

Brian's Path, Episode 7

by Alan Holman

BRIAN'S PATH

Episode 7: "I Thought Cap Was Dead"

EXT. MOVIE HOUSE - DAY

BRIAN and CARA notice ANTON LACE'S picture on a poster for a movie called INVASION FORCE.

In the picture, ANTON isn't wearing his glasses, and he has blonde hair.

BRIAN

To tell you the truth, I'm really not interested in seeing Anton's movie.

CARA

But he wrote it, and you mean a lot to him. He'd be devastated if you don't go to the show he wrote!

BRIAN

I know. And I'd feel the same way if he didn't watch a show I wrote. But for some reason, I don't care to see his show. Tell me the truth: do you?

CARA

No. I know he'd be devastated if we don't show up at the premiere he invited us to.

BRIAN

We're assholes.

CARA

Agreed.

They kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. CAP'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CAP wakes up.

His wheelchair stands beside his bed. And beside his wheelchair is a three-dimensional chess board. Beside the chess-board is a computer.

CAP

Whoah, quite a dream!

CAP gets on his wheelchair.

ANTON enters.

ANTON

Hey, Cap. Weren't you dead?

CAP

It was all a dream. Why are YOU here?

ANTON

I got laser-surgery. I don't need those glasses I sometimes wore, anymore.

CAP

Cool, but why are you here?

ANTON

Hey, did you know that a ten minute chess game per day can make a person more focused, and their IQ's raise twenty points higher than... why aren't you still dead?

CAP

Why are you in my bedroom?

ANTON

You still buy that good yogurt?

CAP

Yup.

ANTON exits, then re-enters with yogurt, which he begins to eat.

ANTON

I thought yogurt doesn't go bad, but when it won't stop coughing... umm ... you died in an earlier scene.

CAP

I told you, it was all a dream. That, or I faked my death -- whatever an audience'll believe.

Just accept that I'm here for once in your life.

ANTON

That reminds me, I once treated a schizo-affective patient who was actually quite a normal guy, with normal goals... a woman's emotionally bullying behavior towards him is what screwed him up sometimes.

CAP

Hey Anton, surely the plastic people in Hollywood aren't keeping you so lonely and bored you had to return, did they?

ANTON

Yeah. Anyway, since you're not dead, how ya doin', buddy?

CAP

Well, I'm alive, so no complaints here.

ANTON

(sarcastic)
Oh, THAT makes sense! Well, If you're not gonna tell me anything, then I don't have to tell you anything.

CAP

Agreed.

ANTON

Let's watch a movie.

CAP

Which movie?

ANTON

My movie. Invasion Force.

CAP

I don't know why a lot of people like it. I've never sat through the entire thing.

ANTON

But you're a friend! I was heartbroken when all of you -- especially Cara and Brian -- didn't RSVP for your free tickets to the premiere. I even stood at the door to let you all in, just in case any of the gang would end up showing up. I actually declined an offer to give a

speech before the show because I was so sad that none of you guys showed up. I was crying, Cap. And I ended up not enjoying my own show, because I wasn't sharing it with anyone who mattered to me -- you guys, especially Cara and Brian, matter to me.

CAP

Oh.

ANTON reveals a video tape from inside his jacket pocket -- then, he inserts the video tape into the VCR, and pushes the "play" button.

ANTON

The theatrical audience hated the commercial break. But including it was the only way to get the show made, and I was desperate to achieve my goals. But instead of feeling proud of the artist who achieved his goals, they mocked me. I wanted to kill myself.

WIPE TO:

EXT. RAINY DAY SKY, HIGH OVER SHADY BROOK - DAY

THE DEVIL sits upon a rainbow colored cloud.

THE DEVIL

The year was 2000. Y2K had come and gone without event. Brian and Cara were living happily, for the moment. Then one day, at a social event, Anton was recruited by his old pals Brian and Cara, to work with them, at their new animation company.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING

BRIAN and CARA are dressed as if they're going to a dance; they exit a Delorian.

CARA

I'm glad you're forgiving Anton.

BRIAN

Tentatively.

CARA

Oh, Brian, what's that mean?

BRIAN
I forget.

CARA
Whose reunion is this?

INT. FIVE YEAR REUNION, SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL

The teacher's daughters have black eyes, ex-football-star husbands, and are pregnant.

ANTON is dancing with CHANTANE.

CHANTANE
You're a good dancer, boy!

ANTON
Why aren't they here yet?

CHANTANE
I don't know.

BRIAN enters with CARA.

ANTON hurries to greet BRIAN and CARA.

BRIAN
Hey! Just the man I was looking for.

ANTON
Hi Brian. Hi Cara.

CARA
Hello Anton.

CHERYL enters, along with MONKEYBOY.

ANTON
Wow. What a sight for sore eyes you two are!

When MONKEYBOY sees ANTON, he backs off, and says...

MONKEYBOY
Whoah there, cowboy; don't shoot!

ANTON laughs.

CHERYL

I don't get it. Anton isn't a cow boy.

ANTON
It's an inside joke.

A long, uncomfortable pause.

ANTON
...which is more unfortunate than funny. Hey,
where's Darla?

BRIAN
She really wants to see you, Anton, but she's
working overtime with some musical ideas for
our production company.

ANTON
Production company?

CARA
A.A.S. Productions.

ANTON
F'wah? Ass?

BRIAN
It stands for: Agartha Animated Soap Operas.

ANTON's jaw drops.

ANTON
A production company? Animated Soap
Operas? Hey, Brian, we were gonna make
anime. Why pussy-foot the issue by calling it
animated soap operas? Just call it AAP for
Agartha Animated Productions, where every
animation is a damn good one, get it?

MONKEYBOY laughs hysterically.

BRIAN
That's brilliant, Anton! But who included you
in this?

ANTON gives a large roll of cash to BRIAN, and says...

ANTON
Benjamin.

MONKEYBOY stops laughing.

MONKEYBOY
OUCH! WHO PINCHED ME?!!

BRIAN
Maybe it was Boris.

MONKEYBOY
THAT was the "PAIN" I've been fearing all
these years?

Pause.

MONKEYBOY
BRING IT ON, MICROCHIPS, 'cuz I kinda'
liked it!!!

They all laugh.

MONKEYBOY
DAMN, THAT HURTS!!!

Everyone looks shocked.

MONKEYBOY
Boris must have escaped from prison. He
doesn't have the nuclear weapons anymore,
so he can't possibly hold the world hostage.
What's his new devious plot?

BRIAN
He probably just wants to push that pain
button some more.

MONKEYBOY
Ouch! EENch!

GABE
This is serious, guys; he's got tiny chips in his
body, programmed to give him pain.

Everyone looks concerned. MONKEYBOY looks like he's in a
lot of pain.

MONKEYBOY
Can't breathe.

MONKEYBOY falls to the ground.

CUT TO:

BLANK SCREEN

WORDS ON SCREEN: "After the Party..."

CUT TO:

EXT. SHADY BROOK HIGH SCHOOL - EVENING

BRIAN and CARA are dressed as if they had just come from a dance.

BRIAN

One year out of high school, and I'm already exiting from someone's five year reunion.

CARA

Your town's so small that everyone's invited to everything.

BRIAN

Yup, just like in a soap opera, my dear.

CARA

What's with you and soap operas, Brian?

BRIAN

I envy their ability to put out suspenseful television episodes daily...Anton doesn't.

CARA

I can't wait to continue making our series...

BRIAN

We need the first three weeks -- or fifteen episodes -- to be made before we approach a network with our DVDs.

CARA

But we ARE done.

Pause.

BRIAN takes a cell phone out of his pocket, dials seven numbers.

BRIAN

Hey Anton. I added a new movie review to my web-site...

(pause)

Hello? He hung up!

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - EVENING

MONKEYBOY, whose face is turning gray, lies on a bed, squirming in pain, as a PARAMEDIC watches over him in this speeding ambulance.

MONKEYBOY
Call the police!

PARAMEDIC
After we filter your blood.

MONKEYBOY
Boris is cranky! He needs his bah-bah!

PARAMEDIC
You're delusional.

MONKEYBOY
Call the police!

PARAMEDIC
Once we suck out whatever's in your blood-stream, they'll have enough evidence to throw you away on drug charges, my friend.

MONKEYBOY
You don't understand! Boris needs his bah-bah!

PARAMEDIC
You're delusional.

CUT TO:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM, HOSPITAL

MONKEYBOY lies on a bed.

DOCTORS talk to MONKEYBOY.

DOCTOR 1
I've got good news and bad news.

MONKEYBOY
What's the good news?

DOCTOR 1
The x-rays revealed microchips in your system.

MONKEYBOY
How's that good news?

DOCTOR 1
Because some of them were interacting with your brain in a fascinating way. It gets you off the hook for any crimes you may have committed.

MONKEYBOY
That's right. I did everything in self defense. What's the bad news?

DOCTOR 1
The x-rays deactivated the microchips.

MONKEYBOY
How's that bad news?

DOCTOR 2
Pissing'll hurt a few days.

The doctors laugh knowingly.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH, NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

ANTON talks on the phone, to BRIAN.

BRIAN
(v.o.)
Remember when we all used to sit around Monkeyboy's shortwave radio, and listen to Bill Cooper's talk show?

ANTON
How could I forget?

BRIAN
(v.o.)
And remember when he gave us all copies of Cooper's book BEHOLD A PALE HORSE?

ANTON
Yes, an important book. What about it?

BRIAN
(v.o.)
Well ... Cheryl wants to talk to you about something completely different. I'm giving the phone to her.

Pause.

CHERYL
(v.o.)
Anton: we live in the city of Agartha, in the Hollow Earth, where we found a computer which has a kick-ass-quick animation program!

ANTON
What the fuck is the "Hollow Earth"?

CHERYL
(v.o.)
Eight hundred miles below the Earth's surface!

ANTON
How?

CHERYL
(v.o.)
Long story. So long, I forgot it.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTON'S HOLLYWOOD APARTMENT - MORNING

ANTON LACE is now 19 years old, has dyed blonde hair, and is dressed very fashionably.

This apartment is huge, and it overlooks the HOLLYWOOD HILLS.

ANTON plays a bass guitar, and sings:

ANTON
(singing)
"In an evening gown town, brown with rain stain/
I'm gonna ride around town, down the main lane/
On my chick's motorized bike, like a porn star/
We sink deep into the night, fight who we are/
Our gang bought the police force, course that's not true/
But yeah we have some remorse for things we do/
as teenagers in the

town of Shady Brook/ and all the little religions
we forsook/ and authority: they just don't know
us/ we slipped through the cracks, cause they
didn't show us/ We broke through their doors,
and we saw their dark side/ The parts of their
souls they deny that they hide..."

COMMERCIAL BREAK

BLANK SCREEN

YEAR ON SCREEN
2001.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

BRIAN, now a twenty-one year old Caucasian male who wears
business attire, sits in his office, staring at a camcorder
on a tripod, which records what he says.

DATE ON SCREEN: September 5th, 2001

BRIAN
Anime. That's what we make here at Agatha
Animated Productions. What is anime? It's
Japanese animation. We're not Japanese, but
we can sure as hell emulate their style of
drawing, and their style of writing, which the
kids seem to go for these days, what with
their Pokémon thingy, and their Digimon crap,
and whatever else kinds of "mons" crack-
headed Japanese animators can dream up.
With computer animation, we can surely ...
(immediate laughter)
SQUEEGIMON!!!

[Squeegimon is pronounced Squijimon.]

ANTON enters; he is a well-dressed, extravagant looking
twenty year old.

ANTON
What are you doing, Brian?

BRIAN
Daydreaming about our future in these offices.

ANTON

What's with the video camera?

BRIAN

I'm making a training video for whoever we may end up hiring.

ANTON

I thought the plan was to just hang out here with the gang and do nothing all day but tell our friends and families that we made it in New York as animation studio executives, so that they could be proud of us back home in the small town of Shady Brook, and every once in a while we send them proof that we made it, wasn't that the plan?

BRIAN

Sure, but Anton; I want to actually make it. I want to make it in New York, in this office which we're leasing with your lotto winnings, and ...

ANTON

Plus, don't forget my my movie-star money! I ended up making a lot for writing and acting in Invasion Force!

BRIAN

Regardless of where the money's coming from...

ANTON

It's all coming from me.

BRIAN

Regardless of that,...

ANTON

Couldn't you chip in a little, Brian?

BRIAN

I grew up on welfare. Leave me alone.

ANTON

Well played.

BRIAN

Remember in the school library, when we used to dream about a future making cartoons together?

ANTON

We also spent that time dreaming about chicks, or is your ambition clouding your sexuality?

BRIAN

I'm perfectly fine, Doctor Lace. My ambition isn't clouding nothing.

ANTON

"Isn't clouding nothing?" -- and you call yourself a writer?

BRIAN

Anton. Success attracts chicks.

ANTON

That's a myth.

BRIAN

Chicks are attracted to successful men; they call it the Alpha Male Syndrome, or something like that...hell, you're the doctor, what's it called?

ANTON

It's a lie.

BRIAN

It better not be.

ANTON

I'm both a prodigious young doctor, of the Doogie Howser variety, and a strapping young star of a Hollywood feature, and my success hasn't been getting me any REAL love with the chicks who matter.

BRIAN

When will your tiny neurologist brain realize, Anton: It's not about the love. It's about the kootchie!

ANTON

Well, if that's your opinion, if you can call that an opinion, then why do you care about getting chicks since we've already got Darla, Cheryl, and Cara?

BRIAN

Well ... I want ONLY Cara.

ANTON

You see: you want love!

BRIAN

Yes.

ANTON

What kind of cartoons do you want to make?

BRIAN

I want to make anime.

ANTON

We're not Japanese, so we can't.

BRIAN

Bull.

ANTON

Like fake news, right?

BRIAN

Huh?

ANTON

You only listen to yourself when you talk, Brian; I've noticed that. Several times during high school, we've had this exact same conversation. It begins with me asking you what kind of cartoons you want to make, and you spout-out some amazing answers, but then when you finally get around to asking me what kind of shows I'd like to make, you never listen as I describe my fake news idea to you; it's always as if it's your first time hearing it.

BRIAN

But satiric fake news has been done many times before, Anton.

ANTON

Not the way I wanna do it. My goal is to actually confuse people with a realistic news program that's packaged exactly like the six o'clock news, with the same people and everything, but filled with lies, all lies. Oh, it would be great.

BRIAN
Isn't there a thing called The Daily Show?

ANTON
My idea's different.

BRIAN
You just keep telling yourself that, Anton, and
someday you'll have an original idea, but never
as original as my ideas.

Pause.

ANTON
So what kind of anime would you make with
this company?

BRIAN
Well, I'm...

ANTON
Actually, forget I asked, because I don't care.
Does that feel good, when I say I don't care?

BRIAN
No. Do you have a favorite Anime, Anton?

ANTON
Hellsing.

BRIAN
That's not even out yet.

ANTON
What's your favorite anime?

BRIAN
That's a very good question. I mean, what I
watch and what I'd recommend are different.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK OFFICES OF A.A.P., OFFICE TOWER - NIGHT

DARLA, CAP, MONKEYBOY, ANTON, JAMES, GABE, CHERYL,
CARA, and CHANTANE sit around a table; plus, BRIAN sits at
the head of the table.

ANTON

Brian. I saw that weird art film you shot last week. I should have realized how talented you actually are. Wow.

BRIAN

Thank you. I finally got around to watching Invasion Force, and I should have realized what was write under my nose -- you, and you always will be.

ANTON

How'd you get away with the bird-torturing segment?

BRIAN

We omitted the punctuation, so that it didn't say, "NO, animals WERE harmed in the making of this film."

Everyone laughs ... somewhat.

WIPE TO:

INT. HOUSEHOLD, SHADY BROOK - DAY

It's a birthday party for BRIAN; celebrating his 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st birthdays in one party.

MANY family from the town are in attendance, plus DARLA and ANTON are also there.

BRIAN is talking with DARLA in a corner of a room.

DARLA

Happy birthdays, Brian.

BRIAN

Thanks.

DARLA

Why were you alone in that movie theater last night?

BRIAN looks annoyed.

BRIAN

Why do you ask?

DARLA

You've got a lot of friends and well-wishers in

this town who would have wanted to go with you.

BRIAN gives her an evil glare.

BRIAN
I wanted to be alone.

DARLA
Why would anyone want to be alone?

BRIAN looks very annoyed.

BRIAN
What do you suggest we do?

DARLA
I suggest we go walk by the river.

EXT. LAWN - DAY

Everyone's crowded around a table where BRIAN is sitting.

On the table are seven cakes, each with a different number of candles lit. (16 - 21)

GRACE
More presents than you can possibly imagine, Brian, await in the house; they'll be brought out one-by-one.

BRIAN
I don't know about that, mom; I can imagine quite a bit! In fact, all I've been doing for the last several years was imagining.

The guests laugh, delighted.

BRIAN
And I tell you what: I loved that coma dream.

RUFUS and GRACE are a bit phased by that comment.

ANTON approaches.

BRIAN
Anton, my bud!

ANTON
Since you're so eager to get your presents, I'll

get it underway. I'll give you the first present.

BRIAN
Can't it wait 'till I blow out the candles?

ANTON
Meh.

He hands a large envelope to BRIAN.

BRIAN
What's in this?

ANTON
Your college education, dude.

The guests applaud.

BRIAN
Wow. Thanks! That's more money than I've ever seen!

ANTON
That's what I was waiting to hear, buddy.
You've just rewarded me for rewarding you.

BRIAN
How can you afford this?

ANTON
How could I not?

EXT. RIVERSIDE PATH - NIGHT

BRIAN and DARLA walk next to the river on a moonlit path.
The town's skyline is across the river.

DARLA
It's nice out.

BRIAN's looks down at his shoes.

BRIAN
Yeah.

DARLA
You haven't made eye contact with me all night, Brian. You promised I'd be laughing my ass off all night.

BRIAN blushes.

BRIAN
(in a funny voice)
You're one cute mortal.

DARLA giggles.

BRIAN looks in her eyes.

BRIAN
Do you feel ... anything ... for me?

DARLA
Well...I didn't. But now I know.

She giggles.

BRIAN
What do I know?

DARLA
I know why I was in your comatose dreams.

BRIAN
Uh-huh ... and?

DARLA kisses BRIAN.

Their kiss is long and romantic, the kind of kiss which ends great movies.

BLANK SCREEN

YEAR ON SCREEN
Still 2001.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIAN'S BEDROOM, HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

GRACE and RUFUS sit on the side of 21 y/o BRIAN's bed.

BRIAN
Good night mom and dad.

Pause.

RUFUS
Is it true that you still go to the same dream

world from your coma every time you go to sleep?

BRIAN
I only told that to the doctor.

RUFUS
Tendo only calls himself a doctor.

BRIAN
Whatever. I'm glad you know.

INT. AIRPORT, SHADY BROOK - DAY

BRIAN goes to the TICKET SELLER.

BRIAN
One ticket to New York City.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL, LARGE BUILDING - EVENING

BRIAN frantically runs down many flights of stairs.

BRIAN'S VOICE
(narrating)
A life insurance firm occupies the place where
A.A.P.'s supposed to be.
(pause)
Reality sucks.

EXT. ALLEY - EVENING

In a dark alley, BRIAN runs amid homeless people and cats.

A HOMELESS PERSON
No one's chasing you.

BRIAN stops.

BRIAN
I guess you're right.

A HOMELESS PERSON
What are you afraid of?

BRIAN gives the homeless person five hundred dollars from an envelope.

BRIAN
People who aren't as nice as I am.

A HOMELESS PERSON
God bless you!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

BRIAN talks on a phone to ANTON.

BRIAN
What's Darla like in reality?

ANTON'S VOICE
You should know. You and Darla walked by
the river last night. That was real.

BRIAN
Yeah, well I'm tryin' to keep it real. Tell me
more about her.

ANTON'S VOICE
She's in her church choir.

BRIAN
Oh.

ANTON'S VOICE
Yeah. Quite pointless, really.

BRIAN
I'm scared.

Pause.

BRIAN
Instead of going to college with that money
you loaned me, I'm gonna start a life in New
York.

ANTON'S VOICE
I figured you'd do something stupid like that.

BRIAN
Will you give me more money?

ANTON'S VOICE
Tendo told me many details about your dream
world, Brian.

BRIAN

Don't give me that "recovered memories" or "manufactured memories" bull-crap, Anton. Agartha Animated Productions was and is real to me. Sure it was a dream I had while in some sort of long sleep, but it was real.

ANTON'S VOICE

Your E.S.P. fed new information to your dreamscape.

Pause.

ANTON'S VOICE

If the animation company is why you went to New York, Brian, let go of those impossible, childish goals.

BRIAN

I want to start Agartha Animated Productions. I can't and won't let go of my dream.

Pause.

ANTON'S VOICE

It was only a dream. You need expertise to start a business. Go to college.

BRIAN

You did.

Pause.

ANTON'S VOICE

Yes, and Tendo said I ran your company in the background.

BRIAN

Then do that!

ANTON'S VOICE

It's not rational. I've got my own life, and I don't want to spend it as the puppet master for Agartha Animated Productions.

TO BE CONTINUED ...