

TWO TWISTED #2: THE VISITOR

by
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FADE IN:

INT. LABORATORY -- DAY

The laboratory is a small and low-tech monitoring station, with computers and cabling thrown together ad hoc.

The end of the laboratory is partitioned by a thick glass wall, creating a small cell. The cell is devoid of features except a hard bed that is bolted to the concrete floor. A single door provides access to the cell.

In the cell is JOHN DOE (35, large build). He's very agitated, prowling around the cell.

JOHN DOE

I said open the door, mister.

Watching from the lab is AARON GREENSMITH (25, glasses).

AARON

Just take it easy, Mr. Tilly. We don't know what effect an increased metabolism will have on the virus.

JOHN DOE

I don't care for your virus.

AARON

Soon as we're done with these questions we can--

JOHN DOE

OPEN DOOR!

AARON

Look, you're not getting out. Sit the hell down, answer the bloody questions, or I'll purge your stupid arse.

JOHN DOE

ARRRGH.....

Doe tries to rip the bed from it's bolted foundations. Aaron watches, fascinated.

Suddenly, DOE CHARGES THE GLASS WALL--

There is a bright FLASH OF LIGHT in the cell at the moment Doe makes contact with the wall. Doe appears to spontaneously lose consciousness; his body falls limp to the floor.

Aaron laughs at this odd sight.

Aaron unseals the door, enters the cell and drags Doe to the bed. He then locates a SMALL ELECTRICAL DEVICE, strewn on the floor, and fixes it to Doe's temple.

Aaron exits the cell and re-seals the door.

AARON

Rod?

The response comes in the form of a SYNTHESIZED VOICE that we will call ROD:

ROD (O.S.)

Aaron. What did I say about purging before they get physical?

AARON

Yeah, sorry about that. I thought I could talk him down.

ROD

And when you say *talk him down* you mean verbally abuse him?

AARON

He just sort of lost it right at the end. I didn't have any time.

ROD

Right.

AARON

It's what happened...

ROD

(beat)

How hard did I hit the wall?

AARON

Heh. Yeah, that one's gunna leave a bruise.

ROD

Aaron...

AARON

He just charged. What do you want...

ROD

Just wait 'till it's your turn in here again, Aaron.

AARON

Yeah, what was that you said about threats?

Aaron sits down at a computer and enters the details into a form. After a moment, the computer reports the results:

AARON (CONT'D)

Okay, here we go. Samuel Tilly. He was Croatian.

ROD

Croatian?

AARON

Yeah. Hit by a car out the front
of his house. Died at the scene.
March 1996.

ROD

Anything about the driver?

AARON

No.

ROD

Alright, something for later.
File it.

INT. LABORATORY -- LATER

Aaron is sitting in front of a CHESS SET that is connected
by cable to a computer. The chess pieces have little pegs
that make them plug into the board. The game is well
underway.

Aaron is eating sandwiches for lunch.

AARON

Are you going to make a move or
what?

ROD

(pause)

...did you move my rook?

Aaron laughs, then moves the rook back to where it should
be.

AARON

Just testing ya.

ROD

Now I have to start my thought
process again.

Aaron bounces a SUPERBALL around the room, then decides to
get himself a drink of water from a dispenser.

ROD (CONT'D)

D2 to D4.

Aaron moves the piece for Rod.

AARON

What's he doing... what's he doing.

ROD

See the whole board.

AARON

Look who's talking...

An ALARM SOUNDS.

AARON (CONT'D)

Rodney.

ROD

Yeah.

Aaron turns around to watch the observation cell. He has his HAND WAITING OVER A LARGE BUTTON on the control panel.

John Doe stirs -- then sits bolt upright, SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS.

JOHN DOE

AEAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAIIIIIIII....

Aaron slams his fist down on the button--

There's a flash of light in the cell and John Doe goes limp.

AARON

Rod?

ROD (O.S.)

I'm all right.

AARON

Another screamer.

ROD

Yeah.

AARON

It'd be interesting to talk to one.

ROD

No.

AARON

Maybe he carked it in the middle of watching Little Women. You don't want to know why he was screaming?

ROD

No.

INT. LABORATORY -- LATER

Another visitor: this one sits up slowly, looking around the room in confusion.

JOHN DOE

Where am I?

Apparently confused at 'his' voice, John Doe coughs and tries to clear his throat.

AARON

Just stay--

Doe looks down at his body--

And instantly falls limp, slides off the bed and hits the floor.

Aaron finds it HILARIOUS.

AARON (CONT'D)

Rod? I think that was another girl. Man, she just went BAM, just like that.

Aaron enters the cell and repositions the Doe on the bed. Before leaving, Aaron takes a moment to pose Doe's arms in a manner that amuses him.

ROD (O.S.)

I wish you'd take this work more seriously.

AARON

Oh come on man, you didn't see how you hit the floor just then. Sack of potatoes.

ROD

And what about her?

AARON

What about her?

ROD

Think what it must have been like to wake up in a man's body.

AARON

Man by who's definition?

INT. LABORATORY -- LATER

Another visitor: this time Doe is a lot more measured in his movements and responses.

Doe reaches up to his temple, and pulls off the device.

JOHN DOE

Oh, should I have left that there?

AARON

No, that's fine. Just put it beside you.

(beat)

It's Rowan with a 'W' or a 'H'?

JOHN DOE

'W'. Thank you for asking. Most people just assume H. Or maybe they don't care, I don't know.

AARON

And what's the last thing you remember, Mr. Brent?

JOHN DOE

Ooh, let me see now. I'm sorry, my voice feels a bit odd.

AARON

It's a side effect of the medication we're trying. Just try to answer the questions as best you can, Mr. Brent.

JOHN DOE

Well, I remember the hospital.

AARON

Do you remember what hospital?

JOHN DOE

The Royal Melbourne of course. It's just up the road from us. And then Jane kissed me on the forehead. I remember that.

AARON

Jane?

JOHN DOE

My daughter. Does she not know I'm here?

AARON

Oh, we'll be able to contact your family now we know your name, Mr. Brent.

JOHN DOE

Oh. I see. May I stand?

AARON

Just don't touch the glass.

Doe stands. He knows there's something not right about his body, and he examines every part of it curiously.

AARON (CONT'D)

Now this is very important, Mr. Brent. I want you to think about what happened after your daughter kissed you. Where did Jane go? Did she stay beside you, or move somewhere else in the room?

JOHN DOE

She... she put her head on my chest and held my hand.

AARON

Did she say anything?

JOHN DOE

No. It was quiet. Everyone was quiet. You see, they all thought the cancer was about to take me. To be honest, I was thinking the same thing. And I was ready.

AARON

How long did Jane have her head on your chest?

JOHN DOE

How long?.

AARON

Ten seconds? A minute?

JOHN DOE

I.. I couldn't really say.

AARON

Where did she go when she stood up again?

JOHN DOE

(pause)

I must... I must have fallen asleep.

AARON

Did you dream?

JOHN DOE

Hmm?

AARON

Do you recall any visuals after you went to sleep?

JOHN DOE

Oh. Hmm. Well, that's interesting...

AARON

Sir?

JOHN DOE

I don't think I can say.

AARON

Try to answer the questions, Mr. Brent. This is important. Was it a feeling or a sensation?

(pause)

Mr. Brent?

JOHN DOE

I don't feel it any more.

AARON

What?

JOHN DOE

The cancer.

AARON

The question was...

JOHN DOE

Did I die, Mr. Greensmith?

Aaron moves closer to the purge button.

AARON

No.

(long pause)

Well, yes. As it happens.

JOHN DOE

There is no virus?

AARON

No.

JOHN DOE

I see.

AARON

Mr. Brent--

JOHN DOE

How long?

AARON

I'm sorry?

JOHN DOE

How long was I dead?

AARON

I really don't know. Mr. Brent, do you remember anything between falling asleep and the time you woke up just now?

JOHN DOE

And you removed the cancer?

AARON

Were you dreaming? Any colors or lights? Smells or sounds?

JOHN DOE

Or is this my new body? I'm a touch confused.

AARON

We can talk about that in a moment, but it's important that we get through these questions as quickly as possible.

JOHN DOE

I must say, it feels good. No pain, I mean to say. The drugs helped, but they so much as biting a rag while someone saws off your leg *helps*. No one understood that.

Doe rubs the side of his torso. Aaron notices that Doe has started to tear up.

JOHN DOE (CONT'D)

It feels good. That's all I mean.

AARON

About the--

JOHN DOE

When can I see my family?

AARON

Please try to concentrate.

JOHN DOE

They'll be worried. How does this door open.

AARON

You can't leave until we've finished these questions.

JOHN DOE

Screw the questions.

(beat)

Excuse the language, Mr. Greensmith, but screw the questions. I'm leaving now, you understand me? You have no right to hold me here against my will!

AARON

Whatever...

Aaron presses the button and Doe slumps to the floor.

Aaron enters the cell, resets the body and device, and exits. He starts entering the information.

AARON (CONT'D)

That was a good one.

ROD (O.S.)

What is the protocol regarding--

AARON

Rodney...

ROD

Tell me. I want to know if you remember any of the protocols. Just give me one. Any one.

AARON

We don't tell them they're dead. Technically, I didn't tell him he was dead, I merely confirmed--

ROD

There is no *technically*! We never drop the cover story, not under any circumstances. Never.

AARON

Don't be such a broom-arse, Rod. That was a good one. We got good responses from him. And he worked it out *himself*.

ROD

They never take it well. We always lose them.

AARON

This guy seemed like he'd be able to take it. And it's interesting, from a scientific perspective, to see how they react.

ROD

Do you want me to recommend they take you off the project until you can get your head around the procedures, and *why* we have these procedures in the first place?

Aaron laughs.

ROD (CONT'D)

What?

AARON

The voice synthesizer doesn't do anger very well.

ROD

Oh for crying out loud.

INT. LABORATORY -- LATER

Another visitor: this one is huddled into a corner of the cell, eyes wide open.

AARON

Hello? Hello? Earth to... Jesus... Sprechen sie English?

JOHN DOE

Momma?

AARON

(pause)

Mommas coming... What's your name?

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

My name's Aaron.

(beat)

AARON (CONT'D)

We need to keep you in confinement
because... Nice talkin' to ya--

Aaron gives up: he hits the purge button.

That one seemed to affect Aaron more than he'd admit.

INT. LABORATORY -- LATER

They're playing chess again. Aaron bounces the superball around while Rodney considers a move, each bounce more energetic than the last.

AARON

I tell you what. I'll even okay
an illegal move if you'll just
move something.

ROD

It isn't easy playing chess like
this. Christ. Just.. let me think.

Aaron's superball hits a stack of books, knocking them to the floor. Aaron gets up and re-stacks the books.

AARON

Did you notice that English one
said he was ready for death?

ROD

Yeah.
(pause)
That surprised you?

AARON

Nah, not really.

ROD

You're a proponent of the theory
that they're waiting for some sort
of closure?

AARON

It seemed plausible enough. Myth
often has a basis in reality,
however far removed.

ROD

But these aren't ghosts, Aaron.

AARON

So what are they? You don't think
they're ghosts?

ROD
You've read the reports.

AARON
The reports are content-less.
Just data. Data, data, endless,
pointless, meaningless data. They
never give us more than name, rank
and serial number.

ROD
Data is how we get to the answers.
You shouldn't expect to have answers
yet.

AARON
We should have *something* by now.
You're not worried your time will
come and we'll still be sitting in
rooms like this collecting data?

ROD
I have no expectation that the
secrets will be revealed by the
time I die.

AARON
And that doesn't bother you, knowing
what you know? Seeing what you've
seen?

ROD
Almost all of my ancestors have
done it. If it's good enough for
them...

AARON
Do we just float around like quarks
for fifteen years and then fade
away? Or it is like what *you're*
experiencing now: able to sense
the world but unable to participate?
I don't get it.

ROD
No one gets it. So we do the
experiments, we collect the data,
we propose the theories, and we--

Quiet.

AARON
And we?
(beat)
Rod? Rodney?

It's at this moment that Aaron realizes that JOHN DOE IS
STANDING IN THE CELL, close to the glass wall, WATCHING
AARON WITH AN EERILY CALM EXPRESSION.

AARON (CONT'D)
Jesus..! What the...
(beat)
Sorry. Just a second. Hello...

JOHN DOE
What are you doing here?

AARON
What's your name?

Doe begins to look around the cell in a slow, methodical motion.

AARON (CONT'D)
You've got a-- you've been infected
by a virus. You'll be in isolation
until we can determine whether
it's contagious.
(beat)
Can you tell me your name?

Doe turns his attention to the glass wall, which he examines in detail.

AARON (CONT'D)
Perhaps you can tell me what's the
last thing you remember? We might
be able to find out who you are
and call your family.

Doe turns to Aaron and grins.

AARON (CONT'D)
Well, what's the last thing you
remember?

JOHN DOE
You asking me what's the last thing
I remember.

AARON
Yeah okay... Before that. Before
you woke up just then?

JOHN DOE
I didn't just wake up then. I
arrived then.

AARON
(beat)
What's your name?

JOHN DOE
Is this a prison?

AARON
It's an isolation cell. Until we
determine whether the infection is
contagious.

JOHN DOE

And yet there are no bathroom facilities in this cell?

AARON

Just hold onto it for a few minutes. We need to get through these questions then we can sort that out.

Doe undoes his fly and goes to the corner of the cell.

AARON (CONT'D)

Hey! HEY! Whoa--

Aaron leans across and hits the button--

The cell flashes white, but this time John Doe REMAINS STANDING.

Doe reacts inquisitively to the flash of light, then urinates in the corner.

AARON (CONT'D)

Shit...

Aaron presses the button several more times, lighting up the room time and again but Doe remains standing.

Doe zips up.

JOHN DOE

You'll break it.

Doe returns his attention to the glass.

AARON

Shit..

(trying reverse psychology)

Hey, keep away from the glass. Don't touch it, man. Neither of us wants it to break, trust me.

Doe reaches out, as if to touch the glass, but then pulls his hand back just in time. It's like he knows there's something about the wall.

Aaron picks up a PHONE, but has to wait for a response.

AARON (CONT'D)

(trying something else on Doe)

You know you're dead, right? You're dead as.

JOHN DOE

I think you're a liar, Mr. Greensmith.

AARON

How'd you know my name? How the fuck do you know my name?

JOHN DOE

It's my turn to ask a question, Aaron. What are you doing here?

AARON

(to phone)

Carl? The purger isn't working.

JOHN DOE

Purger? Doesn't that just roll off the tongue.

AARON

(to phone)

I've tried it half a dozen bloody times. And there's something not right about this guy... I'm telling ya--

(beat)

What? How do I do that? Okay, just wait a sec. Hold on...

Aaron puts down the phone and rushes to:

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

He comes to some equipment.

Aaron opens some panels and checks the various meters and lights. Then returns to:

INT. LABORATORY -- CONTINUOUS

AARON

(to phone)

Everything looks all right from what I can tell.

(beat)

Okay, I can do that. I'll call you back. Just, just stay by the phone.

Aaron hangs up.

Aaron finds a small roll of tools and takes out a SCREWDRIVER. He proceeds to dismantle the casing around the purge button.

For a while, Doe stands motionless near the glass, watching Aaron's every move. Then Doe starts to examine his body.

AARON (CONT'D)

(stalling for time)

Who are you?

JOHN DOE

There you are asking questions again. *Quid pro quo*, Aaron.

AARON

What the hell does that mean?

JOHN DOE

I give you something if you give me something.

AARON

I asked you first.

JOHN DOE

No, you didn't.

AARON

Can't you just give me a name? Between friends, you know? I don't know what to call you.

JOHN DOE

You won't find me in your database, Mr. Greensmith.

AARON

What are you?

JOHN DOE

You haven't answered my question, Mr. Greensmith.

AARON

What fucking question?

JOHN DOE

What are you doing here?

AARON

I told you, you've got a virus and we need to keep you in--

JOHN DOE

Do not lie to me again, Mr. Greensmith. Do you understand?

AARON

Hey, screw you.

Aaron looks back at the purge button, picks up the phone:

AARON (CONT'D)

(to phone)

I've got it open.

(beat)

It looks pretty good to me. Yeah. What should I do?

(beat)

Okay. Okay. No, I'm cool. I'm cool.

Aaron hangs up the phone, returns to the button.

AARON (CONT'D)

So what's it like being dead?

JOHN DOE

You'll know soon, Aaron.

AARON

Okay, so give me a preview. I can take it.

JOHN DOE

Quid pro quo, Mr. Greensmith.

AARON

What? What was it? You wanted to know what we're doing here?

JOHN DOE

Yes.

AARON

Why?

JOHN DOE

Because I need to know who to make accountable.

AARON

Accountable? We're doing good work here. Important work. This is beneficial.

JOHN DOE

Beneficial for whom?

AARON

For everyone. For mankind.

JOHN DOE

Everyone?

AARON

Potentially, yeah. Who knows?

JOHN DOE

And are your subjects participating voluntarily?

AARON

Yes. I've been in there a few times myself.

JOHN DOE

I'm asking about the visitors, Aaron.

Aaron doesn't respond.

JOHN DOE (CONT'D)

I see.

Doe finally takes his gaze off Aaron and looks around.

JOHN DOE (CONT'D)

I like it here. This is the start of something new. Something exciting, Aaron. I hope you're looking forward to it as much as I.

AARON

That glass is bulletproof, there's no way you're getting out of there.

JOHN DOE

If I can find a way into this world, a wall of transparency will not contain me.

Doe takes off his belt and flicks it at the glass.

AARON

(sometimes to John Doe, and sometimes to a microphone on the control panel)

Rod! Rod! Rodney! Can you hear me, buddy? You gotta close this guy down! Rodney? Come on Rod, show him the fuckin' door...

JOHN DOE

Rodney's doing everything he can to stop me from telling you something.

AARON

What?

JOHN DOE

You're three moves from checkmate.

AARON

Fuck. RODNEY! You gotta do it man! Give it everything! RODNEY! COME ON MAN!

Something comes over Doe -- he begins reaching out towards the glass wall, seems to be struggling to pull himself back--

And then John Doe TOUCHES THE WALL--

There's a flash of light in the cell and Doe falls to the floor.

AARON (CONT'D)

Way to fucking go man! Fucking yeah! Woo! Man...

Aaron starts to go into the cell, but then a thought comes over him: what if Doe is faking?

Aaron grabs the screwdriver, and then very carefully enters the cell.

Aaron kicks Doe a few times and then starts to drag Doe towards the bed. But then Aaron decides to simply re-attach the device where Doe is lying.

Aaron retreats to the door.

AARON (CONT'D)
Rod? Rod? Come on man!

John Doe sits up.

AARON (CONT'D)
Rodney? That you, mate?

It doesn't take a moment for Aaron to realize it's not Rodney.

Aaron slams the door closed--

But the door doesn't fully close--

Aaron looks down to see Doe's BELT is obstructing the door. He reaches down, rips it out of the way, and slams the door again--

But Doe's arm is through the opening now. Doe grabs the screwdriver that Aaron is holding -- they both hold onto it with furious strength.

Aaron puts everything else he has into holding the door closed on Doe's arm.

AARON (CONT'D)
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHRRR...

But then Doe manages to get a foot through the gap, and then a full leg. It's a lost cause.

Aaron lets go of the screwdriver and falls back. He throws some books at Doe. Then a handful of chess pieces. Then he throws a KING--

Which Doe CATCHES CLEANLY in his free hand.

Next is the chessboard--

But the chessboard only travels half the distance before the cable snaps taught and the board crashes to the floor.

Aaron grabs the phone:

AARON (CONT'D)
(all blurted together)
HE'SOUTHE'SOUT INEEDSOME FUCKIN
HELPHERE!

Aaron grabs his superball and throws it at Doe. The ball bounces off Doe's forehead.

Aaron RUNS.

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Aaron bolts for the stairs, pulling over equipment as he runs past.

EXT. DESERT -- DAY

The view is uniform: flat, rocky desert as far as the eye can see for 360 degrees.

A door flops open in the middle of the ground.

Aaron rushes up the stairs and out into the sun. He slams the door closed and then piles ROCKS on the door.

The door MOVES once, and then is PUSHED OPEN with force.

Aaron runs. He runs with everything he has.

ON DOOR

Doe steps up and out of the door. He sees Aaron running.

Doe holds up the 'king' chess piece that he caught:

JOHN DOE

CHECKMATE!

(beat)

HEEEEEEEY! CHECKMATE!

ON AARON

Aaron can hear someone yelling behind him. He turns around to see John Doe waving a fist in the air. He keeps running.

ON DOE

Doe chuckles to himself and then goes back downstairs.

INT. LABORATORY -- MOMENTS LATER

Doe is on the phone. He's now talking in his (Rodney's) OWN VOICE:

RODNEY

(to phone)

Carl? Yeah. Aaron's coming your way.

(beat)

No, no, it's fine. I just gave him a little bit of a roasting.

(beat)

He was messing around with the visitors again so I thought, you know... I gave him a bit'a Hannibal

(MORE)

RODNEY (CONT'D)

Lecter. Hah. Yes, I'm sorry about that, Carl. I owe you a beer.

(beat)

Sure. Looks, can you do me a favour? Let him run a few kilometers before you pick him up?

(Rodney notices the urine in the corner of the cell)

Oh, and you better bring some detergent. See ya in a bit.

Rodney hangs up the phone.

He looks at the mess and laughs to himself again.

RODNEY (CONT'D)

Jesus...

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Rodney straightens the equipment, then heads for the exit.

INT. STAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

Rodney pushes open the door and then takes a few more steps to look outside--

RODNEY SEES AARON STANDING ABOVE HIM, HOLDING A LARGE ROCK ABOVE HIS HEAD.

RODNEY

Aaron--

Aaron brings the rock down on Rodney's head.

FADE OUT: