

One fine day in the Foundation, Dr. Bright finds the need to clean up some small problems. A researcher has been asking questions and worse questioning Bright. And so it is that Dr. Jack Bright calls Dr. Hyden to his office for some discussion. Hyden is ushered into the room by an old man. The young doctor is clearly incredibly uneasy. Dr. Bright, you requested my presence. Hyden, Bright smiles lightly. Please take a seat.

00:27

gesturing at the comfy-looking chair across the desk from himself. Haydn takes a moment to look around the room uncomfortably before sitting in the chair. Hold on just a moment please. Dr. Bright pulls out a small remote from his pocket and begins clicking buttons. The red lights on the cameras in the office go off, the door locks shut, and all other machines go dead. There. Much better. Haydn gulps nervously before saying yes, sir. Bright's actions did absolutely nothing to settle Frederick's raging nerves.

00:56

Somehow he suspects that was intentional. Now then, there will be no recordings if you choose to be insubordinate. For the record, my cane is in the corner behind you and my hands are empty. I am doing this in an attempt to provide an air of open conversation that seems to be needed. He nods his head solemnly before continuing. Now, it seems you may have some unresolved issues with me. Shall we discuss these? Haydn's mind races. But once again, honesty remains Frederick's policy.

01:25

He takes a moment to compose himself before speaking. Yes, sir. On my first, ah, incident with the foundation, I encountered SCP-963. It was used to subdue a prisoner, an armed android with which I am sure you are familiar. Bright nods his head. Sonya Vilemer. She was 29, had no siblings, and her parents were deceased. She once loved a man, and he turned her into a cyborg. Yes, I am aware of her, go on.

01:53

Haydn stares at Bright, taken aback by the information, yes. I initially protested this action, but as it was undertaken in the heat of a combat situation, it is understandable that my protests were ignored. I inquired as to the nature of SCP-963, and was offered access to a redacted file containing a briefing on the object. I am an ethicist by vocation, Dr. Bright, though my... Bright snorts. It is a devious and despicable item. Haydn seems caught incredibly off guard by this statement.

02:22

He fumbles for a moment before continuing. Ah, well, my review of the file included sections regarding retaining brainwiped bodies for future use, actually for. That is correct. Bright touches the teardrop tattoo under his eye. I found it wiser to keep bodies on hand instead of trusting to the fickleness of fate to provide me with new ones should an incident arise. By keeping these bodies in stasis, I have found myself capable of extending their lifespan. To be frank,

02:49

Sir, this is among the most hideous crimes I have ever seen systematically inflicted upon a group of people, D-Class or no. I have tremendous difficulty justifying it to myself and as a result, I may have behaved in a manner inconsistent with the attitude expected towards senior staff. Heidenkopf's, still nervous about sounding off to a superior. To cut directly to the heart of the matter, sir, what entitles

you to their bodies? Bright smiles, ah? Brightly? Ah, yes, entitlement.

03:17

You are aware that D-class are executed on a monthly basis, yes?" Haydn nods. I am aware. I genuinely believe that death is preferable. Well then, let us take a look at my bodies. Do you have any issues with my usage of simian bodies? I am unnerved by it, I admit, sir. Haydn ponders a moment, and his speech lapses into a more informal pattern. It's not. It's not as visceral though. It doesn't keep me awake at night.

03:46

It's just another mildly disturbing thing that happens at work. Then that takes care of two of the stored bodies, ticking off two fingers on his hand. Let's move on to this one. Hank Ashton, 42, convicted pedophile and child killer. He enjoys strawberry ice cream and the reflection of his knife in a young girl's eyes before he cuts her throat. Haydn nods. He sees where Jack is going with this. He deserves to be dead.

04:12

Unless exposure to SCP-963 has been proven to be identical to a brain transplant and considering the nature of SCP-963, I doubt proof is forthcoming anytime soon. do not believe use of the object to be justified. It is identical to a brain transplant. The recipient's brain is completely wiped clean. I'll not press further after this one question, but how are you certain? The device is a twisted, disturbing thing. What happens to the data that is wiped? Haydn just wants to be sure.

04:41

Bright wags a finger at Haydn, hoping to explain. Think of it as a computer. All the files are moved to the trash bin, he taps 963, and new files are overwritten. While there may be some small indications the files were once there, you have to work to find them. Sadly, a poor copy is kept in the trash can. It is why I keep myself out of there as much as possible. I, the consciousness never dies, then. It's just sequestered away? It just sounds so ugly to him.

05:11

Bright shakes his head. The consciousness dies, but the memories remain. So it's as if you piggybacked your consciousness on a corpse. Haydn regrets how crude that sounds, but he's trying to fit it in his head. Bright snaps his fingers. Exactly. All the functions become mine. Even the ones you don't think can be changed. Every body I am in beats with the same pulse, breathes in the same manner, walks with the same steps. Haydn frowns. That's bizarre. Wait.

05:41

Where does he work again? Acknowledged, sir. My conduct towards you is based on an understanding of SCP-963 that was mistaken, and for that I apologize. Good. But even were it not mistaken, there is another reason why I deserve these bodies. Haydn tilts his head to the side slightly. I don't understand. Continue, sir. Eye in the foundation. Bright stares at Haydn, a slight smile on his face. In his eyes. Well,

06:10

You read the report and the theory's right. Haydn got a heavily redacted version of the report, it seems. He stares at Bright, feeling more than a little stupid. You, you are the foundation? The only theory he's hearing right now is crippling megalomania on the level of I am the law. Sir, the SCP foundation, while I am aware, requires the work of minds such as yourself, is, as far as I know, a collaborative effort of many. To be blunt, I don't understand. Bright stands up.

06:39

and begins to pace, gesturing with his hands. Currently, you are a junior researcher, and I am a senior staffer in charge of personnel. That means, I pick who comes on board, make sure they can handle the rough stuff, and in general, turn them into people capable of becoming senior staff, whether they know I'm doing it or not. Bright continues. In 25 years, you'll be a senior researcher, possibly with your own sight to handle, definitely with many new researchers, trained by me, under your wing. I...

07:08

will be the senior researcher in charge of personnel. In 50 years, you will, God willing, be ready to retire and leave your work to a trusted researcher who was brought into the foundation under me. I will still be the senior researcher in charge of personnel. Bright focuses his gaze on Haydn, making sure he's getting it. In 75 years, if you are still alive, you will be suffering from dementia and other mental deterioration, barely in control of your own bowels. I, however, will be in a body as young as they give me.

07:37

training a new generation of researchers. Haydn, with dawning horror, realizes what Dr. Bright is driving at. Bright stabs a finger at his desk to make the point. In 100 years, you will be dead, and the researchers you taught will be nearing retirement themselves. I will know who to replace them with. Bright's voice remains calm and collected, as if discussing a new assignment. He doesn't seem to actually care about any of this, it just needs saying. In 200 years, your name will be known only by diligent researchers.

08:07

one name among many of those who have been researchers for the foundation. I will still be a senior researcher from time to time. I will sit with a glass of wine and remember those who have passed, but the list will be long 1000 years from now, no one, but I will remember you existed and I will still be working with the foundation to protect humanity. Do you understand? I am the foundation. I shape its future and I keep it on task. I'm needed, despicable as it might be. Do you see?

08:37

Hyde and lets a long silence pass. Why must it be you? 963 was held by someone before you, and in time, it will be held by another. Do you want this? Bright shakes his head sadly. No one held 963 before me. It was created for another man, but he failed to make it work. I am its first and only resident. There is no escape from 963. Jack considers the question for a silent moment. Do I want it? No.

09:06

But who else am I supposed to trust to get it done? Uneasily, Haydn continues. You don't have to run the foundation, Dr. Bright. You're not Atlas, no human is. Trust that there are people who can get the job done. In your time here, you can assure many, but it is not one man's responsibility to save the

world. What else do I have? If I leave, they will mark me as an SCP and hide 963 away where it will take a long time for someone to find it. He knows someone eventually will.

09:35

part of the curse. Do you think I can live a normal life? I cannot have children of my own, only those of whatever body I wear. Hell, when it comes to sex, do you know how hard it is to have something touch you, but never your partner, not even for a second. The positions get wild enough. have to pay for it. The foundation is my life and I will make it wonderful. Bright smiles. It isn't all that reassuring. You, you really can't be rid of it. Can you hide in pauses? But a moment I

10:05

Ah, my condolences to you, sir. Heiden doesn't know what to say. He feels like a bastard. Never. Breit lifts the remote. Are we done? I believe so, sir. Heiden's head hangs low. Breit hits the button, and everything hums back to life. Dismissed. Don't dwell on this too much, Heiden. I have big plans for you. Heiden rises, his posture straightening as he stares straight ahead. Yes, sir. He turns and walks from the room.

10:35

and Jack Bright watches him walk out the door, his smile widening. Such very big plans.

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