

TEACH A DOG TRICKS

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-TRANSLATED VERSION OF A TITLED STORY -

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I'm reading my emails. Send, Ivan Korda, content assistant. It loads slowly, a *.jpg file. The image shows a boy and four girls. They are all naked; boy is the tallest and has a big penis. Subject says: "This is the really Big Brother".

– OK, yeah, well... – Nikolina, creative producer, interrupts me checking my e-mails. – Like, it would be so cool if, like, we could keep the tension by... I mean, above the fence... – she grabs the root of her nose between her thumb and ring finger.

– I mean, like, to make it visually attractive... – she breaths in, and breaths out.

The really Big brother image crosses my mind. I'm silent. I'm trying to concentrate, but I can't. It's five o'clock in the morning.

– Yeah, well, I'm thinking something like an octopus and a shark appearing above the fence – she says. I'm staring at her in disbelief. I'm waiting. Is she finally going to tell me she's joking? I'm still dead quiet. I wonder where this is going. This is not the first time she's got great ideas or she knows what she wants.

A cab driver once told me that she's the one really governing the whole Big Brother story. On the other hand, I've heard how she's completely oblivious as to what she's doing. I'm inclined to believe the cab driver since that is precisely the atmosphere of this television. People take other people's credits, flaunt their titles for which they hold no responsibility. Highly unusual. If one repeats something over and over again, regardless of it being a lie, everyone will start believing it.

A lot of people with finished high schools, their complexes and fears of losing their given positions, aware of the fact that their real potentials don't reach up to them, are chasing and pressing on other people. College graduates, experts, intellectuals... are placing them underneath, so they would do both their jobs for a modest pay check at best.

– To have the production people sticking these things to staffs and then walking it over the fence. That's how you create tension and inmates will have to stare at the fence keeping the watch. And that's, like, it I think! – she says, while I can't help remembering her telling me how she only washes her hair at the hair dresser's, the most expensive one in town.

– Right... – is the only thing I calmly manage to squeeze out as an image of a rubber octopus attacking Bela Lugosi in an Ed Wood movie flashes before my eyes.

– And what are they supposed to make these octopi from? – I ask. – Collage? – I smile. This amount of irony suits my position as main editor or content coordinator. Can anyone tell me what my position actually is?

– Oh, they'll make it from something – then she waves her large shovel-like fingernails and I remember the performance she had the other day. A cab driver had brought her suitcase with her clothes in it and she told everyone to leave the content room so she could dress up. Than Ivan Korda, content assistant, explained something I had long forgotten – how good she is at selling herself.

– Perhaps we could take the "Teach a dog tricks" assignment? – I ask.

The assignment is lying at the coffee table in living room. It looks simple enough, but still needs some work though.

It's only a piece taken from The Bible, The Book of Rules every country has, where Big Brother is shown. Endemol, being true to its reputation of an entertainment factory, leaves nothing to chance, which is actually very convenient to every single important position on this project, meaning a lot of them. This assignment looks attractive enough for sponsors, so there's no need for me to devise any of my own.

Executive producer, a cocky youngster whose ego ruptures orbit and meets galaxies somewhere in outer space, snuffs cocaine, told me when he hired me on this project:

– We need you! – His flirting gaze and a raised eyebrow made me feel like I was a real person, while he was a movie character. Much like the scene from Pokemon cartoon: „Pokemon I choose you!“, then he throws the ball to capture it.

– You will be the one handling the show's content. – It sounds great, but in reality the production hasn't got the slightest idea what content is, let alone how to sell it.

– We need people of intelligence and expertise. – Even then I could see the lamps in the red light district starting to light up. Actually, he was in pursuit of a top class whore for the least amount of money. This sex is unpleasant since it is not vaginal. They are screwing my brains out, as people would say.

And the people, they are my biggest disappointment. For as executive producer delightfully said it:

– People are very stupid, won't you get that already!

I've maintained this kind of sexual relationship with executive producer on regular basis. I was spewing content, organising, training people and changing condoms in the speed of light. In so doing I slowly started to feel like a spent whore so after a while I stopped using protection. Sex we had was fierce and out of control.

His personal Rapunzel, production coordinator, charged through corridors, yelling into her cell phone. She had a faithful puppy next to her side, a producer. He did everything production coordinator couldn't manage. That means he did everything. I looked upon him with pity and often caught him in situations where he simply lost his grip. He once took a chair and hit it on the floor hard until it fell apart.

There were no working hours for this bordello. At some point in time, somewhere around ten o'clock, while sitting all fucked out in his office, executive producer spoke to me:

– Do you really think that time exists in this place?

At that moment I was totally delirious, having to send fifty versions of the same text to production coordinator, review all of the materials, sit at the MCR thinking of a way to talk to the main producer and contemplating on how much of an impression I can make on the director of television.

Naturally, language used on this television is mainly English so I need to be careful if the sponsors are after high visibility or low visibility as well as what kind of integration they want.

Production coordinator Rapunzel was keen on telling people how she organised things very well and how she used her high visibility talk to screw over the daughter of large shopping centre chain's director, who happens to be one of this German television's partners.

The sex queue lengthened in time and this was the order: Director of the television – a former soap opera actor going through a mid life crisis, drives the most expensive Mercedes, its interior coated in dick foreskin. Here In Croatia he managed to knock up a reporter who used to do it with executive producer, the cab driver said. Main producer – a pure blood homosexual who refuses to make this acknowledgment to himself and appears to be quite frustrated by this, a guy from supplies told me so. He is a father of two, living on Zagreb – Köln relation. Executive producer – a former cop who used to deal drugs on the street. After the police threw him out, television took him in. It is said that he snuffs piles of cocaine and all women, girls and girlies fall on his charm. A grand scale fucker back in his village, they say. I met a girl in the gym that told me how he was the catch of the day back there. Production coordinator – a student, anorexic, very unhappy with her own life, her neighbour I've known for years explained me. Sales and, in the end, to top it off, there was she: creative producer – a student of directing, older than I am, she looks as a forty-five year old chick. Stories about her tell me she doesn't have a clue about anything, but also that she is the best. One of her teachers asked me: Do you really think she would still be studying if she knew anything?

It was this particular assignment; teach dog new tricks that particularly stuck with me. People are trying to teach their dog some tricks. People teach other people tricks. Since I've been working on this project I can feel I'm constantly training some dogs – my content team. As folk would say: Dear God, what a marvellous miracle!

I was in charge of a team that practiced content producing and some direct television craft, consisting of: a student of law who once saw a TV in his living room (story editor), a student of journalism with a rock in stead of brain (story editor), an instant-star (Story Super Nova Talent Show – story editor), one other instant-star, a bunch of posers hired by their relatives and a single person I was allowed to hire, who actually knew what she was doing. Oh, and one more. That means two people and me. And I need to teach them some television tricks. Should we fail, money is lost. Should we succeed, the show may go on.

Ever since I've met these people, I prefer dogs. I can feel that I'm losing my grip, that all of these positions have no meaning in reality. The point is to stimulate people in some bizarre fashion, so they'd be willing to work more than eight hours a day. They should feel good about these positions, willing to fight for them. I've been working for thirty six hours straight and task list never seemed to end. I glance over the assignment:

Teach a dog tricks

Time-limit: a week – until Friday

Inmates: 6 candidates

Mission: Big Brother introduces a dog to the house.

Inmates are supposed to play with the dog, feed it, cuddle with it, pet it, walk it, teach it tricks and name it. They'll also receive instructions on how to properly care for the dog, dog's diet and the way it's meant to be trained.

Tricks to teach the dogs:

- fetch objects
- stay, sit, beg and lie down
- stand up on hind legs
- roll over
- chasing their own tail

Equipment:

- training manual
- dog caretaking manual
- dog food, dog biscuits (as a reward)
- dog necklace, toys, blanket, sleeping basket, bowl

– No, no, we uuuh.... Yeah, we already had that one last year – she said, interrupting my line of thought.

– And how about something using their bodies? – I suggest.

I'm obviously spineless, since I'm sitting here with creative producer instead of pressing hard to my husband's fit torso, stroking his rigid penis gently under the sheets while he's asleep.

I listen to her bright ideas, since she climbed down here among us like Jesus. Production team obviously wasn't capable of doing their job selling the content. Actually, the problem is that I accepted this task and I have what it takes. Thus production, by nature's weird sense of righteousness inversely proportional to common sense, my reward is a Creative producer, the person whose job is to help me out. Only I can't see this. Considering I'm here since the day before yesterday.

Alongside her and this whole project came periodical spine nerve spasms. But that's OK; everyone around me swallows pain killers by dozens, as if they were some sort of sweet strawberries or grandma's marshmallows, the elixir of youth recommended in large doses.

I started to work out in the gym. I remember thinking how that was the only place where I could start fresh, train individually. And at least think about real, comfortable sex that was withheld from me because of this intellectual one.

Among other things, that was the theme of this year's Big Brother: to ensure a sexual tension, spice things up a little, anything just to have some sex in the house. Video editors were particularly happy about this: "If we get to see some action here, we'll own the world, man!" When these guys set up RCO cameras, we could easily have tested them by have group sex together.

For instance, production coordinator sucks executive producer's cock, executive producer sucks main producer's one, while The Director shoves his up main producers ass. Creative producer and I enjoy some heavy dyke action, squeezing each other's tits and lick each other's pussies to prepare them for spanking. RCO cameras should have caught that; that was the only way to make sure that all equipment was functional, instead of having something broken every once in a while, like past few days. And then we prolong the rehearsals, nobody goes home until everything is done properly.

But luckily, there's the gym... An overly-muscled trainer is really involved into my weekly little spine. He questions me in soft voice. How am I doing? Am I feeling alright? He takes good care that I don't stress too much and keeps his eyes on me all the time. Perfect. He shows me the art photos hanging on the walls. I was the only one to notice them and he was delighted. His favourite one is a photo of some girl's ass. I gave him a rough look saying: "How typical, for a man to be drawn to girls' asses!" He blushed, but at that point, an unbreakable bond was made – he needs to make a perfect ass out of me. He can sense my understanding.

I have observed the weights and the equipment. They are all reminiscent of sex. The bar slides into the hole in the weight. As I lift and lower the weights, it's not easy for me. Then all of these naked men and women's photos. Young high school boys release their scent, as I observe their development. I have noticed some elderly women taking more time than usual on cycles or running tracks, since the view is better from those points. Men lift weights, they strain their muscles and marvel their appearance in the mirror, women pedal faster and faster. Levers and machines, entering and exiting, abdomens tightening, sex runs this place.

– Like, there would be tension if we could spill some oil on the water and light the fire, and then inmates would have to jump in and dive from one end of the pool to the other. Something like that... you know what I mean. – She interrupts my daydreaming with a theory I missed. I keep staring at her, uncomfortable with her awkward accent.

– I'm just joking, but I need you to understand what I'm aiming at...

– Look, it's getting late. I really should go home, catch at least a couple of hours of sleep.

– Sleep here.

She says and stands up. It's a little frightening, honestly. I've never been offered to sleep over by a boss before. Were my hunches correct? Does she really want me? I look at her taking out her pyjamas from the closet and placing it on a couch beside me. I feel like a loony. It's simply too much for me to take right now.

– I can't, my husband is waiting for me at home. Although, it's already six o'clock in the morning and he's supposed to get up in half an hour and go to work, but at least we'll have some breakfast together – I manage to squeeze out desperately.

– Okay – she says.

Suddenly, I feel the need to go to the toilet.

– Can I use your bathroom?

– Yes – and she points her salient fingernails to the proper direction.

Her bathroom is nothing much. It's uncared for. There's lime scale on the lavatory, a bunch of magazines, a rusty water tank. Never mind, as long as that thing works well. After some short straining I manage to ease my soul and start wiping my ass. Half a paper roll later I flush. The seat is starting to overflow, water tank stops, but the seat is full of water.

– That thing doesn't really work that well – I can hear her voice.

What a great time to tell me. Classic, much like at work – always left up to improvisation of my own. I grab the brush and start pushing, but the brush gets stuck below the waterline. I roll up my sleeves, still bare-butted, with my pants and panties down around my ankles my hand is diving trying to get a grip on the brushes' handle. The water is lightly overruns the edge of the toilet seat every now and then. I somehow manage to pull the brush out and the water starts to drain out. Anything firm in the seat has remained in place. I grab the chain with my dry hand and pull hard. The water washes away some smaller parts.

Again, I pull hard on the chain, this time it remains in my hand, and the water starts flowing. The seat is once again filled up to the brink. There I am, standing with chain in one hand and brush in the other, trying to get rid of all the shit. I finally make it. The content is swallowed. I exit the bathroom saying:

– Look, the chain fell off.

– Oh, that's OK, it falls off all the time.

– OK. Thanks for everything, I'll see you tomorrow.

Actually, I'll see you today, in only a couple of hours now.

– I'm not sure when I'm going to be there, but you can always call me.

– That's great. Bye – I say.

– Bye.

I step out on the street. After a few meters I get to the point where I parked the car. It's not here. The car is not here. Where is the car?

– Son of a bitch! – I scream.

A guy passing by on the other side of the street looks at me in wonder. Can anyone tell me the colour of my skin? Green. I give him the finger behind his back.

I'm searching for my cell phone, but it's not there. I lower my purse, take out the handheld, papers, a bag with filthy underwear, tissues, cigarettes, a thermos bottle with cranberry tea inside, my wallet. Where the hell is it? I turn my pockets inside out. I feel like crying. I get up and trace the outside of my trousers pockets. It's here. I take it out and call the towing service.

– Hello, are you actually working at this time? – I ask.

After a long pause, the guy says:

– Yes. It's seven thirty, and we usually work in shifts.

– Right, lucky you. The Satan never sleeps! – I say feeling a bit lost and some spit drips on my T-shirt. I smear it with my fingers and continue talking. – Alright. Did you take my car?

– And just which car would that be, madam? – he sounds a bit upset.

– Metallic grey.

– Now isn't that just wonderful?

– OK, BMW 316i metallic grey!

– Just a second – he says and starts flipping the pages over since he doesn't understand the same data is staring at him from that weird box in front of him. The Computer.

– Yes. It is here.

– And when did you pick it up?

– Half an hour ago.

– While I was dealing with the shit.

– What?

– Why did you pick it up? – I ask desperately.

– Hmmm, oh yeah, you parked thirty centimetres into the parking space reserved for invalid persons.

– Son of a bitch!

– Don't be that way – he says.

No, no, no, no, I can't believe this. That's cool. OK. Alright – I try to breathe deeply.

– Alright?

– Yes. Goodbye, I'll pick it up later. Alright. Goodbye.

I hang up on him and listen to birds singing. I think of a cab. It rings.

– Hello? Good morning. Could you please come and pick me up at no. 15 Bosnian street?

– Sure, I'll be there in twenty minutes.

I don't believe this, it's seven o'clock already. I'll be leaving for work in an hour. My beloved one is already on his way to work. I sit on the edge of pedestrian way and call my husband.

– Hello my love! I just called to hear your voice, I need to get back to the studio. How are you?

