees Lily's face because she recognizes her.

LILY

Jesus, I was worried it really was the FEDs. Where have you been?

SANTIAGO

Look, I can't talk now but, I just wanted to say, you're amazing.

4/5

LILY
Really?

SANTIAGO
I'll speak to you later.

He hangs up. Cherry steps out of the wardrobe.

CHERRY
You love that Lily girl, don't you?

SANTIAGO
She's my best friend in the whole world.

Cherry thinks long and hard and then makes a decision.

CHERRY
You seem like a sweet kid, so I'll give you a birthday present worth having. Don't trust her.

SANTIAGO
What do you mean? Why?

CHERRY
She's not real. She's an avatar.

SANTIAGO
No she isn't! I know her.

CHERRY
That virtual girl is used on all the porn sites, even mine.

SANTIAGO
Lily isn't a porn star...

CHERRY
You don't understand what I'm trying to tell you. I don't know who this Lily is, but he or she doesn't look or talk like that. Someone has just downloaded that avatar to trick you.

Cherry clicks on her website and then scrolls through the online CHAT GIRLS until she finds Lily. Lily looks very different because of huge breasts and blonde hair, but it's clearly the same girl, or virtual construct of a girl.

CHERRY (CONT'D)
If it makes you feel better whoever's messing with you, must have spent a fortune modding her out. I mean I've never seen her look that real before.

Santiago is shell-shocked.

S/S