

It Is The Progress Of Knowledge

By

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scene a week exercise

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Source - "It is the progress of knowledge."

INT. PRISON TRANSPORT VAN

A half dozen MEN sit in the back of the transport van. Shackled ankle and wrist and bound to each other. Each has a black hood over their heads, though there is little to see in the dim red light. Three to a side on steel benches facing each other.

CHAPMAN, middle on the right, is the first to speak.

CHAPMAN

Hello?

Silence.

CHAPMAN

My name is Marcus Chapman and I don't belong here. Please, someone speak to me.

GREENBERG, in the far left corner, slumps forward in his seat.

GREENBERG

We're not supposed to talk. You heard the man.

CHAPMAN

I just-- I just need to know what's going on. Why I'm here.

GREENBERG

Just shut up, man. You're gonna make it worse for all of us.

Silence. COMPTON, middle left, breaks it. His words timid and thin.

COMPTON

I shouldn't be here either. I'm a garbage man not a criminal.

SIMONS, front left, shoulder checks Compton. The force pushing Compton over in to Greenberg.

SIMONS

Fuck makes you think the rest of us are?

Greenburg pushes Compton off of him.

GREENBERG
God, shut up.

VERNON, front right, leans his head against the back of the van.

VERNON
He's right. Shut up.

Simons leans over in to Compton. He's touching him, leaning his hooded face over Compton's shoulder.

SIMONS
Maybe we ain't all criminals, boy,
but how you know I'm not?

CHAPMAN
Leave him alone.

GREENBERG
Chapman, right?

CHAPMAN
Yeah.

GREENBERG
Marcus Chapman?

CHAPMAN
Yeah.

GREENBERG
You open that stupid mouth of yours
one more time and shit gets worse
because of it I promise I'll stick
a knife in your stomach the first
chance I get.

Chapman stutters over the words.

CHAPMAN
What?

GREENBERG
That's it.

CHAPMAN
Hey. No. Seriously.

GREENBERG
Keep it running. The beautiful part
is you won't even know who I am. Do
you know how many people are back

GREENBERG
here with you right now? I don't. I
got a bag over my head so I'm
assuming you do to. 'Cept I know
your name.

Silence.

SIMONS
This is bullshit.

GREENBERG
Not you too.

SIMONS
Yeah, you take your best shot at me
motherfucker. Won't be the first
prag I shanked with his own knife.

GREENBERG
Great. He is a fucking convict.

SIMONS
Was. Been runnin' narrow lately.
Figured the rest of you might be
too.

GREENBERG
No. No, I'm not, daisy. I'm a hard
working man who works hard to stay
outta jail.

VERNON
You should take your own advice and
shut up.

SIMONS
We're in the back of a fuckin' van.
Ain't nobody gonna hear us.
Shackled to this shit with a
fuckin' bag over our heads. Ain't
no reason to ride back here with us
and they got better shit to listen
to up there.

GREENBERG
What makes you so sure about that?

SIMONS
You spend some time inside you
learn ain't nobody give a shit
about what you say to keep yourself
entertained.

A crackle of STATIC followed by a synthetic FEMALE voice.

FEMALE

Subject 772-A9, Simons. Cease conversation.

CHAPMAN

What's going on?

FEMALE

Subject 89D-3M, Chapman. Cease conversation.

CHAPMAN

Please. I just want to know where you're taking me.

FEMALE

Subject will cease conversation.

Chapman begins yelling.

CHAPMAN

You can't do this! You sons of bitches! Tell me what's goi-

His words turn to a SCREAM.

FEMALE

Non-compliance will be met with force. Subjects will obey all commands or receive a shock to pacify and ensure obedience. Is this clear?

Silence.

FEMALE

Cross section designate sigma tan, you are being transported to a Project Cecilly compound.

MCINTOSH

Shit.

FEMALE

Subject 088-87, McIntosh. Cease conversation.

MCINTOSH

Yes, ma'am.

FEMALE

Subject will cease conversation.

Silence.

FEMALE

Cross section designate sigma tan, you are being transported to a Project Cecilly compound. You have been selected, at random, for inclusion in the Mnemosyne protocol. The security precautions taken against you are for the security of Project Cecilly. You are not in any danger but you will comply. Your families and places of employment have been notified of your absences. You will be compensated at the completion of the protocol.

COMPTON

What are we supposed to-

FEMALE

Subject T18-22, Compton. Cease conversation.

Silence.

FEMALE

We are nearing our destination. Arrival time is estimated in 6 minutes. More information will be provided at that time.

A crackle of STATIC and a long moment of silence.

MCINTOSH

Well we're all fucked.

COMPTON

What? What is it?

MCINTOSH

Anything that machine tells you? Ignore it. It's all bullshit.

SIMONS

Yeah? How's that genius?

MCINTOSH

There is no happy ending here.
There is no going home. Whatever
god you worship, now's the time to
make peace with it.

GREENBERG

Shut up, man.

VERNON

Yeah. You're just gonna make shit
worse.

McIntosh scoffs at them.

MCINTOSH

It doesn't get much worse than
this. The Mnemosyne protocol is
hell if such a thing ever existed.

CHAPMAN

It can't be. It's a myth. You can't
do it.

MCINTOSH

Of course you can. Just have to
figure out how and apparently they
did. From the sounds of it they're
just automating the process now.

SIMONS

The fuck is a Mnemosyne protocol?

MCINTOSH

It started out as an experiment.
How to collect all the world's
knowledge in a single distributed
network. Redundancy and
connectivity accounted for.
Everything everyone knows in one
place and accessible only by the
government. They tried a lot of
shit all the way down to funneling
all wired and wireless
communications through a relay that
just records.

SIMONS

Fuck.

MCINTOSH

That's just the start. Problem was
material was being generated faster

MCINTOSH

than they could collect. A couple billions brains just operate in a way computers couldn't really keep up on the back end. So they changed the question. Instead of how do you document all human knowledge it became how do you document the contents of an entire brain. Took some trial and error but eventually they got it narrowed down. What they found was not only did they map the entire memory of a person but also their thought patterns. It didn't just create a back up of what you remember but who you were. Enough processing power you continue to live inside the system.

A crackle of STATIC.

FEMALE

Subject 088-87, McIntosh. Cease conversation.

MCINTOSH

Eternal life. Pretty cool, huh? Only one problem.

FEMALE

Subject will cease conversation.

MCINTOSH

Your body doesn't survive it and you have to go through a lot of painful invasive surgery just to--

His words turns to a SCREAM.

FEMALE

Non-compliance will be met with force. Subjects will obey all commands or receive a shock to pacify and ensure obedience. Is this clear?

When McIntosh recovers he talks over her.

MCINTOSH

It creates a imprint of your brain at that time with every nerve in your body on fire. In absolute agony.

He SCREAMS again.

FEMALE

Non-compliance will be met with force. Subjects will obey all commands or all subjects will receive a shock to pacify and ensure obedience.

McIntosh's breathing is laboured. His voice is weak.

MCINTOSH

Eternity in agony living inside a machine.

All six men SCREAM.