

## To stay afloat



Every organic light emitting diode changes per command enforced by the remote, entrancing him while his sentience slowly crawls away. Left, left, left the remote demands. Arbitrary numbers slowly increase in value with each press of a button, struggling to keep up with every order prescribed by the macro script, programmed with an automated request every 0.4 seconds. The majority of the TV's surface loads, resting upon a deep black. That 72 inches of black screen reflects the warm, sunset colour of the dozen emitting bulbs who've been hung via blossoming metal arms, electric cable garrotting their swan necked curves. Those bulbs continue to stare; a stare familiar to a man and his padded room.

The remote blinks its infrared laser straight into the TV's green pupil, trying to correct the image produced by the screen to something more appealing to its user.

A logo has appeared. A bitten fruit, a matte ivory, planted upon a dark background. Another example of an imagephilic company being led by the marketeers with unsightly autistic-- artistic designs. That obnoxious monotone E major note swells, begging for someone to hark and pay attention to its feeble call, the death knell of profiteering late capitalism. The chunk taken from its once juicy skin, perhaps a symbolic representation of the inevitable decline for that company and its promises of an abundant supply of magical technology, which will eventually explode into a newsworthy scandal brought to you by yours truly, the Spoilt Fruit Company & Co.

Aggressive pressure has been placed upon one of many spots on the uniform acne ridden remote; this one has painted pale ink spelling out "mute" in blocky lettering - as if the employee accidentally left caps lock on and just accepted it as the design. No thought behind it, no creativity. And they wonder why customers have begun to scuttle away from their company and its false promises of ingenuity, the former glory of those innovators from the world that's now a distant reality.

The TV has reacted. A box uniformly materialises in and out at the top right. It has an icon seemingly to represent a speaker - though it resembles more of a simplistic imitation of a megaphone - with a line politely slashed across it.

Like a fatigued soldier still shooting the same target, the remote fires yet another beam of light that collides with the lime-coloured, bewildered eye of the slightly curved TV.

A news correspondent develops on the screen. A tight grip envelops the robust bell sided cylinder, typical of a first timer. The foam mesh from the microphone presses gently against her lips, their hue mimicking salmon flesh split in half. That winter chill has induced heavier breathing, accentuating the lavish brunette curls which rest upon her breasts. The fluttering of her eyes somehow connects with him; engages him as though she is a Anthrush bird in the rainforest, cautiously traversing the canopy and he, a goliath bird eating spider, has been anticipating its prey. But alas, that uneasy bird has dramatically fled, now transformed into a well

suited man who has remarkably found himself above what seems to be a toon United Kingdom with multiple arrows pointing towards the west coast of the UK

That lime-coloured eye has received an encore from the man; now, it repeats its previous string of commands and the TV struggles yet again to stabilise the image. That black box has reappeared at the top right, now there's just a liberated speaker, no longer confined from the invisible line, definitely because of the frustrated pressure forced onto the rubber illustrated with "MUTE", reversing its silence.

A hum crawls through the bald cypress wooden devices, strategically triangulated in the corners of the room, a perfect compliment to the curved screen before eruptions resonate through the room. A vivid orange, reminiscent of the radiant sunbeam parting the sea, the once cream walls, now bronzed. Cut. Chiseled jawline. Unrefined marble skin texture trembling into form. Helicopter crashes. And a kevlar, bullet proof vest - presumably to protect him from the explosion. Dust from the impact site now scorches the vest in the form of a 9mm bullet. But nothing hits him. An absurd Die Hard escape from the scripted carnage. Maybe those costume designers wanted to remind the viewer that this is in fact an action movie (in case the symphony of blank artillery wasn't enough of a giveaway). Perhaps the vest is a cover up. Perhaps it hides the healing, still tender laceration over his right kidney; the channel-changing man gently brushes his fingers over a mirror wound. The wound that proved fatal for his brother.

The liquid that once resided in his dear body weeped from its fragile source, pooling upon the paved stone. Those bulging eyes, first wild with a frantic glimmer before fading with the elegance of a fallen leaf at the end of summer, are the image which taunts his thoughts. Gasping for air, his brother's eyelids flicker as his head falls into a sadistic reunion with the recently dispersed blood. Breathe in, and it doesn't leave just yet. Cut. The channel-changing man reclining on the sofa. His body clings to that breath that still inflates his chest on this worn out couch, the remote now disheveled, laying on the carpet. His head slowly raises, his eyes closed, the image residing on his retina like shrapnel from a fatal bullet wound. No longer is he tied to the TV, instead he scans neural networks of dissolving memories of his brother. A turn of the wheel, a ring of the bell, races through endless corridors, the grandeur of our simple sand castles, the quarreling princes, feasting, splashing salt water at each others faces, his shadow eclipses the sun, a pseudo Apollo Helios, ascend; the sun. Revived light. No longer a shadow, a deluge of white.

There are no other memories that bubble to the surface of his cerebral cortex, nor frontal lobe. Slowly, he opens his eyes, almost protruding beyond his sockets, unable to see the oh so mesmerising TV. In fact, the open eye emitting bulbs above seem to cast no light. As if the power has been cut yet still breathes a continuous exhalation, reverberating in the air around it, indicating that, yes, we are still in fact on, and haven't lost our last glimmer of light yet.

He raises his palms. Open. As if in prayer. His iris contracts and broadens, trying to catch some glimpse of light. Dark. And dark. No light taunts his eye, stealing his consciousness, or TV.