

The Silencer

by

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FADE IN ON:

EXT. URBAN CITY STREET - DAY

RALPH (30s) wanders through a crowd, bland business attire on his thin frame.

There's clearly a protest going on. Barricades and SCREAMING CROWDS. Political signs wave in the air.

One PROTESTOR throws a coffee cup at the "enemy's" side. It whizzes past Ralph's stoic face.

RALPH (V.O.)

If you read anything other than the net, you're aware of what philosophers sometimes say: "Some are born to greatness. Some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." That was originally Shakespeare. Or Kim Kardashian. I'm not so sure these days.

Some protestors start to chant. Ralph keeps walking - dead center between the two "sides."

PROTESTORS

America! America!

RALPH (V.O.)

Never mind who said it first. Or who gets dibs on the copyright claim. It's the thought that really counts. Whether it was the Bard or the Butt, the point *is* that they neglected to mention a fourth option: that Greatness can be stumbled into accidentally. By blind, dumb luck. Face first.

Another "missile" flies. This time, a slice of pizza. Scalding cheese hits A PROTESTOR with a SPLAT.

Ralph turns and gives one side a glare.

Sudden silence. All movement ceases - unnaturally.

Ralph swivels around and pins the other combatants with a look. A miraculous, instant calming effect.

Some PROTESTORS' lips still flap: but no sound emits.

A satisfied smile grows on Ralph's face. One he does his best to hide. He straightens his tie - keeps going.

INT. CORPORATE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Ralph steps through the entrance. He approaches the gate, and a UNIFORMED GUARD. The man yaps to a CO-WORKER, more interested in arguing than work:

GUARD

And that's when Rush Limbaugh said -

Ralph waves to him.

RALPH

Morning, Frank.

The Guard/Frank's eyes bug out: Fran Tarkington choked by Darth Vader. His words stop like a faucet turned off.

GUARD

(croaks)

Likewise. Same to you, Ralph!

Ralph swipes his security card, keeps going. An elevator yawns open. He steps inside.

INT. ELEVATOR

...and stands between two CORPORATE SUITS. A peaceful smile on his face. The suits have their own heated conversation underway.

SUIT #1

How the Hell could Trump build a wall?

SUIT #2

They're all here illegally. Don't you wanna kick out the trash?

Ralph nods at both. The suits' conversation chokes off quicker than the guard's. They stare at each other, in surprised dismay.

SUIT #1

Uh, how's things with the family, Ralph?

RALPH

Not bad. We're going on vacation next week.

SUIT #2

(beat)

Anyone catch The Daily Show last night?

SUIT #2

I ain't in the mood to talk about that. I was, but not anymore.

SUIT #1

Me neither. Hey - did you see the Starbucks menu today?

Ralph stares at the elevator door, face neutral.

RALPH (V.O.)

Then there's that *other* pithy saying: "With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility". That's from Plato, I think. Anyhow, it's a life lesson I'm learning. Ever since that fateful day, one week ago...

Ralph and his co-workers blur. We peek into the past..

INT. RALPH'S KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

Stereotypically middle class. Four people slouch at an Ikea table:

Ralph and pretty-but-tired wife ANNE (30s) on one side.

On the other side - three children: KIP (13) and twins STEPHI and ANDREW (both 17).

Kip SLURPS spaghetti. Stephi and Andrew glare at each other. Political fire in their adolescent eyes.

STEPHI

Trump's a fucking bigot!

ANDREW

You're just jealous of his success. He's proof that capitalism works, if you're smart and try hard enough. Sanders ain't worth the cost of his Rolex watch.

STEPHI

You mean, 'cause Bernie didn't inherit shit from Daddy Fred?

Ralph and Anne exchange weary glances.

RALPH

(whispers)

You wanna shut them down, or should I?

STEPHI

They're discussing political ideas - we should be proud!

RALPH

You think I don't hear this all the time at work? I just want peace and quiet when I'm home!

Andrew snarls at Stephi.

ANDREW

Socialist.

STEPHI

Oligarchic Pig!

Andrew sneers, clears his throat:

ANDREW

Trump's the one who'll Make America G-

Ralph glares at his son. For the briefest instant - time just stops.

Then starts again: a streaming film off "pause." Andrew continues. On a completely different topic this time:

ANDREW

Mom, what's your recipe for this sauce? It's really nice. And spicy!

Ralph smiles: confused but pleased.

RALPH (V.O.)

That's how I discovered my super-skills. Getting pissed off at my kids brought out the hidden power in me.

Stephi scowls - spoiling to pursue the fight.

STEPHI

(sneers)

Andrew - you're so sick of that slogan that you can't say it anymore!

Ralph turns his glare on her. Stephi flip-flops as well.

STEPHI

Um, did anyone hear Disturbed's new *Sound of Silence* cover? Seriously, it's major rad.

RALPH
 (mutters)
 You have no idea.

Ralph relaxes; accepts his newfound power. It feels comfortable... instantly.

ANNE
 (whispers)
 They stopped bickering. Did I miss something? What happened?

RALPH
 A miracle, you ask me.

Encouraged by the quiet, Kip perks up.

KIP
 Timmy ate boogers in class today!

Ralph shoots a super-powered glance at his youngest. But Kip rambles on, undeterred.

KIP
 Five of 'em. I counted. Three from the left. Two from the right.

Ralph frowns, disappointed.

RALPH (V.O.)
 That's when I uncovered the truth. Like all powers, mine had limitations. I could "silence" political strife. But everything else... remained fair game.

Reality blurs again - flows across time to Flashback #2.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Ralph and Anne stand in a cluster of middle-aged PARTY HOUNDS. Everyone's dressed to impress. Pockets of conversation dot the crowd:

Including: a RED HAired WOMAN and her LATINA FRIEND.

RED HAired WOMAN
 Hillary is so inspiring! How could you not vote for her? A Female President in our lifetime!

LATINA FRIEND
 One who can't keep her emails secure?

Ralph stink-eyes both women. Their conversation mutates quickly.

RED HAired WOMAN

What did you think of *Superman vs. Batman*?

LATINA FRIEND

(shrugs)

My boyfriend made me go. I fell asleep.

Ralph saunters through the crowd: Singles out political arguments one by one. Every debate gets sucked from the air - into his void.

He reaches Anne, who looks around, confused.

ANNE

Larry's shindigs are usually livelier. What's with this crowd today?

Ralph hands her a drink and smiles.

RALPH

Everyone's burned out on politics. Have a Mojito and relax! That's what parties are for.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - PRESENT DAY

The elevator continues to rise. Ralph adjusts his collar - it seems tight.

RALPH (V.O.)

For awhile, I simply basked in my glory. Then I decided it needed a name. "The Political Punisher"? Nah, too violent. "The Moderator"? No. Too lame. Then I decided to be literal. Which brought up the question: what costume should I wear?

INT. OLD NAVY - WOMEN'S WEAR SECTION - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ralph browses through outfits - ones that'd make Jane Fonda and Olivia Newton John ashamed.

Stephi and Andrew stand "prisoner" at his side: disgusted looks on their pimpled faces.

STEPHI

Dad, are you trying to tell us something? Are you transgender, I mean?

ANDREW

You mean, like Bruce? That fag...

STEPHI

That's "Caitlin" to you, bigot!

Ralph locates a FULL LENGTH BLACK SPANDEX JUMPSUIT. He lifts it up for a better view.

RALPH

That's not me. No way! Not there's nothing wrong with that. But I just need something to... exercise in. With fabric that lets all of me breathe.

STEPHI

Ew!

Ralph heads to the register. Avoids the grossed out look on her face.

RALPH

If you kids don't want to be seen with Dear Old Dad, head over to Hot Topic. Scat.

ANDREW

"Hot Topic"? That's for Kip. We're not thirteen!

RALPH

Go anywhere you want. I don't care. Meet me outside *Sew Crafty* in twenty minutes.

STEPHI

What the... fudge do you need there?

RALPH

I'm picking up fabric paint. Glow-in-the-dark-white. With glitter. Hopefully.

Andrew stares at his father, concerned.

ANDREW

Dad, Steph's full of shit with her "LBGT rights." Some things aren't natural...

STEPHI

Don't be such an oppressive shit!

Ralph glares at the teens. Both of them clam up; fast.

Ralph smiles and swipes his credit card. He's enjoying true peace - at last.

INT. ELEVATOR - PRESENT DAY

Ralph steps out, and ventures down the hall. COWORKERS wave on both sides.

Snippets of conversation fill the air. Some of which is business based. Other comments: more controversial.

COWORKER #1

How can anyone consider themselves humane, and not be pro-life?

COWORKER #2

Muslims are the real danger...

COWORKER #3

So are white, angry Christian males!

COWORKER #4

They're trying to abolish the 2nd Amendment.

COWORKER #5

That's what Amendments are for, dumb-ass!

Ralph ducks into the bathroom, far from the noise.

INT. BATHROOM

Ralph finds himself alone. It's so peaceful. The babble from the halls: reduced to just a hum.

Ralph unbuttons his shirt, revealing: that BLACK SPANDEX JUMPSUIT. It's embarrassingly form-fitting, but still looks good.

Hand-drawn on the chest: A BIG WHITE "S".

Ralph slicks his hair back ala: Clark Kent. He puts on glasses and buttons his shirt back up, all the way.

RALPH (V.O.)

"The Silencer" - that's what I chose for my new name. A champion of peace and tranquility - something sorely needed in this politically divided world. My super-senses tell me today's business agenda will go better than usual. For once, there'll be no side banter. We'll stick to business at hand.

Ralph steps from the bathroom... to a Boardroom across the hall.

INT. BOARDROOM

Ralph settles into a chair - cool and calm all the way.

The table bristles with CORPORATE TYPES. At least ten on each side. One with a BROOKS BROTHERS' SUIT talks over the others with macho energy:

BROOKS BROTHERS SUIT

Who caught Bill O'Reilly's speech today?

Ralph shoots the guy a look. The "Silencer Power" works its magic. Ralph's coworker shuts up - damned fast.

BROOKS BROTHERS SUIT

Never mind. What about our year end goals? Anyone brought numbers? I'm dying to see some hard and fast details!

SUDDENLY: A CARTOON TEXT BUBBLE appears above Brooks' head. Based on the lack of reactions around the table, it's obvious Ralph's the only one who sees.

INSERT OF BUBBLE: "Damn, lots of minorities in this room. Affirmative Action, you ask me."

Ralph frowns, disappointment on his face.

RALPH (V.O.)

That's when I realized fate had even more surprises for me. My new superpowers were surfacing. Forget Silencer. From now on, call me "Sub-text Man"!

Pop Up Bubbles rise over everyone's head.

Ralph squints. Starts to read...

RALPH (V.O.)

Little did I know the evil the World had in store...

FINAL FADE OUT: