

# The Grey Matter

A Short Film

Production Draft 10/30/12 (White Pages)

by  
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1 EXT. CITY ALLEYWAY - NIGHT 1

Off a desolate street, on the ground sprawled out between some trash cans lies the blood drenched and cubicle casually dressed body of SIMON PETERSON (30s).

His eyes burst open. He thrusts up into a sitting position - gasping for air. Attempting to stand, he collapses into a pile of garbage.

Supporting his weight on a trash can, he finally achieves uprightness. He surveys the alleyway and staggers towards the light of the nearby street.

2 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 2

Simon waits in shadow as a couple leaves the building. Once gone, he stealthily proceeds towards the entrance.

3 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 3

Simon studies himself in the mirror. Touching the back of his skull, he locates the wound. He attempts to look at it in the mirror, but it's obscured by blood and hair.

He takes a shower. Cleansed, he makes great effort to locate the wound with a compact mirror.

4 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT 4

Simon sits on a bench in a clinical examination room. A confident DOCTOR (30s) inspects his wound.

DOCTOR

This is quite a nasty gash you have here. You're lucky your brains didn't spill out all over the concrete.

(cracks himself up)

Don't worry. We'll patch you up and have you back on your feet in a heartbeat.

The doctor winks at him. Simon smiles ear to ear.

SIMON

Thanks Doc, I really appreciate it... wait... but this didn't actually happen did it?

DOCTOR

No. No it did not.

5 INT. HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICE - DAY

5

A forgettable florescent lit beige room. Simon is filling out paperwork for a new job. Stopping he rereads a section. He gets up and approaches the H.R. WOMAN (40s) at the main desk.

SIMON

Excuse me. Am I reading this correctly?

Pointing to a section of the paperwork.

SIMON (CONT'D)

If I refuse the health coverage I'll receive an extra \$1500 a year in payment.

The H.R. Woman takes the paperwork from him and reads it.

H.R. WOMAN

That is correct, but I wouldn't recommend refusing coverage... unless you're covered on your spouse's plan.

SIMON

Oh, I'm not married. But I could use all the extra cash I can get.

H.R. WOMAN

It only ends up being an extra \$28 a paycheck.  
(beat)  
Before taxes.

Simon's computes this information.

6 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

Simon stares at himself in the mirror, still wet from his shower. The CAMERA pulls back to reveal his head wound. It's massive, grotesque, a road kill wig.

Removing gauze from the medicine cabinet, he bandages his head.

7 INT. OFFICE - SIMON'S CUBICLE - DAY

7

Simon sits at an old computer. He's wearing his cubicle casual attire with the addition of a brown fedora. The hat conceals the majority of his bandage. Two COWORKERS point and chuckle as they drink coffee.

(CONTINUED)

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Hey deadbeat.

Simon turns, thinking the voice is one of his coworkers. He smiles and waves awkwardly. A gorgeous coworker, EMILY EATON (20s) passes his cubicle and Simon watches her entranced. She doesn't notice him.

MITCH (O.S.)

Keep dreaming, nerd.

Enter MITCH MILLER (30s) a cocksure fabulist and Simon's only friend. He drops a stack of manila folders on Simon's desk.

SIMON

Hey Mitch. I was just taking in the scenery.

Mitch sits on Simon's desk and looks over at Emily.

MITCH

Sure, she's fine as hell... but she will eat you alive. You can't handle a chick like that. Trust me. You wanna stay within your league.

SIMON

My league?

MITCH

You know, frumpy, pleasantly plump, three time divorcees.

Emily passes by again, they are both transfixed by her.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Don't waste brain cells thinking about an unattainable like Emily Eaton. Because if I'm not taking a bite outta that sweet pie... then you most certainly aren't.

SIMON

Thanks for the vote of confidence. I'll always treasure your little bites of penetrating advice.

MITCH

And what's with the hat? You look like Indiana Jones' embalmed corpse.

8

INT. OFFICE - COPY ROOM - DAY

8

Simon hums a tune to himself, breaking down cardboard boxes with a box cutter. Emily enters the room catching him off guard.

EMILY

Are you using the copier?

Startled, Simon slices the palm of his hand. He drops the box cutter and clutches his hands together.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Oh my god!!! Are you okay?!!

SIMON

(trying to stay cool)  
Oh yeah... fine.

EMILY

Did you cut yourself?

SIMON

Just a nick, really. Nothing to worry about.

EMILY

Lemme see.

She approaches and he recoils, backing into the wall.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I don't bite.

She takes his hand in hers. No blood.

SIMON

See, no big deal. Just a scare.

EMILY

Thank god, I thought we were emergency room bound for sure.

As she walks over to the copier Simon inspects his hand closer. There's a deep cut. Squeezing it reveals layers of tissue but astoundingly no blood.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'm Emily.

He quickly conceals his hand in his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Simon.

Emily changes the file in the copier. She gives Simon a good look up and down.

EMILY

Have we met before?

SIMON

No. Well I mean... maybe a few times... in passing.

CUT TO:

9 INT. OFFICE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - VARIOUS TIMES 9

A flashy fast cut montage where in Emily and Simon introduce themselves to each other several times through the years.

10 INT. OFFICE - COPY ROOM - CONTINUOUS 10

Mid-conversation, Emily is struggling to remember Simon.

SIMON

(Pointing)

Well, there's the hat, I guess.

EMILY

Yeah, the hat for sure, but I don't know, you're so... I don't know.

SIMON

I know, the hat's stupid.

EMILY

No, I like the hat.

(thinking)

I don't know... I just feel like I would have remembered you. You're sure we've met before?

CUT TO:

FLASH FRAME MONTAGE - SIMON AND EMILY MEET

All of their meetings. It lasts two seconds and we're back.

SIMON

I don't know if I should be offended that I'm unmemorable or flattered that you think I should be memorable.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Take the flattery. It will rest better on my conscience.

She smiles continuing with her copies.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You know, you don't seem like all the other stiffs at this place.

SIMON

Ah... I'd love to concur, but I'm pretty sure if you looked up "office stiff" you'd be looking at a nice photo of me.

EMILY

(smiling)  
You're funny.

Emily removes her documents from the copier. Awkward silence. They don't know how to finish.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Well it was nice meeting you... again, Simon. I promise I'll remember you the next time I see you.

Simon is struck with a rare surge of confidence.

SIMON

(almost under his breath)  
And when will that be exactly?

Emily smiles. She takes a pen and writes her number on a piece of paper, handing it to Simon.

EMILY

You tell me.

Elated, Simon takes the note and puts it in his pocket. She exits and he immediately reexamines his hand, his smile fades to worry.

Simon sits on his couch, phone in one hand and Emily's number in the other. He begins composing a text message.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Really? A text? So cold and lifeless.

It's the same disembodied voice he heard in his office. Startled, Simon jumps up and surveys the room.

SIMON  
Who's there?!!

He looks up at a vent high on the wall.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
(cackling)  
You won't find me there. I'm in  
your head, man.

Simon sits back down on the couch and closes his eyes.

SIMON  
(to self)  
Just... stress related.

He fingers his ear as if it's not working properly.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
Wrong hole.

SIMON  
(freaking out)  
I'm losing my mind.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
You've lost it all right.

SIMON  
Shut up!  
(laughing or crying)  
What do you want... voice in my  
head?

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)  
I just want to talk to you. Give  
you some pointers. You know, with  
the girl. Now... how would I have  
gotten in your head?

Simon looks around the room.

SIMON  
The hole?  
(gulps)  
This is lunacy.

He cautiously inches his finger into his head wound. Disgusted, he rips his finger out coated in oily black goo.

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

On the tip of his finger -- MOVEMENT. He draws it closer for inspection. There, wiggling around in the black goo, is a MAGGOT (1 day old).

MAGGOT  
(the disembodied voice)  
What were you expecting a cricket  
in a top hat?

Simon shakes his hand in horror and the maggot shoots onto the coffee table. He clasps his hand over his mouth to prevent vomiting.

He falters. Vision blurring. He's on the floor.

CUT TO BLACK.

12 INT. MITCH'S APARTMENT - MORNING

12

Simon awakens on the floor in the same position he just passed out in. He sits up clutching his forehead. There's dried blood on his shirt.

MITCH (O.S.)  
We killed it last night! But today  
I feel like death, and you look  
even worse than I feel.

Startled, he turns to see Mitch in socks and underwear, brushing his teeth.

SIMON  
Mitch, what the hell are you doing  
here? In your underwear?

MITCH  
This is my place.

Simon looks around realizing he's not home.

MITCH (CONT'D)  
You were dead tired. So I let you  
crash. Plus, you were in no  
condition to go anywhere last  
night.

Mitch walks back to the bathroom to rinse. Simon lifts himself up onto the couch.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

I can't remember anything. I must have blacked out.

(looking down at himself)

Is this blood?

MITCH

(walking back into room)

Yes. You were out of your skull, man... and got a bloody nose or something. You kept trying to bite through my hat. You were wild beast. It was awesome!

(shifting tone)

Oh my god - and I don't know how, but somehow, you got Emily to agree to go on a date with you...

SIMON

What?! No.

MITCH

Yes, brother. Check your phone.

Simon jumps up looking for his phone. He locates it and checks.

ON PHONE - A CONVERSATION FILLED WITH EMOJI ICONS

SIMON

Holy shit! We're going out tonight!

MITCH

Hell yeah you are! And you better take a taste of that sweet little thing.

SIMON

Get out!

Simon gathers up Mitch's stuff and escorts him to the door.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I have a million things to do. I'll call you.

Simon opens the door and hands Mitch the remainder of his clothes. Mitch stands in the hallway half dressed.

MITCH

But this is my place, man.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

SIMON

What?!! Right.

Simon takes off down the hall.

MITCH

Knock her dead, man!

13 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

13

Simon is frantically changing outfits and tidying his apartment. Neither is being done well.

MAGGOT (O.S.)

Tonight's the night! Finally you get to taste that juicy pink...

He spins around.

SIMON

Shut up! I won't let you make me believe I'm going crazy. Not tonight!

The now cigar sized maggot chills in a Chinese takeout container. It's somewhat less horrifying. Tiny humanoid eyes blink as it speaks with a fleshy Muppet likeness.

MAGGOT

Somebody woke up on the wrong side of the grave.

SIMON

The bed. It's - somebody woke up on the wrong side of the bed.  
(frustrated shudder)  
What are you doing in my head?

MAGGOT

Eating. Gestating. Hey, you don't mind me hitting up these leftovers. Figured you wouldn't since they've been here a week, unrefrigerated. I gotta be honest, I was getting a bit tired of eating *just* your brains.

SIMON

(annoyed)  
*I mean* - what do you want from me?

(CONTINUED)

MAGGOT

To help you. Guide you. Give you advice - you know be your friend n' shit.

SIMON

You're no friend... you're a parasite!

MAGGOT

Now that hurts my feelings. I'm trying hard here to make this relationship symbiotic, man.

SIMON

Eating my brain is not a symbiotic relationship.

MAGGOT

Well, you weren't using it.

Simon changes his shirt.

SIMON

Listen, you want to be my friend, maggot hallucination? Go away.

MAGGOT

You're changing, Simon. Stop ignoring it, man. I'm just here to help you through this... ah... transitional period. Look, I know you want this girl and I can help.

SIMON

Okay, a maggot is going to help me get laid.

MAGGOT

You do realize that you need a properly functioning vascular system in order to perform the physical act of love, right?

The maggot straightens his posture looking like an erection.

SIMON

What?! I don't know what that means but that's just gross. I'd really appreciate it if you would just stay out of my mind and my love life.

(CONTINUED)

MAGGOT

Who said anything about love? Or life? And after I went and hooked up this dream dinner for you.

SIMON

What?!! Shut up. That was you? How?

MAGGOT

Don't worry about it. Just know that I have your best interests in mind.

Simon puts a trash bag down and plops down into a chair.

SIMON

You win. What's this sage advice you must give, magical talking maggot?

MAGGOT

Really? You have to be such a dick? My name happens to be Brian, not like you bothered to ask.

SIMON

Brian? Are you serious?

MAGGOT

Listen, I may only be two days old, but I've been around the cerebellum once or twice and I happen to know that *you* are way out of practice.

Now, I like to start with some simple physical contact. Nothing too aggressive. Your hand accidentally brushes past her hair. Her sweater fabric rubs against your forearm, you tell her how soft and nice it is. The proximity of your hand lands in the proximity of her leg. The next thing you know, you're sucking face.

SIMON

How many relationships have you been in again?

MAGGOT

Well, none, but I keep my finger on the pulse.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

SIMON  
You don't have fingers.

MAGGOT  
You don't have a pulse.

14 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

14

Simon and Emily can be heard have a conversation outside the door in the hallway.

EMILY  
(laughing)  
...mine was really good. I told you not to order the head cheese, so gross.

SIMON  
You were right. I guess I was just curious.

They stumble in the door and plop themselves down on the couch. Emily seems a bit tipsy, Simon doesn't.

EMILY  
Your place is really cute.

SIMON  
Thanks. I know that's just the polite way of saying small.

EMILY  
No! I mean it's not huge or anything but I like it... it's comfortable.

Emily glances away and Simon sniffs her head like a dog. He's entranced. She turns back misinterpreting Simon's action.

SIMON  
(startled)  
You smell so... yummy.

Emily's face inches towards Simon. She closes her eyes allowing herself to be kissed. Nervous, Simon stands up.

BRIAN (O.S.)  
Just a little love bite.

SIMON  
(startled)  
How about another drink?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Emily opens her eyes, let down. Simon leaves briefly and returns holding a dust covered wine bottle and two mismatching plastic cups.

15 INT. SIMON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

15

The wine bottle is empty and we catch them in mid-conversation. Emily's now heavily intoxicated. Simon nervousness implies no sign of being drunk.

SIMON

...If I get dead leg... or my foot falls asleep, I rub it until it wakes up.

EMILY

(laughing)

Tell you what, you may be under-qualified, but I'm willing to give you a shot.

Emily gets down on the floor and sits in front of Simon. He's entranced by her head as he massages her shoulders. A string of drool stretches from his mouth into her hair.

EMILY(CONT'D)

Not bad, just pretend I'm your dead foot.

She closes her eyes. Simon moves from her shoulders to her neck. His eyes are glassed over as his head inches towards hers. His mouth opens.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Juicy pink... do it.

Emily springs around kissing him. Simon's jolted from his trance.

EMILY

It's okay. I told you I don't bite.

Simon smiles awkwardly. She leans in to kiss him again.

FADE TO BLACK.

16 INT. OFFICE - DAY

16

Simon sings and dances down the aisle towards Mitch.

MITCH

You did it, you bastard. You finally did it.

(CONTINUED)

They high five.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Damn, your hand is cold.

SIMON

Don't you wish you had done what I did with these cold dead hands.

MITCH

(confused)

Okay.

(shifting tone)

So... wait! Lemme grab a coffee before you start.

(stopping short)

Now, I'm gonna need every filthy detail, something I can really sink my teeth into.

Mitch takes off down the aisle.

EMILY (O.S.)

Simon.

Simon turns around to face Emily. The excitement drains from his face. Emily's head is one big bandage.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I wanted to apologize for the last night. I must have made an absolute fool of myself. I mean... I was pretty drunk.

SIMON

You don't have to apologize for anything. I had a great time last night.

EMILY

I can't remember what happened. I must have black out. I never do that. I don't know, I must have fallen and hit my head or something. I'm so embarrassed. I hope I didn't scare you.

SIMON

(confused)

You didn't scare me.

Emily bites her lip and looks around the room.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Did we...?

Simon looks around the office.

SIMON

Um, well... I thought so... but now that you mention it. I can't really remember either.

EMILY

God, I'm so embarrassed... I really did have a great time last night... prior to blacking out and you know, bashing my head in at some point.

Simon smiles then COUGHS, hacking something substantial into his palm. He quickly conceals it behind his back.

SIMON

Excuse me.

(wipes mouth)

I had the time of my life.

The CAMERA pushes in on a clump of Emily's hair, barrette, and scalp in the palm of Simon's hand.

EMILY

Well, I'd love to make it up to you and have you for dinner sometime.

Simon smiles as Mitch returns. One look at Emily's head and he holds up his hand for an un-reciprocated high five.

MITCH

Oh my God! Simon, you're an animal!

*Conversation 16* by The National plays over the end credits  
...I was afraid, I'd eat your brains... THE END.