

REDEMPTION

Screenplay

based on the short story

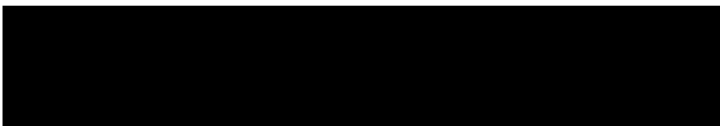
God is an iron

by Spider Robinson

Final Draft

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Balthasar v. Weymarn



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PERSONAE

Peter Templeton

a dark-haired man with a weathered face, in his fifties, never smiles, wears dark clothes.

Karen Scholz

brunette, she's seen quite a few things in her 22 years. If she put any effort into it, she might look "acceptable".

During the teaser and the voice-over we see a variety of shots that indicate the preparation of either an intimate encounter or a computer installation or both, e.g.: extreme close-ups of

- a Western plug cable plugged into a notebook,
- a sweet disappearing between the lips of a woman (KAREN),
- inserting a 3,5" disk into a disk slot,
- open eye in which a drop of liquid is falling,
- a hand plugging another plug into the back of her skull,
- a hand moving over the keyboard and hitting ENTER.

No one knows yet (a) where this is taking place; (b) who she is.

We hear O.S. voice over (taken off a tape interview):

1ST VOICE

Using a socket behind the left ear the pleasure center of the human brain is stimulated by weak electric currents. The pleasure experience therefore is original, not filtered by sensory perception.

2ND VOICE

Experts have stated that this stimulation might result in a greater potential addiction than heroin, even implying a possible new form of suicide. What do you think about this?

1ST VOICE

In order to avoid such potential danger, my colleagues and I have included a timer limiting the stimulation to 15 seconds per hour.

CUT TO

CUT TO

3

INT. HALL - EVENING

3

Hallway of an urban apartment in the near future.

PETER puts the traveler's bag on the floor. He is dressed in dark, functional clothes; there is nothing on him that would keep him from moving quick, e.g. to fend off an attacker.

He has the air of a man who is always determined, focused on the subject at hand at the present time. We will see him acting like a future-world P.I. or police officer probably would.

He sniffs the air, puzzled and disgusted and reaches for a handkerchief in his bag.

PETER (V.O.)
I smelled her before I saw her.
Even so, the first sight was
shocking.

Holding the handkerchief to his nose, he walks to

CUT TO

4

INT. LIVING-ROOM - EVENING

4

The living-room is equipped with four larger pieces of furniture: a bed, a cubical bedside table, a chair where the front comes up as the back goes down. There is a desk in the background. Next to the chair on the ground one can see a large can. On the bedside table beneath a lamp without a lampshade rests a notebook computer, which two wires connect with KAREN's head and an outlet in the wall. The notebook is running a "Windows"-program indicating the name "Mindfresh", the warning sign and the running time (86+ hours).

KAREN is on the chair, wearing a jeans that is too wide in the hips for her. Over that, a dirty T-shirt. She had vomited a few days ago, she looks like it. A hose from the can is plastered to Karen's mouth with adhesive tape. The wire from the device leads to some sort of socket at the base of her skull. She has been there for a few days, slowly starving. Karen's eyes are open, her facial expression does absolutely not fit the situation. She is beaming with joy - her smile resembles the one of a woman who is caressed intimately.

PETER is staring at this for a few seconds. Then he slowly moves in her direction.

PETER (V.O.)
It was her smile under the vomit
that decided me. Using my exacto-
knife, I quickly severed her from
the artificial ecstasy she had
exposed herself to.

(MORE)

PETER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Illegally, of course, but who wants
pleasure for 15 seconds only...?

Her eyes follow his move, although she does not seem to be conscious now.

Peter is clearly horrified. As he sees her strange gaze on him, smiling, he makes a quick decision, walks over to the notebook and severs the connection between it and Karen with a carpenter's knife he takes out of his pocket. She collapses and closes her eyes.

He walks over to the notebook and watches the screen message saying she has been on this for more than 86 hours.

PETER (V.O.)
But as I looked on the computer
screen and found out how long she
had been -

Watching and realizing this he suddenly receives a full blow into his face. He groans. Pulling back, we see that KAREN has jumped out of the chair, ready to attack him again.

KAREN
(*hoarse, croaking*)
You swine of a cop!

She moves into the attack. In a reflex he lunges inside the arc of her next swing at him and hits her solar plexus. The force of the blow throws her back into the chair. He looks down on the motionless Karen, lifts her head to disconnect the wire from her skull with swift motions. He lifts her out of the chair and groans again. He carries her out.

CUT TO

5 INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

5

PETER puts KAREN into the tub. She does not seem to notice anything going on around her. Turning on the faucets he puts some soap in. He is looking for a sponge and, finally spotting it on top of the sink mirror cabinet, he starts to clean her.

PETER (O.S.)
Karen Scholz, 22, part-time
secretary, waitress, masseuse...
Dealing cocaine? I don't know. She
definitely has the money for it.

CUT TO

6 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

6

KAREN is lying on her back in her bed, asleep, hair still wet from the tub. He is standing at her desk, on which papers and binders are sprawled all over. Searching the mess he is looking for something, though it does not seem clear to him precisely what it is.

PETER (O.S.)

Both parents deceased four years ago. Doesn't make no sense. Not enough to make her want to kill herself like that.

PETER walks to the stereo and starts a cassette. Cutting in mid-sentence, we hear fragments of the interview from the teaser.

CUT TO

7 INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

7

She is awake. Hearing the sounds of his steps, she looks up, intimidated.

PETER

Don't try to get up, please.
Everything's o.k. My name is
Templeton. I ... I'm a friend. Are
you hungry?

KAREN

(hoarse, croaking)

Your voice is ugly. My voice is
ugly. Everything is ugly. I want a
drink.

PETER

After you've eaten.

KAREN

Who are you?

PETER

Mother Teresa. Eat.

He puts the tray down firmly on her lap and pulls the headside of the bed into an upright position. Nibbling on the toast, she sometimes sips some of that tea.

KAREN

I don't know you. Maybe you don't
even exist.

PETER reacts to this with his eyes. A hint of a smile appears on his lips. We do not know what intentions might be behind that smile.

CUT TO

8

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

8

PETER is sitting at her desk, she is asleep in her bed. Suddenly, he is hearing a noise: while turning, she had fallen right out of bed, waking up and complaining. He helps her getting back into bed, she turns to her left side, as if she wanted to fall asleep again. But suddenly she turns around and yells at him:

KAREN

You coward, it was almost over!
I'll never have the strength to go
at it again now! How could you - it
was so ... nice!

He sits down at her bedside and starts stroking her hair, trying to remain at the edge between comforting and necessary distance. He is a little clumsy at that. She starts to cry, sobbing, finally turning into the wail of total heartbreak. PETER continues to stroke her hair.

PETER (V.O.)

So there I was, still without a
clue. And I would have to spend one
more night sleeping at her bedside.

CUT TO

9

INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

9

PETER is lying asleep on the carpet next to her bed, covered with a sheet, still fully dressed and unshaven. Approaching steps. KAREN is coming into frame, looking greatly improved with her hair combed and nails cut. She has brought a tray with breakfast for him. She sees him lying on his front, the hair in a mess. She is pulling a table near to put the tray on.

Looking at him again, she sees the same Western-plug socket in the back of his head just like the one she has.

Karen reacts to this. She is suddenly suspicious. Eyeing him carefully, she moves over to his bag in one corner of the room, opens it and finds various items in it. Coming to a conclusion, she steps up to him and taps his body with her foot.

KAREN

(suspicious)

Wake up. Who are you?

PETER:

(tired)

Eh...? A friend. Peter Templeton. I told you.

KAREN

What about that cop business?

PETER

(catching on quickly now)

Oh, I freelance from time to time.

Karen does not really buy this. She knows better.

KAREN

So why didn't you bring me to the precinct or the hospital? You're a wirehead like me. You get a kick out of this.

He looks at her, with a mixture of anger and sadness written on his face.

He slowly starts to get up, gets his belongings, carelessly, walks over to his bag, picks it up and starts to head towards door.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Hey, wait!

PETER

(his back to her)

Shut up.

KAREN

Am I right?

He stops and turns around.

PETER

(contemptuous)

No. You know nothing.

He resumes his way out.

KAREN

(louder, calling after him)

What did you come here for?

He swirls around, screaming at her.

PETER

(in rage, contempt and disappointment)

To burgle your fucking apartment!

Silence. She is looking at him with big eyes. Her surprise is turning to awe, and then the corners of her mouth start to twitch.

Without a warning she is suddenly starting to laugh, to giggle, infecting, irresistible. After a while he cannot resist, his armor of cynicism cracks.

So does his pose, and tentatively he joins her laughing. A good belly-laugh, full of deliverance and freedom.

KAREN

(calming down, deadpan)

You'll have to wait until I'm up to full strength again. You're gonna need some help with the TV.

(turning to the breakfast

she brought)

Butter on the toast?

CUT TO