

The Journal of a Neurotic

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INT.

A shot of a radio. A broadcast message about about internet being restored to the public plays.

CUT TO:

INT. DVD SHOP. DAY.

Cluttered, lively DVD shop. Posters on the walls, shelves crammed with DVDs. VHS boxes are perched awkwardly atop the shelves too, hinting at their resurgence. Regulars gossip. Shop assistant Peter zips between customers. Andrew, the owner, stands behind the till stirring a cup of tea while reading a newspaper. Two customers, Lee and Mick, walk up.

LEE

Excuse me, do you have that film with that bloke in?

ANDREW

I'm sorry?

MICK

You know, that film. With that bloke.

MICK

And that lass who's, like, really fit.

ANDREW

You'll have to be more specific.

LEE

You must have heard of it?

ANDREW

Well I probably have, but you're being a little vague...

LEE

How can you not have heard of it, like? Everyones seen it.

MICK

Even his Mam's seen it.

LEE

What does that mean, like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICK

Well she hasn't seen nowt.

LEE

Don't talk about my Mam like that.

MICK

Well she hasn't, has she?

LEE

Your always having a go at my Mam aren't you?

ANDREW

Gentlemen, please. There is no need to argue. Now do you know the name of the film?

LEE

Of course, man. Everyone knows what its called. Don't you know what it's called?

ANDREW

No, that's why I'm asking you.

LEE

Oh, haway Mick. Waste of time this, man.

Lee and Mick leave. Andrew has his face in his hands.

ANDREW

Peter, take over I'm going in the back.

Andrew goes into the back room of the shop. There is is a device there under construction.

ANDREW

I won't have to put up with riffraff like that for much longer. Soon my plan shall be complete. Soon I shall have a new internet. A better internet. A faster and powerful internet. A safe internet, a free internet. Am internet without fear. One run by me. And I shall call it... "the Andrew-net".

As Andrew speaks he looks at a switched off computer monitor, which shows his reflection.

INT. ANDREW'S MAN CAVE. DAY.

Andrew writes on a blackboard. There are equations on it, and post it notes on all of the walls.

ANDREW

... so if my calculations are correct, once the parts have been acquired and assembled once we have found a suitable transmitter, the Andrew-net will be fully operational.

We see him talking to a row of empty chairs. He runs and sits down on one of them.

ANDREW

Brilliant.

Andrew sits another chair.

ANDREW

Yes, brilliant.

He sits on another chair.

ANDREW

I think its a ludicrous idea.

Andrew runs back to the blackboard.

ANDREW

Quiet, nobody asked you. Now, you all heard the broadcast the other day. We have to get the Andrew-net on before the internet comes back. That means we have less time than we thought, and we'll need some help to speed up the process. Who can we trust?

Andrew runs to another seat.

ANDREW

What about those two chavs that always hang around the shop?

Andrew runs back to the blackboard.

ANDREW

Lee and Mick? Yes, it should be easy to convince toss idiots to do my bidding.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Of course the other problem is
what could be used as the
transmitter?

Andrew's wife Polly knocks on the door.

POLLY

Andy, dinner's ready.

ANDREW

I'll be down in a minute my angel.

Andrew has a eureka moment.

ANDREW

Angel? Of course.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. PUB. DAY.

ANDREW

What I am asking you to assist me
with is nothing short of epochal.
The epoch in question, of course,
is the rising of a new digital
dawn. And yours truly, Andrew D.
Wilcox, will be its architect.
However, before my grand plan can
be accomplished, there is some
gear that I need for. You two
clowns are going to acquire it for
me.

MICK

Smack?

ANDREW

No.

MICK

Ganja?

LEE

Paracetamol?

Andrew slams his fist onto the table.

ANDREW

It's not drugs, it's electrical
equipment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lee and Mick look at him with confusion.

ANDREW

You know, wires. Computer parts.
That kind of thing.

Lee and Mick nod.

Andrew passes them a piece of paper.

ANDREW

Here's the list of items and where
you can get them.

LEE

So what's in it for us?

ANDREW

A Mars bar each.

MICK

I prefer Snickers.

ANDREW

Ok, a Snickers and a Mars bar.

LEE & MICK (IN UNISON)

Done.

CUT TO:

Montage of Lee and Mick getting the equipment.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE. NIGHT.

Lee and Mick drive across the bridge surrounded by the
equipment.

CUT TO:

INT. DVD SHOP.

Andrew talks to a customer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

It stands to reason that Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron was the first truly great Western of the 21st Century, ushering in a new wave of cowboys and equestrians. Not only that, but as I have already stated, its score was composed by none other than Hans Zimmer. I rest my case.

CUSTOMER 1

Well, I see what your saying, but I think I'm looking for something a bit more mature.

Lee and Mick arrive with the parts.

LEE

Where should we put these boss?

ANDREW

In the back.

They go into the back room, as the customer suspiciously eyes up the electrical equipment.

ANDREW

New shelving. If its something more adult you're looking for might I suggest the second truly great western of the 21st century Open Range. You see the final gunfight is quite possibly the greatest in all of cinema...

FADE TO:

EXT. ANGEL OF THE NORTH.

Andrew ascends to the Angel of the North, followed by Lee, Mick, and Polly. Lee and Mick struggle to carry the device up the hill.

ANDREW

Make haste.

LEE & MICK (IN UNISON)

Make what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

Just get a move on.

Andrew stands at the bottom of the Angel with his device, while Lee, Mick and Polly watch him.

ANDREW

The day is finally upon us. Soon
it will all be mine.

The group stand in the woods near the Angel. Andrew is holding the device, with wires leading up to it. Polly is recording him on her phone.

ANDREW

This is a... No, no, no. Polly I told you not to film in portrait mode. Turn the phone around.

POLLY

Does it matter?

ANDREW

It looks more professional in landscape mode, so landscape me.

Lee and Mick suppress laughter. Andrew looks confused then realises what he has just said.

ANDREW

Thats' not not what I meant.

POLLY

What's so funny?

Mick whispers something in her ear. She laughs.

ANDREW

Stop laughing. (Pause) Are you still recording?

Polly nods while still laughing.

ANDREW

Stone me, I can't have this in my moment of triumph. Start the recording again.

Polly presses the record button, then presses it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDREW

This is a film of my experiment, because this is a day that shall be mentioned in the history books and it must be recorded for for future generations. Once I press this button, the internet shall come back on. No longer will we have to...

LEE

Hold on won't that put you out of business?

ANDREW

Eh?

LEE

Well the punters buy DVDs because can't watch things on streaming because there's no Internet. If the internet's back, then streaming services will start up again.

POLLY

He's right honey.

ANDREW

As lord and master of the internet, I shall be in control of the streamers. Making the kinds of programmes they should have been making long ago. I can see it now: Andrew's Premium Streaming Emporium, the first streaming service to make an original sitcom based in an aquarium: "Tank You Very Much". With a revolutionary pay-per-rewind model, I... we, will become rich beyond our wildest dreams. Besides, the shop will still have the collectors market. (Pause) Now I've lost my place damn you... Oh hell, I'll just start it.

Andrew activates the device. It begins powering on, glowing, then after a few seconds smoke comes out of it and it switches off. Andrew looks deflated.

MICK

Is it supposed to do that?

((CONTINUED))

CONTINUED: (3)

Polly and Lee look at him.

Andrew walks up to the device.

ANDREW

All that time and work. Wasted.

He starts to turn away, but then turns back.

ANDREW

Why won't you work you bastard?

Andrew kicks the device, but hurts his foot in the process. After shaking the pain off he turns back to the others. Polly hugs him.

POLLY

I'm sorry your... Thingy didn't work.

ANDREW

No it's all right. It was a hopeless plan anyway. I mean using statue as a transmitter? Even if I had something transmit the signal, it was pure hubris to think that I could be the saviour of the world wide web. Some sort of online messiah.

LEE

Oh no, he's starting up again.

ANDREW

Why I should be using my knowledge to help the world, not for myself and then telling people it was to help the world. I mean actually helping the world. Helping to make a better world. A safe world, a free world. A world without fear. One not run by me, but that I hopefully may have a not insignificant role in. This is the dawn of a new me. A better me. A safe me, a free me. A me without fear.

MICK

What do we do with this?

He points to the device.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANDREW

Oh just throw it away.

Mick picks up the device and throws it. It lands close to the Angel. Then suddenly turns back on then explodes taking the Angel of the North with it. The group looks in horror.

ANDREW

Leg it!

They all run away.

THE END

NFC Feature Short Challenge 2025