

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 ...