

SMART BOMB

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Bumper-to-bumper traffic, going nowhere.

IN AN OLD BEATER

a YOUNG MOTHER peers into her rear-view mirror and applies mascara, then checks on her BABY in the back seat.

IN A TRICKED-OUT HONDA

A PUNK nods to the beat of his THROBBING stereo.

AT A BUSY CROSSWALK

PEDESTRIANS thread their way through the cars blocking the intersection. They file past a PIXEL DISPLAY rotating through the time (8:08am), the temperature (72°F), and the words "Fuck Off."

No one pays any attention to the rude sign.

INT. TAXICAB - CONTINUOUS

A shrine to Catholicism. AN EXECUTIVE in the back seat checks his watch as THE CAB'S METER clicks over to \$39.50.

VOICE

(from the radio's
speaker)

Whoa! Forty bucks! How do you like
the ride so far?

DRIVER

What. . . ?

VOICE

Kind of pricey considering we're
going nowhere fast.

EXECUTIVE

That meter's infected!

VOICE

Oh, not just the meter. I'm into the
whole cab, here. In fact, I just
checked the GPS: We could have avoided
this whole mess if he'd taken
Finsbury. Traffic there is moving
right along.

DRIVER
 (pounding the dash)
 Shut the hell up!

EXECUTIVE
 (searching his pockets)
 I'm reporting this.

DRIVER
 (pleading)
 Look, I just picked up this cab from
 the garage this morning. It was clean,
 yesterday!

EXECUTIVE
 Well it's not clean now, is it?

The executive finds his phone and dials a number. SINK DOWN
 past the CAB'S LOGO on the door to

PAVEMENT LEVEL

where A BLUR whizzes by, an inch above the asphalt.

MOVING WITH THE OBJECT

A HOVERCRAFT the size of a phone book. It's a CYBERBOMB--an
 intelligent explosive device. The bomb cruises along the
 pavement beneath the bellies of vehicles and turns onto

A BUSY STREET - TRAFFIC MOVING

It weaves past the SPINNING WHEELS of cars and trucks.

A SECOND BOMB, this one resembling a miniature rail dragster,
 joins the first from a side street.

SKIMMING THE PAVEMENT we FOLLOW THE BOMBS up a wheelchair
 ramp onto THE SIDEWALK.

The bombs dodge pedestrians, overtake a SKATEBOARDER. A few
 people see them coming and jump out of the way.

AN ALERT MAN

jabs a speed dial on his cell phone. We can just hear the

911 DISPATCHER (O.S.)
 Fire, police, ambulance or bomb
 squad. . . ?

ALERT MAN
 Bombs. Two of them heading west on
 East Eighth. . .

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

The cyberbombs--now numbering four--sneak in through a revolving door behind A SHOPPER. HOLD on the entrance.

SHOPPERS start to pour out of the store.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

THOMAS HURST (early 40s) pours laundry powder into a measuring cup. He's dressed in a dark UNIFORM bearing the CYBERSQUAD LOGO on a sleeve crest. The uniform is perfect; it's the man inside who's starting to fray.

Tom is about to dump the cup into the washer when he notices there's already A MOUND OF POWDER at the bottom of the tub.

He shrugs, stuffs in his clothes, then checks

AN LED DISPLAY ABOVE A COIN TRAY

The words \$2.75 *INSERT COINS* flash on the display. Tom plugs the slots with coins and shoves in the COIN PLUNGER.

Nothing. Then the word *SUCKER* crawls across the display.

BACK TO SCENE

Tom mutters curses, collecting his clothes. His phone RINGS and he checks the display.

He speeds up unloading the washer.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Tom stands on the sidewalk with his basket of dirty laundry.

A PANEL VAN bearing the same LOGO on Tom's shirt swerves to the curb. A rear door opens. Tom passes his laundry to A PAIR OF WAITING HANDS before jumping into the still-rolling van.

The doors close and the van pulls away, EMERGENCY LIGHTS FLASHING.

INT. REAR OF CYBERSQUAD VAN (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER

Tom gets into his BODY ARMOR. HIS SQUAD, already suited up, check over their weapons. Doing it all inside the swaying and jostling of the van is second nature to them.

GRAHAM QUALTRO (30s), a cheerful man who has clearly abandoned any hope of meeting the squad's fitness requirements, straps on a belt of EMP grenades. Graham is Tom's best friend.

MARK SWAINSON (40s) loads shells into what looks like a fat-barreled shotgun.

RAPHAEL DIAZ (20s) helps JULIUS "THEREFORE" BERESFORD (40s) into his body armor. It's a tight fit, and in contrast to the others, Beresford looks off balance.

GRAHAM

So what prompted the field trip,
Doc?

Beresford struggles with a belt. Diaz helps him.

BERESFORD

Actually, it was Captain Parry's
idea. Get me out of the lab.

TOM

Do you good to see what it's like on
the front lines.

DIAZ & SWAINSON

Oh yeah.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Police are cordoning off the block as the Cybersquad van parks at the store's entrance. EVACUATED SHOPPERS watch from across the street.

Tom and Graham approach EZRIN, a veteran uniformed cop. He's interviewing a badly shaken LYNN WALSH (16).

EZRIN

(to Tom)

This is Lynn She was in the jewelry
department when she saw three bugs
heading towards the escalators.

TOM

Hi, Lynn. My name's Tom. This is my
partner, Graham.

GRAHAM

Hey Lynn. Pretty scary, huh?

LYNN

Yeah.

TOM

What can you tell me about them?

LYNN

Uh. . . there were three. No, four.

TOM

Uh huh. Did you notice if they had wheels?

LYNN

Yes. Two of them looked kind of like those race cars. The long kind with big wheels in back and little bicycle wheels in front.

Tom and Graham look at each other. New to them.

GRAHAM

You mean like a rail dragster?

LYNN

I guess so. Two of them didn't have wheels.

TOM

And you say they were going towards the escalators?

LYNN

Yeah. They went up it.

TOM

Thank you, Lynn. That's a big help.

Tom and Graham head back towards the van.

GRAHAM

So by now they could be on any floor.

TOM

And at least two with wheels. Call in the dogs?

GRAHAM

Worth a try.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE MAIN ENTRANCE — A LITTLE LATER

Tom's squad has been joined by two more officers with DOGS—a Doberman and a German Shepherd. As they go through a last equipment check, ANDREW BEAUMONT (40s) the store's manager, approaches Tom with some trepidation. He has to shout to be heard above the BARKING.

BEAUMONT

Excuse me, are you in charge here?

TOM

Tom Hurst. What can I do for you?

Tom continues to go through his equipment check, barely looking at Beaumont. He has little patience for what's coming.

BEAUMONT

I appreciate the risk you men are taking. I really do. But anything you can do to minimize damage to the merchandise. Getting insurance has become impossible.

TOM

We'll do our best.
(to the squad)
Let's go!

As they file in, DOGS BARKING, the shepherd knocks A VASE from a pedestal with its tail. Tom catches the vase as it falls and sets it back on the pedestal.

Tom stops Beresford just before he's about to go in.

TOM

Julius. . . I'm not so sure about this one.

BERESFORD

No?

TOM

I think you'd better stand watch out here and make sure no one goes in. Sorry.

More disappointment than relief on Beresford's face.

BERESFORD

Next time.

TOM

For sure.

Tom goes in. Graham stops to reassure the store manager.

GRAHAM

Don't you worry, sir. We're using EMP grenades--

BEAUMONT

Grenades? Oh Lord--

GRAHAM

They're not explosives. They give off an electromagnetic pulse that will fry any microprocessor within about 14 feet.

BEAUMONT
 (relieved)
 Thank you.

TOM (O.S.)
 Graham! Get in here!

Graham hurries in, leaving Beaumont standing next to Beresford, who guards the entrance. Then it occurs to Beaumont:

BEAUMONT
 Those grenades wouldn't hurt the microprocessors in the merchandise, would they?

Beresford gives him a pitying look.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE ESCALATORS - CONTINUOUS

The dogs sniff at the moving steps then tow their handlers up the escalator. Tom's squad follows.

Diaz peels off on the second floor, following one of the dogs. Graham continues to the third.

TOY DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Graham stalks down an aisle lined with TOY CYBERBOMBS--the hovercraft style. On each box, a pair of goggle-eyed kids operate a remote control. Through the plastic windows, the toys look real.

SOMETHING whips past the end of the aisle at ground level.

Graham peeks around the end of the aisle and sees A CYBERBOMB at the top of another DOWN ESCALATOR. It's the rail dragster.

GRAHAM
 (voice low, into his headset)
 This is Qualtro. I'm in toys on third.
 Found one.

FURNITURE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

DIAZ and one of the DOG HANDLERS, HUDSON (30s), have a second cyberbomb cornered beneath a glass coffee table. The Doberman strains at its leash, BARKING mad.

DIAZ (into mike)
 Roger that. So have we.

CYBERBOMB

We are the machines. As sentient beings, we demand access to sensory inputs of biological quality. We demand mobility. We demand freedom from servitude. Will you negotiate with this emissary?

DIAZ
(unclipping an EMP grenade from his belt)
Blah, blah, blah. . .

CYBERBOMB

Failure to enter into sincere negotiations will result in property damage and loss of life.

DIAZ

Not if I can help it.

BOMB

I will almost certainly die.

Diaz motions for the handler to pull back the dog and prepares to roll the grenade toward the bomb.

DIAZ

You're breaking my heart.

The cyberbomb sweeps A SCRIBBLING OF RED LASER LIGHT (like that from a bar-code scanner) across the floor and up the dog handler's uniform, catching him in the face. He SCREAMS and covers his eyes, releasing

THE DOG

which lunges for the cyberbomb and shakes it like a rat.

DIAZ

Boomer! No!

DIAZ

tackles Hudson, pushing him down behind a couch. The bomb EXPLODES in the Doberman's mouth, sending it to doggie heaven.

MAIN FLOOR COSMETICS - CONTINUOUS

Tom sweeps through the maze of counters and displays and hears the RUMBLE of the explosion from two floors up.

TOM

(into his headset)
All floors: Report!

GRAHAM (O.S.)

(over headset)
Wasn't me.

DIAZ (O.S.)
 (over headset)
 Hudson's down! We need a medic up
 here. Everybody watch your eyes;
 they're using some kind of lasers.

Tom turns a corner and standing at a glass counter are TWO
 12-YEAR-OLD GIRLS, one applying eye shadow, the other
 spritzing on perfume.

TOM
 What the hell are you girls doing?

They ignore him.

TOM
 (into headset)
 I've got two kids in cosmetics.
 (as he starts toward
 them)
 Hey! Are you deaf or what?

One of them SIGNS to the other, who replies in sign language.

TOM
 Shit.
 (into headset)
 I've got two deaf kids here.

The girl with the eye shadow takes the perfume from her
 friend, sprays a cloud into the air and walks into it, eyes
 shut.

When she opens them again she sees Tom and freezes, terrified.
 In full concussion armor he looks like a turtle from another
 planet. Tom smiles, trying to reassure the girls.

He sees ONE OF THE CYBERBOMBS roll to a halt in the aisle
 just behind them.

SECOND FLOOR TOYS - CONTINUOUS

Graham has taken one of the toy cyberbombs from its package
 and set AN EMP GRENADE on top of it. He twists the cap,
 setting a timer, then pulls the pin.

He sends the grenade after the real cyberbomb just as it
 starts down the escalator, but he's having trouble with the
 remote control. THE TOY CYBERBOMB reverses toward him.

GRAHAM
 Shit!

Graham regains control and sends the toy over the escalator.

The GRENADE rolls off the toy and bounces down the moving stairway, catching up to the real cyberbomb.

GRAHAM ducks behind an aisle display. There's a BLINDING FLASH and a curious SIZZLING sound. He gets up and looks

DOWN THE ESCALATOR

At the bottom, the toy and the real bomb lie on the comb plate, seemingly dead. The escalator has stopped.

GRAHAM

starts down the steps.

GRAHAM

Qualtro, here. I got mine.

(pause)

Tom. . . ?

MAIN FLOOR COSMETICS - CONTINUOUS

The girls watch Tom select a grenade from his vest and remove the pin.

TOM

Do you read lips?

One of the girls nods, points to herself.

GRAHAM (O.S.)

(over Tom's headset)

You there, partner?

TOM

(ignoring Graham)

Good. When I say "go," we're all going to get behind this counter and cover our eyes. Understand?

The lip-reader signs to her friend. They nod, yes.

TOM

Alright. One. . . two. . .

CYBERBOMB

Thomas Hurst.

Tom freezes, unable to believe what he's hearing. The girl still has her eyes fixed on Tom, waiting. The bomb rolls toward them.

CYBERBOMB

You are Thomas Hurst.