

MASCOT

Written by

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What motivates the motivator?

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BLACK.

VHS STATIC.
A TAPE CLICKS IN.
PLAY.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

A BRIGHT PINK MASCOT with a white clothed, FULL FACED, SMILE and a pair of LARGE GOOGLY EYES DANCES in front of KIDS.

Poppy music builds into a song and dance with Mascot leading.

MUSIC (O.S.)
Before that little bag of smack
starts talkin' back, ah JUST DON'T!

MASCOT waves its oversized, gloved finger at us.

All the kids shake their heads in unison.

It's all very performative, cheesy, and makes drugs seem cool
(Cooler than this Sesame Street bullshit at least).

A BAG OF SMACK PUPPET rises and bounces around on a hand.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (O.S.)
I'm gonna go ahead and stop ya
there.

CHHRRCK! -- The screen FREEZES on a happy bag of smack.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A BRONZE placard reads: *PRINCIPAL ANDREW MATTHEWS.*

Thin hands fold into each other, fingers interlaced, thumbs tapping. PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (40's) leans forward.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS
We don't do "Just Don't" anymore.

Principal Matthews makes eye contact with-

A large, pink, googly-eyed, and fuzzy MASCOT.

It's the same Mascot in the video only its WORN IN with sunken eyes and a STAINED, once-white, smile.

A loose fit and raggedy football jersey reads: **JUST DON'T.**

Mister Mascot doesn't say anything.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
 We use two other words. -- "Harm.
 Reduction."

Mister Mascot cocks its head. Curious.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
 Or, realistic expectations. Ha.

Principal Matthews takes a beat to regain composure.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
 The war on drugs is over, Mister
 Mascot. -- We've lost.

Principal Matthews opens a desk drawer and pulls out TWO
 GLASS TUMBLERS with a nearly empty bottle of SCOTCH to find-

MISTER MASCOT **LURCHING** above him.
 Staring intently.

Principal Matthews doesn't seem to be bothered.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
 Shall we?

Glug glug -- glug glug! Slugs filled. Glasses ready.

Principal Matthews raises the glass up for Mister Mascot.

Mister Mascot stares down. It looks between **two options:**
 PRINCIPAL MATTHEW'S THROAT or the WHISKEY GLASS.

THROAT ----- GLASS ----- THROAT ----- GLASS ----- THROAT.

Mister Mascot's googly pupils VIBRATE.

The lights DIM. A low electrical HUM chills the air.

A VHS image bleeds across the office walls-
 It's Mister Mascot DANCING.

Smiling. Moving.
 Closer.
 Closer-

The image FLICKERS in and out of existence.

Mister Mascot is now standing inches from Matthews.
 Principal Matthews looks around, confused.

He focuses his attention up towards Mister Mascot.

Mister Mascot slowly extends it's hand, reaching out.

It grabs the glass from Principal Matthews and raises it.

All the lights STOP flickering.

Principal Matthews sighs in relief.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

To harm reduction. -- May they live
their lives, responsibly.

Principal Matthews goes to make a toast and cheers.
But Mister Mascot just holds the glass.

Mister Mascot's hands start shaking.

Principal Matthew's waits, giving an impatient shrug.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

Well? Are you going to cheers or
wha-

-TISSSH!

Glass EXPLODES into his face.
Mister Mascot PALMS his skull -- *CRUNCH!*
The shards vanish under skin.

Then:

SMACK! SMACK.

A "**BELIEVE!**" poster buckles under bone.

Mascot throws Principal Matthew across the office.
CRACKING his head open against the corner of his desk.

Tendrils of blood pool under Matthews.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Mister Mascot DRAGS Matthew's body down the empty hall.

Soft felt shoes squeak.

The EXIT sign flickers.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Leather shoes and khaki cuffs DRAG across white pebbles.
Matthew's gets shoved against a knee-high ledge.

Mister Mascot leans over and checks the height --
TWO STORIES.

The town below is dead quiet. Then-

A phantom CROWD begins CHEERING.

Mister Mascot soaks it in.
It bows.

"Wooooo!!! Allllriiiighhhttt!!!"

It grabs Principal Matthew's body, LIFTS him up, and fucking
HURLS HIM over the edge.

His body falls -- limp and rag-doll.

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Matthews CRACKS against the pavement under a wet -- **SPLAT!**

The CROWD'S CELEBRATION gets LOUDER.

"HOORAAAAAYYY!" -- "WOOOOOHOOOOO!!" -- "YEEEAHHH!!!"

Mister Mascot DANCES. It does a little shimmy.
Then Matthews gasps.

He's still alive.

The cheering halts.

Mister Mascot freezes. It looks down.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

It's empty.

The wind moves.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Principal Matthews is dragged backwards across asphalt.

But no one's there.

No footsteps.
No shadow.

Just Matthews being pulled away -- SCREAMING.

His body JERKS then STOPS.

He breathes.

A SHADOW falls over him with a "squeak."

He looks up-

Mister Mascot is standing there.
One gloved hand locked around his ankle.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS
Noooo!!!! PLEEEAAASSSEEEE!!! What
did I do to you?!

Mister Mascot stares down at its prey.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
Cause I didn't like your fucking
song?! Well I'M SORRY!

Mister Mascot lifts its oversized felt sneaker high above
Principal Matthew's head.

PRINCIPAL MATTHEWS (CONT'D)
Who do you think you are! You're
just a fucking Masco-

Mister Mascot STOMPS.

And Matthew's head disappears.

Mister Mascot looks up.
Directly into camera.

The googly eyes vibrate.
The smile doesn't move.

SMASH CUT TO:

80's pop needle drop.

"PARADISE" by CHANGE builds with its 80's pop-disco-synth.

A FIERY, golden-orange, trail EMBLAZONS. IGNITING SLOWLY and
BURNING through the screen revealing VANITY LIGHTS for a-

TITLE CARD:

MASCOT

**OPENING CREDITS
MONTAGE.**

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

- A small gathering of PEOPLE, mainly ADDICTS/ALCOHOLICS stand outside and suck down the last of their cigarettes.

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

- A SEMI-CIRCLE of ADDICTS all seated and listening to one another.

- Rough HANDS lay comfort to a shoulder.

- A table is decorated, protected, and laid SACRED.

- A BOOK bound in tacky bedazzles and FELT CLOTH is OPENED.

- Posters of famous MASCOTS line the walls -- grinning, corporate, immortal.

- A large ROLL of PINK CLOTH unfurls along on the table.

- SILVER KNIVES are drawn.

VOICES (O.S.)
Grant me the serenity...

- Hands hover.

- BLOOD dots the pink cloth.

- The GOOGLY EYES SNAP ON.

END MONTAGE.

NEWS REPORTER(O.S.)
You're saying this isn't a suicide?

EXT. HEREFORD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

CRIME SCENE TAPE. -- A CHALK OUTLINE -- NUMBERED TRIANGLES.

MARIE MARKOWSKI (30's) stands on camera. Beside her -- OFFICER ANDERSON (50's). Trim. Focused. Eyes scanning. Not blinking much.

MARY MARKOWSKI
Officer Anderson, are you ruling out suicide?

OFFICER ANDERSON
Yes.

MARY MARKOWSKI

Why?

A beat.

OFFICER ANDERSON

There was resistance. -- Damage to the office. Defensive wounds. A *BLEEP*-ing blood trail to the roof!

He's watching the building.

MARY MARKOWSKI

Any suspects?

Beat.

OFFICER ANDERSON

Not yet.

MARY MARKOWSKI

Should the community be concerned?

He turns to her. Steady. Controlled.

OFFICER ANDERSON

They should be aware.

Mary Markowski pivots back to camera.

MARY MARKOWSKI

In a sleepy town-

OFFICER ANDERSON

(to himself)

This town isn't asleep.

Mary finishes the segment.

MARY MARKOWSKI

- it sounds like someone won't be sleeping tonight. Back to you.

Anderson walks towards the school.

Mary lowers the Mic and walks off as a TECH says:

FORENSICS

We lost security footage. Glitched.

Anderson's jaw tightens.

He looks up and clocks the school's Mascot banner hanging. A plastered image of Mister Mascot beams a bright smile back.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - DAY

An SUV cuts through miles of obedient farmland.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

FUTURE-FUNK pulses. Neon rebellion against beige America.

LEXI BANCROFT (18) films the passing fields on a digital super 8. Corn rows flicker through a grainy filter.

Sun bleeds pink.

LANCE talks -- muffled beneath her music.

LANCE
(muted)
It'll be a good start. A clean
slate. -- For both of us.

Lexi whips the camera at Lance.

LANCE (CONT'D)
Oh -- we're rolling? Okay American
Beauty. What's this one called?

LEXI
(Smiling)
How my dad ruined my life.

Lance snorts.

LANCE
Catchy.

She lowers the camera but keeps recording.

LANCE (CONT'D)
I'm trying here, Lex.

Lexi pulls off one headphone.

LEXI
I know. -- It's not you. It's...
It's just -- it's this place.

LANCE
I get it. But out here, no one
knows us. -- That's a gift.

She keeps filming him. Zooms in. Close. Too close.

LANCE (CONT'D)

You could put that in your movie?

She pans to the school coming into view **HEREFORD HIGH SCHOOL**.

It's too quiet. Too clean.

LEXI

Maybe. If it's worth remembering.

She pulls her hoodie over her eyes. Headphones back on.

Lance puts the car in PARK and looks around.

LANCE

Lex-

LEXI

Wake me up when you're done.

Just then- TINK TINK TINK!! Tapping on the glass.

Lexi uncovers her head to see a BRIGHT, WIDE EYED SMILE, of the school's SECRETARY, MS. HANOVER (40's) gleaming at her.

LEXI (CONT'D)

Jesus-

LANCE

Watch it.

Lance rolls down the window.

MS. HANOVER

You must be Lance! Welcome to Hereford. And this must be our new student?

Lexi stares.

LANCE

Lexi.

Beat.

LEXI

Hi.

MS. HANOVER

You'll fit right in.

INT. HEREFORD HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Concrete corridors. Fluorescent hum. Endless lockers.

Ms. Hanover marches.

MS. HANOVER
We keep things simple here.
Upperclassmen up top. Underclassmen
below. No confusion.

THUMP!

KID (O.S.)
OW! Fucker!

A TEEN SPRINTS past.

MS. HANOVER
Oh my! (To Lance) Typical boys.

Lexi glances back. An underclassmen, KEVIN (15), is on the floor. Books scattered.

She steps out of formation and gathers Kevin's papers and books. She hands them over.

A beat. Eye contact.

Back on the tour. They pass the **SCIENCE LAB.**

Beakers. Glass. Sterile.

SHOP CLASS -

A LASER ENGRAVER FIRES and spits spark.
Metal's being burned clean.

MS. HANOVER (CONT'D)
We believe in practical skills.

LANCE
They still teach shop?

MS. HANOVER
HVAC, carpentry. Real work.

The laser ETCHES deep into metal.
Precise. Violent.

Lexi watches the groove being carved.

LEXI
Permanent mistakes build character?