

Mouthwash

By

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INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- NIGHT

Lights flicker on menacingly, illuminating a dark, depressing room. We see a variety of menacing details- jars filled with liquids, stains on the walls, a variety of rusty tools and implements, etc.

We see BATES, 24, a lightly-roughed up American domestic terrorist strapped to a metal chair. He is unconscious.

The door opens, bathing Bates in light. Two shadows enter, covering Bates. The door closes, and the shadows vanish. Two CIA agents, agent ADAMS, 48, and agent SAMSON, 37, stand over him. They are both dressed in black suits and ties, and both are wearing dark sunglasses and American flag pins on their lapels.

SAMSON

Alexander Bates. The leader of the notorious PFA. Can't believe we finally caught this guy.

ADAMS

He's a real fighter, this one. This should be fun.

SAMSON

Let's just get this over with.

Adams walks to the metal table in front of Bates and stops in front of the still unconscious Bates.

ADAMS

Wake up, Bates.

Adams slaps Bates lightly, but Bates doesn't respond. He grabs a bucket of cold water from under the table and dumps it on Bates, which wakes him up promptly.

BATES

Wh-What the fuck-

Adams slams his hands down on the table and gets in Bates' face.

ADAMS

We know who you are, Bates. We know everything that you've done, and we know everything you plan to do. You're going to answer some questions for us.

(CONTINUED)

BATES

I don't know what the hell you're talking about. Let me go!

ADAMS

Is that so?

Adams pulls a headband cut from an American flag from his pocket.

ADAMS

Then where'd you and your friends get these cute lil' terrorist headbands from? Salvation Army?

Bates eyes the headband nervously, and we dissolve into a flashback.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

Bates and several rebels are running through an alleyway after setting a fire. They are carrying various firearms and wearing the same headband as seen before. The rebels are dressed in white t-shirts, jeans, and dark blue bandannas over their faces.

ADAMS (V.O.)

You and your insurgent pals had just set fire to a chemical warehouse, after stealing some very volatile compounds.

The rebels continue to run, with Bates in the lead, until a helicopter's spotlight suddenly shines on the group. A helicopter is heard whirring overhead, and the group freezes.

HELICOPTER LOUDSPEAKER

Put down your weapons and get on the ground!

The rebels look around confused, looking for a way out.

ADAMS (V.O.)

You had no idea we had a man on the inside.

One of the rebels pulls down his bandanna and aims his pistol at Bates.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

It's over, Bates. Come quietly or we'll be forced to take everyone out.

BATES

What the hell? David, you fucking traitor!

DAVID

Just put down your guns and come with us.

One of the rebels yells and runs right at David, armed with a baseball bat. David shoots him in the chest, and he goes down.

Bates glares at David with contempt, and puts down his gun. He gets on his knees, and everyone else follows suit.

ADAMS (V.O.)

David plugged one of you pricks, and everyone else was brought in for questioning.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- NIGHT

Samson steps in, placing his hand on Adams' shoulder. Adams recedes.

SAMSON

Look, Bates. This can go real easy for you. Just help us out, and we'll cut you a visa for Brazil, no charges pressed.

BATES

I'm not telling you shit.

Adams lets out an audible sigh and begins to pace the room.

SAMSON

Last warning, Bates. You're gonna have a real bad time if you don't tell us right now.

ADAMS

Chrissake, Samson, the kid's not gonna break. Just-

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON

Hold it. Give him a chance.

Samson leans in real close to Bates, looking him dead in the eyes.

SAMSON

You possess fifteen stolen warheads
armed with homemade neurotoxin.
Where are they?

Bates grins, looking Samson in the eyes.

BATES

They'll be eradicating the heart of
America tomorrow, Sammy boy. You
and the rest of this shitstain
government are fucked. A new
republic will rise from the ashes,
bringing true democracy for the
survivors! Kill me or let me go,
the Patriot Front of America will
seize the reins of the Union and
usher in a glorious new age!

Samson looks into Bates' eyes some more, then withdraws,
disappointed.

SAMSON

Okay. I guess we're doing this.

Adams and Samson hoist a bucket from the corner of the room
onto the table. It's full of a sickly green liquid. Adams
gets right in Bates' face.

ADAMS

Know what this is, cocksucker?
Industrial grade mouthwash. 26.9%
alcohol. Mentholated. It won't
blind you, but it'll burn like
hellfire whether your eyes are open
or not. Tell us where the goddamn
warheads are.

Bates spits in Adams' face. Adams plunges Bates' head into
the mouthwash. He struggles and yells underwater, but Adams
doesn't let up.

SAMSON

That's enough, Adams.

Adams ignores Samson, and continues to drown Bates. Bates is
now in the final thrashings of consciousness, but finally
goes limp.

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON (O.S.)
Adams, no!

INT. MEETING ROOM- NIGHT

Fade to another flashback, this time in the PFA meeting room. PFA propoganda fills the room, along with various war room implements. A large American flag with an anarchy symbol sprayed onto the stars hangs in the back.

Members of the PFA gather around the room, listening as Bates gives a grand speech at the podium below the flag. Everyone is dressed in similar rebel outfits from the prior scene.

BATES

The politicians in Washington do not own us. They cannot regulate our lives, or control us, or brainwash us. The politicians in Washington fear us. They fear we will rise up against them. It is for that reason they try to oppress us. Freedom of speech no longer applies to us. Peaceful protesting is seen as rioting in their eyes. They may take our guns, but we will only resort to taking up swords and spears.

A door opens in the back of the room, and an exhausted patriot shambles in, taking a seat near the door. Bates notices her, and continues.

BATES

The American way of life is at stake. Because who are we, if not fighters? Who are we, if not rule breakers? Who are we, but the descendents of a people who broke free from an oppressive authoritarianism? It's time to take back the identity of our founding fathers. I can see the spirit of 1776 burning in the eyes of each and every one of you. My friends, my warriors, my patriots... LET'S RAISE SOME HELL!

At this, the crowd erupts in cheering and fist-pumping. Bates grins as he observes the crowd, raising his fist in the air. He walks away from the podium to the patriot who just entered.

(CONTINUED)

BATES

Good to see you back safe, Jess.
Where's Edward?

JESS

Edward...Didn't make it. He was
shot on our way out.

BATES

Edward is...dead?

Bates pauses, and rubs his head.

BATES

He...will be missed. How did the
mission go aside from that?

JESS

Well enough. The warheads are bound
for their final destination.

BATES

Good.

He looks away from Jess to the rest of the patriots, still
fired up from the speech and preparing for a mission.

JESS

Alex, I really don't feel good
about tonight's mission. Why do we
need more bombs?

BATES

For insurance. Having a broad
arsenal makes us all the more
powerful. We're going up against
the world's strongest military,
firepower is the only thing they
understand.

JESS

I've got a bad feeling about this
warehouse raid. Can everyone here
be trusted?

The crowd continues to prepare for the mission. David is
seen grinning and shaking hands with another man.

BATES

I trust everyone here with my life.

(CONTINUED)

JESS
Just promise me something, Alex.

Bates looks back at Jess.

JESS
Don't ever let us down. Too many
people have died for this cause to
fail.

BATES
Never. Even under threat of death,
I will see our plans to the end.
This movement dies with me.

Jess hugs Bates.

JESS
You're sexy when you're in charge.

Bates grins, and moves to the door.

BATES
Patriots! On me!

Bates kicks the door open and dashes outside, and everyone follows in pursuit.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM- NIGHT

Cut back to the interrogation room. Samson plops a yellow envelope at the table before Bates, unconscious. Bates comes to at the sudden sound, and stares at it hazily.

SAMSON
Open it.

Bates does as he's told, and empties the headshots within onto the table. He looks through them, noticing that they are headshots of his fellow patriots.

SAMSON
We brought all these guys in before
you.

Samson picks up a few photographs and lists their names.

SAMSON
Andrew Nelson, Peter Jacobs,
Jessica Kopinsky...They all really
look up to you, you know? None of
them cracked. They all said the
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON (cont'd)
same thing. "We would never betray
Bates."

ADAMS
Know where they are now,
cocksucker?

SAMSON
You don't wanna know.

Bates is seething with anger, and refuses to look either
agent in the eye.

SAMSON
Please, Bates. This will only end
bad for you and the rest of your
friends. Just tell me where you've
hidden the warheads.

Bates slowly looks Samson in the eye and musters all the
contempt he has in him.

BATES
No.

Samson sighs deeply and retreats from the table.

SAMSON
Alright, bring him in.

ADAMS
Thought you'd never ask.

Adams speaks into a walkie-talkie.

ADAMS
Send in Dr. Williams.

The door to the room bursts open, and in walks a man wearing
medical scrubs and a surgical mask carrying a thick metal
suitcase.

ADAMS
As you probably know, Bates, our
government banned all use of
torture.

Dr. Williams hums a cheerful tune as he sets his suitcase on
the table and pulls his rubber gloves on. They snap loudly.

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON

So we don't do water boarding, or electrocution, or any of those things anymore. We've taken to using... other means to acquire intel.

Bates is watching Williams closely as he washes his hands in a wash basin nearby. He is getting nervous, but he remains composed.

SAMSON

I really wish you just told us, Bates. I hate to see this happen to you.

DR. WILLIAMS

Good evening, Mr. Bates! Have you been flossing?

BATES

...What? Uh, no, I-

DR. WILLIAMS

Tsk tsk, Mr. Bates. That only makes my job harder.

Dr. Williams chuckles, then starts to open the latches on the suitcase.

ADAMS

Yes Bates, we may have outlawed torture in this God-given nation of ours...

Dr. Williams opens the suitcase, revealing a cheap toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste.

ADAMS

...But dentistry is still allowed.

SAMSON

Lord, have mercy on us...

Bates begins to laugh, as the situation seems to unwind.

BATES

What, you're gonna brush my teeth?
Ha! Go ahead then. Do your worst!

Samson turns his back, unable to watch. Adams looks on, fixated on watching Bates suffer.

Dr. Williams prepares a toothbrush, then closes in on Bates.

(CONTINUED)

DR. WILLIAMS
Say 'ah', Mr. Bates!

Dr. Williams brushes Bates' teeth for the ADA recommended one and a half minutes, then allows Bates to spit in the bucket that once held water.

BATES
That wasn't so bad. You gonna give me a haircut next?

DR. WILLIAMS
Oh, we're just getting started, Mr. Bates! We have hours to go still. Say 'ah' again, please!

BATES
Again? Heh, alright, I'll be able to outlast you. Make sure you get my molars, doctor!

Dr. Williams prepares the toothbrush again, and begins to brush the teeth of Bates once more.

A montage passes, wherein the process is repeated while sinister muzak plays in the background. We see many shots of Dr. Williams brushing teeth, Adams watching fervently, Samson cringing or looking away, and Bates spitting. As the montage goes on, the bristles on the toothbrush get weaker, and the tube of toothpaste shortens. Bates appears a little more uncomfortable with each session.

The montage ends. Bates spits one final time in the bucket, and Dr. Williams examines the empty tube of toothpaste and sighs.

DR. WILLIAMS
You sure are resilient, Mr. Bates. How are you feeling?

BATES
My gums kinda hurt, but I'd sooner die than betray my comrades.

ADAMS
We're not through with you by a damn sight, mister. Williams, get more toothpaste.

Dr. Williams nods and leaves the room. Samson rushes to the table and slams his fist onto the metal surface.

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON

Dammit, Bates! Nobody wants to see this! Tell us where your weapons are so we can all go home!

BATES

Never! The Patriot Front of America will be victorious!

Samson growls and overturns the table. He backs away to a wall, and Adams approaches him to calm him down.

ADAMS

Easy now. This is what that commie scumbag wants to see.

SAMSON

Adams...If God in Heaven knew what we were doing, would he let us into his kingdom?

ADAMS

Come on, now, I don't think-

Samson slams his fist into the wall and turns around to face Adams.

SAMSON

I feel sick every time I see this happen to someone. Shit, it was quicker when we could just beat the bastards...

ADAMS

Just remember, soldier. This is for the greater good of America. Got it?

SAMSON

The greater good...Yeah, yeah. Let's just finish with this one.

Dr. Williams comes back in, pushing a cart carrying stacks of toothpaste boxes and plastic toothbrushes.

DR. WILLIAMS

Now then, are we ready to continue?

Samson turns his back again, shaking his head.

ADAMS

Please proceed, Dr. Williams.

(CONTINUED)

DR. WILLIAMS
Excellent! Sorry for the wait, Mr.
Bates, ready to continue?

Bates glares at Williams, and opens his mouth in defiance. Williams prepares a fresh toothbrush as another montage begins.

"Requiem for a Dream" plays as Dr. Williams brushes Bates' teeth. Bates looks uncomfortable, but Dr. Williams looks excited as he works. More shots of Williams brushing, Adams and Samson reacting respectively, Bates suffering, and Bates spitting. At some point, Bates begins to spit blood along with the mixture of toothpaste and saliva.

The boxes of toothpaste begin to wear down as time progresses. Bates' mouth gets progressively bloodier with each session, and spits out more blood than toothpaste mixture.

The montage ends as Dr. Williams prepares one more toothbrush.

DR. WILLIAMS
Say 'ah', Mr. Bates.

BATES
(with a slurred voice due to gum
damage) NO MORE! PLEASE STOP THIS!

ADAMS
You gonna tell us where you hid
those weapons, son?

BATES
I'LL TELL YOU ANYTHING! JUST STOP!

Dr. Williams looks at Adams expectantly.

ADAMS.
Thank you, Dr. Williams. You may
take your leave.

Dr. Williams nods his head, and removes his gloves. He places them on the cart and wheels it out of the interrogation room.

Samson calmly approaches Bates, who is still spitting out blood.

SAMSON
Where are the warheads, Bates?

BATES
(slurred) Jefferson Memorial...

ADAMS
WHERE?!

BATES
AH, JEFFERSON MEMORIAL! JEFFERSON
MEMORIAL!

Bates begins to break down, blood pouring out of his mouth.
Adams writes down the location on a notepad.

SAMSON
Our nation thanks you, Bates.
Adams?

Adams approaches Bates.

ADAMS
I've been itching to do this for
hours...

SAMSON
We've been given orders to take you
out, son. If only you had told us
sooner. May God have mercy on you.

Bates doesn't seem to hear him, and continues to cry and
spit blood. Adams and Samson open their suit jackets to
reveal toothbrush cases clipped onto their belts. They open
them and pull out thick black toothbrushes.

ADAMS
Say 'ah', Mr. Bates!

The CIA agents scrub Bates' head furiously with the
toothbrushes. Bates screams in pain as his flesh is scrubbed
away.

CUT TO BLACK

END