

"DEVIL INSIDE"
by Joseph Formichella

FADE IN:

EXT MOONLIT URBAN ALLEY -- NIGHT

A city in decline. Garbage rots in the street beneath a dead sky. Flickering streetlights only serve to deepen the legion of shadows.

ALEX TREEWELL (34, athletic) runs wildly into the alley. Breathless with panic, he skids over the pavement and crashes into a pile of debris. High-pitched, decadent O.S. LAUGHTER drifts in from the street.

Alex desperately dives behind a dumpster as PETANIN, a lean and cool assassin, effortlessly sprints to the alley, a bored smile on his face. He holds a gleaming silver NEEDLE GUN, complete with laser sight.

He halts and casually sweeps the scene, a brilliant red dot pausing on each potential target.

JAARIS, a second assassin, similarly armed, sidles up beside Petanin. They are absolutely identical -- twins. They radiate a jaded air, like a pair of bored Caligulas eager for a thrill.

The pinpoint of light moves across the dumpster which conceals their quarry, and stops dead center.

The assassins simultaneously grin in deadly anticipation. Jaaris locks his own weapon on the trash bin, then moves to flank it.

Their laser sights hold rock steady as they stalk, catlike. When both are in place, Jaaris kicks the dumpster with super-human ferocity. It tumbles aside like a toy, exposing their prey.

Alex explodes into action, throwing a whiskey bottle at Petanin with precision, then sprinting deeper into the alley.

In a single fluid motion, Petanin effortlessly sidesteps the missile, aims, and fires. The gun HISSES like a steam pipe in a beehive.

The fugitive's legs erupt red clouds of blood and flesh particles in muffled POPs as the exploding needles strike home. He goes down.

Unhurried, the two assassins converge on the fallen man. His eyes blaze silent, defiant hatred at his enemies.

Still smiling, Petanin removes a silver dollar-sized DEVICE from his pocket. He smiles at his victim as he touches a hidden switch. A green light pulses in its center.

Involuntary fear and revulsion ignite in the injured man's eyes. Delicate needles spring from the Device with a CLICK. The green light blinks rapidly.

The killers display mock sympathy, then efficiently level their guns and fire a salvo into Alex's chest.

FADE TO BLACK.

A long, black gap. Muddled O.S SOUNDS of foot traffic and urgent voices gradually become distinct.

FADE UP ON:

INT LONG CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

A semi-spherical, blurred white light slides through the black and offscreen in slow motion.

Another glaring light slips by, less blurry. A dim pattern of fuzzy checkerboard squares fades up to displace the black void.

The third moves into view and stops. It resolves into a glowing rectangle -- a florescent fixture gliding amid water-stained acoustic tile. The intense face of DOCTOR PHILIPS (45, female, all business) moves into view and partially eclipses the radiance.

PHILIPS

I need ten CC's of talamine-J
complex, stat.

The faces of TWO ORDERLIES, a NURSE, and an INTERN appear in a circle around the light. All are weary but focussed.

The Nurse holds up a syringe, checks it, then lowers it out of view. Phillips checks a monitor.

PHILIPS

No effect. Goddammit -- Otto!

An apparatus resembling a stainless steel squid floats into view. A variety of blades, drills, clamps, and claws adorn its many snake-like arms. Lights blink on its surface as it speaks with soothing, polite precision.

OTTO

Yes, Doctor Philips?

PHILIPS

Seal that arterial damage. All of it. We are not losing this one.

OTTO

Yes, Doctor.

The robotic surgeon spreads its tentacles and lowers out of view as the Doctor squints at something O.S.

PHILIPS

Can anyone tell me what the hell is that thing on his head?

The team looks, but all shake their heads in bewilderment. An O.S. mechanical HUM arises. An O.S. SCREAM of agony rips out. The team reacts in shock as the Doctor scowls.

INTERN

Conscious? How can he...

PHILIPS

Sedate him Otto! Now!

OTTO

Yes, Doctor Philips.

The (O.S.) HUM raises in pitch. The O.S. SCREAMING tapers off.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP ON:

INT HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Unconscious, ALEX floats in a tank of clear fluid, surrounded by gleaming towers of high-tech equipment that a TECHNICIAN carefully monitors.

A breathing hose snakes down his throat. Other tubes lead from the machines to assorted spots on his body. A swarm of tiny MEDI-BOTS flutter like a school of minnows around partially healed wounds on his chest and legs.

There is a strange, circular red mark about the size of a silver dollar on his left temple.

DOCTOR PHILIPS peers at the patient. She checks a control panel. Green lights glow on various monitors.

TECH

He's stable, maam.

PHILIPS

Wake him up.

The Tech turns a dial. Alex's eyes twitch as his body convulses once, then sluggishly shudders.

Philips signals to stop. The Tech turns the machine off. The Doctor leans close to a slim microphone.

PHILIPS

Can you hear me?

Alex's eyes snap open, then register shock as he realizes he's immersed in water. He panics and struggles. Alarms sound and red lights wink on the monitors.

PHILIPS

Easy! You're in a full-immersion healing tank. In a hospital.

The panic passes as the patient relaxes. He keeps a wary eye on Philips, who resets the alarms.

PHILIPS

Good. Just relax and let the healers do their work. For the past six days, you've been in an induced coma, so you're bound to feel a bit groggy. Here ...

She touches a button and a small object floats into the patient's hand.

PHILIPS

That's a call switch. Give it a squeeze.

With obvious effort, Alex closes his eyes and struggles. A pleasant chime BINGs.

PHILIPS

Very good. Looks like you're on the road to recovery. Now, I have to ask you some questions. Squeeze once for no, twice for yes. Okay?

No response. Philips smiles, reassuring.

PHILLIPS

Don't worry. It won't take long, and we can stop any time. Okay?

Two BINGs. Philips smiles.

PHILIPS

Good. Do you know why you're here?

One BING.

PHILIPS

You've been shot, twice. Fragmentation needles in the legs and chest. Shredded you, but good. Do you remember being shot?

BING.

PHILIPS

You'll need another week of immersion to patch up all those arteries in your chest. If those micro docs weren't swimming around you right now ...

She indicates the swarm of tiny robots.

PHILIPS

Let's just say you'd make a pretty good lawn sprinkler. Capice?

BING BING.

PHILIPS

I've never seen anyone heal so fast. Probably won't even scar. Not much, anyway. But don't thank me until you get the bill.