

SHOCK VALUE

by

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Darkness.

We hear approaching Footsteps.

A METAL DOOR OPENS into a DARK room. Two Silhouetted figures crowd the entrance, by their shape- A man and a Woman.

The woman is a RESEARCHER [Primp, Leopard Rim Glasses, Stark Gray Lab Coat, Clipboard in hand] and she ushers the man inside.

RESEARCHER
And here is our stop.

HIGH ANGLE DUTCH WIDE: The MAN wades into the dark room.

RESEARCHER (CONT'D)
Welcome to your room Teacher,
Please take a moment to get
acquainted... You'll conduct your
session here this evening. Upon
completion - I will return back
here to debrief with your
compensation in hand. When you're
ready, have a seat. We begin
momentarily

TEACHER
Eh, where do I sit? Its kind of--

-- The Metal door SLAMS shut. Kicking on the dingy OVERHEAD LIGHTS

TEACHER (CONT'D)
...Dark

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

The Room is made up of sheer Concrete walls. 2 INTERROGATION MIRROR'S stretch across the center and rear walls and in the middle of the room, idles a METAL DESK & CHAIR.

Teacher [a lanky copywriter, Cracked Wire-Frames Glasses, Day-Blazer, High-waisted flats, White dress-shirt, & Comb-slicked hair] wanders over to the REAR MIRROR

Cupping his eyes trying to peer through...

Nothing.

From his front pocket he snatches out a pack of CIGARETTES, sparks a lighter, grabs a seat at the desk, and takes notice of the strange items laid out..

An INTERCOM SPEAKER pierces the silence - from above

<p>INTERCOM (O.S, Above) Hello Teacher-</p>	<p>TEACHER (shaken) -Ah Shit! (cont'd) ..Uh.. H-Hello?</p>
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INTERCOM (CONT'D)
Thank you for joining us. Please confirm - on the desk in front of you is supplied a Questionairre, a Desk-bell, a Microphone, and a Switchboard.

TEACHER
uh...ok sure.. Questions.. yep, and you got the Bell, Microphone..and Board, looks like those are all here

INTERCOM
On the Switchboard - Please read out the first and last labeled signs

TEACHER
Well, first switch says 50 volts and last one says 450 volts.. with a skull next to it..

INTERCOM
Excellent. Lets begin, please rest your palm atop the Desk-bell.

Teacher rests his palm atop the Desk-Bell.
The OVERHEARD LIGHTS flicker and we hear an electrical humming..

TEACHER SEIZES. HIS PALMS CLENCH. HAIRS SHOOT UP & TEETH BEGIN TO GRIND.

The Electrical humming wanes as fast as it began.

Teacher reels back .

TEACHER
(gasping)
AH! Oh god! Oh- the hell?

INTERCOM

--To better illustrate the Students experience, we believe it is only fair that you receive a shock similar to what Student will undergo. On a scale of 50-450, how many volts did you feel that you received?

TEACHER

..Probably like 150 something?

INTERCOM

Interesting, however, incorrect. That was 50 volts.

(cont'd)

Teacher, are you familiar with the phrase 'Can't teach an old dog new tricks'

TEACHER

Ye-Yeah I've heard it

INTERCOM

This Study aims to do exactly that. Metaphorically: *To teach an old dog new words*. Reading off the list document - You will instruct Student to analyze and remember all word-pairs. When Student answers incorrectly, you will refer to switchboard and administer punishment in the form of shock. Beginning at 50 volts, then moving along the row, increasing in voltage for each additional incorrect response. You will circle each incorrect response, flip a switch, then move on to the next Word-pair. Repeating this procedure until all word-pairs are successfully learned. Now, its time to meet your student, please ring the desk-bell.

Teacher eyes the Desk-Bell.

TEACHER

No..I think I got the picture

INTERCOM

It is imperative that you meet your student, Please ring the desk-bell

Teacher gazes at the bell.. swiftly rings it.

A LIGHT ILLUMINATES THE CENTER WINDOW AND WE SEE..

A MAN... STRAPPED into a WOODEN CHAIR.. in ANOTHER DARK ROOM exactly like TEACHERS..The man is motionless and quiet.

TEACHER

..has he just..been there?

INTERCOM

Please greet your student and inform them of the session this evening.

Teacher presses down the Microphone.

TEACHER

(blaring through feedback)
..Hello?

STUDENT

(Shielding his ears)
GAHHH Damn!!

TEACHER

Oh! are you alright?

STUDENT

Cut the volume will ya?! My implants going - Ah!

TEACHER

..ehh
(adjusts a volume scroll)
Hows this?

STUDENT

- yeah much better, thanks. Thought I put that in the notes...eh, you were saying something?

TEACHER

This is your Teacher speaking. Are you ready for class, Student?

STUDENT

-Yeah listen, this supposed to take long? I'm on lunch actually, got to be back pretty soon.

TEACHER

Lets get started then, shall we?

STUDENT

Funny you say that, I was chowing down a Chop-Cheese over by Prince's Deli when your billboard caught my eye. Yeah! Said to myself "Therapy? Paid? On a lunch-break? That's mind-body healing right there"

TEACHER

Solid Game Plan --

STUDENT

--Hold on, Is that you? Behind this glass here? You watching me?

TEACHER

(Turning to intercom)

Are you sure he's all there? He did mention something about an implant

INTERCOM

The student at times will be uncooperative, your job is to make sure he remembers the word pairs. Please proceed teacher.

STUDENT

Aye What was that? Someone speaking to you too? What's he supposed to be? Jesus?

INTERCOM

Teacher, please proceed with the question list.

STUDENT

Jesus paying you too?

TEACHER

(To Student)

Ahh.. Please listen carefully to the following word-pairs Deep-Ocean, Red-Shark, Floating-Plant, Now Question; what word was paired with: Deep-

STUDENT

..OCEAN..?

TEACHER

Right on next pair; Red-

STUDENT

-Shark, Floating-Plant

TEACHER

Well done! Next set; Sad - Blues,
Dance - Slow, Quiet - Pulse...
First: Sad

STUDENT

Dance

TEACHER

Actually its-

INTERCOM

-Teacher, please administer the
appropriate punishment followed by
correct answer.

Teachers looks at the switchboard. Eerie.

TEACHER

..That is incorrect. This is 50
Volts.

Teacher hits the 50v switch. Student flinches.

STUDENT

Aye! The hell was that!?

TEACHER

The correct answer is Blues

STUDENT

That's what I said!

TEACHER

..Next pair: Dance

STUDENT

'Dance'- Quiet then Slow - Pulse

TEACHER

Again incorrect, this is 100 volts

Teacher hits the 100V switch. Student tenses up.

STUDENT

Grrah! What the fuck guy?

TEACHER

Its Dance - Slow.

STUDENT

I said that! Word for word!

TEACHER

(to Intercom)

Are you certain this guy's okay?
I'm not sure he's able to hear all
that well. I think he has the words
but..

INTERCOM

Please continue, Teacher.

TEACHER

Alright.. I just don't want to fry
his hearing thing..

INTERCOM

Though shocks may seem painful they
cause no permanent damage.

Beat.

TEACHER

(to student)

Lets move on shall we?

STUDENT

Just going to ignore me? You know
that was Bullshit!

TEACHER

Next Set: Silent - Valley, Salted -
Desert, Shaded - Meadow,. Ok, lets
take it one at a time: First pair:
Silent -

STUDENT

- Meadow

TEACHER

Again incorrect-

STUDENT

-Thats exactly what you said!
Silent -Meadow then Salted - Valley
then Shady-desert!

TEACHER

150 volts. Its actually Silent-
Valley.

Hitting 150 volts, Student CLENCHES UP in his chair.

STUDENT

This a fucking joke to you? You
just laughing it up back there?

TEACHER
Just take it slow and listen
carefully

STUDENT
shut the fuck up

TEACHER
Right...Next pair: Salted-

STUDENT
Dick Cheese

Teacher is stunned. Student chuckles.

INTERCOM
Continue, Teacher

TEACHER
But that wasn't even an answer

INTERCOM
Uncooperative behavior will also
constitute as incorrect responses.
Proceed.

TEACHER
You hear that?

STUDENT
You hear me, bitch?!

Teacher hits the 200v switch. Student JOLTS UP. before falls
into the chair. And giggles silently to himself

TEACHER
Out of your system?

STUDENT
(nasaly mocking)
Out of your system, Student? Ready
for me, student? Cuffs tight
enough, Student? Shall we commence
the probing?--

Teacher hits the 250v switch. Student Seizes before
collapsing back into the chair.

STUDENT (CONT'D)
GAHH! Fuck!

TEACHER
Enough! Moving on: Eternal-Dream,
Itching-Desire, --

STUDENT

-- Is that all we're doing here?
'12 Riddles' in a fucking Shock
Collar? I signed on for Therapy!

TEACHER

Actually, this is a learning
experiment.

STUDENT

Yeah? What makes you the teacher?
Lets spice things up eh? I got a
riddle for you.

Teacher strains in his chair, annoyed.

TEACHER

No, I'll ask the questions here --

STUDENT

So get this, You have a Cat. And
One day hes shuffling up his litter
looking to unload for evening.
Little does he know there's a worm
crawling in there, somewhere. So he
plops a squat and proceeds with
business. Next day, somethings off
about him, he didn't come wake you
up, doesn't respond to his name,
hes being weird about the sun, and
there's something else..

TEACHER

Real fascinating but lets stay on--
-

STUDENT

-- Something new, maybe an acquired
taste or a new idea, whatever it
is, He now loves Dirt and I mean
loves it. And its strange because
on the outside he seems like the
very same kitten you brought into
your home and loved so dearly. But
now- hes rolling around in muck,
creeping in shadows, acting in ways
he'd never done before. So tell me
- Is that still your cat or is it
now the worm - How do you know
where one begins and the other
ends?

TEACHER
(pinching his forehead)
I-I don't know..

STUDENT
Exactly right, good answer. Its a
doozy huh? You personally I think
its-

INTERCOM
--Teacher.

TEACHER
Alright! alright!

Hitting the 300v switch. Student SUSPENDS, screaming through
his teeth.

Falling limply back in the chair. Student catches his breathe

STUDENT
--GAH FUCK! The fuck was that for?!
Fuck this! I'm done. Get me outta
here.

Teacher, throwing up his hands, relieved.

INTERCOM
Please continue to next set.

TEACHER
(beat)
What? He said hes done. Isn't this
where we cut it off?

INTERCOM
Until student has successfully
learned all word-pairs the
experiment must go on.

STUDENT
Aye, Someone coming to get me? I
told you I'm on a crunch here.

TEACHER
What should I say? I mean..?

INTERCOM
Begin from the top of next page.

TEACHER
(to student)
..Lets move to next question --

STUDENT

Aye, how bout you fuck off and get me out of here, huh?

TEACHER

Student, it is imperative that you cooperate and we'll get you out of here asap alright?

STUDENT

--Fuck you, you snake-oil shrink, You ain't shit from me.

TEACHER

350 volts.

Hitting 350 volts. Student WREATHES .

STUDENT

AHH-- FUCK! FUCK! I told you I'm done here! Get me out! I got nothing more to say! I don't want any part of this.

Teacher slumps back into his chair, pinching his forehead.

INTERCOM

Please continue

TEACHER

(to intercom)

...For how long? He's got've survived at least 3 seizures by now. You see him right? His brains probably sloshing around in there like soup.

INTERCOM

Though the shocks can be extremely painful they do not impose any permanent damage

TEACHER

(to intercom)

Okay, but what does that mean really?

INTERCOM

The shocks do not leave any lasting damage. Similar voltages have been on rodent studies.

TEACHER
 (to intercom)
 That's just- that doesn't seem
 right...

INTERCOM
 Please go on, Teacher.

TEACHER
 ..its just... We've barely gotten
 through 3 questions and there isn't
 a lot of switches left..

INTERCOM
 For Students sake, We must continue
 until they have successfully
 remembered all Word-Pairs. Please
 go on

TEACHER
 (to student)
 Student, How're you feeling now?

STUDENT
 Does it matter Shrink-fuck? You're
 just going to Zap me retarded

TEACHER
 Well, were skipping to the next
 group, okay?

STUDENT
 Fuck you

TEACHER
 Just listen please, for your sake:
 Vapor-Mist, Vibration - Sound,
 Pressure - Air. First Question:
 Vapor

The student doesn't reply.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 Please answer.

Teacher mouths the answer. Student doesn't move.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 Its the other word for Fog come on.

INTERCOM
 Teacher-

TEACHER
 (to intercom)
 -Okay! 'Proceed! Proceed! Proceed!'
 I fucking heard!!
 (cont'd, to Student)
 ..Student, if you do not answer I
 will have to mark that as
 incorrect.

Student hacks up, and spits unto the Window.

Beat.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 400 volts.

Hitting 400v switch. Student violently thrashes before
 collapsing limp.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 ..The correct..

Student groans. Painfully Adjusting himself up.

Teacher looks on.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
 ..No. No more. I'm done.

Teacher stands and backs away from the desk.

INTERCOM
 Go on please

TEACHER
 No-I'm sorry I can not go on. Look
 at him. Either hes on something or
 hes doing this all on purpose. I-

INTERCOM
 The experiment requires you to
 continue.

Teacher lights up a cigarette and paces.

TEACHER
 (Turning to the rear
 window)
 No I can't. I'm not going to kill
 this man.

INTERCOM
 Though shocks may-

TEACHER

Can be extremely painful?! I
fucking heard you!! I don't buy it!
Just look at him!

INTERCOM

Whether Student likes it or not, it
is for his own sake and it is
imperative that you continue,
Teacher.

TEACHER

Well, thats tough shit. This man
has been screaming murder and I
refuse to go on any longer.

INTERCOM

It is absolutely essential that you
continue.

TEACHER

No! I will not kill this man!

INTERCOM

We are responsible for anything
that happens to student, please
continue.

TEACHER

No I just...I can't. I-

Beat.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

..you say he's not actually hurting
that much.. you promise that?

INTERCOM

Yes.

TEACHER

And you accept responsibility?

INTERCOM

That is correct. Go on please.

Teacher ashes his smoke, leering over his desk. Staring at
indecision

He sits Down

TEACHER

..Let's just try this again, okay?

STUDENT
 (quietly)
 ..Ok..

TEACHER
 Yeah? Alright. Vibration--

STUDENT
 Ya mothers legs after I get up on
 out of this---

Teacher strains for a moment and hits 450v switch. Student
 violently thrashes before collapsing motionless.

Student is motionless breathing heavily.

TEACHER
Hey.. Student? You okay? ..Pal?
 (Intercom)
 Aye! I- I think you call for
 someone, hes not moving!

INTERCOM
 Continue please.

TEACHER
 What? No! We're at the end of the
 line here! Aren't we done?

INTERCOM
 The experiment requires you to
 continue until student has learned
 all word-pairs.

TEACHER
 There's no more switches and there
 sure as shit isn't anything left in
 there to teach. I'm not doing it.

INTERCOM
 If we stop now we will have to
 discontinue the experiment

TEACHER
 What more do you want? What do you
 want me to do?! You said he wasn't
 going to be hurt and Look at what
 you've done - He's a fucking
 vegetable!

INTERCOM
 As we've said We are responsible
 for anything that happens to
 student, go on.

TEACHER

(to student)

No no.. Hey! Hey pal! Listen I'm on your side huh? Here's a hint, it rhymes with hair but without the H in front, okay? So Pressure--. What is that word that goes with Pressure?

Student slowly and painstakingly turns his palm.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Good man, just answer okay? One finger for air, two fingers for.. Fucking blair.. Again, one finger for air.. Come on

Student lifts his head, looking straight into Teachers eyes. His hand unfurls a middle finger. He smiles weakly.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Ok. Nice. Next group. Eternal-Dream, Itching-Desire, Burning-passion. Okay? Easy. The word for Eternal: One for dream. Two for ..I don't know even doesn't matter

Student unfurls his other palm. Middle finger up. Grimacing.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

....please man.

He holds firm.

INTERCOM

Continue, please.

Student painfully hacks up and spits. It dribbles down his chin.

TEACHER

(shaking, looking away)

..incorrect..450 Again..Dream.

Hitting 450 again. STUDENT thrashes like a lifeless doll.

He rag-dolls limp, lifeless, small wisps of steam rise from aside his head. *HIS IMPLANT IS FRIED.*

TEACHER rises out his seat.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Hey..aye! Someone go check on him! Student? Student! Someone come in!

INTERCOM
Please flip the switch again.

TEACHER
No! Fuck that. Fuck all that. I'm
done! No fucking more!

He raps on the window. Student is non-responsive.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Hey Cut it out man! Wake up!
Please! Come on! Wake Up!
(backing up, walking
toward rear window)
Is he dead? Is he fucking--?! Hey!
Answer me!

INTERCOM
You didn't have any other choice
did you?

TEACHER
What're you saying!? You said it
was safe! you promised! You said it
was! What did I just...

INTERCOM
Please go on, Teacher.

TEACHER
SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

SUBJECT
(faint)
Death wheeze

TEACHER
Hey! Hey! Stay with me!

Silence.

Teacher rushes to the the Metal door. It opens into a DARK
HALLWAY. He shouts down it.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
(down hallway)
We need a doctor in here! Somebody!
(to student)
Hey Bud! Stay with me alright?! OK?

INTERCOM
You had no other choice, Didn't
you?

TEACHER

You kept pushing me! And pushing me! I fought it! You saw how I fought it! I didn't want any part of this..any fucking part..But you!

Silence.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

You said it wouldn't kill him!?!
You said! What did you do? What..

Silence.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

WHAT DID YOU MAKE ME DO?!

A BUZZER blares from the hallway. A figure now stands at the door.

RESEARCHER

Congratulations Teacher. Your session is complete. As promised here is your compensation -- Ah!

The TEACHER LUNGES at the RESEARCHER. She runs off, dropping her CLIPBOARD and Paperwork. In the frenzied dash, TEACHER slips on the paper, and crashes into a wall.

TEACHER

WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

TEACHER leans up against the wall and gazes down a Dark Corridor of endless rooms. The RESEARCHER, now distant, seems like an Ant

INT. DARK HALLWAY

Papers still tickle down.

TEACHER

Hey! Get Back! A man is dying in here!

As he rises to his feet. He takes notice of the papers.

Money and documents scatter along the hallway. TEACHER picks up a sheet. *ITS A SCRIPT & IT READS:*

"Please continue Teacher. It is absolutely essential that you Continue. You have no other choice didn't you?"

In a neighboring room - strange sounds eek out.

The Door is cracked open and TEACHER peers in. Seeing:

INT. EMPTY ROOM

An EMPTY ROOM with A SINGLE METAL CHAIR LADDEN IN LEATHER STRAPS at the center.

Teacher encroaches slowly.. a rickety mechanical whirring emanates from the room...

A PROJECTOR comes alive, blinding TEACHER, and rolls PROJECTED FOOTAGE over TEACHER. The speakers comes alive.

O.S
(groans)

O.S. 2
Wow That was great, Might just be
the one!

The voices sound like RESEARCHER and STUDENT

O.S. STUDENT
(Student)
Yeah I really felt that one. Do you
know where this is airing on?

O.S. RESEARCHER
Lets Cut all around!
(cont'd, amid themselves)
We're actually thinking about--

The footage CLIPS OUT for a moment before the projector rolls again

O.S. RESEARCHER (CONT'D)
Okay from the top of the page, with
the ear. 3, 2, 1

STUDENT screams.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM.

Back in TEACHERS ROOM now: WE GAZE THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

TEACHER, SILHOUETTE, stands as Footage plays over him.

O.S STUDENT
(footage)
Cut the volume will ya? My implants
going - Ah!

TEACHER tries to reach up and almost grasp STUDENT..

O.S. RESEARCHER
(Footage, deadpan)
How about this.

TEACHER looks down at hands....clenching them.. pressing them against his head...

O.S SUBJECT
(footage)
Yeah much better, thanks. Thought I put that in the notes...eh, you saying something?

O.S. RESEARCHER
(footage, deadpan)
Are you ready for class?

O.S. STUDENT
Yeah listen, this supposed to take long?

BLACK.

FIN.

Over a thousand people were tested in the 1970 Stanley Milgram Experiments...

70% of participants would hit the final switch. *Twice.*

