

CONTINUUM

"The Day the Laughter Died"

by
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TEASER

BLACK

Under which WE HEAR nothing. Several seconds of total silence. Then the VOICE of the NARRATOR is HEARD.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Existence is a path with a
beginning...

A point of light appears left of frame in the lower third of the screen. It pulses ever so slightly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...and an end.

A second point of light appears right of frame, directly across from the first. It also pulses slightly.

A line of light emanates from within the first point of light, slowly moving across the screen toward the second point.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Life is the journey along this
path.

The line of light continues its slow pace across the screen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Life is a continuum.

The TITLE "CONTINUUM" FADES IN above the line of light, center screen. Its appearance is identical to that of the points and line. After two beats the TITLE GLOWS BRIGHTER, THEN DIMS AND SLOWLY FADES AWAY.

The line of light reaches a point 1/3 of the way across the screen, then slants upward at a continually rising 45 degree angle for the second 1/3 of the line. It suddenly stops, drops vertically down to a horizontal position and continues its path across the screen. The line slows and stops just short of the second point of light and ANOTHER TITLE FADES IN at its end. The title reads "April 23, 2010, Woodland Hills, California".

Lingering for a moment, the title, points and line of light all FADE AWAY SIMULTANEOUSLY and we are plunged into black again.

FADE IN:

INT. WAITING AREA/TELEVISION LOBBY - DAY

Your typical generic waiting area: for the most part matched furniture pieces, end tables, dim lamps, a coffee table with dog-eared copies of Time, Popular Science and US magazines. A 27" television in the middle of it all, picture faded due to age. A dusty VCR rests on top.

Various nurses, older people and other adults pass by the waiting area in different directions.

Slumped in an easy chair directly across from the television, holding a remote, sits a MIDDLE-AGED BUSINESS MAN. He is zoned out, bored, watching a nondescript news program.

Around him, scattered about the various furniture pieces, are a group of equally bored children ranging in age from six to eighteen. Some play handheld video games, others listen to Ipods, a couple read, the rest fidget.

Except for one child.

A SMALL BOY, around eight, whose eyes dart impatiently between the television screen and the business man. He has a slight case of "happy feet" which he fights to keep under control.

A NURSE (#1) approaches the business man and taps him on the shoulder.

NURSE #1

Excuse me, Mr. Morrow. Your mother
is ready for you now.

The business man nods "thank you" and stands. As he does he sets the television remote down on the arm of the easy chair, then exits the waiting area with the nurse.

The small boy seizes his opportunity and literally leaps into the easy chair, grabbing hold of the remote and hunkering down. The other children in the area barely pay passing notice to him.

The small boy begins hitting the channel change button on the remote.

INTERCUT WITH:

CHANNEL CHANGING PLAYBACK

The channels fly by. Your typical cable crap. Infomercials. Bad movies. News. Reality. Nothing even remotely watchable.

The small boy continues to change channels, searching for something to watch. No cartoons come up. No I Love Lucy. Nothing.

The channels wrap around to the beginning and make a second pass.

The small boy looks defeated. Spears the channel button a couple more times. Still nothing. He stops and tosses the remote down in disgust.

The channel changing playback ends on a commercial that is coming to an end. Something forgettable, say an adult diaper or hemorrhoid commercial.

After a beat or two the commercial yields to a banner that reads: "THE BEST OF PAULINE BEARDEN." The banner is accompanied by an announcer voice-over.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We now return to "The Best of Pauline Bearden."

(**NOTE TO THE READER: IT IS PROBABLY BEST AT THIS TIME TO REVEAL THAT THIS SCRIPT IS DEDICATED TO, AND WILL STAR, CAROL BURNETT IF I AM FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GET THIS SERIES BEYOND THE SPEC STAGE. THE CLIPS THAT ARE FEATURED DURING THIS EPISODE WILL BE FROM THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW.**)

A funny clip plays, a sketch featuring the hilarious comedienne, PAULINE BEARDEN, in her prime. In color, looking somewhat dated, but the humor is priceless and timeless.

In other words, it is funny. Period.

The small boy takes notice. The 40+ year old slapstick comedy sketch grabs him just like it grabbed generations before him.

A smile begins to appear on his face. Accompanied by a muffled chuckle. A chuckle that gives way to a giggle which turns into a laugh.

END INTERCUT.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Wider to include the small boy, the television and the other children, who one by one begin to notice two things. The first is the small boy who is continuing to laugh at the clip that is playing on the television.

The other is the clip itself.

Eyes look up from video games and magazines. Ipod ear buds are pulled out.

A wonderful thing begins to spread across the room: the laughter of children.

All inspired by a 40 year old slapstick comedy clip playing before them on a faded 27" television screen.

We now become aware of an OLDER WOMAN who slowly walks in to FRAME, her back to the CAMERA. She stops, unnoticed, behind the back of the easy chair that holds the small boy who started it all.

The woman stands quietly and watches the clip along with the still laughing children, drawing no attention to herself. As it plays on, she turns to CAMERA.

The face of none other than PAULINE BEARDEN herself is revealed. Clearly older, in her mid-70's, her hair now silver, but it is unmistakably her.

She smiles a heartfelt smile, not one of ego and self acknowledgment but of pure joy. Of satisfaction that goes to the very core of her being.

CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY on this wonderful face as we

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER