

"SWITCH"

Screenplay

by

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FADE IN

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL - THEATRE ROOM

Electronic hospital equipment routinely buzzes and beeps.
A clear tube with fatty substances splattering inside.
Thick dark blood snaking down another.
A tray with serious looking instruments, glinting under
florescent lights.
An intense cutting sound pierces the air.
A bright, automated laser cuts decisively, blinding us.

INT. SPECIMEN ROOM

DR ERBERHAUST lifts up a white sheet carefully.
A humanoid figure is reflected in his thick, heavy-set
glasses.

DR ERBERHAUST

Yes, certainly a prime
example.

Eberhaust pulls a flop of hair back from his forehead and
pastes it over his scalp, waiting for a response.

DR ERBERHAUST

As soon as he became
available, I thought of you.

CASEY SUDERMANN looks under the sheet.
His eyes close in, working round, taking it all in.
The corner of his mouth curls into a tight smile.

SUDERMANN

He's perfect.

INT. THEATRE ROOM

DR ERBERHAUST

This new laser is much more
precise than the last model.
It leaves absolutely no
visible scar on the patient
once everything is back
together.

DR ERBERHAUST (Cont'd)

You are lucky you will be learning on these models, back when I started this clinic, well, it was a different story.

The laser joins the cut where it started in the centre of the patient's forehead.

It pulls back on a folding robotic arm and away.

HANS KLUMM places his rubber-gloved hands on the skull top, his fingertips firmly gripping the freshly shaven head. As he works his hands slightly left and right the cap comes free with a crunch.

Hans puts the cap carefully aside, revealing a clammy brain.

Shiny metal forceps lower in between the skull and brain. One of them, shaking, slips and slides over the sweaty brain's grey surface.

DR ERBERHAUST

Be careful with that brain dammit! This is the most delicate and important part of the procedure, this is not a simulation.

The forceps, mildly shaking, pull back.

DR ERBERHAUST

A degree from UCL granted you this assistants position but it does not grant you to be clumsy in my theatre! Mr Sudermann is one of my best customers. Are you trying to render him unable to sign his chequebook?

Taking over, with a steady hand, Dr Eberhaust re-inserts the forceps into the cavity with adept precision.

Finding the correct foundation first time.

The brain is lifted out of view.

DR ERBERHAUST (O.S)

That's it.

Casey Sudermann's docile face looks on, his brain removed and skull cap missing, oblivious to the whole procedure.

INT. ERBERHAUST'S OFFICE

SUDERMANN

So, why would anyone want to give this up?

DR ERBERHAUST

Let's say he came into some
(beat) financial
difficulties.

SUDERMANN

Will he be moving into my
body?

DR ERBERHAUST

No, he could not afford your
current vessel. We have
already relocated him. A 48
year old. A smoker too. One
of the cheapest we had.

INT. THEATRE

A ventilator pumps rhythmically.
The tools are now bloody and covered in dubious matter.

DR ERBERHAUST

That's it, lower the brain.
CAREFULLY this time.

An Adonis of a man sits in an operating chair.
In his open head Klumm eases Sudermann's brain.
Erberhaust pokes in various, sharp, electronic probes.
He studies readouts on a number of screens reeling out
undecipherable information.

DR ERBERHAUST

Right, we are good to go.
Seal him up. Then let's get
some lunch.

INT. TV NEWS STUDIO

Hot studio lights beam down, near melting the pancake makeup of four panelists.

Dr Erberhaust sits amongst them.

A heated discussion is in progress; three cameras slide in and out catching all the action.

KERRY LINKLATER scratches his greying beard and looks over the small spectacles resting on his broad nose.

LINKLATER

It is the the ethics behind your procedures not the practice which I find very hard to condone Dr Eberhaust. Underprivileged people selling their bodies for financial gain with immensely rich people in the sidelines waiting to buy them up. It's a similar situation to before the artificial growth of organs was commonplace. But this. This is on another level altogether. There have been rumours...

REV. PHILLIPS

Well the Church takes a different stance...

LINKLATER

...let me finish, rumours of diseased husks of carcasses used as replacements for body donors. In one such case the victim died only a few weeks after having the transplant.

REV. PHILLIPS

The Church's position is to completely oppose this practice. We emphatically believe it is against God's will (beat) cheating death like this...

DR ERBERHAUST

Who are you to say that we cannot progress. Science has achieved so many things, and brought our race so far. Religion has simply brought war.

The Reverend instinctively stroking the cross on his neck goes to spout a tirade of retribution, but is interrupted by...

LINKLATER

It is not that I disagree with progress Dr Eberhaust, I never said that, what I am strongly contesting is the way science is being used. It is just one more example of science being solely developed for monetary gain and preying on disadvantaged people. This is not progress!

REV. PHILLIPS

But the Church...

ANGLE BEHIND TV STUDIO CAMERAS

An audience member slips through the barriers. Runs awkwardly on-set through the cameras. Throws blood-red paint all over Dr Eberhaust, screaming indecipherable insults. It sprays out all over the other panelists.

CLOSE ON PANELIST TABLE

The INTERVIEWER jumps back out her chair holding out her hands looking over her ruined Chanel suit in horror. A microphone squeals feedback. Heavy security jump in trying to get hold of the rabid woman.

ANGLE BEHIND TV STUDIO CAMERAS

A Producer on the floor, holding clipboard and pen, watching the cacophony breaking out, nods his head in approval, knowing some good television was in progress.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Dr Erberhaust picks up the mirror. Casey Sudermann looks at his new face for the first time. Tracing a line over his forehead.

SUDERMANN

I can't see it at all. On the last one I could see the scar if I looked very close. There'll be no need for make-up at all this time.

DR ERBERHAUST

Yes it's a new laser we're using, it really is quite remarkable. As before, it will take a couple of months to fully adjust. There may be feelings of numbness, pins and needles, that sort of thing, but you know all this. And, Mr Sudermann, take care of this one wont you?

CUT TO VIEW OVER FAT MAN WATCHING TV, WE DOLLY TO TV PLAYING OUT TV ADVERT.

Cheesy 80's style corporate ADVERT for Erberhaust's clinic, think Paul Verhoven/Robocop/Total Recall/Starship Troopers.

INT. ERBERHAUST'S OFFICE - A YEAR LATER

Casey Sudermann sits, head bowed, in a leather chair.

DR ERBERHAUST

Well, the results are back. Been doing drugs again haven't you?

DR ERBERHAUST (cont'd)
You've done a splendid job of
burning out your nose canal.

Casey nods, head still down.

DR ERBERHAUST
Our worst fears have also
been confirmed. As we
suspected you have contracted
a strain of AIDS 2.

Casey now looks up, his face is gaunt and pock-marked.
Eyes red from sobbing.

DR ERBERHAUST
It's not too late. It has not
fully taken hold in the
brain, it can be flushed and
transplanted without
infecting the new host.

Dr Erberhaust puts a hand on Casey's shoulder.

DR ERBERHAUST
(to Klumm who has been taking notes)
Prepare for emergency
transfusion in theatre four.
Immediately.

Klumm hurriedly leaves the room, blurting instructions into
his communicator.

SUDERMANN
I fucked up again.

DR ERBERHAUST
It's nothing that can't be
fixed. You must learn to take
more care.

SUDERMANN
I really liked this body. The
women loved it too.

DR ERBERHAUST
I May I suggest something to
cheer you up?

INT. STORAGE CHAMBER

Casey shrugs along, still looking miserable.
Erberhaust stops at a container, brushes off the ice
crystals that have formed on the glass.
He slides the heavy metal door open.
Revealing a beautiful Eurasian woman.

She is a famous model.
Casey recognises her immediately.

SUDERMANN

Isn't that?

DR ERBERHAUST

Yes. She's on holiday in
another shell, she wants to
avoid the paparazzi, never
leave her alone apparently,
whatever measures she seems
to take. Naturally she came
to me. She instructed us that
she would not at all mind an
intermediate host, as it will
of course considerably lower
her bill.

Casey looks rather more happy now.

DR ERBERHAUST

You must understand, you will
not be able to leave the
foundation as we can't risk
the body being damaged.
Especially with your track
record. In the mean time you
can see what it feels like to
be, well, a woman. It could
be...

SUDERMANN

...fun.

A massive smile beaming across his face.

DR ERBERHAUST

Excellent. We will in the mean time make all efforts to find you a suitable new host. Now all we need is to prep you for surgery. And of course your signature. Here. And here. And there. With today's date. We already have your fund transfer details. I trust you're good for it Mr Sudermann. Your profession still pays well I take it?

ANGLE DOWN CORRIDOR

Rows of body containment units.
Erberhaust and Sudermann walk, arms linked, cheerfully chatting, off to theatre.

END