

THE BLUE MAN – A Treatment

A FLYING SAUCER in outer space. The pilot, a WOMAN dressed in a body-suit of yellow lycra, notices something wrong with her ship. She's passing by a planet and spots what she thinks may be a repair facility on the surface. She descends through the atmosphere and lands in the center of Brazilia. She doesn't see anyone around. She climbs out of the ship and is suddenly surrounded by dozens of young men....

(This is the first half of Andre's commercial)

The picture freezes, wavering a bit, as if someone has hit the Pause button on a remote. Then the tape rewinds and pauses again on the image of the city.

A DIRT ROAD on the outskirts of Brazilia, strewn with Third World litter. A middle-aged man, MICHAEL PRIETA, lies in a ditch beside the road, half-conscious. He's been beaten and bloodied, and appears to be at the end of a week-long drunk—his clothes (the remnants of a tropical-weight suit) are soiled and torn, and he hasn't shaved for a while.

Walking along the same road is the BLUE MAN. He sees Prieta and reacts. He approaches Prieta, bends down, discovers he's alive, and helps him to his feet. Prieta is

confused and tries to push him away. Finally he realizes the Blue Man is trying to help.

The Blue Man supports Prieta as they walk toward a VILLAGE, a scattering of ramshackle huts with rusted tin roofs set among palms and banana trees. As they go, Prieta keeps up a line of non-stop chatter.

Prieta: You look familiar, you know. You remind me of somebody. My aunt, maybe. (He grins.) She only had one eye and her hair was the same color as that thing you're wearing. (He pokes the Blue Man's suit.) What is that, anyway? The latest in scuba gear? You going in search of the giant squid or some shit? I tell you one thing, you better get yourself in some water fast, because you stink, man! I'm serious. You fucking reek! You smell like a goat with gangrene."

They walk a few more paces

Prieta: You sure I don't know you from someplace?

The Blue Man shrugs.

Prieta continues to harangue the Blue Man about his smell, and carries on a semi-stream of consciousness monologue ("How do you get out of that suit, anyway. I always wondered about that...Did you hear what I said?

Always! Did you hear that? I must know you! Otherwise why would I have said “always,” you know?”)

They pass a VILLAGE--shanties plastered with decaying posters advertising concerts, mixed martial arts fights, etc.--and see a RIVER running through it. Children are playing in the water; women are washing clothes. Some men are sitting on the riverbank, machetes at hand, taking a break from their work. Prieta points to the river and insists that the Blue Man clean himself. The Blue Man walks into the river and begins floating. At first alarmed, soon the children begin swimming about him, squeezing his nose, and the women return to their happy chatter. Prieta collapses on the bank.

For a while, it's an idyll: the children and their mothers and the Blue Man sporting in the water. One of the women covers him in suds and pretends to scrub him. Then we see Prieta sit up abruptly. He stares at the Blue Man as if seeing him for the first time. He grabs one of the workman's machetes and brandishes it.

Prieta (shouts): I remember, you son-of-a-bitch! I've got your ass now!

He goes splashing into the river. The children scatter. The mothers race to protect them. Seeing Prieta, the Blue Man, who's floating near the opposite bank, scrambles

onto land and flees into the trees. Hampered by his injuries, Prieta can't keep up. He hurls the machete after him and curses in frustration as the men of the village close in on him.

#

The Blue Man wanders the streets of a favela, attracting considerable attention. CARNIVAL is about a week away and people can be seen sewing costumes. One woman dances with the Blue Man as he passes. Children follow him, as do a sampling of the favela's street population—among them is a SKINNY BLACK MAN who eases through the crowd furtively, his movements reminiscent of a monkey's, pausing now and again to write something in a pocket notebook.

Switch to a flyblown POLICE STATION, a room with a ceiling fan that squeaks and wobbles. Prieta is explaining things to a sergeant at a desk while other cops kibbitz.

Prieta: He's very dangerous. An escaped mental patient. Are you following me? Dangerous. Escaped. Lunatic.

Sergeant (with an air of amusement): Can you describe this man?

Prieta (frustrated): He's pretty damn easy to spot. He's wearing a rubber suit that covers his entire fucking body.

Sergeant: You mean like...Batman?

Prieta: Hey, this is no joke. The guy is dangerous. It's a blue suit. Bright blue. It's got one eye and a goofy fucking nose like a tube.

The sergeant and another cop exchange words in Portuguese. They're obviously not taking this seriously.

Prieta: A blue rubber suit. Want me to draw you a picture?

Sergeant (stands): You can go now, Senhor Prieta. Just don't cause no more trouble.

Prieta: Look, man! I'm telling you...

Sergeant: You want to stay? Okay. It's a little crowded, but we find some place to put you.

Prieta: You can't touch me! I'm an official of the American government.

Sergeant: Braulio!

He beckons to another cop.

Prieta: Listen. I'm going to confide in you. This guy, the Blue Man...we don't know what he is. But we suspect (he lowers his voice to a conspiratorial level) he may be an extra-terrestrial.

Sergeant (holding up his hand to stay Braulio): An extra...what do you mean? Is it like a terrorist?

Prieta: Could be, yeah!

The sergeant looks at him askance.

Prieta: A terrorist and he's from up there.

He waves toward the ceiling and the sergeant follows the gesture with his eyes, uncomprehending.

Prieta: Outer space, you get it? From Mars or the moon. Some place like that.

Sergeant (his face grows grim): From Mars?

Prieta: Probably not Mars, probably some place farther away. But like Mars, you know.

Sergeant: Braulio!

Prieta backs away, hands raised as if to say no harm, no foul.

Prieta: All right, man. Okay. But you hang onto that number I gave you. You're going to start hearing some weird shit about this guy. When you do you give that number a ring. They'll set you straight.

#

The Blue Man, trailed by a procession of onlookers, approaches a SHOPPING MALL where some sort of promotion is going on. In front of a clothing store, a BEAUTIFUL GIRL in a yellow Lycra suit and a space helmet with its faceplate open has just driven up in a flying saucer (it has wheels), tires, and is now cavorting in front of a crowd to music, kind of a space samba with synthesizers and organ effects, that issues from the smallish (20 feet in diameter) saucer. On the side of the saucer is a screen that's playing Andre's commercial. In the crowd is the Skinny Black Man.

The Blue Man spots her and stops dead. Like, whoa, a girl in a costume...and she's got a spaceship. He comes closer and follows the girl as she dances into the store, which is in the process of being robbed by a thin, patchily bearded YOUNG GUY with a beat-up looking pistol, a relic forty or fifty years old. The two crowds merge and push into the store. This completely unhinges the robber. He grabs the girl, threatens to shoot everybody and backs

toward the rear of the store. The crowd goes crazy, milling this way and that. People are on their cell phones, calling friends, the police, etc.

In the rear of the store is a maze of dressing rooms and stock rooms. The robber drags the girl into a dressing room to hide, then decides this is not a good idea, and emerges from the room, only to find that the Blue Man is in the corridor. Startled, the robber pulls the trigger, but nothing happens. He stares at it. The Blue Man tugs at the barrel; the robber struggles to hold on, and the cylinder falls out of pistol, rendering it useless.

The girl breaks free of the robber and hides behind the Blue Man. The robber breaks down, abruptly transformed from an erratic menace into an object of pity. He says the police will shoot him--he's a dead man. He begs the Blue Man to let him have his suit; maybe he can escape that way. The Blue Man shows him it cannot be removed. This baffles the robber (and the girl), but he's too agitated to dwell on it. He begins to weep, saying he only wanted the money for his family, etc. Even the girl is moved. The police probably have the building surrounded by now, she says, but she knows where he can hide. She takes him into a stockroom where they keep styles that haven't sold, rejects, etc., and hides him under a pile of blue jeans, telling him he can get out after the store is closed for the day.

The Blue Man and the girl go back out into the store. The girl goes out into the street, but the Blue Man lingers by the cash register. It's full of money. Beside it is a little cloth sack—it contains a lot more money, maybe a week's receipts. Meanwhile, the girl tells the manager, reporters, everyone, that thanks to the Blue Man's intervention, the robber fled through the back door. The crowd picks up the girl and The Blue Man, celebrating him as a hero, and carries them down the street before the cops can interview him.

We see the end of Andre's commercial on the screen on the flying saucer (it's endlessly recycling), the part where the men take off their pants due to the girl's mind control, culminating with the image of a guy hidden in a pile of jeans.

#

In an expensive HOTEL ROOM, Prieta is watching TV, the scene of the Blue Man and the girl being carried away by the crowd. He's cleaned up now, wearing a clean shirt and slacks. Angry, frustrated, he gets up and paces the room, berating himself for not having brought the Blue Man in, a rant that verges on the psychotic. He goes to a closet and takes out a Haliburton briefcase and dials the combination. Inside are an automatic pistol and holster, and a number of ID holders. He looks through them,

discards FBI, CIA, DEA, and etc, before choosing an Interpol ID. Then he puts on a jacket and leaves the room.

#

Somewhere in the favelas surrounding Brazilia, the Blue Man is giving an interview to a TV journalist. Since he can't talk, the girl, Margareth, is giving the interview for him, frequently interjecting the fact that she is an actress, clinging to the Blue Man, kissing his rubber cheek, saying he's her hero. But the instant the interview ends and the journalist leaves, she becomes sullen and irritable, complaining she left her purse in the spaceship and that she's probably lost her job. It's his fault. What's she going to do now, etc. Through all this, the Blue Man is undemonstrative, but when she mentions that she's hungry, he holds out the cloth sack full of money. She snatches it from him, begins counting it.

Margareth: It's so much! Where did you get it?

The Blue Man spreads his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

Margareth and the Blue Man check into a hotel, the same hotel, as it happens, where Prieta is staying. She orders room service, stuffs herself. Then she takes a shower. While she's in the bathroom, the Blue Man examines her Lycra suit. It seems to perplex him. Margareth comes out

of the bathroom, catches him fingering the suit. She pretends to be angry.

“Naughty man!” she says and spanks his hand.

She puts the suit on, tells the Blue Man she’ll be back soon, she’s going to a hotel shop and buy some clean clothes. She sits him down and tells him to watch TV until she returns. After she goes he flicks it on, channel-surfs, and finds their interview being aired. In the impassioned crowd behind the journalist is the Skinny Black Man.

Margareth is gone a long time. Growing bored, the Blue Man goes out into the hallway. He wanders up and down for a while, trying doorknobs, then pushes the button for the elevator. The door opens and there’s Prieta. They both react in shock. Then Prieta fumbles out his gun and pushes the Blue Man against the wall. They go to the Blue Man’s room.

#

In the lobby, Margareth, laden down with her purchases, is preparing to bolt the hotel. But every time she starts for the hotel entrance, something stops her. We see her inner turmoil: He’s a fool, but he did save her life. He’s crazy...but kind of sweet. Etc. A concierge asks if she needs a cab. No. Exasperated with herself, she heads for the elevators.

#

In his suite, the Blue Man sits on the sofa, listening to Prieta.

Prieta: I have to take you in. Why don't you just tell me what you're after...what you're doing here? (Gestures with the gun) That way, I can maybe let you go, tell them you escaped.

The Blue Man sits.

Prieta: I've got your interests at heart. You know that, don't you? Jesus Christ! I'm not the enemy! I'm the closest thing to a friend you've got. I've actually grown fond of you. Don't get me wrong! I'm not gay...I mean that sounds pretty gay, but I'm not.

The Blue Man nods as if he understands...or maybe the nod is involuntary, a sign of sleepiness.

Prieta: Do you understand what they'll do to you? They will purely fuck you up! They'll torture you, and when they're done they'll chop you up and put you in a blender and analyze each atom.

The Blue Man scratches his balls, or where his balls would be, and yawns. He tries to lie down on the sofa, but Prieta yanks him upright.

Prieta: Does the girl know anything?

The Blue Man blinks sleepily and closes his eyes.

Prieta: Answer me!

The Blue Man snores.

Prieta: (bending and shaking him awake): Listen up, man! I'm serious as a fucking bullet.

The Blue Man's head wobbles back and forth, but he's awake. Prieta releases the Blue Man and takes out a cell phone. Behind him, in the foyer, we see Maragreth sneaking around.

Prieta: Last chance. (He flourishes the cell phone.) Once I make this call, you're up shit creek. (He waits, then punches in a number and holds his thumb over the activation button.) I'm going to count to three. One. Two...

Margareth smashes a vase down over his head and Prieta falls on all fours. He's still conscious. Margareth looks around, seizes a marble ashtray and whacks him again, knocking him out.

Margareth (to the Blue Man): Don't just sit there! Let's go.

The Blue Man stands, bends to Prieta—he seems worried about him.

Margareth (grabs his arm): Are you nuts! Let's go!

They start to leave. Prieta moans. Margaret turns back and kicks him twice in the chest/

#

Margareth and the Blue Man flee in a cab into the favelas. The cab driver keeps staring at them in his rear view. She asks the Blue Man who Prieta is. He makes indefinite gestures.

Margareth (angry): Don't you know anything? Do you understand me? What language do you speak?

She makes a disgusted noise.

Margareth: I might as well be talking to a stump! To a stone, a frog...

She heaves a sigh.

The Blue Man consoles her, taking her hand. At first she tries to pull away, but she relents and leans her head on his shoulder.

#

Margareth and the Blue Man arrive at her home in one of the favelas. Their arrival does not go unnoticed. Soon a small crowd has gathered and is peering in the windows of her shanty. The Blue Man goes to sleep.

He wakes after a cat nap. A TV truck is outside and Margareth is giving another interview. This time, however, she's less self-promoting, cooler toward the interviewer, asking that they be left alone.

The Blue Man wanders out back into Margareth's garden. He hears a woman speaking tearfully from an adjoining shanty. Then a scream cut short. Curious, he ambles over and looks in a window. Sees a little BEARDED MAN holding a machete, and a woman and three kids huddled on the floor. The man is obviously drunk. He curses the woman, threatening her with the machete.

The man approaches the woman and grabs her by the hair, exposing her throat. The kids are wailing now and the man screams at them to shut up. He releases the woman and threatens the kids with the machete. Suddenly the woman's eyes widen and she stares at the door. The man

turns to see what has attracted her attention. Filling the doorway is the Blue Man.

The bearded man raises the machete high as if preparing to attack, but the Blue Man just stands there, glowering. He looks enormous compared to the bearded man and, because of the way the shadows fall across his face, he seems a creature of menace. The bearded man shouts at him, but the shout gutters in his throat. He slashes at the air, but falls back a step. Outside, people are gathering, expecting blood. The bearded man picks up one of the kids and holds him hostage. The women and the kids scream and cry. The bearded man backs against the wall, his face sweaty and frightened. Still the Blue Man only stands there, silent and terrible. The bearded man drops the kid and the machete, goes to his knees and begins to pray, clasping his hands and asking God to forgive him. Seizing the opportunity, the mother collects her children and runs out the door into the throng.

#

On a television screen, a journalist is interviewing the wife of the bearded man, who testifies as to the saintly and supernatural powers of the Blue Man. As her husband is led past in handcuffs, she pauses to spit at him, and then continues to extol the Blue Man's virtues.

Cut to a jailhouse interview with the bearded man, still very drunk. He claims to have been visited a demon.

Drunk Husband: He didn't speak to me, yet I heard his words in here. (He points with handcuffed hands to his forehead.) What he said was horrible to contemplate. I saw...

He wets his lips, makes the Sign of the Cross, then asks his wife and kids to forgive him, and asks God to cleanse him of evil.

Various onlookers offer wildly varying descriptions of what took place, all of them tinged with religious hysteria.

Cut to a crowd shot. The crowd is chanting Homem Azul, Homem Azul, Homem Azul...! In the midst of the fervent, clutching crowd, the Blue Man and Margareth (she's burdened by her bags of newly purchased clothes and looks upset) push through the press.

Cut to a shot of a male journalist.

Journalist: So what are we to think of this strange individual who has come among us? Described as some as a saint and others as a demon, and by others yet as... Well, listen.

Cut to a shot of Prieta muscling through the crowd, angry as usual. He's got a bandage on the back of his head.

Prieta: Are you kidding me? A saint? The guy's an imbecile, a retard!

He stops, looks around.

Prieta: Where is he? He was just here!

He glances about wildly.

Prieta: Where's my fucking taxi?

Cut to a shot of the journalist.

Journalist: And then we have the opinion of the police.

Cut to a shot of a podium, a police press conference. At the elbow of the spokesperson, we see the Sergeant with whom Prieta spoke.

Spokesperson: We have it on the authority of the American government that the Blue Man is to be considered extremely dangerous and...

He stops, looks at the statement he is reading, turns and holds a whispered conversation first with the Sergeant, then with an official in uniform. They appear to have a

brief argument, after which the spokesman continues, somewhat ruffled.

Spokesperson: He is to be considered dangerous. We suspect (he draws a breath) that the Blue Man may be extra-terrestrial in origin and poses a threat to the security of all nations.

Cut to the journalist, who now wears a bemused expression.

Journalist: Lock your doors and keep watch on the skies tonight. We may be invaded at any moment. Meanwhile, the Blue Man remains at large...

Cut to a shot of the Blue Man and Margareth running ahead of the crowd toward a pick-up truck with the passenger door open.

Journalist's Voiceover: ...no doubt conspiring to bring down the government with the driver of the blue pick-up that carried them away to safety, perhaps to a secret cavern in the jungle where they will make contact with the mother ship.

Cut to a TV shot of the truck bouncing along a dirt road. This resolves into a real-time shot, and then a close-up of the passengers. We see that the driver is the Skinny Black

Man. Margareth asks him where they are going. He fumbles open his notebook and lets her read what is written on one page, the words: Somewhere Safe. She looks at him. He nods, smiles. You can almost see Margareth's thoughts: Another one that can't talk. She's too exhausted to deal with it. She rests her head on the Blue Man's shoulder and closes her eyes.

#

A village near Brazilia. It resembles many other villages—little concrete block houses, some with tin roofs, some with tile; but there are differences. A tiny corner store is called Venda UFO. A place that sells chairs and sofas and such is called Mobilias Saturno (Saturn) and bears a sign with a ringed planet. A tavern is named Bar Astronauta. There is a high incidence of space-related names. Another difference, on the outskirts of the village is an immense building that itself roughly resembles a huge flying saucer, surrounded by a number of outbuildings, twenty or thirty of them, all enclosed by fencing. The pick-up passes through a gate and stops near the largest of the outbuildings, a two-story place of whitewashed stone.

The Blue Man is entranced by the place. He allows himself to be led toward the saucer-shaped building by a group of men and women, among them the Skinny Black Man. Margareth is less happy with this turn of events, but she too allows herself to be taken inside the building,

which is a temple with a vast mural covering ceiling and walls complete with UFOs and sanctified blue aliens and worshipful indigents. A charismatic gray-haired man, the Elder, begins to explain the mural's meaning to the Blue Man, but when they arouse no response from him, they direct their comments to Margareth, who—albeit truculent—is at least capable of minimal responses. The Elder touches Margareth more than is appropriate and she reacts away—his only response is a benign smile. The Blue Man wanders away off, unnoticed. He finds a chair with a gilt rope tied between the arms, preventing anyone from sitting. It's such a big, comfortable-looking chair, he slips off the rope and sits.

The Elder attempts to impress upon Margareth their complicated and insane-sounding doctrine. He points out the painted figures of a blue man and a woman dressed all in gold, and says they have come as relative innocents to learn our ways and then will be the ambassadors for mankind at the center of the galaxy, where God lives. Does this seem familiar to her? I don't know, she says. Maybe. Some of the others ask questions she doesn't understand but that are disturbing in their resonance. She says she's confused and tired. The church members keep talking. One woman suggests that they may not be "the ones." The Elder says that they may not know they're "the ones." Indeed, that is part of the teaching, he reminds her—that the blue man is like a child and the woman of

gold is more worldly. They have both forgotten their pasts and will not remember until the time comes to leave. Then they will endure pain and put off human form, becoming the creatures of light they truly are, and return to the galactic center and God.

Suddenly a member of the group gives a shriek and points to the Blue Man sitting in the chair. The chair apparently belonged to their prophet, now dead. Making signs that seem to have religious significance, many in the group shrink away from the chair and from Margareth, stranding her between them and the Blue Man. Uneasy, she moves to stand by the Blue Man's side. She hears a light snore.

#

Night. Margareth and the Blue Man are in their quarters in the large outbuilding. She's carrying on an essentially one-sided conversation about the temple, what was said by the devotees, etc. The Blue Man contributes his usual repertoire of indecisive gestures and stares. Margareth expresses doubt about the sanity of the devotees, but then goes on to say that maybe they're onto something—she's was raised in an orphanage and has never felt at home in Brazilia. Maybe...She gives herself a slap. What's she thinking about? She must be going crazy, she says, from being around so many crazy people. The best thing they can do is stay here until the excitement dies down. Maybe the crazy people here will give them more money. Then

they'll figure out what to do. She hums, flounces her hair, fiddles with the Blue Man's suit.

Margareth: I wish you could take that off. When I'm confused, feeling crazy, I get horny, you know?

The Blue Man nods vigorously.

Margareth: What do you mean? Are you saying you can take that suit off?

The Blue Man makes a series of gestures that implies a concept difficult for him to express.

Margareth: I don't understand what you're saying.

The Blue Man thinks, then pretends to take the suit off, then makes vehemently negative gesture. He grabs a clock and circles the dial with a finger several times, then he makes as if he's taking off the suit.

Margareth: So someday you can take off the suit, but for now you can't?

He nods.

Margareth gets to her feet, undoes the buttons of her dress.

Margareth: Well, too bad for you, because now's when I'm in the mood.

Clutching the dress to her body, she scurries into the bathroom. We hear the shower running. The Blue Man stands looking disconsolate. Then Margareth calls to him. He hurries into the bathroom. A soapy arm reaches out of the shower stall and pulls in. Inside the stall, she stands with her arms around him. She begins rubbing herself against him. The Blue Man appears puzzled and tries to back away, but she won't let go. She puts her finger to her lips, kisses it and then puts the finger into the Blue Man's snout, touching his lips.

Margareth: You just stand there, okay? This won't take long.

She begins rubbing against him once again. Soon, from the shower stall come the unmistakable sounds of a woman getting off.

#

A female TV journalist is doing a puff piece on the approaching Carnival, showing the colorful costumes that are being fabricated in the favelas: fantastic birds, clowns with silver lame suits, and so on.

Journalist: But this year there's something new.

From all sides, smiling men and women press in around her, all wearing different versions/interpretations of the Blue Man's suit. A chant starts up, drowning out her commentary: Homem Azul, Homem Azul. She grins helplessly and is swept away by the faux-Blue Men.

#

A montage covering the next few days. The Blue Man and Margareth walking, holding hands. The Blue Man splashing around in a stream with kids. Margareth giving the Blue Man one of her finger kisses. Margareth rubbing against the Blue Man, who evinces frustration. Etc. This segues into a scene in the temple during which devotees ask questions (mostly concerning civilization on other planets), none of which they can answer, though Margareth tries, apparently sincerely, saying she has feelings about things she can't explain and perhaps they signify this or that. The Elder lectures to Margareth and the Blue Man. He tells them they will have to sacrifice themselves in order to fulfill their mission. But they will pass through the fire and reinhabit their true form and all will be well. It's clear that Margareth is falling under the Elder's spell. She lets him touch her without objecting and listens attentively, nodding at key junctures. At the end of the lecture, the Elder draws her aside and has a talk with her, saying she must help the Blue Man fulfill his destiny.

The Elder: The moment we envision a thing, the instant we think about it, it becomes real....but only briefly. If we want to believe in that thing, we have to hang onto it. We have to be tenacious, we have to struggle to make it real. That is the nature of faith. Do you have that kind of faith, Margareth? Do you have the strength to believe?

Margareth (tentatively): I think so.

The Elder (taking her by the shoulders): Some people are tossed about by the storms of life and have no anchor, no solid ground. The man who pursues you, for instance. He has no direction, yet his fate is tied to yours. If you do what is right, he will follow a path that is appropriate for him. (He brushes hair from her face) Other people, like you, their paths are appointed.

Margareth: But I don't know what to do.

The Elder: You and the Blue Man must become creatures of light and return to God. I could instruct you further on how that may be achieved, but perhaps you would not believe me and then everything would be lost.

Margareth: I... these things you say.... (She makes a frustrated noise.)

The Elder: You have been the article of my faith for so long, Margareth, I know you will make the right choices. You may not recognize that they are right, or even that they are choices, but you will make them.

They walk away together. His hand brushes her ass. Margareth looks up sharply, but as the Elder continues to talk, she seems to fall under the spell of the words.

#

Edison, the Skinny Black Guy, is never far from them during this time, always sneaking around. One night, during a service at the temple, he becomes overly fervent, calling on the gods to come from the sky, and throws some sort of fit and has to be carried from the temple. During this scene we gather he is not held in high esteem by the members of the church, considered harmless, but simple-minded. The Blue Man, however, is especially concerned for him and sits by his bed until he has recovered.

#

Night. Prieta climbs over the fence surrounding the temple compound. A dog barks in the distance. He freezes at the sound, relaxing after a few seconds and no further barks are heard. He draws his pistol and sneaks downslope toward the temple, but trips. The gun discharges and Prieta goes head over heels. He gropes for the gun in the dark, can't find it, and stands. Voices are heard, raised in alarm. Prieta sprints for the fence, but

several figures cut him off. There ensues a wild, Keystone Cops-style chase at the end of which Prieta is brought to the ground and kicked repeatedly until unconscious.

Prieta wakes slumped on a cot in a locked room. He sits up, groans, rubs his head. He's beginning to look like how he did when he was lying in the road. Cut and bloody, lumped up. The door is unlocked and swings open. The Blue Man appears. They stare at one another.

Prieta: Oh, my bad! Did you say something...and did I neglect to respond? I'm sorry. How've you been? Good? You're looking bluer than last time we met. Have you been getting some sun? Of course it could be just me. I'm no expert, but getting kicked in the head may tend to make things look bluer.

The Blue Man remains motionless.

Prieta (puts a hand to his temple): I think I'm starting to hear your thoughts. I'm getting this whining noise. That's to be expected. But over the whining I'm hearing this "duh, duh, duh..." That's you, isn't it? That's all you're thinking, this moronic sub-routine. Every now and then you belch up something semi-coherent, but otherwise it's "duh, duh, duh..." 'Course that's more-or-less how it is with everyone. We're not a brainy species. I guess

you'd know this better than I, but I suspect that when measured by universal standards, Einstein was the slowest kid in the class. The rest of us, we're like earthworms.

Edison eases past the Blue Man. He's carrying a bottle of water and a plate of beans and rice. He sets them on the floor beside the cot and backs away.

Prieta: For me? Gosh, that's thoughtful! I mean, really.

Edison grins anxiously, then looks to the Blue Man to see if it's all right to act friendly. Prieta has a sip of water, gargles, and spits blood onto the floor. He sets the bottle down and picks up the plate.

Prieta: Beans. My favorite.

He looks at the plate for a second then hurls it at the Blue Man; beans and rice spatter the rubber suit. Edison pulls a knife, but the Blue Man restrains him.

Prieta: Asshole! You must think I'm a rookie. I'm not going to eat your drugged food. I know what you're up to. You're trying to discredit me. I'll wake up in a brothel with some diseased whore. With six midgets and a chicken. There'll be pictures, videos on the internet. Un-uh, no way. I'm not that easy.

The Blue Man picks a bean off his arm. He tips back his head and drops the bean into his snout and thus into his mouth.

Prieta (snorts in derision): One bean! I'm impressed!

The Blue Man and Prieta exchange stares.

Prieta: Get out of here! Go on!

He lies down on the cot and turns to face the wall. The Blue Man waits for a second or two, then he and Edison go out and lock the door.

#

The next day, Prieta is sitting beneath a tree, his hands tied, guarded by two men. Some distance away, the Blue Man and Margareth are sitting in the midst of a group, listening to the Elder declaim about their purpose, etc. Margareth pays strict attention. As usual, the Blue Man is less than attentive. The Elder tells them that the physical world is comprised of artificial constructs that are symbols of a deeper reality. He produces a mango and compares it to a planet, an atomic particle. Everything is the symbol of another thing, he says. Even base symbols, fraudulent images are at heart the thing they appear to be. The image of the Cross is actually the Cross of Golgotha. The cartoon drawing of a train or a boat may express the soul

and function of the thing. Understanding this permits a kind of magic to occur...or a kind of physics.

The Elder: Do you know what I am talking about, Margareth.

Margareth: I...no, I don't think so.

The Elder: And yet you have an intuitive grasp of this process. You have the ability, more than anyone I've ever known, to penetrate illusion and actualize the core reality of a thing. Come to my apartment this evening and I will instruct you on the subject.

Margareth nods. Several women shoot her bitter looks—perhaps they once received similar instruction and are envious—but Margareth doesn't notice.

The group breaks up. Margareth and the Blue Man stand and are about to walk away, but Prieta calls to them and asks them to come over. They do and he asks them to sit.

Prieta: I got to hand it to you. You really have these people snowed. I don't know how you did it. But, hey. Congratulations. You're a hit.

The Blue Man tracks the flight of a butterfly.

Prieta: How's it make you feel, taking advantage of these deluded fucks. You get off on it? Or is it part of your process? Like it's basically irrelevant to you, a byproduct of what you're doing. Collateral damage.

Margareth doesn't understand everything he's saying, but she understands enough to know Prieta is screwing with them. She tries to pull the Blue Man away, but he resists.

Prieta: I've been after you a long time. Now and then I pick up your trail, usually in some backward shithole like this. (He waves his arm, indicating the temple, the village.) Then you disappear and I have to start over. But this time I think I've figured you out. You want to hear? Are you at all intrigued?

The Blue Man nods.

Prieta: Maybe you're an alien, but you act like a human. Totally self-absorbed. But that's how humans have to be—if they weren't indifferent, the sorrows of the world would crush them. You, apparently, being a space person, have an option, but you don't choose to take it, because you're not interested in people. You're interested in the effect you have on them. That's all. Their suffering, their plight...it doesn't touch you. That dumb-ass rubber suit is like armor—it protects you from any emotion that might cut too deep. Somebody's starving? Your initial reaction

isn't to get him something to eat, it's let's find out what seeing the Blue Man does to him. You're playing self-indulgent games with the wretched of the earth.

Prieta pauses to allow a response, but of course there is none.

Prieta: It's ridiculous, man. How do you think people are going to react to you? Either they figure it's a goof and they play along, or else they can't be bothered with you. Or maybe they'll be annoyed and say, Get the hell outa here! Wow. That's truly fucking profound. That offers great insight into the human condition. (He leans forward, getting in the Blue Man's face.) The only goddamn thing it illuminates is the level of your indifference...and that, by the way, is nearly off the charts. Still within the human range, mind you, but just barely. So if you are ET, an innocent abroad in the wicked world, you are one butt-stupid, emotionally stunted ET.

Prieta leans on an elbow, waxing expansive.

Prieta: I have to admit you occasionally blunder into a situation and have some positive affect. That drunken puke who tried to decapitate his wife, for instance. But the odds are you were simply dumfounded and the guy freaked out. If I'm wrong, just say so. I'll believe you. You're lacking in guile, I'll grant you that much.

The Blue Man shakes his head, No. Margareth tries to speak, but Prieta cuts her off.

Prieta: I could be self-absorbed like you. I could forget my job, my responsibilities, my oath of allegiance. I could let go of those things and surrender to the demands of ego. If I did, here's how I might interpret things. This is all a therapeutic process. I've been injured in some way. Damaged. And chasing you...it's none of it real. It's some kind of virtual reality trip the shrinks are putting me through over and over. Very advanced stuff. Very high-tech. I could make a case that that's true, because when I first began tracking you, I hated your ass. I couldn't wait to get my hands on you. Now I look at you as another assignment. I get frustrated on occasion, but it's nothing personal. And like I said, I realize we've developed a bond. I don't entirely grasp it, but that's neither here nor there. But overall, it's an improvement, right? So the therapy must be working.

Prieta winks broadly at The Blue Man, who—after a pause-- struggles to his feet and starts to walk away. Margareth at his side.

Prieta: Aw, come on back! Did I hurt your feelings? I love talking to you. You're so...what's the word? (He snaps his fingers.) Tractable. That's it. People can lead

you in any direction. You have the attention span of a chipmunk, but you'll follow them until a shiny object catches your eye, or something comes along that makes you feel better about yourself. Too much reality makes you uncomfortable.

They keep walking.

Prieta (shouting): Okay, if that's the way you want it...but can't you even be happy for me? I may be standing on the verge of mental health!

#

Alone in their quarters, the Blue Man and Margareth sit on a sofa.

Margareth: Are you depressed? Don't be depressed.

The Blue Man gives a twitch with his head.

Margareth (mopey): I wish I knew what he said.

The Blue Man doesn't react. After an interval he points to the shower.

Margareth: I don't feel that way right now.

She snuggles up to the Blue Man; he puts an arm around her.

Margareth: I don't understand what's happening. All these people talking...it doesn't make any sense, what they say. But sometimes it seems to make sense. You know what I mean?

The Blue Man waggles his head as if to say, Yes and No.

Margareth: All this business about you and me, our destiny, it sounds crazy. But in here (she touches her breast)...I'm not sure.

The Blue Man offers a feeble gesture that might signify anything.

Margareth: What Prieta said, it's not true, you know. I don't understand him, but I know it's not true...because he's not true. You see?

The Blue Man shrugs.

Margareth: Shit. It's so crazy...everything. I just can't figure any of it out. (She looks away.) I want to believe. I'm trying really hard to believe, but I don't know if it's working.

#

Night. Prieta alone in his room, on his cot. He hears a key turn in the door, but it doesn't open. He sits up, waits,

but no one enters. Finally he goes to the door and tries the knob. It opens. On the floor in the hallway is Prieta's gun. He picks it up, checks the clip, looks along the hall. He ducks back into the room, collects his jacket, and makes his escape. Edison steps from around the corner. It's obvious he's the one who let Prieta go. His behavior is distraught, as if he's deeply conflicted.

#

Prieta's escape is discovered. The Elder decides that it's no longer safe in the compound for the Blue Man and Margareth. Prieta is certain to alert the police. The Elder tells them they will be taken to a safe house in Brazilia and urges Margareth to put on her gold costume, so it will seem that they are a couple dressed for and on their way to the Carnival. Margareth does as told and she and the Blue Man are led to a waiting car. They are about to leave, when Prieta appears out of the dark and puts a gun to the Blue Man's head. The temple members surge forward.

Prieta (flicking off the safety): Everybody take it easy or Rubber Boy gets it. Compreenda?

The people back away.

Prieta: Beautiful. That's it. A little farther. There we go.
(Then to Margareth): You drive.

Margareth takes the keys, gets behind the wheel. Prieta and the Blue Man climb into the back. Off they go, into the night. Prieta keeps the gun on the Blue Man. When he's certain they're in the clear, he relaxes.

Prieta: That's better. (He rolls down the window.) Ah, the smell of the open road. Nothing like it, eh?

Margareth (in English): Where we go?

Prieta: The police. Policais.

Margareth: Why you do this?

Prieta (looking weary): It's a long story. Don't worry about it.

They ride in silence for a few seconds, then Prieta tells Margareth to switch on the radio. She finds a station. The music is the same as in Andre's commercial—in fact, it's the prelude to a jeans commercial. Margareth's face tightens. The car drives on toward the lights of Brazilia. Behind them, in the distance, comes a blue pick-up truck.

#

Brazilia is a chaos of music, people, lights. Traffic is barely moving on the main avenue. Even on the side street their passage is inhibited by clots of people dancing and drinking, beating on the car, blocking their way. At

last they're forced to stop the car and get out. Some people race by shrieking, Homem Azul! Prieta presses the Blue Man against the side of the car, holding the gun to his stomach.

Prieta: You..." He indicates Margareth. "Walk in front of us, but don't get too far ahead. You try anything funny and he gets a flat tire. You dig?"

Margareth curses him in Portuguese.

Prieta (to the Blue Man): Nice mouth on your cooze, huh? Okay. I make it about six, seven blocks to the station. Let's go slow and we might all get there in one piece.

They slowly negotiate a block or two, avoiding people as much as they can. They approach an intersection. A crowd of dancers and musicians comes swirls around them and, as they pass, a black hand reaches out from the press and knocks the gun from Prieta's hand. The gun skitters away under the feet of the passers-by and is kicked under a car. Prieta peers between feet, trying to find it. The Blue Man gives him a hard push and Prieta goes sprawling. Someone steps on him. By the time he regains his feet, the Blue Man and Margareth have run almost to the end of a cross street. He races after them, knocking people aside. He comes out into one of the

major arteries. It's packed with musicians and dancers. A parade is passing. Then he spots the Blue Man a few yards away. He pushes toward him and spins him around. It's a woman in a cloth version of the Blue Man suit. She shoves him and he reels backward, bumping into a large man, one of the people he knocked aside while trying to catch the Blue Man and Margareth. The man punches him in the face.

We see the crowd is salted with Blue Men and Golden Girls, twenty or thirty of them visible in a single block.

Prieta picks himself up as another faux-Blue Man dances past. Prieta's bleeding from the mouth and nose. His teeth are bloody, his suit is ripped. He staggers off to the side of the street. There's a bar, its corrugated gate rolled up, open to the air. He orders a cachassa and drains it. He looks out at the street. Another Blue Man whirls past. Seconds later, two Golden Girls and a Blue Man skip by, holding hands. Prieta orders another cachassa.

Prieta: Fuck it.

He drains his glass and orders another.

#

Margareth and the Blue Man are hustling along a darkened street in an industrial park. She's looking for an address and at last she spots it. The Blue Man gives her a

boost up over the gate and a moment later it swings open, permitting him to enter. Inside there's a small office building and in the parking lot are five shiny flying saucers. Racing out from between them comes a Doberman. The Blue Man pushes Margareth behind him and the Doberman attacks him, but can't close its mouth on the rubber. It finally snags a tooth in the rubber and the tooth breaks off. Whimpering, the Doberman withdraws from the fray and runs off into the darkness. (Might be easier to have the Doberman succumb to the Blue Man's charm and simply become docile.)

Margareth crawls into one of the saucers, looking for her purse. It's not there.

Margareth: Oh, god! I bet somebody found it! I thought I hid it good, but maybe they stole it.

She crawls into a second saucer. No luck. The Blue Man intercepts her as she prepares to crawl into the third saucer and suggests through hand signals that maybe she doesn't need it.

Margareth (shoving him away): It's got all my papers in it!

She enters the third saucer. Nothing. She emerges from the saucer distraught, on the verge of tears, and climbs up

into a fourth. Seconds later, she calls out from inside that she found it. She checks to make sure everything is in order, then hears a noise behind her. It's the Blue Man. He has taken off his rubber suit. Magareth looks at him in wonderment and starts to speak, but he gives her a finger kiss. They embrace, sink to the floor, and begin to make love.

Outside, we see the Doberman near the gate, passed out beside a piece of half-eaten meat. Edison climbs over the gate and approaches the saucers with an expression of awe. He notices that one of them is shaking slightly. He waits until the shaking subsides, then crawls up to the top and looks down inside. Margareth and the Blue Man are lying in each others arms. Edison removes Prieta's gun from his pocket. Margareth opens her eyes and sees Edison. She is startled at first, but when she sees the gun understanding comes into her face and she grows calm. She closes her eyes again. Edison fires twice.

We see Edison peering into the saucer. Then a golden light washes over his face, too bright to look at. He falls to the pavement and scrambles away. The saucer's wheels retract and it rises from the ground, making a whining sound, until it reaches an altitude of a hundred feet. It gains speed and arrows off over the city, leaving Edison gaping.

The saucer flies over the heart of Carnival and hovers. A few people notice it and point, but for the most part it goes unseen. After darting back and forth for a while, the saucer accelerates upward, shrinks to a golden dot, and is gone.

#

A country road in a snowy landscape close to a village. Lying by the side of the road is a man, covered with cuts and bruises, and wearing a torn fur coat. It's Prieta. He looks as if he's been on a week-long bender. The Blue Man comes walking along the road. He sees Prieta and reacts. He approaches Prieta, bends down, discovers he's alive, and helps him to his feet. Prieta is confused and tries to push him away. Finally he realizes the Blue Man is trying to help.

The Blue Man supports Prieta as they walk toward the village, a collection of wooden buildings centered by one of concrete. In the distance lies a great city. We go tight on the Blue Man's face—it's Edison.

Prieta: You know, you look familiar. You remind me of somebody.

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