

THE
MATRIX

by

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12 INT. NEO'S APARTMENT

12

It is a studio apartment that seems overgrown with technology.

Weed-like cables coil everywhere, duct-taped into thickets that wind up and around the legs of several desks. Tabletops are filled with cannibalized equipment that lay open like an autopsied corpse.

At the center of this technological rat-nest is NEO, a man who knows more about living inside a computer than outside one.

He is asleep in front of his PC. Behind him, the computer screen suddenly goes blank. A prompt appears: "Wake up, Neo."

Neo's eye pries open. He sits up, one eye still closed, looking around, unsure of where he is. He notices the screen.

He types "CTRL X" but the letter "T" appears.

NEO

What...?

He hits another and an "H" appears. He keeps typing, pushing random functions and keys while the computer types out a message as though it had a mind of its own.

He stops and stares at the four words on the screen: "The Matrix has you."

NEO

What the hell?

He hits the "ESC" button. Another message appears: "Follow the white rabbit."

He hits it again and the message repeats. He rubs his eyes but when he opens them, there is another message: "Knock, knock, Neo."

Someone KNOCKS on his door and he almost jumps out of his chair. He looks back at the computer, but the screen is now blank.

Someone KNOCKS again. Neo rises, still unnerved.

NEO

Who is it?

CHOI (O.S)

It's Choi.

(CONTINUED)

Neo flips a series of locks and opens the door, leaving the chain on. A young Chinese MAN stands there with several of his friends.

NEO
You're two hours late.

CHOI (MAN)
I know. It's her fault.

NEO
You got the money?

CHOI
Two grand.

He takes out an envelope and gives it to Neo through the cracked door.

NEO
Hold on.

He closes the door. On the floor near his bed is a book, Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulations. The book has been hollowed out and inside are several computer disks. He takes one, sticks the money in the book and drops it on the floor.

Opening the door, he hands the disk to Choi.

CHOI
Hallelujah! You are my Savior,
man! My own personal Jesus
Christ!

NEO
If you get caught using that --

CHOI
I know, I know. This never
happened. You don't exist.

NEO
Right...

Neo nods as the strange feeling of unrealness suddenly returns.

CHOI
Something wrong, man? You look a
little whiter than usual.

NEO
I don't know... My computer...

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

He looks back at Choi, unable to explain what just happened.

NEO

You ever have the feeling that you're not sure if you're awake or still dreaming?

CHOI

All the time. It's called mescaline and it is the only way to fly.

He smiles and slaps the hand of his nearest droog.

CHOI

It sounds to me like you need to unplug, man. A little R&R. What do you think, Dujour, should we take him with us?

DUJOUR

Definitely.

NEO

I can't. I have to work tomorrow.

DUJOUR

Come on. It'll be fun. I promise.

He looks up at her and suddenly notices on her black leather motorcycle jacket dozens of pins: bands, symbols, slogans, military medals and --

A small white rabbit. The ROOM TILTS.

NEO

Yeah, yeah. Sure, I'll go.

13 INT. APARTMENT

13

An older apartment; a series of halls connects a chain of small high-ceilinged rooms lined with heavy casements.

Smoke hangs like a veil, blurring the few lights there are.

Dressed predominately in black, people are everywhere, gathered in cliques around pieces of furniture like jungle cats around a tree.

(CONTINUED)

Neo stands against a wall, alone, sipping from a bottle of beer, feeling completely out of place. He is about to leave when he notices a woman staring at him.

The woman is Trinity. She walks straight up to him.

In the nearest room, shadow-like figures grind against each other to the pneumatic beat of INDUSTRIAL MUSIC.

TRINITY

Hello, Neo.

NEO

How do you know that name?

TRINITY

I know a lot about you. I've been wanting to meet you for some time.

NEO

Who are you?

TRINITY

My name is Trinity.

NEO

Trinity? The Trinity? The Trinity that cracked the I.R.S. D-Base?

TRINITY

That was a long time ago.

NEO

Gee-zus.

TRINITY

What?

NEO

I just thought... you were a guy.

TRINITY

Most guys do.

Neo is a little embarrassed.

NEO

Do you want to go somewhere and talk?

TRINITY

No. It's safe here and I don't have much time.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

The MUSIC is so LOUD they must stand very close, talking directly into each other's ear.

NEO

That was you on my computer?

She nods.

NEO

How did you do that?

TRINITY

Right now, all I can tell you, is that you are in danger. I brought you here to warn you.

NEO

Of what?

TRINITY

They're watching you, Neo.

NEO

Who is?

TRINITY

Please. Just listen. I know why you're here, Neo. I know what you've been doing. I know why you hardly sleep, why you live alone and why, night after night, you sit at your computer. You're looking for him.

Her body is against his; her lips very close to his ear.

TRINITY

I know because I was once looking for the same thing, but when he found me he told me I wasn't really looking for him. I was looking for an answer.

There is a hypnotic quality to her voice and Neo feels the words, like a drug, seeping into him.

TRINITY

It's the question that drives us, the question that brought you here. You know the question just as I did.

NEO

What is the Matrix?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

TRINITY

When I asked him, he said that no one could ever be told the answer to that question. They have to see it to believe it.

She leans close, her lips almost touching his ear.

TRINITY

The answer is out there, Neo. It's looking for you and it will find you, if you want it to.

She turns and he watches her melt into the shifting wall of bodies.

A SOUND RISES steadily, growing out of the MUSIC, pressing in on Neo until it is all he can hear as we --

CUT TO:

14 INT. NEO'S APARTMENT

14

The sound is an ALARM CLOCK, slowly dragging Neo to consciousness. He strains to read the clock-face: 9:15 A.M.

NEO

Shitshitshit.

15 EXT. SKYSCRAPER

15

The downtown office of Meta CorTechs, a software development company.

16 INT. META CORTECHS OFFICE

16

The main offices are along each wall, the windows overlooking downtown. RHINEHEART, the ultimate company man, lectures Neo without looking at him, typing at his computer continuously.

Neo stares at two window cleaners on a scaffolding outside, dragging their rubber squeegees down the surface of the glass.

RHINEHEART

You have a problem with authority, Mr. Anderson. You believe that you are special, that somehow the rules do not apply to you. Obviously, you are mistaken.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

His long, bony fingers resume clicking the keyboard.

RHINEHEART

This company is one of the top software companies in the world because every single employee understands that they are a part of a whole. Thus, if an employee has a problem, the company has a problem.

He turns again.

RHINEHEART

The time has come to make a choice, Mr. Anderson. Either you choose to be at your desk on time from this day forth, or you choose to find yourself another job. Do I make myself clear?

NEO

Yes, Mr. Rhineheart. Perfectly clear.

17 INT. NEO'S CUBICLE

17

The entire floor looks like a human honeycomb, with a labyrinth of cubicles structured around a core of elevators.

VOICE (O.S.)

Thomas Anderson?

Neo turns and finds a FEDERAL EXPRESS GUY at his cubicle door.

NEO

Yeah. That's me.

Neo signs the electronic pad and the Fedex Guy hands him the softpak.

FEDEX GUY

Have a nice day.

He opens the bag. Inside is a cellular PHONE. It seems the instant it is in his hand, it RINGS. Unnerved, he flips it open.

NEO

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Hello, Neo. Do you know who this is?

Neo's knees give and he sinks into his chair.

NEO

Morpheus...

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

I've been looking for you, Neo. I don't know if you're ready to see what I want to show you, but unfortunately, we have run out of time. They're coming for you, Neo. And I'm not sure what they're going to do.

NEO

Who's coming for me?

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Stand up and see for yourself.

NEO

Right now?

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Yes. Now.

Neo starts to stand.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Do it slowly. The elevator.

His head peeks up over the partition. At the elevator, he sees Agent Smith, Agent Brown and Agent Jones leading a group of cops. A female employee turns and points out Neo's cubicle.

Neo ducks.

NEO

Holy shit!

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Yes.

One cop stays at the elevator, the others follow the Agents.

NEO

What the hell do they want with me?!

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

I'm not sure, but if you don't want to find out, you better get out of there.

NEO

How?!

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

I can guide you out, but you have to do exactly what I say.

The agents are moving quickly towards the cubicle.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

The cubicle across from you is empty.

NEO

But what if...?

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Go! Now!

Neo lunges across the hall, diving into the other cubicle just as the Agents turn into his row.

Neo crams himself into a dark corner, clutching the phone tightly to him.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Stay here for a moment.

The Agents enter Neo's empty cubicle. A cop is sent to search the bathroom.

Morpheus' voice is a whisper in Neo's ear.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

A little longer...

Brown is talking to another employee.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

When I tell you, go to the end of the row to the first office on the left, stay as low as you can.

Sweat trickles down his forehead.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Now.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

Neo rolls out of the cubicle, his eyes popping as he freezes right behind a cop who has just turned around.

Staying crouched, he sneaks away down the row, shooting across the opening to the first office on the left.

18 INT. EMPTY OFFICE

18

The room is empty.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Good. Outside there is a scaffold.

NEO

How do you know all this?

Morpheus laughs quietly.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

The answer is coming, Neo. There is a window in front of you. Open it.

He opens the window. The WIND HOWLS into the room.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

You can use the scaffold to get to the roof.

NEO

No! It's too far away.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

There's a ledge. It's a short short climb. You can make it.

Neo looks down; the building's glass wall vertigos into a concrete chasm.

NEO

No way, no way, this is crazy.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

There are only two ways out of this building. One is that scaffold. The other is in their custody. You take a chance either way. I leave it to you.

CLICK. He hangs up. Neo looks at the door, then back at the scaffold.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

NEO

This is insane! Why is this
happening to me? What did I do?
I'm nobody. I didn't do anything.

He climbs up onto the window ledge. Hanging onto the
frame, he steps onto the small ledge. The scaffold seems
even farther away.

NEO

I'm going to die.

The WIND suddenly BLASTS up the face of the building,
knocking Neo off balance. Recoiling, he clings harder to
the frame, and the phone falls out of his hand.

He watches as it is swallowed by the distance beneath
him.

NEO

This is insane! I can't do this!
Forget it!

He climbs back into the office just as a cop opens the
door.

NEO

Shit!

19 EXT. SKYSCRAPER

19

The Agents lead a handcuffed Neo out of the revolving
doors, forcing his head down as they push him into the
dark sedan.

Trinity watches in the rearview mirror of her motorcycle.

TRINITY

Shit.

20 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

20

CLOSE ON a camera monitor; a wide angle view of a white
room where Neo is sitting at a table alone. We MOVE INTO
the monitor, entering the room as if the monitor was a
window.

At the same moment, the door opens and the Agents enter.
Agent Smith sits down across from Neo. A thick manila
envelope slaps down on the table. The name on the file:
"Anderson, Thomas A."

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED:

20

AGENT SMITH

As you can see, we've had our eye on you for some time now, Mr. Anderson.

He opens the file. Paper rattle marks the silence as he flips several pages. Neo cannot tell if he is looking at the file or at him.

AGENT SMITH

It seems that you have been living two lives. In one life, you are Thomas A. Anderson, program writer for a respectable software company. You have a social security number, you pay your taxes and you help your landlady carry out her garbage.

The pages continue to turn.

AGENT SMITH

The other life is lived in computers where you go by the hacker alias Neo, and are guilty of virtually every computer crime we have a law for.

Neo feels himself sinking into a pit of shit.

AGENT SMITH

One of these lives has a future. One of them does not.

He closes the file.

AGENT SMITH

I'm going to be as forthcoming as I can be, Mr. Anderson. You are here because we need your help.

He removes his sunglasses, his eyes are an unnatural ice-blue.

AGENT SMITH

We know that you have been contacted by a certain individual. A man who calls himself Morpheus. Whatever you think you know about this man is irrelevant. The fact is that he is wanted for acts of terrorism in more countries than any other man in the world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AGENT SMITH (CONT'D)

He is considered by many authorities to be the most dangerous man alive.

He leans closer.

AGENT SMITH

My colleagues believe that I am wasting my time with you but I believe you want to do the right thing. It is obvious that you are an intelligent man, Mr. Anderson, and that you are interested in the future. That is why I believe you are ready to put your past mistakes behind you and get on with your life.

Neo tries to match his stare.

AGENT SMITH

We are willing to wipe the slate clean, to give you a fresh start and all we are asking in return is your cooperation in bringing a known terrorist to justice.

Neo nods to himself.

NEO

Yeah. Wow. That sounds like a real good deal. But I think I have a better one. How about I just give you the finger --

He does.

NEO

And you give me my phone call!

Agent Smith puts his glasses back on.

AGENT SMITH

You disappoint me, Mr. Anderson.

NEO

You can't scare me with this Gestapo crap. I know my rights. I want my phone call!

Agent Smith smiles.

(CONTINUED)

AGENT SMITH

And tell me, Mr. Anderson, what good is a phone call if you are unable to speak?

The question unnerves Neo and strangely he begins to feel the muscles in his jaw tighten. The standing Agents snicker, watching Neo's confusion grow into panic.

Neo feels his lips grow soft and sticky as they slowly seal shut, melding into each other until all traces of his mouth are gone.

Wild with fear, he lunges for the door but the Agents restrain him, holding him in the chair.

AGENT SMITH

You are going to help us, Mr. Anderson, whether you want to or not.

Smith nods and the other two rip open his shirt. From a case taken out of his suit coat, Smith removes a long, fiber-optic wire tap.

Neo struggles helplessly as Smith dangles the wire over his exposed abdomen. Horrified, he watches as the electronic device animates, becoming an organic creature that resembles a hybrid of an insect and a fluke worm.

Thin, whisker-like tendrils reach out and probe into Neo's navel. He bucks wildly as Smith drops the creature which looks for a moment like an uncut umbilical cord --

-- before it begins to burrow, its tail thrashing as it worms its way inside.

Screaming, Neo bolts upright in bed.

He realizes that he is home. Was it a dream? His mouth is normal. His stomach looks fine. He starts to take a deep, everything-is-okay breath when --

The PHONE RINGS.

It almost stops his heart. It continues RINGING, building pressure in the room, forcing him up out of bed, sucking him in with an almost gravitational force. He answers it, saying nothing.

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

This line is tapped so I must be brief.

NEO

The Agents --

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

They got to you first, but they've underestimated how important you are. If they knew what I know, you would probably be dead.

NEO

What are you talking about? What the hell is happening to me?

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

You're the One, Neo. You see, you may have spent the last few years looking for me, but I've spent most of my life looking for you.

Neo feels sick.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Do you still want to meet?

NEO

... Yes.

MORPHEUS (V.O.)

Go to the Adams Street bridge.

CLICK. He closes his eyes, unsure of what he has done.

22

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

22

It is just beyond the middle of the night; that time when it seems there are no rules and everything feels unsafe. Neo's boots scrape against the concrete. Every pair of eyes he passes seems to follow him. Rain pours from a black sky.

As he reaches the bridge, headlights creep in behind him. He turns just as the car slides quickly to a stop beside him. The back door opens.

TRINITY

Get in.