

The Glitch
by
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BLACK SCREEN

Sounds of TV channel-hopping, with electronic distortion.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON flickering late night TV IMAGES: Hitler documentary
Ftzzt-- a 'male enhancement' ad. *

CASSI VEGAS *

A pill that can make men larger, and
increase his pleasure? Is that right? *

DOCTOR GEORGE SWIFT *

That's right, Cassi. The product is
called 'Big Boy Natural Male
Enhancement'-- *

Ftzzt-- another channel: Doll Channel Victorian doll
documentary: *

DOLLY DARLING *

This here, right here, this little
cherub right here, see her? Look at
those lil' bowed lips right there.
Aren't they just adorab-- *

Ftzzt-- another channel: inane game show laughter. *

Ftzzt-- another channel: a romantic French language film. *

HARRY OWEN -- mid-30s, dressed in office clothes, ruffled
shirt, dark pants with red stockinged feet -- is on the sofa
flipping channels with the remote, the remains of Chinese
takeout food on the coffee table. He snaps off the TV, lets
out a long, anguished sigh, stares at the ceiling, too tired
to sleep. A NOISE and then movement catches his eye in the
corner of the room. *

The pages of 'Men's Health' and 'Dwell' magazine flap in the
breeze of an oscillating fan.

Harry O sighs, sits up, pours himself a whiskey, turns off
the fan, settles back to read. His eyelids droop, he can't
focus on the page, his head starts to droop-- *Ftzzt* [VISUAL
EFFECT: FULL-SCREEN IMAGE GLITCH DISTORTS THE SHOT] Harry
grimaces in pain. *

HARRY O *

Aaagh! *

Harry O drops his magazine and snaps up, clutching his head
as if from a sudden ice cream headache. *

He looks at his hands, looks down at his body, touches his skin.

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Harry O looks at his reflection, sees his eyes are bloodshot. He runs cold water, splashes water in his face, trying to rinse his eyes by cupping water in his hand -- *Ftzzt* [GLITCH]. He looks into the mirror.

*
*
*
*

ANGLE ON

His bloodshot pupil, deep inside the black... *Ftzzt* [GLITCH]

Harry O stumbles back, trips and lands on his backside, bangs his head against the door. Grimacing in pain he holds his head.

HARRY 2 (O.S.)
You look like hell, Harry Owen.

Harry O looks up.

His reflection [HARRY 2] is peering out of the glass at him, concerned, not behaving anything like a reflection.

HARRY 2 (CONT'D)
How many times this week you fallen
asleep on the sofa, bud? I'm telling
you, it's not healthy.

Harry O stares in disbelief at his reflection talking back at him, then scrambles out of the bathroom.

*
*

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Harry O runs out of the bathroom and yanks the door shut behind him. Wait a minute. Be rational. Get a grip. Harry O stands, composes himself, looks down. Light from inside the bathroom is shining through the crack under the door. A noise from inside. Harry O re-opens the bathroom door.

P.O.V. INTO BATHROOM

The door swings open to reveal HARRY 3 dressed identically to Harry O, seated on the toilet (not using it) with a 'Healing Lifestyles' magazine open in his lap.

HARRY 3
(re: the magazine)
What's with this 'metrosexual' crap?

*

Harry O slams shut the door again. He stands back, staring at the closed door, terrified and disoriented. He returns to the sofa, sees his glass of Scotch and finishes the drink. He sees his hands are shaking.

HARRY O
 (to himself)
 I am losing my mind.

*
 *
 *

He places the Scotch bottle on the kitchen counter walks around, purposefully turning off the lights, muttering to himself and heads for bed, hesitates, looks back at the bathroom door. The light is still on inside.

*
 *

INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Harry O gently shoves open the bathroom door, revealing Harry 3 snooping through his toiletries, taking a sniff of a pungent bottle of cologne. Harry O slams shut the door again.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Harry O addresses his closed bathroom door.

HARRY O
 Who are you?
 (louder)
 What are you doing in my bathroom?
 (losing it)
 If you don't get out of here, I'm
 calling the cops. I mean it.

Pause.

HARRY 3 (O.S.)
 I wouldn't do that.

HARRY O
 Oh, no?

Harry O marches back into the main living area of his open-plan loft. He snatches up the phone on the kitchen counter. A weird electronic noise. Harry O pauses as he hears his own VOICE filtered through the phone on an echo loop, becoming more and more distorted:

*
 *
 *

HARRY'S PHONE VOICE
 Who are you? Who are you ? Who are
 you?

*
 *

Harry O drops the phone, races to the front door. Harry 3 looks out of the bathroom.

*
 *

HARRY 3
Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

Harry O trips and falls, upsetting a table lamp by the door.
Harry 3 exits the bathroom and heads for the kitchen.

HARRY O
Keep away from me, you freak!

HARRY 3
Chill, dude. You're gonna hurt
yourself.

Harry 3 replaces the phone on its cradle, steps closer.

HARRY 3 (CONT'D)
I wouldn't go outside--
(smiles)
--if I was you.

HARRY O
Why not?

HARRY 3
Look out the window. Go on.

Harry O crosses the room, keeping his distance from Harry 3,
peeks out through the open window.

SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOW

Down below in the car park, A DOZEN IDENTICAL HARRYS are
dressed in office clothes -- rumpled shirt, dark pants, red
stockinged feet -- some some hunkered down, others standing
in plain view, all peering at the window. One waves. Another
points enthusiastically AT CAMERA, seeing Harry O.

CLOSE ON

Harry O's eyes widen in fear.

SEEN THROUGH THE WINDOW

Identical Harrys start react excitedly, seeing Harry O at
the window. Suddenly -- *ftzzt, ftzzt, ftzzt* -- THE IMAGE
GLITCHES and, with each glitch, a new Harry appears below.

BACK INSIDE

Harry O yells in fright and stumbles back -- *ftzzt, ftzzt,*
ftzzt [MULTIPLE IMAGE GLITCH]. Harry O whimpers.

HARRY O
Oh, God, help me.

HARRY 3
Take it easy, will you? You're not
making this any easier.

Harry 3 steps closer, reaching out. Harry O scrambles back.

HARRY 3 (CONT'D)
Okay, I won't touch. Just calm down.
You're gonna be safe in here.

*
*

Harry 3 picks up the whiskey glass from the counter, finds the bottle, tops up the drink and places the glass between them on the table and slides it over. Harry O watches every move, eyes the glass suspiciously. Harry 3 sits.

HARRY 3 (CONT'D)
Here, you might need this. Sit down,
will you?

*

Harry O climbs up to sit on the sofa across from Harry 3. Harry 3 switches a light back on.

HARRY O
What is happening to me?

HARRY 3
You're digital.

HARRY O
Pardon me?

HARRY 3
Did you ever get the feeling that
you've done all this before? That
there's nothing to your life? That
everything's the same, day in, day
out?

*
*
*

Harry O stares blankly at Harry 3.

HARRY O
No.

HARRY 3
Well, you should. This is strictly
film festival material.

HARRY O
What?

HARRY 3
You're a character in a digital short
movie.

An uncomfortable pause. Seen from a HIGH ANGLE OF THE ROOM
both characters look up INTO CAMERA --ftzzt [GLITCH].

HARRY O
(flinches in pain)
Ow! What is that?

HARRY 3
It's a glitch. Your file's been
corrupted. It happens time to time.
I'm here to help you through it until
we can sort it out. *

HARRY O
'We'?

Harry O reacts to the sound of somebody KNOCKING on the front
door.

HARRY 3
Don't answer that.

HARRY O
Why not?

Harry 3 looks at his watch.

HARRY 3
Look, just stick with me ten minutes. *
And think yourself lucky this isn't *
shot on film because then you'd really *
fall apart.

More KNOCKING from out in the corridor. *

HARRY O
What are you talking about?

HARRY 3
You're digital. Digital is cool, *
man. You can do anything in digital. *
Now just bear with me. Okay? *

The KNOCKING is more insistent. The PHONE RINGS, startling
Harry O. Harry 3 just smiles, gestures for Harry O to remain
seated and gets up to answer the phone.

HARRY 3 (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Yyyy-ello?

INT. HARRY CENTRAL -- NIGHT

In a 'Brazil'-like office of overflowing files and Post-it notes, HARRY 4 is on the phone, highly stressed, chain-smoking and working at a computer.

HARRY 4
 What in hell is going on down there?

INTERCUT WITH HARRY 3:

HARRY 3
 Relax, I got it under control.

HARRY 4
 Yeah? Well, it don't look that way to me. You told him yet?

HARRY 3
 (lowering his voice)
 Look, I was getting round to that. *

HARRY 4
 Well, make it snappy, bro. This is getting mighty chatty for a ten-minute flick. Folks out there want action! *

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Harry O watches the phone conversation, disconcerted, hearing angry voices.

Harry 3 turns his back on Harry O, continuing to speak closely with Harry Central.

Harry O edges toward the front door.

Harry 3 sees him make the move.

HARRY 3
 No, wait!

Harry O sprints for the front door.

INT. CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Harry O bursts out of his apartment, looks right and left. At the end of the long corridor, another Harry steps out into view, sees Harry, points.

HARRY 5

This way!

Harry 0 runs in the opposite direction, down another long corridor with an EXIT signpost.

Harry 3 steps out of Harry's apartment as Identicals run by, chasing after Harry. Harry 3 puts on dark sunglasses and lights a cigarette.

HARRY 3

(to himself)

Action, huh?

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Harry 0 runs down a stairwell, glances up. Above him, Identicals peer down, racing toward him.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Harry 0 runs, too frightened to look back, too unfit to yell.

His red stockinged feet pound onto the street.

A dozen pair of Identical red stockinged feet run after him.

Seen in WIDE SHOT, the Identicals chase Harry 0 down the street.

EXT. ALLEY -- NIGHT

Harry 0 takes a corner, runs past a darkened alley, darts down it. He hunkers behind trash cans, petrified, out of breath. The Identicals run past. Harry 0 waits two seconds and then runs on down the alley, looking back. He steps on something sharp and cries out in pain, but continues running.

Harry 5 looks into the alley, hearing the cry, then calls to his cronies.

HARRY 5

There he is! Let's get him!

Harry 0 sees the identicals approaching, lets out a tortured yelp of fear and runs as fast as he can, limping.

Identical Harrys pour into the alley, in darkened silhouette.

Harry 0 runs for his life.

Identicals all step on the same sharp objects.

IDENTICALS

Ow! Ouch! Ooh! Ow! Ow!

BLAZING LIGHTS OF A CAR appear behind the Identicals and they dive out of its way.

Harry O sees the car approaching, whimpers again, runs faster.

The HEADLAMPS bear down on Harry O.

Harry O stumbles and falls into a pile of garbage.

The car pulls up close and the passenger door pops open. Harry 3 is driving, with sunglasses and cigarette.

HARRY 3

Get in.

HARRY O

(bewildered)

But you're driving my car. *

HARRY 3

Get in, jerk!

Harry O brushes garbage from his shirt, then sees his pursuers.

The Identicals come hopping and limping, chasing after the car.

Harry 3 yanks Harry O into the car and peels out.

INT. CAR -- MOVING -- NIGHT

The inertia of the car's motion causes the passenger door to slam shut, then Harry O peers up over the back seat to stare out the rear window.

SEEN OUT OF THE BACK WINDOW

The Identicals are left behind in the dark alley.

TWO SHOT

Harry O sits back, exhausted, eyes closed.

HARRY 3

We need something to wake you up.
Like an explosion. *

HARRY O

Wait. What? You mean, this is all--
?

*

HARRY 3

No. This is better than that. You
can reboot. Buckle up.

*

CLOSE ON

Harry 3's red stockinged foot stomps on the gas.

Harry O, pressed back by the acceleration, frantically tries
to fasten his seat belt. Harry 3 swerves the steering wheel.

HARRY 3 (CONT'D)

*

Yeee-haaa!

CLOSE ON

Harry O as he SCREAMS. SCREECH of tires. From Harry O's
P.O.V., impressionistic swirling LIGHTS and then a FLASH OF
LIGHT and an EXPLOSION WHITES OUT FRAME.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

A TV IMAGE of a CAR EXPLODING (a cheesy model shot) in a
booming Dolby Stereo FIERY EXPLOSION.

The explosion wakes Harry O on his sofa. He is in the same
posture as he was when we began, mouth is open, lips dry, a
puddle of saliva on the cushion beneath his face. He fumbles
the remote, mutes the TV to hear--

Sound of somebody KNOCKING INSISTENTLY ON THE FRONT DOOR.

Harry O sits up, rubs his face, looks at his watch. The
KNOCKING continues.

HARRY O

*

Coming! I'm coming! I'm coming,
I'm coming, I'm coming...

*

*

Harry O goes to the door, disoriented, unlocks it, peeks
out.

*

HARRY O (CONT'D)

Oh, hi, Mr. Mezzanotte.

The CAMERA ANGLE prevents us from seeing Mr. Mezzanotte or
from hearing him speak, but from Harry O's demeanor we glean
what is being discussed.

*

HARRY O (CONT'D)

Yeah, oh, was it, really? Sorry,
 yeah, it just woke me up so it must
 have been loud-- No, I'm sorry, I
 understand it woke you, I-- Okay, I
 will. No, I will. Yeah. Okay,
 g'night. Thank you. Sorry.

(closes door)

What is wrong with me?

*
*
*
*
*
*

Harry O picks up his 'Men's Health' magazine, stuffs it in the trash, does the same with all his magazines, returns to the TV to turn it off, but stops.

CLOSE ON

The TV IMAGE: Harry 3 crawls from the car wreck, sunglasses askew, smeared with grime and a trickle of blood, but mercifully alive. CAMERA ZOOMS in for a closeup as Harry O 3 removes his sunglasses staring INTO CAMERA. FREEZE FRAME, then MOVIE CREDITS START TO ROLL accompanied by a corny rock ballad that sounds suspiciously like it is SUNG BY HARRY.

*
*

HARRY'S SONG

Look into the mirror / Tell me what
 you see / Fractured like a prism /
 Spider-webbed in glass / Breaking me
 in pieces!

*
*
*
*
*

Harry O snaps off the TV.

He stands a moment, looks around the room, goes to the coffee table, picks up the remote, points it AT CAMERA and-- Ftzzt: CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.