

Robert

By

David Beatty

08-17-2018

INT. DRAB CUBICLE - THE STATE

JEFFERY behind a desk, rolls paperwork into a PNEUMATIC TUBE, Pushes a button and WHOOSH the tube sucks it away.

Enter ROBERT

JEFFERY
Please, sit down.

Robert sits.

Jeffery picks up a file, opens it, reads.

JEFFERY
Do people call you Robert or Bob?

ROBERT
Robert. Is this a work review? I had a full review just last month.

JEFFERY
What kind of entertainment do you like?

ROBERT
Entertainment?

JEFFERY
Games, simulations, that sort of thing.

ROBERT
I play from time to time. Socially.

Jeffery writes this down.

JEFFERY
Any favorites.

ROBERT
The interactive simulations.

JEFFERY
Any good?

ROBERT
Yeah, pretty good.

Jeffery writes this down.

(CONTINUED)

JEFFERY

What about synthetic partners?

ROBERT

I had a Model-3 series and model-5.
But I sold them.

JEFFERY

Think you'll ever go back?

ROBERT

Maybe.

JEFFERY

Third times a charm. We may not be
human, but we do feel like the real
thing.

Jeffery smiles, he's proud of this.

JEFFERY CON'T

Okay. Well, I'm here to inform you
that members of The State have read
your life, reviewed it and they
think it has great possibility. The
State is interested in acquiring
your life story for distribution.

ROBERT

Distribution?

JEFFERY

Yes, congratulations.

ROBERT

Um. What does that mean, exactly?

JEFFERY

We are going to make an example of
you. Tomorrow morning your friends
and family will wake up to a news
story about you. That news story
will circulate. It will build
momentum and be distributed to
society as an educational tool.

ROBERT

A news story? About my life? Why
would you want my life? I'm a
clerical supervisor.

(CONTINUED)

JEFFREY

Exactly. You're a nobody. Which reminds me: In the retelling of your life, we're going to make some changes.

ROBERT

You're going to change my life?

JEFFERY

Yes, are you excited?

ROBERT

I'm not sure.

JEFFERY

Good, because in order to do that we have to research your life and see what we can use to our advantage.

Jeffery pushes a PHOTOGRAPH of a young woman across the table.

JEFFERY CON'T

Is this your wife?

ROBERT

Yes.

JEFFERY

She died, three years ago.

ROBERT

Yes.

JEFFERY

She was human?

Robert nods.

JEFFERY CON'T

After having had synthetics, do you have a preference?

Robert stares blankly at Jeffery, unable to answer.

JEFFERY CON'T

Just curious. How did she die?

ROBERT

It was an accident. A machine, at work, malfunctioned. She was struck in the head, died instantly.

(CONTINUED)

Jeffery thinks about this as a possible scenario.

JEFFERY

A machine that wasn't properly maintained. An accident that could have been avoided.

ROBERT

I don't know. Maybe.

JEFFERY

Do you blame The State for your wife's death?

ROBERT

No, not at all.

JEFFERY

A State building. A State machine. A State malfunction. There is a responsibility to guarantee the safety of the citizens who work in a government building.

ROBERT

It was an accident.

Jeffery has an idea.

JEFFERY

In the news story we can tell the world that you, overcome with grief, go against The State, call out their irresponsible behavior. Demand justice.

ROBERT

What?

JEFFERY

We make a video of you calling for reform and name key members of the State you find responsible.

ROBERT

I don't want to do that.

JERRERY

You wont have to. We create an image of your likeness and build the video in our advertising department.

ROBERT

You would do that?

JEFFERY

Hear me out. At first The State will deny it, then to get their attention, you explode a bomb in an empty building. However, turns out, it's not empty and you accidentally kill a janitor. Better yet, two children playing hide and seek. You are arrested, sentenced and executed.

ROBERT

I would never do something like that.

JEFFERY

And that's what everybody will say. *'Not Robert, he seemed like such a quiet, nice citizen.'*

ROBERT

You're gonna make me a criminal.

JEFFERY

Not a criminal. A Rebel. After your death, The State will recognize your crusade. They will admit there is a problem and make changes to insure the safety of their citizens. This will be very benevolent on their part. Then they will pass a law and name it after your wife. They will call it the...

He looks to Robert

ROBERT

Hester.

JEFFERY

"The Hester Law of responsible machinery"

Jeffery is proud of this conclusion.

JEFFERY CON'T

The news report will unravel over the course of several weeks. If it does well, we tell your story in Premium Programing and your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JEFFERY CON'T (cont'd)
character will be played by a
celebrity performer. After that:
Games, simulations, all forms of
entertainment.

ROBERT
If you don't mind, I'd like to go
back to work.

JEFFERY
Oh that's impossible, You have an
execution scheduled today.

ROBERT
What... I have what?

JEFFERY
Citizens who have their life
distributed must be executed.

ROBERT
What? I've given my life to The
State, I've given you everything.

JEFFERY
Well, we can't have you alive after
we re-purpose your life. You could
expose us, say your life didn't
happen the way we decided to
re-write it.

ROBERT
I wont say anything, I promise.
I'll go underground, I'll run away.
You'll never see me again.

JEFFERY
It's already been decided. Would
you like a glass of water?

Jeffery speaks into a microphone.

JEFFERY CON'T
Water. Number 55.

Water appears in the pneumatic tube.

Jeffrey hands it to Robert. He drinks.

The realization that his life is over hits Robert. His eyes
fill with tears and his face bends into an ugly, broken,
cry.

(CONTINUED)

JEFFEREY

Oh boy.

Robert Sobs.

JEFFERY CON'T

I understand you're scared. I've watched many people go through this. Some go crazy. My job can be very dangerous.

Jeffery reaches under the desk and takes out a TASER

JEFFERY CON'T

I've used this electric zapper on quite a few irate folks in my time.

Beat.

JEFFERY

I'm gonna tell you a secret. I really enjoy my job. I'm not supposed to enjoy it because telling people they're about to be executed has a certain gray cloud over it. However, sitting across from a human who only has a few minutes left to live is very exhilarating.

Beat.

JEFFERY CON'T

It's a shame so few have the nerve to fight back. You want to, but you're scared. It's a reflection of how you've lived your entire life. Afraid to be who you really are. I guess that's why we have to re-write your life, because you don't have the nerve to be who you really are.

Jeffery takes out a large file folder.

JEFFREY CON'T

Sign this contract, we will tell your life story exactly the way it happened, no changes. That's a guarantee.

He takes out a second file folder.

(CONTINUED)

JEFFERY CON'T

Sign *this* contract, and your life will be a valuable lesson that inspires people to live in accordance with the values of The State.

Robert considers both contracts. Then picks up a pen and signs the second contract. (FINGERPRINTS)

JEFFERY

Good choice.

TERROR crosses Robert's face, he leaps up and attacks Jeffery!

However, Jeffery is quick and pulls the TASER. 50,000 volts shoot through Robert's body!

He falls back down into his chair.

JEFFEREY

Valiant effort Robert. Valiant. I'm so proud of you for trying.

Jeffery pushes a button. In walks two military guards.

JEFFERY CON'T

This is Phillip and Conrad, they will escort you down the hall and have you fit for your electric shock helmet.

The guards start to lift him up.

ROBERT

Wait. Hester. My wife. Will you really name the law after my wife?

Beat. Long pause.

JEFFERY

Maybe.

Jeffrey waves the guards to take him away.

A moment later, the door opens and in walks another citizen.

JEFFERY CON'T

Please, sit down.

The citizen sits.

Fade Out