

GAMERS

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REVISION 212

April 7, 2009
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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.

Just then a man, TREVOR, steps up to the bar. He signals the bartender.

TREVOR

Barkeep! Another round, please.

He nods to Susan and Jess.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Ladies.

Victor is tall, good-looking, and athletic. His clothes are smart, but have a slightly foreign look.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
How might you be this evening?

JESS
Fine, thanks.

TREVOR
My boys and I are celebrating a
victory of sorts.

He gestures to a table across the room. Four friends are
toasting with the last of their previous drinks.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I was hoping you might join us.

Susan looks at Jess, her eyes wide. She nods her head "yes."

JESS
Well...

TREVOR
Trevor.

JESS
Well, Trevor, that's a nice offer,
but it's been a tough day and...

SUSAN
And another beer would be a fine
way to forget all about it.

Trevor smiles. He's got a great smile.

VICTOR
Excellent. What are you drinking?

JESS
Guinness.

TREVOR
You don't say? Not bad at all.
(to bartender)
Two more pints here.

INT. PADDY O'KILTY'S PUB - NIGHT - LATER

Susan and Jess are seated with Trevor and his friends. The
table is littered with the debris of a long evening: torn
napkins, half-empty baskets of fries, bottles, and glasses.

TREVOR
I'm telling you, it's "foolish
man."

JESS
 "Footloose man." Don't doubt the lyric queen.

TREVOR
 I saw her today at the reception. A glass of wine in her hand. I knew she would make her connection. By her feet was a foolish man.

Jess smiles and shakes her head

JESS
 Footloose man!

SUSAN
 Enough! Who cares? I want a truce.

JESS AND TREVOR
 (in unison)
 You can't always get what you want!

The table erupts in laughter. Susan leans in to one of Trevor's friends, LIAM.

SUSAN
 (quietly)
 I'm not sure who's in more trouble, my friend or yours.

LIAM
 Who says it has to be trouble?

JESS
 All right, I've got another one. See if you can keep up.

She sits up straight, prepared to recite.

JESS (CONT'D)
 I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together. See how they run like pigs from a gun, see how they fly. I'm crying.

Trevor shakes his head. He's got nothing.

JESS (CONT'D)
 Sitting on a cornflake, waiting for the van to come. Corporation t-shirts, stupid bloody Tuesday. Man, you've been a naughty boy, you let your face grow long.

Trevor takes a sip of beer.

JESS (CONT'D)

(puzzled)

I am the egg man? They are the egg men? C'mon!

TREVOR

Sorry, don't know it.

JESS

I am the walrus!

TREVOR

Not from where I'm sitting, you're not.

JESS

Where'd you say you're from again?

TREVOR

Look, I'll go toe to toe with you on the Stones, but the, ah...

JESS

The Beatles.

TREVOR

The Beatles just aren't my thing, you know? Never heard 'em growing up.

JESS

But, they're THE BEATLES!

Susan leans in to Liam again.

SUSAN

Hope this isn't a deal breaker.

EXT. PADDY O'KILTY'S PUB - NIGHT - EVEN LATER

The group piles out of the bar onto the sidewalk.

LIAM

Gah! Cold air.

SUSAN

Suck it up, it'll put hair on your chest. You fellas know your way back to your hotel from here?

LIAM

Of course, it's this way.

Liam and the others all point in different directions.

SUSAN

Lovely.

LIAM

Maybe you could show us the way?

TREVOR

(to Jess)

What do you say?

JESS

Oh, no. It's way too late for me anyway.

TREVOR

You know, Jessica, we've got another match tomorrow. I don't know when we'll be back this way again.

JESS

Mmm hmmm. I'm heading home. It's only a few blocks to walk.

TREVOR

At least let me walk you. It's a dark night.

Jess looks into his eyes.

JESS

All right.

The two walk off.

SUSAN

Good night, Jess. Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

JESS

(not angry at
all)

Shut up, Susan!

Susan turns back to Liam and company.

SUSAN

Right, does this hotel room of yours have a mini-bar?

EXT. JESS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

JESS
Well, this is it. You're really
leaving tomorrow?

Trevor nods.

JESS (CONT'D)
And your game... what is it you
play again?

Trevor moves in and kisses her.

JESS (CONT'D)
This doesn't happen to me
everyday.

They kiss again.

TREVOR
No excuses offered anyway.

JESS
Let's spend the night together.

INT. JESS' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT