

(Nightcall)

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(Based on, If Any)

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FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

A YOUNG MAN, 23, lies on his back on a half-made waterbed in a condo bedroom. The room is almost dark, but the viewer can make out that he has his typical college-age good looks. He wears a loose, almost unbuttoned sports shirt and shorts.

The room is pretty dark, but you can make out some details. There are messy bookshelves with lots of non-fiction books, tables with laptop computers. There is a mirror on the chest near the bed. There is also a cellphone and a pager.

Out in the living room there are three more computers, a TV with attached VCR and DVD player, an old sofa with the phone on the arm. There are messy wires. One of the computers shows a scenic screensaver. The apartment is dark but there is some indirect lighting from nearby downtown highrise buildings.

The pager buzzes. Young Man jumps up, fumbles the cell phone and drops it, as its antenna blinks. He picks up the pager. It is steep beeping. He fumbles around and turns on a night light, and reads the message on the table.

The screen shows the message. ABEND BILLB203 U901. The Young Man dials a number on his cell phone.

YOUNG MAN

What's this? This hasn't gone down
in years.

The screen shows a male call center OPERATOR, 60 and bald, speaking into a mouthpiece.

OPERATOR

I looked at it. Says you wrote this
ten years ago. Looks like your old
forced logic bomb.

The camera shows the main living room computer, and all the sudden the screen goes blue.

The Young Man walks out to the computer.

YOUNG MAN

Damn.

OPERATOR

Watch your language with me, Sir!

YOUNG MAN
Sir? What do you mean? We were..

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

BILL, 60, bald, spindly, sits on the messy sofa next to the Young Man. He reclines against the Young Man's chest. He starts to undo the button's on the Young Man's shirt. Bill's own music is playing on the computer.

INT. WORKPLACE CUBICLE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Bill sits in his messy cubicle (mainframe computer terminal with a dump showing) and looks at the Nightcall list and sees his name on it. A FEMALE COWORKER, 30, with a wedding ring on, approaches.

FEMALE COWORKER
Bill, the kids are sick again. Can you cover my nightcall tonight?

Bill looks at his phone roster on mainframe TSO, and sees an entry marked "YOUNG MAN." He picks up his phone.

BILL
You know, I won't get paid for this.

FEMALE COWORKER
You don't want to.

BILL
Well, like that goes with being salaried.

FEMALE COWORKER
I know. You want to be a free spirit. So change first.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Young Man boots up the computer. He brings up a dialup session, and eventually dials in to what looks like a mainframe screen. He goes through some panels to recompile the program.

He calls a number on his cell phone.

YOUNG MAN
OK, try restarting it now.

OPERATOR
From the top? Restart or rerun?

YOUNG MAN
Restart.

The job runs, and flashes EXECUTING on the screen. It disappears. The Young Man looks at the completed jobs and sees another abend. This time it is SOC7. He tries to look at the dump and the screen says, ABEND AID NOT AVAILABLE.

Holding the mouse, he tries to go into the binary dump himself. Suddenly, his body lights up, then dims. He looks at himself in the mirror.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Man, in bathing suit and looking like a high school teen, sits on the davenport and watches a black and white television. On the courtroom show, this happens.

PROSECUTOR
Have you ever looked at yourself in
the mirror?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The Young Man looks at himself in the mirror and sees an old man, who looks like the operator. The old man is BILL, 60.

He looks down at his legs with a certain amount of chagrin, as they are bald.

He touches the mouse again, and the screen goes blue.

Bill gets up and turns on another, older computer, and logs back in to the data center and brings up the dump.

There is a knock on the door, which turns into banging. Bill gets up, but the door flies open.

The Young Man, now dressed in a suit, walks into the room. He wears a backpack filled with bottles of chemicals.

YOUNG MAN
Police.

BILL
What? You are of college age.

YOUNG MAN
That's your opinion.

The young man forces Bill back to the old computer. Bill sits down.

YOUNG MAN
Now, solve the dump. Do the arithmetic in ink. I mean, in hex.

The Young Man pulls up a Walkie Talkie.

YOUNG MAN
We're ready.

CUT TO:

INT. GAY BAR - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Bill is talking to the Young Man. Both are dressed in sports clothes but the Young Man has on trousers. Bill is sipping on a Bud.

BILL
Yeah, because I'm single for a whole life, I do double nightcalls. They call it family values.

YOUNG MAN
It's not fair.

BILL
Yes it is. In their eyes.

Bill looks at the bottle. It is almost empty. He sips one last time and puts it down.

BILL
Just one drink.

YOUNG MAN
You enjoy the buzz, don't you.

BILL
Just once a week. To blow if off.
When I finish the drink, I watch
people.

The Young Man laughs.

YOUNG MAN
And measure people, too. So, you
want to do it?

BILL
I want you to convert me. You know,
to Sinus.

YOUNG MAN
I haven't had to scrub yet. It's
just as well, isn't it.

BILL
Just don't become a surgeon.
They're just mechanics anyway.

Bill stares at the Young Man, who backs up and smiles.

YOUNG MAN
You want to do it. Not just to see
it.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Young Man leads down and opens up one of the bottles.
Bill is working, transfixed on the dump.

BILL
I need to print it. But it will
take too long.

The Young Man grabs Bill by the shoulders, opens his shirt,
and spreads goo on his chest. Bill transforms, and shrinks,
and looks now like a Gray.

The young man picks up his walkie talkie.

YOUNG MAN

We did it. We made one man turn
into an alien.

The operator dumps up in his seat.

OPERATOR

All in a day's work for \$10 an
hour. My shift is over now.

YOUNG MAN

I'll take him to the craft tonight.

The Young Man carries Bill/Gray with a fireman's carry out of
the apartment and leaves the door unlocked as he leaves.

The elevator opens and more grays get off the elevator and
scurry to the apartment.

FADE OUT.