

GAMERS

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FADE IN:

VIDEO GRAPHICS

An animated network logo moves onscreen. The words "WQWE News at Six" appear. Upbeat music plays over.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
WQWE News at Six. You heard it
here first.

INT. WQWE NEWS STUDIO - NIGHT

A well groomed anchor, JIM GRANT looks into the camera.

GRANT
And finally tonight, our bright
spot shines on 9-year-old Trudy
Malone. Trudy took on the task of
saving the lives of ten baby
ducklings when they were separated
from their mother.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

News director RICK MASON watches the bank of monitors intensely. He stops chewing on his pen, pulls it from his mouth and taps the shoulder of 20 something JESS HARPER, the board engineer sitting directly in front of him.

MASON
Cue the ducks.

Jess responds by hitting appropriate switch.

ON THE MAIN MONITOR

The image of Grant is swapped for incoming video footage of a little girl holding a box of ducklings.

TRUDY
I saw they had tried to cross the
road, but fell down the sewer
grate.

GRANT (V.O.)
Little Trudy went and got her mom,
who helped her stop traffic on
Route 13.

BACK TO MASON

As he taps Jess with his chewed-up pen once more.

MASON

Cue the mom.

ON THE MONITOR

A middle-aged woman stands by the side of the road.

MOM

Trudy has always loved nature, so when she said she wanted to save some ducklings, I couldn't argue. I held up traffic while she climbed into the sewer.

ON JESS

As the pen hits her shoulder once more

MASON (O.S.)

Cue the street.

JESS

(to herself)

I know, I know.

She switches the next piece of footage.

ON THE MONITOR

The image is not what you'd expect. Three cars are piled up in a heap of twisted metal. Firemen work to put out a blazing fire. The duck story audio continues.

MOM (V.O.)

Drivers didn't want to stop at first, but once they saw Trudy come out with the baby ducks, they understood.

BACK TO JESS

Jess stabs at the board quickly. She can't find the correct street scene.

MASON

Harper!

JESS

Just a second!

She ejects a tape from the console. We see the monitor go black. The voice over continues.

TRUDY (V.O.)

I helped the mommy duck get her babies home. My mom says I'm a hero.

Jess gets the right tape in.

ON THE MONITOR

The image on the screen is of ducks crossing the street, but it's in fast forward, looping over and over.

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

I wanted to keep one, but Mom says BLEEARRRUUUUUGGGGGHHHH--

The audio winds to an awkward halt. There is dead air. The duck footage runs out and we see blue screen.

BACK TO THE CONTROL ROOM

Jess is frozen.

MASON

Dammit! Just go back to one!

He stabs at the board. We see a confused Grant back on the screen.

IN THE STUDIO

Grant regains composure.

GRANT

Looks like we'll have to get back to little Trudy and her ducks some other time. Rest assured, they all got home safely. Thanks for watching. Stay tuned for the world news.

The on-air light goes off. The on set monitor shows a commercial begin to play.

GRANT (CONT'D)

That's one for the record books.

IN THE CONTROL ROOM

JESS

I don't know. I thought I had the right tape. If Chris hadn't distracted me earlier...

MASON

I don't need excuses! I need someone who can run the board. This station needs to run right, and if it doesn't, it's my job on the line. And let me tell you -- I'm not gonna lose MY job.

JESS

I'm sorry.

MASON

The writing was on the wall, Jess. It's just one screw-up too many. I have to get someone in here I can rely on.

Mason puts his hand on Jess' shoulder.

JACOBS (CONT'D)

Clear out your desk.

INT. WQWE NEWS OFFICES - CUBICLE - NIGHT

Jess sweeps her few pathetic possessions into a WQWE tote-bag. This includes a day planner, a couple notebooks, and a coffee mug full of pens and paperclips.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Wow, I am so sorry, Jess.

Jess looks to the opening of her cubicle. SUSAN, in her 30s, is a well dressed news segment producer.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You all right?

JESS

Yes. No. I will be.

She looks around, vacant.

JESS (CONT'D)

I don't think it's hit me yet. You know I've never been fired from anything before?

SUSAN

C'mon. How about a drink? Let's get out of here.

JESS

Yeah.

INT. PADDY O'KILTY'S PUB - NIGHT

Jess and Susan are at the bar, each with a beer.

SUSAN

You know I never should have answered that call this morning. Something told me that a story about cute little baby ducks would be nothing but trouble.

Jess smiles.

JESS

Shut up.

SUSAN

No, really. I ignored my instincts. I went out on the road with a camera crew and shot a hell of a segment, but it was cursed from the start. Don't work with animals and children. And now it cost you your job.

JESS

If it wasn't that, it would have been something else. Mason has wanted me gone for a while.

SUSAN

Yeah, but that doesn't change the fact that Mason is a prick.

JESS

You're right about that.

SUSAN

And I'm the one who has to go on looking at his face every day. So maybe you're the lucky one.