

PROJECT: SABINA

SCI-FI / SPY THRILLER
(PG-13)

This sample is from a genre-bending sci-fi, spy thriller set in 1970's Moscow. The film is about an American spy whose mission to abduct an infamous Soviet scientist named Doctor Sergius ends with a psionically enhanced cyborg named Sabina escaping the doctor's lab. This woman-turned-abomination tracks her creator and his abductor back to the American Embassy in Moscow.

The following is a dynamic action sequence that begins with Sabina using her telepathic abilities of mind-control and illusion to enter the American Embassy. At the same time, Ted -- the agent responsible for her escape -- is in a holding room after attacking Doctor Sergius during interrogation. The carnage Sabina wreaks is enough for Ted to be released in an effort to defend the building.

Sabina's arrival and display of power marks the story's midpoint, in which the stakes are significantly raised. This scene also sets-up several future reveals that deepen characters and the story's plot.

AWARDS RECEIVED:
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BLUE LIST (2023)

INT. / EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - GUARD STATION - DAY

Two bored US SOLDIERS watch *Gunsmoke* playing on a mini-TV.

A fire truck rumbles down the street, the axels GROAN as it parks right in front of the embassy's gate.

The US Soldiers watch as Sabina, still under the guise of a normal woman, climbs out.

US SOLDIER 1

What the hell's this now?

Sabina limps to the booth. The TV's image distorts, worsening as she gets closer.

The US Soldiers leave the guard station to block her way.

US SOLDIER 1

Ma'am you're about to enter --

Sabina looks directly at both soldiers. They freeze, eyes milking over into white orbs.

She turns to the embassy's front gate. The US Soldiers pull their hats low, obscuring their eyes, and lock the gate.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - LOBBY - DAY

The two soldiers flank Sabina as she crosses the embassy's threshold. Sabina winces after several steps. Something about this place bothers her... but not enough to stop her advance.

Kosta spots the soldiers. He greets them with a toothy smile and double thumbs up.

The mind-controlled soldiers ignore him, stone-faced, as they escort Sabina toward the receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST

(re: soldiers)

Aren't you fellas on duty?

Sabina stumbles before reaching the desk and falls to her knees. Both the receptionist and Kosta stand to help her.

RECEPTIONIST

Ma'am!

Sabina loses her grip over the two soldiers. They waiver just as Kosta reaches Sabina, the receptionist behind him.

KOSTA
You okay, m--

Kosta's fingertips are inches from her shoulder when he's suddenly launched across the room by telekinetic force.

The startled receptionist and dazed soldiers turn to see --

RECEPTIONIST
Oh my god!

Sabina's glamour has faded! Too weak to keep up the psychic mirage, Sabina appears in her true ghoulish cybernetic form!

The receptionist runs to her desk and hits a panic button.

SIRENS BLARE. LEAD SCREENS ROLL DOWN THE LOBBY WINDOWS, COMPLETELY BLOCKING ANY AND ALL DAY LIGHT FROM ENTERING.

The two soldiers regain their faculties and aim their rifles. Sabina lifts her head in time as the soldiers FIRE...

BANG-BANG-BANG!

... but the bullets bend around her...

BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!

... striking furniture, walls...

BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!

... and people.

Kosta scrambles behind a pillar and watches as more ARMED SECURITY FORCES funnel into the lobby to join the firefight.

The lobby lights dim and flicker as Sabina alters each bullet's trajectory in a new chaotic direction.

A bullet narrowly misses Kosta, striking the wall. It RICOCHETS off the wood with a bizarrely metallic CLANG.

More bullets strike the walls with the same effect, turning the lobby into an unpredictable web of ricocheting bullets.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - SAME TIME

CURIOUS PEDESTRIANS gather at the sight of the embassy's sealed windows. They gawk at the sound of MUFFLED GUNFIRE escaping from inside the building.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - SAME TIME

The BLASTS OF GUNFIRE reach Bob's ears. He trades his cigarette for his firearm and runs toward the danger.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - TED'S HOLDING ROOM - SAME TIME

FOOTSTEPS RACING outside the door put Ted on alert. MUFFLED SHOUTS and INAUDIBLE COMMANDS put him on his feet, knocking on the door.

TED

Hey, what's going on? Hello?

Ted bangs on the door. No response.

TED

Hello!?

The door swings open.

MILNER

Come on!

TED

What's happening?

Milner offers Ted a pistol.

MILNER

We're under attack.

Ted takes it without hesitation. They run out of the room.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - SERGIUS'S HOLDING ROOM - SAME TIME

Sergius presses his ear to the door. Listening. Smiling.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The lobby's lights continue to dim as Kosta hides behind a pillar, mindful of the bullets RIPPING the air around him.

BOB (O.S.)

Heads up, Coleslaw!

Bob slides beside Kosta, gun drawn.

KOSTA

Mr. Bob!

BOB
What the hell's going on?

KOSTA
I do not know! This woman come with
two army men and then she change
into, into *thing!* What do we do?

BOB
If I knew we wouldn't be hiding.

Bob peers around the pillar for a better look. His jaw drops.

BOB
Jesus, Mary, 'n Joseph...

BOB POV: Fewer bullets are sent in unpredictable directions. Now Sabina bends their trajectories, making them orbit her like high-velocity electrons around an atom. She captures more and more -- *She's gaining strength!*

Bob rears his head behind the pillar, pulling Kosta down.

BOB
Get down!

Sabina scans the lobby as her constellation of bullets gain momentum, moving around her at such incredible speed they're little more than silver streaks.

SABINA POV: A relentless assault from angry faces SHOUTING and SHOOTING at her from all directions.

Sabina gnashes her gray teeth, throws her arms out to either side, and the bullets bending around to LAUNCH in every direction.

Wounded agents' MOANS replace the gunfire, legs and arms shredded by Sabina's attack. No casualties. Those that haven't been hit find cover, shocked by what they witnessed.

Sabina begins to wobble. The lobby lights brighten. She slumps to her knees.

Bob seizes the moment. He lifts Kosta by the arm and shoves him toward the door.

BOB
Go!

Bob splits off in the other direction, firing at Sabina --

BOB
Over here you tadpole lookin' --

-- and lands a heart shot! She grabs her chest and collapses to the floor.

Stunned, Kosta stops mere feet from the door, staring at Sabina's motionless body. Bob stares, too, his affect somewhere between surprised and self-impressed.

BOB
That was easy.

Ted, Milner, and several ADDITIONAL GUARDS race down the lobby steps. They stop in their tracks at the sight of destruction.

TED
My god...

Bob notices their arrival, turns to Milner.

BOB
It's alright, I *gerk*--

Telekinetic force sends Bob across the lobby, CRASHING into a far wall with brutal force.

KOSTA
Mr. Bob!

The lights dim to near darkness. Only red emergency illuminate the lobby... and Sabina's sickly green eyes as she rises to her feet.

One spindly hand clutches her chest wound leaking purple-red blood. The other she raises at Ted and...

CUT TO:

DISJOINTED IMAGES INVADE TED'S MIND:

- A rural Russian farm beneath a stormy sky.
- Surgeons restraining a child to a steel operating table.
- Sergius taking a scalpel to flesh. A long incision and--

RETURN TO:

MILNER
C'mon, Butler!

Ted suddenly finds himself being dragged up the lobby stairs by Milner as GUNSHOTS ring out behind them.

Despite having to psionically deflect this new onslaught, Sabina's glares at Milner dragging Ted away. She growls when they disappear from her sight.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - ELEVATOR - SECONDS LATER

Milner drags Ted inside the elevator. The door quickly closes, the elevator car WHIRRS as it descends. Relieved, Milner snaps his fingers in front of Ted's face.

MILNER

You in there?

TED

(groggy)

Yeah, bu--

MILNER

Name and rank.

TED

What?

MILNER

Name and rank.

Milner places his hand on his pistol's grip. He's serious and Ted knows it.

TED

Theodore Butler. Central
Intelligence Agency. Class 6
Special Operative, Moscow.

Milner relaxes, removes his hand from his pistol.

TED

Where're we going?

MILNER

Sub-level. We'll be safe there
while the others contain that...
whatever that was.

Ted, fully awake, tenses.

TED

Good. Take me to Sergius.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - LOBBY - SAME TIME

The few guards left standing ditch their guns, knowing Sabina will use their bullets against them.

They charge her, ready to subdue Sabina with force. A flick of the wrist and **KRACK!** **SNAP!** her aggressor's SHRIEK as their legs break in ugly angles.

The fight is over. Sabina falls to her knees, chest wound leaking like a spigot.

RATTLING draws Sabina's eyes to the door. It's Kosta. He's pried the metal gate just enough to shimmy through.

Kosta is halfway through but stops with Sabina's eyes on him. He's frozen. Terrified.

Sabina glares at Kosta... then looks away. Kosta frantically scrambles through the tight squeeze and disappears outside.

With only the wounded for company, Sabina twitches and the gate KLANGS shut with psionic resonance.

Sabina falls over. Motionless beneath the lobby's red lights, the glow of her eyes dimming.