

Thesis

By

Robert Sarkanen

FADE IN:

Darkness. Panting.

SENTE (O.S.)
I'm sorry... I'm so so sorry...

1 **INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY**

1

INTERVIEW

ALEX MURPHY with a book, flipping pages, reading --

ALEX
"November 20. First day of the
thesis shoot tomorrow. I know the
mentors weren't too excited about
the idea but I'm confident I'll
have a great movie at the end of
it."

2 **INT. IAFT HALLWAY - DAY**

2

SUPERTITLE: November 21, 2012

INTERVIEW

SENTE is getting her make-up done on camera by LALLY, the
AD.

The unseen cameraman, JASON --

JASON (O.S.)
SET!

The Alec is setting up his microphone.

ALEC
Sound speed!

ALEX (V.O.)
"Three months of searching and I've
finally found the perfect story."

SENTE
How do I look? We ready?

JASON (O.S.)
Rolling!

SENTE
Three months ago I heard a
story. About a promising young

LEWIS
 animation, showreels. Each year we
 make about fifteen-twenty thesis
 films.

SENTE (O.S.)
 What about the rumor that someone
 was murdered during a thesis shoot?

LEWIS
 (laughs nervously)
 Excuse me? That's the first I've
 heard of it. Anything like that.

6 **INT. MENTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

6

INTERVIEW

TIMM
 That's just another of the many
 ghost stories around here. We're
 in a catholic country after all.

7 **INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - DAY**

7

INTERVIEWS

Various STUDENTS being interviewed:

STUDENT #1
 Oh yeah, they say Bigfoot's
 haunted.

STUDENT #2
 I heard there was this guy
 like...years ago who made a snuff
 film on campus and
 disappeared. Radic was his
 name. Mikhail Radic.

STUDENT #3
 He tortured his lead actor to death
 by driving nails into his chest
 while filming the whole thing.

STUDENT #4
 I heard he burned a mentor alive on
 the shoot, I could be wrong.

STUDENT #5
 Oh, it was his soundguy. He got
 stabbed, then slit his throat.

STUDENT #4

It happened in the old doctor's office upstairs in Bigfoot.

STUDENT #5

He played music on set up there. Something classical.

STUDENT #2

Yeah, like Beethoven or something. Really creepy.

STUDENT #3

If you go there at night, if you can hear the music - you're next.

8

INT. BIGFOOT SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

8

INTERVIEW

Sente is standing in the stairwell, the doctor's office right behind her.

SENTE

This is where the gruesome shoot supposedly took place, right in the office behind me, a member of Mikhail Radic's shoot was brutally killed, his death captured on film. Let's take a look.

The CAMERA follows her as she walks toward the office. An eerie atmosphere of an abandoned studio, the curtains blowing.

Suddenly a loud BANG. The CAMERA PANS around, Lally just bumped into a trashcan.

LALLY

Sorry... Did you hear that?

SENTE

What?

LALLY

Didn't they say there was music?

ALEC

I don't hear anything.

The camera pans back around as she near the office and BAM - A GUARD!

GUARD
Permit please? You're from IAFT?

SENTE
Yeah, I have the permits right here.

The guard looks it over, confused.

GUARD
No signature. No signature, no shoot.

SENTE
What? Let me see that! There's some kind of mistake. My A.D. took care of the signatures.

The CAMERA pans around, Lally is gone!

SENTE
Lally? Lally?! Where is she?

GUARD
No signature, no shoot. Try again later.

SENTE
What the fuck?

JASON
I'm cutting it --

9

INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

9

INTERVIEW

Alex recites another passage.

ALEX
"November 21. First day's shoot was a disaster. The AD bailed on us and the shoot was shut down. The crew is getting spooked. They're talking behind my back. I don't know what's going on here anymore."

10

INT. LAB - DAY

10

INTERVIEW

Sente in front of a computer.

SENTE

My A.D. seems to have abandoned the shoot, I can't find her and her phone seems to be off but going over the footage I found something.

She turns to the computer, playing back the footage from Bigfoot from Lally to the guard and suddenly she freezes the image as the guard looks over the permit.

A DARK FIGURE STANDING IN THE BACKGROUND, watching them.

JASON (O.S.)

Is that what I think it is?

SENTE

I don't know what or who that is. Those offices are supposed to be empty. Mikhail Radic?

11

INT. ADMIN OFFICE - DAY

11

ANTHONY LIPAT, admin, is looking through old files, Sente standing by his side.

ANTHONY

Radic? Mikhail Radic?

He pulls out a file.

ANTHONY

Strange. There is a file, but nothing in it but this. A withdrawal form, dropping his five-oh-one classes.

He hands her a piece of paper. Radic's handwriting a mess. As she takes the paper out of view, a man is seen watching them outside the office - Bowen.

JASON (O.S.)

Who's that? Someone's watching us.

Bowen disappears, Sente looks confused.

SENTE
Who? Nevermind, moving on.

12

INT. LAB - DAY

12

LLOYD VELOSO, lab technician, is looking through his harddrives, Sente standing by.

LLOYD
I don't have it, sorry. There was a harddrive crash, all that old stuff disappeared.

SENTE
Nothing's left?

LLOYD
Try contacting his batchmates?

13

INT. STUDENT LOUNGE - DAY

13

MONTAGE of Sente on the phone, pacing back and forth.

PHONE
The number you have dialed is out of service.

VOICE
I'm sorry. He passed away last year.

VOICE #2
I don't know where he is.

SENTE
What do you mean?

VOICE #2
I mean I don't know where he is, he disappeared, he's missing, three years ago --

Group picture of a batch of people - including Bowen.

Caption: "Not present - Mikhail Radic"

Sente addressing her crew, O.S.

SENTE
Okay, there's no one left in that batch. So weird.

JASON (O.S.)
 So what do we do? There's nothing
 with that guy? And where the fuck
 is what's-her-name, our A.D.?

SENTE
 You rolling still?

Glimpse Bowen watching them.

14

INT. ADMIN OFFICE - NIGHT

14

Sente walks in. Anthony is already searching through files.

SENTE
 Lally? Lally Eleazar? We just
 need the contact info of her family
 or someone close to her.

ANTHONY
 I'm sorry, we don't have a student
 here by that name.

SENTE
 What are you talking about, you
 know Lally! Three-oh-one!

ANTHONY
 What did you say her name was?

The CAMERA pans around, Bowen is watching.

JASON (O.S.)
 He's there! He was in Radic's
 batch!

Sente spots him, Bowen runs!

SENTE
 WAIT! Who are you? We just wanna
 talk to you!

JASON (O.S.)
 You take the elevator, I'll take
 the stairs!

Jason runs after through the hallways -- into the stairwell
 -- up the stairs -- into --

Bowen is backed up against the corner, panting and sobbing. Surrounded by hundreds of sketches of spirals, patterns, musical notes, faces, scenes of torture -- drawings of a madman.

JASON (O.S.)

Whoa, easy dude, we just wanna talk to you!

BOWEN

I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU!
YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD! ALL OF YOU!

Sente suddenly enters.

SENTE

What are you talking about? You knew Radic, didn't you? What's your name?

BOWEN

FUCK YOU!

JASON (O.S.)

(laughs nervously)

What is that, asian?

ALEC

I'm hearing something weird here, some kind of static --

SENTE

Who cares? We'll just go with the camera mic. ...Wait, I remember you. You're Bowen, right?

Bowen is silent.

SENTE

You know what's going on, don't you? You know the story.

BOWEN

It's no story. It happens. I've seen it so many times. So many people. So many faces. Everyone forgets. Everyone but me.

SENTE

You live here? What is all this?

Sente looks at the pictures of torture and death.

BOWEN

That's what he does to you, after he makes everyone forget you. He makes your worst fears come true. Then you see the tape. Then you see yourself die. Then you disappear.

SENTE

How do you know this? Why do you remember them and no one else?

BOWEN

Because my worst fear isn't to be forgotten or killed. It's not being strangled or drowned or poked with needles. It's going insane. So he makes me watch. So he'll make me watch the three of you disappear, just like the rest.

SENTE

The three of us?

BAM! The sound gear hits the floor. Everybody screams.

16

INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

16

INTERVIEW

Alex recites.

ALEX

"November 22. My crew is disappearing one by one. I don't know what's happening. If there's gonna be a film or if we're gonna make it. I'm scared."

17

INT. CASABLANCA ROOM 213 - DAY

17

INTERVIEW

The place is a mess, turned upside down. Sente in the middle of it, teary-eyed. Camera on the desk.

SENTE

Lally is gone. Alec is gone. I don't know where Jason is. Bowen is nowhere to be found. And I can't even remember their faces anymore. This morning... I couldn't find my ID. I put it on

SENTE
 the desk like I do every day. It's
 gone. My wallet's empty. No one's
 picking up my calls. He was
 right. It's happening.

She sobs quietly.

Suddenly her phone rings, she picks up.

SENTE
 Jason?!

JASON (PHONE)
 Help...me...

SENTE
 Where are you?

JASON (PHONE)
 Help...me...

He screams. Suddenly static.

SENTE
 Jason? Jason?! Jason?!
 (crying)
 I'm sorry... I'm so so sorry...

18

INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

18

INTERVIEW

ALEX
 "December 14. They shut me down
 weeks ago. All of them. They all
 left me. My actors, my crew. The
 mentors don't care. No one
 cares. Like I don't matter. Like
 I don't exist. I'll show
 them. I'll show them all. Tonight
 I'll finish it. Tonight is the
 night they'll remember me by..."

Alex closes the book.

SUPERTITLE: Last entry of Mikhail Radic.

19 INT. BIGFOOT SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

19

Sente is operating the camera, sneaking down the deep dark hall. The Guard passes, shining his flashlight, Sente ducks down around the corner.

SENTE (O.S.)
God that was close.

She turns the camera to herself.

SENTE
My name is Sente. If anyone should find this... I have no home. I have no friends. I have no family. My only hope is to find the tape and destroy it. I have no choice but see it through to the end. Remember me. No matter what happens, remember me.

She pans around, approaching the office. Suddenly music. Classical music. She stops cold, panting. Gathering courage.

SENTE (O.S.)
Come on. Come on, you can do this.

The sound of static as we enter...

20 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

20

Lights are set up. A monitor on the floor, surrounded by cables, sitting on top of a VCR. White noise. A tape inside. Suddenly it plays. Black screen.

She presses eject repeatedly, the tape wont come out.

ON THE SCREEN:

The CAMERA approaches the office from outside.

BACK TO SCENE

She keeps hammering the eject button, beating the VCR, pulling the plug - nothing helps.

ON THE SCREEN:

The CAMERA enters the room behind her. She sees herself.

BACK TO SCENE

She turns around to where the camera ought to be --

THE GHOSTLY BLOOD-SOAKED FIGURE OF MIKHAIL RADIC RUSHES TOWARD HER.

SHE SCREAMS.

The CAMERA DROPS, facing the monitor, the sound becomes muffled.

ON THE SCREEN:

Sente is on the bed, Radic eating her entrails as she screams. Bowen is standing in the corner watching silently.

THE END