

CASCADE LOCKS

A SCREENPLAY

BY

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FADE IN:

INT. RECEPTION AREA, KUBOTA INDUSTRIES, SEATTLE - DAY

A buzz of activity. Administrative assistants answering phone calls in English and Japanese. Visitors coming and going. This is clearly a big, powerful corporation with a lot happening at the moment.

CUT TO:

INT. INNER-OFFICE, CEO OF KUBOTA INDUSTRIES, SEATTLE - DAY

In stark contrast, the inner-office of MR. YUKIO KUBOTA is serene. Mr. Kubota, a late-middle-aged man of Japanese-American descent, sits at a small conference table. Behind him stands his BODY GUARD, also of Japanese descent. A CAUCASIAN WOMAN sits off to Mr. Kubota's side, with a steno-pad balanced on her delicate thighs. On the conference table, precisely in the center, sits a metallic box. Its shape is spherical -- but not perfectly so. The case is closed, but does not show any keyhole, seams or lid. A small, rather nondescript key sits beside it.

Mr. Kubota presses a button on a small box.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (FROM THE MACHINE)

Yes, Mr. Kubota?

MR. KUBOTA

No sign of our client?

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT (FROM THE MACHINE)

I'm sorry, Mr. Kubota. No appearances. No phone calls.

MR. KUBOTA

Perhaps . . . I should not have trusted . . . a voice on the telephone

. . .

More silence. Tension builds in the room. The Body Guard clears his throat.

After a moment, a closet in the background creaks open. Out steps A BOY, perhaps ten years old. He holds a leather bag, which contains a bulky item.

The Body Guard reaches for his pistol. Mr. Kubota holds the Body Guard with a gesture.

BODY GUARD

He didn't pass through the metal detector!

Mr. Kubota inspects The Boy with a stare. This is clearly no normal child. This child is clearly in control. The Boy's eyes settle upon the metal case.

MR. KUBOTA

Built to your specifications. You said it was urgent.

The Boy steps forward, stopping a few feet from the table. Again Mr. Kubota holds the Body Guard with a gesture.

The Boy spies the intercom box. He points to it. A voice comes out of the machine, projected there by The Boy.

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

It is.

There is a brief period of shocked stillness, through which no one breathes.

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

This is one of your impenetrable boxes?

Mr. Kubota nods.

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

Open it.

BODY GUARD

You can't just order --

Mr. Kubota throws a strong warning gesture to the Body Guard, who backs off, frustrated. Mr. Kubota picks up the key, showing it for all to see, then he touches it to the case. As soon as the key makes contact, a keyhole appears in the case. Keeping the key in constant contact with the case, he moves it around and slides it into the keyhole. As soon as the key enters the slot, a seam appears around the case and the top opens, revealing a padded interior.

The Boy reaches into his leather pouch, and gently lifts a hairy skull. This is no ordinary human skull -- it is pointed at the top and ape-like in appearance. It is also only about half the size of a normal human skull.

We see the Caucasian Woman, sitting literally at the edge of her chair in suspense. Her eyes bulge at the sight of the skull, and she licks her lips, trying to hold herself back.

The Boy places the skull carefully into the case. He also pulls out a sharply-pointed wooden stick, and places it into the case beside the skull. He then quickly removes the key from the case, which reseals itself with neither seam nor keyhole as before.

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

You must deliver this to Cascade Locks. On the Columbia River. On the docks beside the old locks. At sunrise on the day of the Summer Solstice. I cannot deliver it myself. Since it was taken from us, it must be given back to us by someone. Someone with great courage.

The Caucasian Woman shakes herself out of her moment and scribbles down the message. Mr. Kubota notes that she has taken the information down.

MR. KUBOTA

I assure you. My very son will deliver it. The key . . .

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

The key will be safe with me. When the time is right, key and case will come together.

MR. KUBOTA

If I may be so bold. The skull . . . what is it?

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

It must get back to my people. If your case is as impenetrable as you say, there will be no danger. But if someone not of our people handles the

skull directly, if they have hatred in their hearts, all whom they despise will be turned to stone. One who despises many, can - and will - destroy many.

MR. KUBOTA

The megaliths! The stones that have appeared here in Seattle -- the people who have disappeared. Stone?

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

I have said too much already.

MR. KUBOTA

It will be delivered as you say.

BOY (FROM THE MACHINE)

And you shall be repaid for your kindness. But not in the way you had hoped . . . there are traitors among you. This will make them known to you.

The Boy makes a gesture of gratitude with his hand and, grasping the key tightly, steps back into the closet and closes the door. The Body Guard rushes to the closet and opens it. The Boy is gone. The Body Guard inspects it, perplexed.

The Caucasian Woman is caressing the case with her finely-manicured hands. She is breathless; a small drip of sweat forms on her upper-lip.

Mr. Kubota turns to her.

MR. KUBOTA

We must put this in storage until --

His memory fails him here.

MR. KUBOTA

-- when?

CAUCASIAN WOMAN

(looking up from her notes,
slyly)

The . . . Vernal Equinox . . . the first day of spring.

MR. KUBOTA

Wasn't it . . . the Summer Solstice?

Caucasian Woman indicates her notebook.

MR. KUBOTA

My memory. This is not good.

CAUCASIAN WOMAN

I'm sorry, sir. Can I get you a glass
of water?

Mr. Kubota shakes his head. All stare at the gleaming metal case.

INT. CORPORATE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT SUITE, PORTLAND, OREGON,
A FEW MONTHS LATER - NIGHT

Out of the stillness that is always present in the blackness of the night, comes the clicking of someone typing on a computer keyboard, which continues while we . . .

Focus on a kitchenette with a microwave, refrigerator, and coffee pot. The coffee pot is half-full and the "on" light is glowing. The sound of the typing gets louder as we . . .

Move down the hallway between the kitchenette and the office, and louder still as we . . .

Enter the doorway of the office, where a TYPING MAN has his back to the entrance, tapping away on the keyboard of a computer. The office is dark enough that we really can't see much but the lit monitor. We get closer to the computer until we read "Proposal for Inclusion" over the Typing Man's shoulder.

The Typing Man, whom we will come to know as NIGEL BIRCH, sits back from the keyboard and reads it over to himself. He is in his early-thirties, and though he looks fatigued, he also looks like his eighty-hour-a-week pace at the office has not taken too much of a toll.

The TELEPHONE RINGS and Nigel picks it up quickly, as if he is startled by its ringing in the otherwise still night.

NIGEL

Yeah? . . . Skip put you up to this,
didn't he? . . . I need a break anyway.
I'll be over.

INT. LOBBY NEAR SECURITY GUARD'S KIOSK - NIGHT

A NIGHT SECURITY GUARD stands in a kiosk near the entrance to the Software Development Suite. Nigel enters the lobby and approaches the Night Security Guard.

NIGEL

Okay. Where's this "woman" who says she's here to visit me? Let me guess -- Skip in a dress? Right?

Nigel sees the look on the Night Security Guard's face. He turns to the side of the lobby to see VISITING WOMAN standing there. Beside the Visiting Woman is A BABY, sitting in a car seat on the floor. Beside the Baby is a large DIAPER BAG, stuffed full.

Nigel is stunned, staring at her a moment.

The Night Security Guard is sweating profusely.

The Visiting Woman smiles a little at Nigel and puts out her hands.

VISITING WOMAN

Nigel. I . . . I knew you'd be here.

Nigel has a puzzled look on his face.

VISITING WOMAN

You're always here.

NIGEL

Do I know you?

VISITING WOMAN

(meekly)

How are you, Nigel?

Nigel now suspects the Night Security Guard has put her up to this. He begins to clap.

NIGEL

Oh, that's a good one. This . . . a woman . . . AND a baby! Nice touch.

Nigel turns to exit through the door.

NIGEL

Had me there.

The Night Security Guard steps forward to stop him.

NIGHT SECURITY GUARD

Nigel? No joke. I don't know anything about this.

There is something in the Night Security Guard's tone that stops Nigel. There is something in the Visiting Woman's face that haunts him.

Visiting Woman uncovers the Baby's face beside her.

VISITING WOMAN

Don't you want to see her? Her name is Katherine. You'd probably call her Kit. She has your sleeping patterns alright.

The Night Security Guard turns away, disgusted. He's seen a few of these scenes over the years and he's never liked how they've turned out.

Nigel is smiling now more than ever. The little doubt he harbored is not enough to overcome his certainty of never having had intimate relations with that woman.

NIGEL

I don't know you, and whatever scam you two have worked up, but it just fizzled out.

Walks away from the Visiting Woman, scanning the lobby.

NIGEL

Okay, Skip! Games over! Come on out. Wherever you are!

In the following silence, the Night Security Guard's face quickly goes from disgust to shock.

The view over Nigel's shoulder from the Night Security Guard's POV sharpens to reveal that Visiting Woman has pulled A PISTOL. She points the pistol at Nigel's back. Then the view sharpens on Nigel's face as it takes on a sharpening realization.

NIGEL

Wait. High school. You used to sit
--

As Nigel turns, the roar of a pistol sounds.

We see Nigel standing, shocked into stillness.

We see the Visiting Woman, standing, shocked into stillness. She drops the pistol, rocks, and sinks to the floor.

We see the Night Security Guard, with smoking pistol, still pointing it where the Visiting Woman had been standing. Fear mixed with dread in his eyes.

We see the Visiting Woman, lifeless on the floor, taking one last look at her baby. We now look fully into her eyes and see the madness drain out of them into peace.

Nigel uses his hand to lower the Night Security Guard's arm. He then kneels beside the Visiting Woman. He turns to speak to the Night Security Guard.

NIGEL

In high school. Eighteen, nineteen years ago. She used to sit -- behind me, I think -- in home room. I didn't even know her name.

We look into the eyes of the Night Security Guard, still in shock, speechless.

We look into Nigel's eyes, perplexed. Somber. Nigel still doesn't know her name.

INT. CORPORATE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT SUITE LOBBY -- A WHILE LATER

A CASEWORKER is holding at A BLUE PIECE OF PAPER. She appears annoyed. POLICE OFFICERS are milling about, doing the usual business they do when a shooting has occurred.

CASEWORKER

So you are Nigel Birch?

Nigel is sitting, face in his hands. A POLICE OFFICER is in the background, holding onto The Baby.

Nigel nods.

CASEWORKER

And you claim you haven't seen this woman in years?

NIGEL

Since high school.

CASEWORKER

And you don't even know her name?

NIGEL

I answered these questions already.

CASEWORKER

Well, she sure knew yours. This birth certificate names you as the father.

Nigel looks up, surprised.

Caseworker crosses to the Police Officer, taking The Baby from her.

CASEWORKER

Meet Katherine Birch. Daughter of Nigel Birch. By public record.

NIGEL

It's a mistake --

The Baby catches his eye, and he can't help but smile a little.

CASEWORKER

Yours? Or hers?

Nigel struggles to break his moment with The Baby. He finally breaks and looks at the Caseworker, earnestly.

NIGEL

I'm sorry. I -- she was in my high school. I haven't seen her since. Honestly!

Caseworker closes her case book with a sigh.

CASEWORKER

Well, I can't make you take responsibility. And I certainly can't make you take custody.

The Caseworker moves The Baby mindlessly to her hip. She picks up the diaper bag with her other hand, and heads for the door.

CASEWORKER

(over her shoulder)

If you want to claim custody, fill out the forms down at City Hall. Until then, she'll be a ward of the State.

As the Caseworker moves to the door, The Baby's face peeks over the Caseworker's shoulder at Nigel, with a happy though drooling smile on her little face.

Nigel is dying inside as he sees this beautiful, happy baby getting carried off to get ground up in the system.

The Baby is making bubbles as she looks over the Caseworker's shoulder at Nigel.

Nigel can't take it any more.

NIGEL

Wait! Wait!

FADE TO:

INT. LOBBY, CORPORATE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT SUITE -- MID-MORNING

The DAY SECURITY GUARD sits at his post inside the doorway, watching a small television in his kiosk. The kiosk PHONE RINGS. The Day Security Guard picks it up.

DAY SECURITY GUARD

Yeah?

Day Security Guard glances out the window.

DAY SECURITY GUARD

Not yet. Want me to call you when I see 'im?

Another glance out the window.

DAY SECURITY GUARD

Wait! He just pulled in. Positive. Alright.

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