

"LIFE CHANGING"

By

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Reg. WGA

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LIFE CHANGING

FADE IN:

MONTAGE

Bird's eye images of a volcanic ridge on a small island.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Over the last decade, environmental experts have eyed the dangers associated with volcanic eruption along the Cumbre Vieja volcanic ridge on the island of La Palma, of the Canaries.

Images of a printed scientific report.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The EWD's most recent study, published last month, estimates an 85% probability that Cumbre Vieja will erupt in the next five years.

Computer simulation of the following:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When it does, the western half of Cumbre Vieja - 20 cubic kilometers of rock, weighing 500 billion tons - will sink four miles into the Atlantic Ocean, causing a 40 foot tall megatsunami, traveling westward at 500 miles per hour. The megatsunami will level much of the Caribbean and the eastern coast of the Americas, including New York, Boston, Miami and São Paulo.

Apocalyptic images of the mega-tsunami striking.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Panic stricken, the American public has come out largely in support of Disco Volante, a proposed project to partially inhabit Mars. Days from a major election, Congress has yet to agree on a budget that could sustain the \$400 billion venture.

A Congressman speaks on the floor, interrupted by yells from the mass of politicians, angrily shaking papers about.

(CONTINUED)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
New York City. Present time.

FADE TO:

INT. PHIL'S BATHROOM - DAWN

PHIL, 26, sits on the toilet wearing only his eyeglasses. His body stiff, eyes closed, hands together in a diamond, he seems to be meditating. He draws a long breath and pushes. His face reddens.

The PLOP of a turd landing in toilet water signals relief, and his body relaxes. He notices his reflection in the doorknob. He moves his face close to it, playing with the distortions caused by the doorknob's intricate surface.

PHIL'S POV: Phil's mutated reflected face. After a few variations, his eyes converge, and his pupil contracts to a single point in a giant pool of white.

Phil pulls away, scared. He opens the bathroom door, effectively removing the doorknob from his line of sight.

INT. PHIL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Bookshelves and entertainment systems line the walls of the room, engulfing its inhabitants.

NICK, 18, bald, sits on the couch, wearing giant headphones wired up to a professional sound recorder; both he and Phil wear wireless lav mics. Nick holds a drawing pad on his lap. He simultaneously doodles, fiddles with the dials of the recorder, and converses with Phil. Phil paces.

PHIL

You can't control determinate processes Nick, they're inherently outside personal control.

NICK

Not if we expand our view of identity such that--

PHIL

Such that...?

NICK

Such that the components of the determinate process be parts of the individual. Then, as a sum of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
parts, the individual is the
choice, it doesn't come from
outside.

INSERT: Nick's drawing pad. A cartoon lemur and grizzly bear
in various positions. On top, the heading: "Leemster and The
Grizz discuss: Free Will."

PHIL
You're playing with definitions. If
it's determinate, it can only go
one way. Choice requires two or
more possible options.

NICK
Except its all self-contained. The
identity isn't only the determinate
process, it's also the external
input, which guides the movement of
the determinate process, so it's
all one thing, it's self
determinate.

PHIL
You can't pretend you have choice
over an event by arbitrarily
appropriating its causes into your
concept of self.

Nick pulls out his phone.

PHIL
C'mon Nick, don't break character.

INSERT: Nick's phone, message from "Amy <3": "I thought
about it. Its still over. Pls dont call."

Nick puts his phone away.

NICK
I won't be participating. In
Founding.

Phil stops pacing.

PHIL
Stop the recorder.

NICK
No one else is hearing this.

PHIL

The tapes are for L and the G, this ain't about L and the G.

NICK

So let's stay on the show then.

Phil stops the recorded himself. Rolling his eyes, Nick lowers his headphones.

PHIL

Why?

NICK

I don't know. I just finished high school. I wanna take a year to chill out before I go off and change my life. Y'know? I'm young. Just wanna...

He imitates a wave with his hands.

PHIL

Okay. Okay. And the real reason?

NICK

You wanna know the real reason? The real, for real, real reason? A brand new Evolver console plus Eschaton Four. The package costs me about the same as the seminar.

PHIL

Eschaton Four?

NICK

Have you heard of it? The first Eschaton game with multiple possible endings, depending on how you play.

PHIL

You're dropping our plans for a videogame? You need Founding more than I thought.

NICK

I have a plan. If I can beat the game in under two standard deviations less than the average player's time - 23 hours in this case, rounding - I'll sell the Evolver, give up videogames for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
good. I think I can do it. Then
I'll do the seminar.

PHIL
Eschaton fucking four. So like you.
Just tell me you're scared.

NICK
I'm scared.

PHIL
Then the fucking sarcasm. But can
you muster the balls to be honest
with me? And with yourself Nick.

NICK
I'll catch you around Phil.

Nick detaches from the mic setup and saunters out. Phil unhooks his mic, makes as if to throw it against the wall, then drops it on the couch and punches the wall.

PHIL
Hey, whatever, just fuck him. Just
fucking fuck him, you--

He cuts himself off. He closes his eyes and breathes.

INT. PHIL'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Phil goes for toilet paper as he closes the door.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

EVA, a thin 32 year-old brunette on whom four layers of clothing appears fashionable, stands by the closed front doors of a mid-Manhattan skyscraper. Cigarette in hand, she looks off into the distance, her expression veiled by bug-eye reflective sunglasses. Between drags, she uses her cigarette hand to feel her other wrist's pulse.

Phil approaches the building from a distance, singing along to his earphones. Noticing Eva, he lowers his voice to silence and drapes his earphones over his shoulder. He scans Eva up and down.

PHIL
(whispering)
Helloo breasts.

(CONTINUED)

At a few feet away Eva finally notices him, only to instantly look away. Once he enters conversational space, Phil follows Eva's line of sight, imitating her aloof stare.

PHIL
Streets. Buildings. Halal food
carts. Fascinating, I agree.

She turns to him.

PHIL
Could I buy a cigarette off you?

EVA
Oh.

She drops her own cigarette before reaching into her purse. She hands him a thin, feminine cigarette, apparently (by the image on the filter) cherry flavored. Phil lights it, then pats and gropes his many pockets.

EVA
Oh, don't worry about it.

Phil produces a pack of cigarettes and offers it to her, a single cigarette neatly poking out the nearly full pack. Eva shudders in momentary confusion, then chuckles and slides her hand over Phil's shoulder.

EVA
Oh, that's funny.

Phil keeps his hand out.

EVA
I just had one though.

She reconsiders and takes the cigarette. He lights it.

PHIL
We are pretty fucking early.

Eva faces away again. Phil offers her one of his earphones. She looks at him, no expression discernible behind the glasses. Phil rummages through his messenger bag.

PHIL
I know what you're thinking, I do.
Who listens to music with one ear?
Ridiculous. Well, never
fear...um...um...

He twirls his hand to gesture for her name. A few seconds pass before she answers.

(CONTINUED)

EVA

Eva.

PHIL

Eva. That's a nice name. Well,
never fear Eva, because I, Phil...

He holds a tiny headphone splitter up to Eva's face.

PHIL

Always come prepared.

Eva reaches into her purse for her own set of flamboyant headphones. Phil takes charge of the wire connections.

PHIL

Okay, this is--

Eva shushes him. He starts his mp3 player. They lean against the wall. Seconds later Phil pauses the music.

PHIL

Hey, Eva?

No reaction. He squints, trying unsuccessfully to see her eyes past the glasses. He resumes the music.

INT. HYPNOTIST'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The office is decorated by framed diplomas and certificates. A woman flips through a complimentary magazine in a waiting room lobby, visible through a large window in the office.

INSERT: One diploma reads: "CERTIFIED HYPNO-THERAPIST."

The HYPNOTIST, 40's, extravagantly dressed, sits across from Eva. She bites her nails as he flips through his files. He fishes for eye contact behind the sunglasses.

HYPNOTIST

Mhmm. Eliska Cerna, is that right?

EVA

Yes.

She crosses her legs, and he does the same.

HYPNOTIST

It's cigarettes, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

EVA

I'm sorry?

HYPNOTIST

I can smell it. It's nothing to be
ashamed about--

EVA

I like cigarettes.

She rubs her hand over her mouth, and a second later, he
does the same, which Eva notices.

HYPNOTIST

Mhmm. What may I do for you then?

EVA

I work for a very large
institution, I have a very specific
and important job title.

HYPNOTIST

You wear sunglasses indoors.

Eva uncrosses her legs. A moment later, he does the same.

EVA

In order to continue my work, I'm
being asked to take on certain
tangential tasks, tasks that are...
distasteful--

HYPNOTIST

Eliska, do something for me. Tell
me what you want. Background comes
later.

Eva scratches her knee, which again, the Hypnotist mimics.
She laughs.

HYPNOTIST

What's funny?

She gets up and touches her nose with her finger. The
Hypnotist is now plainly confused; Eva notices something out
the corner of her eye.

EVA'S POV: In the waiting room lobby, the woman holds the
magazine up as she reads it. The page facing Eva reads: "The
Face of the New Frontier" over a doctored photo of Eva's
face, hovering over an image of the solar system.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly panicked, Eva steps over, so that in facing her, the Hypnotist will look away from the window. The Hypnotist looks through the window to see what startled her.

EVA

Hey!

HYPNOTIST

What's wrong?

He eyes her curiously, then glances back over through the window. Eva grabs her handbag and makes for the door. He intercepts her and places his hand on her shoulder.

HYPNOTIST

Eliska. You can trust me. I'm here to help.

She storms out.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Eva runs across the street against the light, nearly causing a traffic accident. She stops to rest under a scaffold. She breathes in and out.

EVA

(soft whisper)

Shh...shh...shh...it's okay.

Calmer, she looks up and notices an advertisement on a bus stop glass shelter. A montage of smiling faces, the logo reads "FOUNDING INQUIRIES," subtitled: "Life. Free of Restraints." A quote on the bottom: "It changed my life!" credited to "Max Punic, Millionaire and Philanthropist."

INT. UNDERGROUND - "4" TRAIN PASSENGER CAR

RAOUL, 51, white, average height and build, dressed business casual, earphones in. His clothes are spotless but his hair is ruffled. He holds a ripped up paper cup in one hand, jiggling change, and a briefcase in the other. He staggers through the car.

RAOUL

(slurred)

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry to bother you. See my dog, my dog Rocky ate our mattress. He's a big dog. Em'ly kicked us out. Got us res-restrain' order. Got no job uh

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL (cont'd)
food, nowhere to go. Please, if you
can just spare a little - ain't no
shelter take a big dog like Rocky.
Just need a little change. A penny,
anything. He's a big dog, needs to
eat. Please ladies and gentlemen.

Despite his attire, his performance is convincing. A young woman drops some coins into his cup and recoils, eyes darting about for feedback. A preppy teen blatantly laughs. The train stops and Raoul exits.

INT. UNDERGROUND TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Raoul smiles weakly. He hands the cup of coins to a smiling Chinese boy. The boy's mother scolds the boy in Mandarin while negotiating a stroller. Raoul skips up the stairs.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Raoul emerges from the subway station. A parked car honks. Raoul enters the passenger seat. ANA, a tired 38 year-old Hispanic, occupies the driver's seat.

ANGLE ON: Down the block, a tall woman in her mid-20's, EMILY, hurries down the street. She passes by the car, and glances inside.

Emily's and Raoul's eyes meet. Raoul's stare acknowledges recognition, nothing more.

Emily hesitates, then turns and hurries her pace, almost jogging down the street.

INT. ANA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Raoul watches Emily speed away, then checks his watch.

RAOUL
I won't be meeting you here
anymore. I'll meet you at your
apartment after the sessions. Is
that alright?

Ana pulls at the skin around her throat and nods.

RAOUL
You know you're blocking the lens's
view?

(CONTINUED)

Ana looks down at her forearm, stretching across her chest. A two inch long silver chain dangles from a bracelet on her wrist. She pulls her arm down.

RAOUL

Relax. No one's gonna suspect you.
We're doing the right thing.

Ana nods.

RAOUL

Remember why you're there. You owe this to your sister. You owe this to Herbert - it's why I put him there, he's a reminder for you. You'll meet incredible people - the best - and you'll see them commit their souls. To fabrications. To empty rhetoric, designed purely for profit. Always keep in mind: we're doing this for them.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC OFFICE - WAITING ROOM LOBBY - DAY
(FLASHBACK)

The small lobby hosts a cross-section of inner-city poverty, seated in folding chairs, fill-in forms on their laps.

Ana examines paperwork behind the reception window. A Hispanic teen awaits instruction. She slides him a paper slip.

ANA

You have a great day.

The teen exits the lobby.

ANA

Mr. Herbert Frank, please come to the reception window.

HERBERT, 30's, rushes to the window; as he does, Raoul enters the lobby, impeccable appearance and calm demeanor sharply contrasting with the rest of the room. He smiles at Herbert and Ana. Herbert hands in his form as Raoul sits.

ANA

Good morning.

She examines the form.

(CONTINUED)

INSERT: a question on the form offers the choices: "drug use," "gang violence," "depression," "domestic," and "other," the latter followed by an "explain" blank. "Other" is checked on Herbert's form, with the explanation: "DCS-related panic attacks."

ANA

Mr. Frank? DCS?

Herbert speaks with a stutter:

HERBERT

Decompression sickness. The bends.

ANA

The bends?

HERBERT

Yes, the bends. Do I have to explain this to you?

ANA

Frankly, yes.

HERBERT

It happens to scuba divers. The sudden shift in air pressure forms air bubbles in the body, causing joint pain, fatigue, loss of balance--

ANA

Sir, what we offer is a psychiatric service. I can refer you--

HERBERT

The sickness is not the problem. Can't I explain this to the doctor?

ANGLE ON: Raoul listens to the conversation from his chair.

ANA

Frankly, no sir.

HERBERT

Stop saying frankly!

ANA

I can't give out an appointment without an idea of your condition.

HERBERT

It's the fear of the sickness. Do you understand? I can't elaborate. Not here, not in front of all these people. I can't dive anymore, and it's my passion. That's not enough for you?

ANA

Let me see photo ID.

Herbert hands her a university ID.

ANA

Do you have a driver's license?

HERBERT

I don't drive.

ANA

A state ID, or a passport?

HERBERT

Yeah, I walk around with my passport in my back pocket.

ANA

We can't put you in our system without a photo ID.

HERBERT

I gave you an ID.

ANA

I'm sorry, a government issued ID.

HERBERT

I have a credit card with my name on it.

He reaches for his wallet. Another receptionist, next to Ana, interjects:

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, I believe she's been clear.

ANA

Mr. Frank. Come back before five with proper ID, come straight to me, you won't have to wait, I'll schedule you immediately.

(CONTINUED)

HERBERT

You don't understand. You think
it's just scuba diving--

RECEPTIONIST

Sir!

HERBERT

Who cares about diving when you
have junkies and gangbangers,
right? They can't be expected to
have ID, right?

RECEPTIONIST

(to Ana)

I'm gonna call security.

ANA

Wait.

Raoul walks over to the window, extends his hand to Herbert
and performs a handshake interrupt.

ANA

Excuse me sir, please take a seat.

RAOUL

Herbert, yes? Come with me.

(to Ana)

He's alright.

Raoul guides Herbert toward the exit.

ANA

Sir! Mr. Frank!

Raoul and Herbert exit. Ana looks after them, unsure.

ANA

I'm going on a smoke break.

Ana exits through the back door.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIC OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Ana exits the building and bumps into Raoul. He extends his
hand and she ignores it.

RAOUL

Ana Ramos.

(CONTINUED)

ANA
Do I know you?

RAOUL
I'm Raoul N., Ana. I know this is
surprising. Take a walk with me.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

A mass of people has formed behind Phil and Eva, who still lean against the wall listening to music. Emily is on the line. Ana too, near the rear; she avoids eye contact with Herbert, just a few people behind her.

ANGLE ON: Phil opens his eyes to see KATE, 28, a short, full-bodied blond, emerge from the building; she yells through cupped hands.

KATE
Single file! No entrance until I
see a single file.

Phil removes his earphones, but does not pause the music or alert Eva. Through much murmuring, a single file emerges. Kate looks at Eva, still leaning against the wall.

KATE
Hey!

Phil signals Kate to leave it to him. He pinches Eva's sunglasses. Startled, Eva pulls her glasses back before he can get them off. She bolts off toward the entrance, only to have her headphones yank at Phil's pocket. The headphones detach, but propel Phil's mp3 player and splitter out onto the floor. He bends down to pick them up as Eva runs into the building.

KATE
Hey! Where are you--

Kate runs in after Eva.

INT. FOUNDING ENTRANCE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Two VOLUNTEERS sit at a desk. Volunteer 1, closer to the entrance, sits ready with stick-on nametags and a sharpie. As Kate enters, Volunteer 2 inspects Eva's bag.

KATE
Hey!

The Volunteers are startled. Eva ignores Kate's call.

(CONTINUED)

VOLUNTEER 1

What's up?

Kate glares in Eva's direction. Volunteer 1 leans in close to Kate.

VOLUNTEER 1

(whispering, gesturing to Eva)

Something wrong?

Kate checks her watch, then storms back out.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Kate signals the line of people to enter. As they begin to flood in, they knock into Phil, still bent down retrieving his belongings. He suffers a few tumbles before he manages to finally walk in.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

An American flag overlooks the head of a full-size bed. SAM, 40, muscular, crew-cut, stands in the middle of the room, about six feet across from Kate. They rhythmically juggle two handballs between each other. Sam studies Kate's facial expressions closely, gathering information from them.

SAM

Ever have a pet?

KATE

Yes.

SAM

You were a child.

KATE

Good.

SAM

It died.

KATE

Duh.

SAM

Who'd you love more, your mom or dad?

(CONTINUED)

KATE
Mom.

SAM
Lie.

KATE
Good.

SAM
You hate your mom.

KATE
Move on Sam.

SAM
Why?

KATE
Are we training or psychoanalyzing?

SAM
Your reasoning is sincere.

KATE
Well done.

SAM
You're in love with someone.

KATE
No, and fuck off.

SAM
Lie.

Kate pegs him on the shoulder with a handball.

SAM
I'm sorry.

KATE
About what?

SAM
I'm prying.

KATE
No. You were wrong.

SAM
I was not.

She gestures him to come closer. He looks into her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

You're in love with someone.

Kate does nothing as Sam studies her face closely.

SAM

Shit.

KATE

You're seeing what you want to see.
Not because it's me, you don't have
this yet. This is the easy stuff.
You get a clever wiseass up there,
and you're fucked.

Sam sighs, drops to the bed.

KATE

Let's go again.

Kate watches Sam get up and fetch the handballs.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

The windowless lecture hall is long, wide, and flat. A sign hangs over the stage: "LISTEN." The stage holds two folding chairs, a whiteboard, and an obscured back door. The rest of the hall is filled with folding chairs, positioned into three sections.

As the last participants find their seats, Kate places crowd control posts in front of the entrance. The two other Volunteers position themselves by the left and right sections, monitoring their respective participants, all now wearing nametags. Kate takes the center section.

Phil, among the last to sit, scans the room. He spots Eva and hurries to an open seat directly behind her. On the stage, Sam paces and drinks water.

SAM

Good morning. My name is Sam
Newhard. I welcome you to the
Founding Inquiries Continuum. We
have a lot to talk about here. I'm
sure you have many questions. There
will be time. First, let me make
some things clear. Today is Friday,
October 26th. You will spend every
day in this building until and
including two Sundays from now,
November fourth. You will arrive

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)

every morning no later than nine o'clock. If you arrive late, you will not be admitted, and if you miss a day, you will be expelled. I do not bluff. Every night, you will leave at ten o'clock. In between, you will take two one-hour breaks, during which you will eat in our lounge, but will not exit the building. Additional ten-minute bathroom breaks will be announced throughout the day. For no reason will you otherwise exit this room unless you do not intend to return. This is what is necessary for us to give you what you paid to get. You may leave with a full refund any time before tomorrow at noon.

Sam's demeanor suddenly shifts.

SAM

Glad that's done with. How're y'all doing this morning?

A cacophony of scattered answers. Eva checks her phone.

INSERT: Eva's phone, message from "Mitch DiscoV": "Call time today 9:00 a.m. Where the fuck are you?"

Eva powers off her phone. Next to her, Ana squeezes the skin around her neck, the chain from her bracelet resting down the center of her blouse. She suddenly jerks her arm down.

INSERT: Attached to one of the buttons of Ana's blouse, a tiny camera lens stares out.

EXT. PHIL & NICK'S BUILDING - BACKYARD - SUNRISE

Nick, halfway through a joint, laughs to himself. Beyond the backyard's fence, an open field; a few yards farther, thick forest.

OLD MAN, 64, enters. Mid-hit, Nick hides his joint behind his back. He exhales the smoke away from the Old Man, but lets out an obvious cough. The Old Man sits on the bench across from Nick, blatantly staring. Nick rushes through the joint, causing him to cough even more.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

Hey! Can I ask what y're doing over there?

NICK

Just smoking a cigarette sir. Yourself?

The Old Man slides over to Nick's bench.

OLD MAN

That doesn't smell like any cigarette to me. What kinda cigarette you call that?

NICK

Uh, it's scented. See, doesn't it smell nice?

Nick takes an exaggerated whiff. The Old Man smells it too.

OLD MAN

What a queer smell. What kinda scented cigarette is this?

NICK

Uh, it's rolling tobacco.

OLD MAN

No I mean, what's the scent? Like, uh, mint, ginger, oak, what?

NICK

I don't...I'm not really sure.

OLD MAN

You're telling me you bought a pack of scented smokes and you don't know the scent? Check the pack son.

NICK

I left it inside. Sorry.

OLD MAN

And you don't know?

NICK

It might just be...grass scented.

Nick lets out a snort. The Old Man laughs heartily.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

You kid. I'm just teasing you. I
smoked many a joint back in my day.

He pats Nick on the back. Nick exhales dramatically.

OLD MAN

What's your name kid?

NICK

Nick. Really, you used to smoke
weed?

OLD MAN

Yeah, those were better days. Emily
- my fiancé when I was maybe your
age, a bit older - Emily and I.
We'd puff away the days, listening
to, uh, Iron Butterfly, and uh,
Spirit. You know Spirit?

Nick is absurdly delighted. He takes a puff.

NICK

Yeah I know Spirit. Taurus, right?
Yo, well here you go old man.

He offers the Old Man the joint.

OLD MAN

You can't call yourself a Spirit
fan and talk about Taurus.

NICK

You wanna hit this?

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

The introductory lecture continues.

SAM

How many of you have heard of Raoul
N., founding Medium of the
Continuum?

The majority of participants raise their hand.

EMILY

(yelling from her seat)
Yeah, Raoul!

(CONTINUED)

SAM

As some of you may know, Raoul N. has retired from his position as Medium. He personally trained me as one of his successors.

He looks around, letting all the faces sink in.

SAM

Let's move on to an example of the work we do here. We've all got these things we call surface modifiers. You'll be amazed at how obvious these are. You, over there - stand up, please.

PARTICIPANT 1, a tiny middle-aged woman, half stands.

PARTICIPANT 1

Me?

SAM

Sure. Why are you here?

PARTICIPANT 1

Well. There's a couple of things.

SAM

But mostly...relationships, yes?

PARTICIPANT 1

Yes.

SAM

Family. You have kids...you don't get along with your kids.

PARTICIPANT 1

They haven't spoken to me in years.

SAM

You're also divorced...and remarried. The kids are from the previous husband.

PARTICIPANT 1

This is incredible.

SAM

What's incredible is the relationship you're gonna build with your kids in ten days.

Sam points out an area in the left section.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
You over there.

A small cluster of participants hesitate, unsure as to whom Sam has pointed out.

SAM
The writer.

PARTICIPANT 2, in her early twenties, stands up.

SAM
Why are you here?

PARTICIPANT 2
Oh, I don't...there's like...

SAM
Mhmm...let it out.

PARTICIPANT 2
It's like something missing. Like this vague, amorphous emptiness.

SAM
You're 23 years old and you have no idea what to do with your life, there's nothing vague about it. Ten days, yes?

Participant 2 nods.

SAM
Alright, I'll do one more. You, in the center. Why are you here?

He points out Eva. She doesn't stand.

SAM
Well?

EVA
I can't answer the question.

Sam cups his ear.

EVA
I can't answer the question.

SAM
You can't? Or you won't?

EVA

I won't. Sam.

SAM

You won't. Okay. That's great, actually. Because what I'm here to tell you is that I don't frankly care why you're here. I'm here to tell you that, whatever you think your problem is, you got a way bigger one. And that is: you don't know what it means to choose. You think you do. You think you have a few choices, and you go and you make the best one you can and your life moves along. Meanwhile, your impulses choose. Your culture chooses. These surface modifiers that are so superficial I can pick them up from a glance at you - they choose. And you - who you are - you sit back and you watch while these forces design your life. You sit and you watch and you tell yourself that fear and pain are unavoidable. And you never do anything.

INT. FOUNDING DINING LOUNGE

The windowless dining lounge offers a generous variety of food, buffet-style, and high-school cafeteria seating. WORKERS work behind the buffet booths, replenishing trays and maintaining the area.

Eva and Ana serve themselves at adjacent booths.

EVA

Would you like to sit in the same group?

Ana nods. They take their trays to a table. A second later, Phil sits across from Eva.

PHIL

Hi.

Emily appears from behind him.

EMILY

Mind if I join you guys?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
That's four then.

Emily sits. A silence follows.

PHIL
What are we supposed to do again?

EMILY
That sucks that Raoul's retired - I don't know about this Sam guy. Any of you ever met Raoul?

ANA
You know him?

EMILY
Oh yeah. This is my fourth year doing this. Believe me, it's magical - at least with Raoul.

PHIL
How well is it working if you have to keep coming back?

ANA
You were here last year?

EMILY
Sure was.

ANA
I'm sorry. Did you happen to meet - she had your name - Emily Ramos?

Emily and Ana suddenly seem deadly grave.

EMILY
Emily. Of course. My most beautiful namesake.

ANA
She was my sister.

Emily takes Ana's hand across the table.

EMILY
I'm sorry. She was a beautiful person. I see the resemblance.

She touches the chain dangling from Ana's wrist.

EMILY

This was hers. Talk to me.

A long pause.

PHIL

Let's give them some space.

(pause)

So, why are you here?

ANA

Oh, there's nothing, I was just curious. You know when it happened? And how?

EVA

I don't think I could articulate it.

EMILY

Yes. You need to know why.

PHIL

Try.

ANA

Was the timing of it a coincidence? I don't mean to...

EVA

I - you go first.

EMILY

You're wondering if Founding's to blame.

PHIL

Me? Oh, y'know, the usual, hit on women when they're most open to suggestion.

Eva chuckles, then turns to Ana and Emily.

ANA

Not blame, not blame.

EVA

Does this, with your sister, is it related to why you're here?

All eyes on Ana; she pulls at the skin around her throat.

EMILY

Can I say one more thing?

(pause)

I spoke with Emily a bit during her last days. She glowed; she told me all her years of supernatural investigation were finally coming together. She was on the brink of a discovery about synchronicity. Meaningful coincidences in time. Did you ever talk about this?

(CONTINUED)

ANA

We didn't really...speak.

EMILY

She told me about seeing coincidences everywhere. Series of coincidences, coincidences about coincidences. There was one - something about The Bends. I don't exactly remember, it had to do with two rock bands.

ANA'S POV: Herbert walks his tray to a garbage receptacle.

ANA

Rock bands?

EMILY

And something about a flying saucer. I'm sorry, I don't remember the details, I don't.

ANA'S POV: An empty bowl on Hebert's tray.

EMILY

But I think she saw something. Something that made her want to go. Not leave, but go.

Emily glances up to see Kate, hovering over the group.

KATE

Please don't mind me.

EMILY

So Phil, why are you here?

KATE

Don't change your conversation.

EVA

It was done anyway. It wasn't for you.

KATE

Okay. Could you tell me - if it's okay with you - why someone in your group is here?

EVA

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Thank you; I appreciate your honesty. We can start now. Why are you here, Eva?

EVA

You appreciate honesty?

KATE

Above all else.

EVA

I'm sick of that question. I'm not going to answer it.

KATE

That's perfect.

EVA

You don't think that's perfect, you asked me the question.

KATE

I know how to take a no, Eva.

(to the group)

Who here - and follow Eva's example, be fully honest - is willing to answer the question 'why are you here?'

Emily's hand goes up. Phil's slowly follows.

KATE

Tell your group. And you...

She places her hand on Eva's shoulder.

KATE

...can listen. Thank you.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nick's room is tiny and crammed. The walls are covered with drawings of the cartoon lemur and grizzly bear. Nick sits on his bed, packs a bong from a baggie of marijuana. The Old Man sits on Nick's only chair, eyes on the weed.

NICK

What do you smell?

Nick brings the weed up to the Old Man's nostrils.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN
Hmm. Nick right?

NICK
Cat piss. It's the tell-tale mark
of high-grade sativa.

OLD MAN
You're a good kid.

NICK
Yeah man. I'm sure you're a good,
you know, man too.

OLD MAN
Nick, you know I am the super here?

NICK
Quite aware.

OLD MAN
I don't personally have anything
against marijuana. I don't. But as
super, it is my responsibility to
report this. At least to your
father, if not the authorities.

Nick looks up from his bong.

NICK
Wait. You're not gonna smoke?

OLD MAN
I'm sorry.

NICK
You sure about this? You can't
ignore it, you know, like you
ignore our leaking shower?

OLD MAN
I have a legal and ethical
obligation. You understand?

NICK
Hey, well...you gotta do what you
gotta do, I get that.
(pause)
You wouldn't...? I'll tell you
what. Hold on, I need water. You
want water?

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN
Uhh...no thank you.

Nick rushes out.

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nick drops two sugar cubes into two tall glasses each, then pours water into them. The sugar cubes quickly dissolve.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Nick. I...

Nick exits with the two glasses.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nick enters the bedroom, sipping from one of the glasses.

NICK
I brought you some if you want.

He places the other glass on his night table.

NICK
What are you doing now? Right now.

OLD MAN
What's that?

NICK
Ever play an Evolver game?

OLD MAN
Evolver?

NICK
What's the last videogame you played old man?

OLD MAN
Nick, this isn't a joke.

NICK
You wanna go your whole life never playing a videogame? C'mon.

Nick grabs his controller, sits at his desk. The Old Man stands there.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN
Okay. I won't tell anyone.

NICK
You do what you think is right old man, I still want you to play.

Nick selects "New Game" on the game's HOME SCREEN.

OLD MAN
I am curious. I'd prefer to watch for now.

NICK
No problem. You can sit on the bed.

OLD MAN
Thank you.

The Old Man sits. Nick selects "Create Your Character." The Old Man sips water from the glass on the night table.

ESCHATON IV NARRATOR
Please say your character's name.

NICK
(to Evolver)
Nick.
(whisper to Old Man)
Nice!

ESCHATON IV NARRATOR
Welcome Nick Nice. Your character will now speak in your voice. Please upload photos and enter biodata, so that we may render your character in your likeness.

MONTAGE: Nick uploads photos into the game as the Old Man watches. The game BEEPS.

ESCHATON IV NARRATOR
This is your character. Are you ready to play?

Nick's character uncannily resembles Nick, and wears a medieval armor and sword. Nick selects "Play Now."

ESCHATON IV - INT. ENCLOSED ROOM

GAMEPLAY: NICK NICE awakens in a closet-sized room with a single door, guarded by a floating tentacled creature, a GRANILOID. When Nick approaches it, he is electrocuted and his health bar drops. Nick attacks the graniloid with his sword; a short battle ensues, which Nick dominates.

CUT SCENE: Nick holds his sword to the graniloid. The graniloid's voice is highly distorted, but can be recognized as Phil's.

GRANILOID

No, please, please Nick! Nooo!

The graniloid cries, hovering in place. Two lines of text appear: "Press X to strike" and "Press B to show mercy." Nick strikes. The graniloid dematerializes into thin air.

GAMEPLAY: A counter labeled "XP" goes from "0" to "10." The door opens. Nick walks through it.

ESCHATON IV - EXT. DECAYING LAND - NIGHT

CUT SCENE: A busty, barely dressed woman with blue hair, GAME GODDESS, floats above Nick.

GAME GODDESS

Nick. Do you recognize me?

Nick shakes his head.

GAME GODDESS

As I feared. During your last battle you suffered a head injury and now have temporary amnesia. Nick, you're on a quest. To stop the evil Dr. Nichtsberg.

ESCHATON IV - SERIES OF SHOTS

CUT SCENE:

1. A barren wasteland. A scrawny man crawls toward a well, only to fall unconscious just before reaching it.
2. A large forest blazing in flames.
3. A metropolitan city. Graniloids crawl along the walls of skyscrapers. Lightning strikes.

(CONTINUED)

4. A hollow, skeletal woman stands in place, mouth agape, as the color fades out of her skin. She falls face-first, revealing a graniloid attached to her back.

Throughout:

GAME GODDESS (V.O.)
Dr. Nichtstberg has infested our world via creatures called graniloids. They cling to our Earth, and inject it with dark energy, gradually converting our planet to dark matter. Earth and its people suffer.

ESCHATON IV - EXT. DECAYING LAND - NIGHT

CUT SCENE: The Game Goddess continues.

GAME GODDESS
Nick, you must travel to the three Temples of Choice. At each, you will be asked by a Sage to make a choice. You must make the correct choices to save our Earth and defeat Dr. Nichtst--

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Umm, Nick?

The game cuts to its PAUSE SCREEN.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nick turns to the Old Man.

NICK
What's up old man?

The Old Man rises; he seems disoriented.

OLD MAN
I appreciate the...but I have to--

The Old Man coughs, and Nick puts his hand on his back. The Old Man retreats, still coughing.

OLD MAN
I'm alright.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

You sure? Let me bring you more water.

OLD MAN

I said I'm fine. This damn cough. But I'm alright.

NICK

You certainly will be.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures.

SAM

Let's play with our surface modifiers. I need a volunteer.

A handful of hands go up, including Phil's. Sam points him out, and he climbs on to the stage. Sam reads his nametag.

SAM

Phyllis! I'm only teasing you. What's your favorite color?

PHIL

Green.

SAM

What kind of green?

PHIL

Dark. Like moss.

Sam walks over to a whiteboard and writes on the back side of it, so no one can see his text.

SAM

Sit. I need one more volunteer.

The same group of hands.

SAM

All of you with your hands down, remind me, how much did you pay for this? Don't get me wrong, we appreciate the donation.

One or two more hands go up.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Great, hands down. All of you who didn't put your hands up, put your hands up.

Some participants laugh, but very few hands go up, not nearly enough to make up the difference.

SAM

(to Phil)

Choose the second volunteer.

Phil scans the crowd.

PHIL

Sam. There's someone - Eva, you see Eva in the center there - I'm sorry, she didn't raise her hand either time.

SAM

I like you Phyllis. Okay, let's see, Eva, hand up Eva.

(noticing her)

Oh Eva, of course. The one who won't answer questions. C'mon up.

EVA

I would prefer not to.

SAM

Why are you here?

(pause)

That. If you want that, come up here.

She walks up to the stage as a few participants applaud her. Sam gestures her to sit across from Phil.

SAM

Phyllis. Tell her what you think of her. Be honest, I can see you're an honest guy, yes? Eva, you can reply, ask for clarification, but let's stay on what he thinks of you. We're clear? Okay, go!

A few awkward seconds pass before Phil begins to speak.

PHIL

She's, uh--

(CONTINUED)

SAM

To her, you're talking to her.

PHIL

You're - I'm sorry, this is weird, but you're smart, definitely. Maybe not as smart as you think, but you're smart. You're very knowledgeable in some specialized field, probably. Am I on the right track here? I feel like I'm making an ass of myself.

Silence.

SAM

You can respond if you'd like, Eva.

No reaction from her.

PHIL

So you're not gonna talk then?

SAM

Stay on topic. This is all you.

PHIL

You're reserved, you hide yourself.

One participant audibly laughs.

PHIL

No, I mean, I noticed that before.

SAM

Stay with her.

PHIL

I wan to have sex with you, if you wanna know the truth.

SAM

That's you, we're talking about her.

PHIL

Well, I'm trying, if you'd stop interrupting.

Phil waits for a response, but Sam says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

You're arrogant, you think you're above everyone. I'm just being honest, that's why you wear those ridiculous glasses. You're so damn brilliant and beautiful, the rest of us don't deserve to see you, right? You get off on being mysterious to people, so they put you on some pedestal.

He stops, awaiting a reaction. An awkward silence follows.

PHIL

Why don't you take off the damn sunglasses and look me in the eye when I'm talking to you?

SAM

Phil--

PHIL

No, you wanna know what I think of her, I think she should take off her damn glasses and talk to us like a normal human being.

He makes as if to yank her glasses off; she pulls back.

PARTICIPANT

Hey, relax man.

PHIL

Yo, when you're up here you fucking relax, alright?

SAM

Whoa, let's everyone take it easy. Phil. You did great. Really. Can I show you something? You're gonna like this.

Sam walks to the whiteboard and flips it over, so everyone can see what he'd written. Five words: "conceited," "attractive," "intelligent," "shy" and "selfish." Some participants applaud.

SAM

Stay with him. Phil, you could have said anything - charming, kind, cruel, lazy, anything. So how is it that four, I think that's fair, four of the five attributes I wrote

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)
down were exactly what you focused
on? I didn't know whom you would
choose.

PHIL
How Sam?

SAM
These attributes are how you've
created yourself. You're all so in
love with your surface modifiers,
you impose them on everyone around
you. You have many ugly friends
Phil? Stupid ones?

Phil says nothing.

SAM
How about arrogant ones?

Phil laughs.

SAM
Yeah, most of them, huh? The good
news is, these surface modifiers
are just that - surface. They're
not your core identity, so they're
very malleable. Right?

Phil nods.

SAM
So, can you look at Eva again? What
do you think of her?

Phil looks at her, takes his time.

PHIL
I don't even know you.

SAM
Yeah. Eva, anything to say?

EVA
No.

SAM
Great, you can return to your
seats. Thank you.

Applause as Phil and Eva walk off stage.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The participants exit, chatting excitedly. Phil walks through inconspicuously, heading toward a train station at the end of the block.

EVA

Phil!

Phil jogs to her.

PHIL

Howdy.

EVA

Hi. No grudges, I have nothing against you. But please stay away from me from now on.

PHIL

Okay.

Eva begins to walk away.

PHIL

I know who you are. Eliska.

Eva turns back around.

PHIL

Your disguise isn't great. But why hide? You do good work--

EVA

Phil. I'm going home.

Phil walks back toward the train. Eva stands in place until he's some distance away, then walks in the same direction.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ana enters. Her apartment is small, crammed, disorganized. She removes her blouse, revealing a wire with a tiny lens on one end (attached to one of the blouse's buttons), the other end going into her skirt. She produces a rectangular device from the side of her skirt and ejects a tiny memory card from it. She places the bulk of gadgets on the table; from her purse, she retrieves a few more memory cards and glances at the clock: 10:30PM.

There is a knock on the door. She throws on her blouse and opens, revealing Raoul.

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL

Hello.

She hands him the memory cards.

ANA

Good night.

She closes the door, and looks through the door viewer.

ANA'S POV: Door viewer: Raoul pockets the cards and leaves.

Ana shifts her sofa left and right, carefully aligning it to lie perpendicular to her TV set. She flicks on the TV:

DISCO VOLANTE PSA - SERIES OF SHOTS

1. Disco Volante logo.
2. Eva, in goggles and what is practically a sexy scientist outfit, working in a lab, taking notes and inserting data into machines, wide superficial grin.
3. Outer-space POV: a little red sphere, Mars.
4. A slow moving spacecraft. A little boy inside, face pushed to the window, looking out, wide-eyed and awed.
5. On Mars, men in elaborate suits drill into the ground. Next to them, various machines and igloo-like steel domes.
6. A family of three, wearing full spacesuits, remove their helmets and inhale. They look at the audience and smile.

Eva's face, superimposed over the images:

EVA

My name is Eliska Cerna. From a Princeton laboratory, I designed a mechanism that, through the decompression of the atmosphere's molecules, will allow us to live and breathe on Mars. Yet Congress has repeatedly denied funding, even for tests. I, Eliska Cerna, urge you: write to your representatives and demand funding for the Disco Volante Project. Together, may we bend our future to our will.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ana powers off the TV. She stares blankly into her silhouetted reflection on the screen.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures.

SAM

You're all schizophrenics. Literally. You all have these characters in your head, vying for the wheel. Any good storyteller will tell you, the substance of character is desire. You want to know why you can't get the things you want? Because all the crazy personalities in your head want different things, and they're all acting at once. You. What's one thing you want?

Participant 2 rises.

PARTICIPANT 2

Well, there's a lot of things.

Some participants laugh.

PARTICIPANT 2

Okay, I get it. Um, I want to lose weight.

SAM

Great. What gets in the way?

PARTICIPANT 2

Umm...I love chocolate?

SAM

This is perfect. There's two people involved here. You got your "I want to be thin" person fighting the "I want chocolate" person. Have you lost much weight recently?

PARTICIPANT 2

I did last summer.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Of course not. You need your damn chocolate. When's the last time you really devoured a whole chunk of chocolate, just went all out?

She thinks.

SAM

Been a while? Of course. After all, you can't enjoy chocolate, you need to be thin.

Participants laugh.

SAM

(to all participants)

You see that you're crazy? Here's your assignment for the break: call up someone you're not on good terms with. Have one goal: to reconcile. Ignore all other desires. Notice every word you say, your tone - do they further your one goal? If not, what desire do they foster? Hands up: what desires may come up?

He picks on a few hands successively, nodding after each.

PARTICIPANT

Not to be embarrassed.

PARTICIPANT

Not to sound crazy.

PARTICIPANT

To make sense.

SAM

Good. Ignore them. For the duration of one call, have a single-track mind.

Herbert's hand goes up.

HERBERT

How we can we converse without caring about making sense? Some desires are complimentary.

SAM

What do you want right now?

(CONTINUED)

HERBERT

To understand the program.

SAM

You also want to evaluate it. Prove yourself smarter than it. Yes?

HERBERT

I don't know. Maybe.

SAM

You need to decide whether you're here to write a review, or improve the quality of your life. Either's fine, but pick one, or you're not getting either. You got that?

Herbert nods.

SAM

So what's it gonna be?

INT. FOUNDING DINING LOUNGE

The participants trickle into the lounge, excited, plates on one hand, dialing into phones with the other.

Ana paces, her phone to her ear. A click from the receiver, then breathing.

ANA

¿Alo? ¿Mami? ¿Alo?

Another click. Ana looks at her phone and her face drops. She notices Herbert, who lethargically considers his phone. She approaches him, but when he notices her coming, he puts his phone to his ear. Something from Ana's peripheral catches her attention.

ANA'S POV: Everyone around her is hunched over, hiding their phone conversations from those around them. Their bodies are all positioned exactly the same way. Two participants about ten feet apart pace, exact mirror images of each other, as if in a synchronized dance.

INSERT: Strapped to the inside of her skirt, Ana's camera vibrates.

Ana looks down at her skirt, then back at the participants. They're no longer synchronized. She heads for the bathroom.

ANGLE ON: Eva concludes a conversation in Czech and hangs up. Phil makes his way to her.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Can I borrow your phone? My phone's not getting reception and there's a call I really want to make.

Eva hands him the phone. He flips through her phone and his own, dialing into both. He gives her her phone back.

EVA

You can make your call, I don't mind.

Phil puts his own phone to his ear.

PHIL

I am.

Eva's phone rings. Phil turns around, his back to her. Eva answers her phone.

EVA

Hello?

PHIL

Eva? Hi, it's Phil.

EVA

Hi Phil.

PHIL

Can you meet me in the food lounge, like in right now? I need to talk to you.

EVA

Sure Phil.

He turns around. They both hang up.

PHIL

I'm sorry.

Her subtle smile betrays a hint of pity, and they embrace.

EVA

I'll see you around, okay?

Phil nods. Eva rushes toward the bathroom.

ANGLE ON: From a distance, Kate watches Eva enter the bathroom.

INT. FOUNDING BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eva enters and locks herself in a stall. She stands against the stall wall, taking deep breaths. A tear runs down her cheek from behind her sunglasses.

ANGLE ON: In the next stall over, Ana listens to Eva as she carefully pulls the camera out from the side of her skirt.

ANGLE ON: Eva emerges from the stall. She hangs her glasses on the neck of her blouse and splashes her puffy eyes with water. A mirror hovers over the sink.

ANGLE ON: Ana, camera in hand, switches out a memory card. She meets Eva's reflected eyes through the crack in the stall door. They share an extended glance, Eva's eyes red from tears, Ana's attached wires and camera in full view.

ANGLE ON: Kate bursts into the bathroom. Eva, face still wet, scrambles her sunglasses on. A long, awkward staredown follows, until Eva rips out a paper towel from a dispenser, dries her face, and rushes past Kate to the exit.

ANGLE ON: Ana slides a new memory card into her camera and stuffs it back into her skirt. Through the crack she sees Kate washing her hands at the sink. Ana slides out of the crack's view.

ANGLE ON: Kate catches a glimpse of something moving through the reflection of the crack. She looks back to the stall, and notices Ana's shoes underneath. She shuts off the water, dries her hands, and exits.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

The videogame is paused. Instrumental rock blasts from Nick's speakers. Nick and the Old Man sit on Nick's bed. They wear each other's clothes.

NICK

Look at this.

He points to his bedsheet - it's dark purple, with an intertwined vine pattern in light purple; lines squiggle in all directions, with leaf-shaped lumps at the intersections.

NICK

Can you see the music travel along the vines? Look closely.

(CONTINUED)

OLD MAN

Not quite.

NICK

It's like arteries, carrying blood to all these hearts. You see these lumps, how they pulsate to the beat?

The Old Man nods.

NICK

These pulses, they leave echoes, like ripples of color fading out into the air.

OLD MAN

They form patterns.

NICK

Yeah. The newer echoes superimpose over the older ones. It creates like waves of shades of purple.

OLD MAN

The music. The music produces the color.

NICK

Literally. The song's rhythm gives the light waves their frequencies. The bedsheet is the medium. This isn't in our heads man. This is reality we normally refuse to see.

TITLE SCREEN

"Leemster and The Grizz Discuss: Paradoxes. Part 1."

FADE TO:

CARTOON - EXT. SHACK IN THE WOODS - DAY

A lemur, LEEMSTER, sits on a chopped tree trunk crying his eyes out. A grizzly bear, THE GRIZZ, approaches. Abstract geometric figures and mathematical symbols occasionally fly by. Leemster and The Grizz absentmindedly practice evasive action as they speak.

(CONTINUED)

THE GRIZZ
Leemster, what's the matter?

LEEMSTER
Oh, The Grizz!

THE GRIZZ
Leemster, get a hold of yourself.
What happened?

LEEMSTER
God doesn't exist.

THE GRIZZ
Wha? How're you so sure?

LEEMSTER
Well, I was playing catch in the
forest.

CARTOON - EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Leemster plays catch by himself. An obelus flies by,
knocking his ball into the forest.

LEEMSTER (V.O.)
When this obelus knocked my ball
into the forest. I went in and
looked for it, for hours, but I
couldn't find it.

CARTOON - EXT. GOD'S CAVE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Leemster kneels outside a cave with white blinding light
emitting from it.

LEEMSTER (V.O.)
So I went to God's cave--

THE GRIZZ (V.O.)
He was there?

LEEMSTER (V.O.)
Yeah. And I asked him where my ball
was. So you know where there's
those five rabbit holes?

CARTOON - EXT. FOREST - DAY (EXPLANATION)

On a clear patch of dirt, surrounded by trees, lie five holes in the ground, along a straight line.

THE GRIZZ (V.O.)

Of course.

CARTOON - EXT. SHACK IN THE WOODS - DAY

The Leemster continues his story.

LEEMSTER

Well...God told me the ball fell into one of the holes. And he told me if I go look for it, I won't be able to predict which hole it's in until I actually see it.

Leemster breaks into hysterical crying.

THE GRIZZ

Well, what's so upsetting about that? There's only five holes, just check them all.

CARTOON - EXT. FOREST - DAY (EXPLANATION)

Leemster walks up to the last of the five rabbit holes.

LEEMSTER (V.O.)

Don't you see? Think about it. Imagine for a moment I've looked into the first four holes, and haven't found it. It'd have to be in the fifth hole, right?

THE GRIZZ (V.O.)

Right...

LEEMSTER (V.O.)

But then I'd know it in advance, before seeing it. So, if God's telling the truth, it can't possibly be in the fifth hole.

THE GRIZZ (V.O.)

Makes sense.

An "X" manifests over the last hole. Leemster moves down to the fourth hole.

(CONTINUED)

LEEMSTER (V.O.)

Now imagine I've looked at the first three holes and haven't found it. I already know it can't be in the fifth. So it'd have to be in the fourth. But then I'd know it in advance, so it can't be there either.

THE GRIZZ (V.O.)

Oh my.

An "X" appears over the fourth hole. Leemster moves down to the third; an "X" appears over it, and so on, until Leemster moves down to the first hole.

LEEMSTER (V.O.)

And this can go on down to the first hole, which again, I'd know in advance, so it couldn't be in there either.

The first hole is crossed off. Leemster dematerializes.

CARTOON - EXT. SHACK IN THE WOODS - DAY

The Grizz pats Leemster on the back gently.

LEEMSTER

What God told me is impossible!

THE GRIZZ

Well, don't jump to conclusions. Maybe God is a liar.

LEEMSTER

That can't be either. If God lied, then either the ball isn't in one of the holes - impossible, because I checked every other part of the forest - or, I would know in advance which hole the ball is in. And the truth is, I have no idea which hole the ball is in.

THE GRIZZ

Hmm...

LEEMSTER

You see it now? It's impossible for God to be telling the truth, and impossible for him to be lying.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LEEMSTER (cont'd)
That's a contradiction, and
contradictions can't exist!

Leemster falls into uncontrollable tears again.

THE GRIZZ
Leesmter, I've got it. God told you
you wouldn't know in advance which
hole the ball was in if you went
looking for it, right?

LEEMSTER
Right...

THE GRIZZ
Then don't go looking for it.

LEEMSTER
But The Grizz...I want my ball!

Leemster sobs. The Grizz rubs Leemster's hair.

FADE TO:

INT. FOUNDING DINING LOUNGE

Phil and Eva sit at a table. Eva lowers her headphones and
hands Phil his iPad.

PHIL
So. What'd you think?

EVA
Can I be honest?

PHIL
No. Just be polite and say you
liked it.

EVA
It's cute, the animals, the
animation. But a little confusing.

PHIL
That's fair. I appreciate that.
We've been working on making it
more accessible actually, so I'm
glad you said that.

INT. PHIL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Phil sits by an open window, still wearing his jacket, record player blasting. He shakes from the cold and smokes a cigarette out the window. Outside, a dog barks incessantly. Phil holds his hands over the ashtray, protecting it from the wind.

Suddenly, the record falls into a loop. Phil stands to go fix it, and the wind blows ash into his living room.

PHIL

Fuck!

He slams his finger down the record player's power button, then sticks his head out the window:

PHIL

Shut the fuck up out there!

His head back inside, he breathes in and out.

PHIL

It's ok. It doesn't bother me. Hey man, does it bother you? Nope, you? Nah bro. Good. What's bother anyway?

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures.

SAM

Let me introduce you now to your core identity. Deep down, past the surface modifiers and all your crazy personalities, you'll find a base desire - what we call your core identity. It's who you are. Yet, the whole facade of your personality is designed to suppress your core identity. You have literally arranged yourself so as to minimize the possibility of fulfilling what you want most. Why would you do that?

(to Volunteer 1)

The box.

Volunteer 1 hands him an ornate box. Sam addresses Participant 3, a bookish middle-aged man in glasses.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Fact: there's something in this box. Want to know what it is?

PARTICIPANT 3

Sure.

SAM

I'm not telling you. Do you wanna know what's in the box?

PARTICIPANT 3

Yes.

SAM

Well, open it and take a look.

Sam offers the box. Participant 3 goes for it, but Sam pulls it away.

SAM

Psyche! Haha. Seriously, if you can grab the box, you can open it. Go on, try to grab it.

He extends, Participant 3 yanks, Sam pulls it back just in time. They do this a few times.

SAM

Do you want to know what's in the box?

PARTICIPANT 3

Yes!

SAM

Oh. Why didn't you ask then?

Sam hands him the box. He opens it; inside, a handball.

PARTICIPANT 3

A ball?

SAM

What were you expecting? Now. Do you want to know what's in the box?

PARTICIPANT 3

I already know.

SAM

Yes or no question. Do you want to know what's in the box?

(CONTINUED)

PARTICIPANT 3

No?

SAM

The desire's gone, isn't it?

PARTICIPANT 3

Yeah.

SAM

Disappeared. We killed it.

(to the room)

You are a desire, and this is your
fear - that you'll get what you
want. Because once you do, you -
the desire - is gone. You die. This
is what we'll do tomorrow, what
you've avoided you're whole life -
tomorrow you're going to kill
yourself.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ana and Emily speak as the participants trickle out.

ANA

That was something.

EMILY

Mhmm. Raoul did it better.

ANA

You know him well?

EMILY

Do you?

ANA

Oh, I don't know him.

EMILY

Honey. You don't have to give me
details. But don't lie to me.

(pause)

Is it you're in love with him?

A long pause.

ANA

I, I really don't...

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Don't answer if you don't want to.
Just don't lie.

INT. SAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Sam enters his car, parked across the street from the Founding building. Kate enters the passenger side door as Sam starts the ignition, startling him. Seconds pass.

KATE

I don't want to sleep alone
tonight.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Rain pours outside. Ana, wrapped in a towel, dries her hair. The camera rests on the dining table. Ana looks at the clock: 10:28PM. She grabs a handful of memory cards from her purse and takes them to a wooden urn on her TV. As she opens the urn, she drops it, spilling a collection of memory cards. They land on the carpet in the neat shape of an "E." The doorbell rings; Ana quickly stuffs the cards back into the urn, and the urn back onto the TV, before running to the door. It's Raoul, and he's drenched.

RAOUL

Ana, hi. May I come in?

ANA

I'm...I've just showered.

He points at his soaking sleeve ironically. She forces a chuckle. He closes the door behind him.

RAOUL

Where were you last night?

He notices the camera on the table. Ana closes her eyes and dries her hair.

RAOUL

You've had second thoughts.

He produces a pen from his shirt pocket and twirls it between his fingers. His eyes dart about the room.

RAOUL

What about your sister?

(CONTINUED)

ANA

Emily was Emily. I'm me. You can take the camera.

RAOUL

And Herbert?

(pause)

Ana, don't succumb. It's brainwashing. They condition you to depend on them.

ANA

Sam's addressed that theory.

RAOUL

I wrote what Sam's addressed. For a profit. I need the footage.

(pause)

They're my memory cards.

ANA

I'll pay you for them.

Raoul notices the urn, and stares at it curiously.

RAOUL

How would Emily feel about this?

ANA

Don't talk about her anymore.

He twirls his pen back into his pocket, then holds Ana's cheeks with each hand.

RAOUL

You're confused. That's the power of this program. But I have faith that you'll pull through. Keep the camera. I'll be back.

He exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOUNDING ENTRANCE LOBBY - DAY

Volunteers 1 and 2 stand at either side of the entrance to the Lecture Hall. Volunteer 1 hands out purple index cards and Volunteer 2 green ones, so that all participants walk in with an index card of either color.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

The chairs have been cleared from the hall. Volunteers 1 and 2 guide the participants to form two lines, facing each other, green card holders facing purple card holders.

From a distance, Eva and Phil flash each other their cards - purple and green, respectively. Phil sneaks out of his designated spot, and gestures adjacent participants to move, so that he can stand across from Eva. She smiles at him.

SAM

The exercise is simple. Stand toe to toe with your partner. Clear your mind and be with each other. That is all.

Eva removes her sunglasses.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

They still sit on the bed, music playing.

OLD MAN

Everything has a color. Like this song...it's...

NICK

Pink.

OLD MAN

Yeah.

(pause)

Why don't you play something?

NICK

I don't play in front of people.

The Old Man walks to the computer, lowers the speakers all the way, and brings Nick's acoustic guitar to him. Nick smiles, and strums. The Old Man closes his eyes.

OLD MAN

It's purple. What you're playing. It's beautiful and purple. Like me.

He opens his eyes. Nick plays, and listens.

OLD MAN

You see it's not just music, it's everything, people too.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
What color am I?

OLD MAN
You're green, of course.

A moment passes. The Old Man closes his eyes.

NICK
What're you seeing?

The Old Man shakes his head, eyes still closed.

NICK
C'mon old man. I'm playing for you.

OLD MAN
My Emily. She was my finacee when I was maybe your age, a bit older. I saw it in her first. She was green. Undeniable, full vibrant green.

NICK
Tell me.

OLD MAN
She was, we both were, into supernatural investigation. We visited haunted houses, people. It was all fun for me, but she was serious. She wanted to find the real thing. Once we went up this mountain, upstate, not far from here. There was a shack up there, supposed to house a spirit. We felt something, something...I tried to stay, but it was too much, I asked her to come with me. But she stayed. She faced it and I ran. I haven't seen her since.

Seconds pass with only Nick's strumming.

NICK
Have you ever gone back?

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

The participant-pairs stare unmovingly into each other's eyes. Some laugh, some cry. Some are wide-eyed, terrified.

Eva cries and laughs at once. Phil bears a knowing, compassionate smile.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - DAY

The front door's knob quietly vibrates, then stops - Raoul strolls in. He sits on the couch opposite the TV, taking in his environment.

He pulls out a notebook and pen from his briefcase, walks to Ana's desktop and takes notes from her browser history. He notices a framed certificate on a back wall and walks to it.

INSERT: A graduation diploma, from the University for Paranormal Studies. Emily Ramos, and it features a small yearbook style photo of her.

Raoul notices the urn on the TV. He opens it, and takes one of the memory cards out. He inspects it, then places it back in the urn. He stares at the urn for a few seconds.

He leaves the urn on the TV and returns to the framed diploma. From his briefcase, he produces the same model camera as Ana uses, along with the accompanying wires/lens, and a few tools. He installs the camera behind the diploma.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY

Nick and the Old Man hike up; the terrain is rocky and uneven, the slope fairly steep. The Old Man stops, panting. He chugs from a water bottle and prepares to move on. Nick pats him gently on the back. The Old Man starts up again.

Nick hikes up past the Old Man. Over a hill, he sees another steep uphill stretch. Yards below, the Old Man coughs.

INT. SAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Sam enters his car, parked across the street from the Founding building. He looks out the window, scanning the outpour of participants. He notices Kate and catches her eyes. She looks away and walks around the corner.

Sam sits in place a few seconds, then turns on the ignition.

INT. RAOUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Raoul's office is small but tall. A system of inter-connected monitors and computers spread out over numerous desks. Raoul works on a computer.

INSERT: Raoul's monitor: The website for a Democratic New York senator, Bill Lochner.

A BEEP alerts him to his video monitor. In it, Ana and Emily enter Ana's apartment.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ana and Emily barge into the apartment, practically dancing.

EMILY

What's amazing is how the moment
you get who you've been, the other
person gets it too, and it's like
for a moment we're one, y'know?
Feels magical, but it's the design.

They plop on Ana's couch.

EMILY

I love your place.

ANA

It's alright. Let me show you
something.

She walks Emily to the diploma. They share a moment of
silence.

ANA

Emily.

(pause)

I've been secretly recording our
sessions. I stopped now, but I was.

EMILY

Sorry?

ANA

Look.

She drags a chair over to her fridge, climbs on it, and
retrieves her compact camera.

ANA

I've been wearing this, under my
blouse.

EMILY

What are you talking about?

ANA

It's Raoul. He asked me to. He
wants to use the footage to shut
down Founding.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Wait, stop, what are you saying?
Raoul made Founding, he is
Founding, he wouldn't--

ANA

But he is. I don't know why, but...

EMILY

You're crazy.

ANA

Don't say that Emily. I stopped, I
won't let him shut us down. I've
been seeing things. Synchronicities
like you told me. Like the song
Space Oddity came out in 1968, like
the movie Space Odyssey. The song's
by David Bowie and the movie's main
character is David Bowman.

EMILY

Ana, what are--

ANA

Listen. It's rock music and
outer-space, like the Bends you
told me about, with the flying
saucer. So it's a synchronicity of
two synch--

EMILY

Just stop it for a moment.

A pause. Ana goes for the urn on top of the TV, empties out
the memory cards.

ANA

See? I haven't given them to him.

EMILY

These are...?

ANA

Just believe me.

EMILY

I'm going to burn these.

ANA

Yes. Good. We should.

Emily stuffs the memory cards into her purse, and goes for
the door. Ana rushes after her.

INT. RAOUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: Raoul's monitor: Emily opens the door and almost exits, then notices the camera still lying on the table. She grabs it, and closes the door behind her as she stuffs the camera and accompanying wires into her purse.

Raoul rises, grabs his keys, and makes for the door.

INT. RAOUL'S CAR - NIGHT

Raoul speeds down the street. A block down, he sees Emily exiting an apartment building, about to cross the street. Raoul steps down on the gas.

EXT. ANA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

As Emily crosses the street, Raoul's car comes to a SCREECHING halt just in time to avoid collision. Emily jumps back in shock. Raoul steps out of his car.

RAOUL

Hey, are you alright? Hey...Emily?
Emily, from Founding?

Emily is still in shock.

RAOUL

Are you okay? What a coincidence
running into you.

He smiles and walks toward her. She clutches her purse.

INT. EVA'S LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eva and Phil lay on their backs on the carpet, arms spread out. They look at each other.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SHACK - DAY

The sky is clear, the weather fair and there is no wind. Nick, a few feet ahead of the Old Man, abruptly stops. The Old Man catches up and they both stare straight ahead; meters away lies a small wooden shack with a rusty aluminum roof. The Old Man nods.

Nick starts toward it, slowly, and the Old Man follows. Gradually, Nick's steps slow. His face becomes confused, then anxious, then wide-eyed, terrified. He surveys the

(CONTINUED)

atmosphere with a manic urgency, though everything around them seems normal. His steps slow to turtle-pace. Nick looks back to the Old Man, similarly affected. Nick stops moving - his body tenses up, as if resisting powerful winds, though the weather remains fair. He shuts his eyes tight, his face contorts, his mouth as in a silent scream. The Old Man likewise, but fighting on, stepping forward, little by little, passing Nick.

Tears escape Nick's eyes, not from crying, but from the physical strain of his face's contortions. They yell, as if to overcome overwhelming incident noise, though all around them is silent.

NICK

Old man! We have to go!

OLD MAN

No! Have to...face it!

He takes a step forward; his ankle bends, and he falls. Nick screams through an effort to step forward, unsuccessful. The Old Man slowly crawls toward the shack on all fours.

NICK

Old man! Stop!

The Old Man collapses on the ground. Expending great effort, Nick takes his shirt and belt off, ties them together, then throws the makeshift rope at the Old Man.

NICK

Grab on!

The Old Man crawls on, on his stomach, snakelike. His movement is minuscule and the effort great, but he shows no sign of stopping. Finally, Nick manages a few steps, reaching the Old Man's legs. He grabs the Old Man's feet, and drags him away from the shack.

OLD MAN

No! Let me go, you...

Nick drags the Old Man down, the effort diminishing with their vicinity to the shack.

OLD MAN

Nick! I order you to let me go.
Stop, don't you, Nick!

Nick ignores the Old Man's pleas.

INT. RAOUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Raoul sits at his desk editing video footage of the Founding sessions on his computer, wearing headphones.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures.

SAM

So the question arises: how can we
be a new person? How can we--

An SMS ALERT from center aisle. Herbert turns his phone off.

SAM

Excuse me. You, with the phone.
Come up here.

Kate shakes her head at Sam. Herbert goes up.

HERBERT

It's an old phone, you have to set
the texts on vibrate separately. I
forgot.

SAM

Do you remember our agreement about
phones?

HERBERT

Sure.

Kate checks her watch.

SAM

You don't seem convinced.

HERBERT

No, I remember. Just. Aren't I a
different person from when I made
the agreement?

SAM

Mhmm. Who are you now?

HERBERT

Look, I'm not trying to excuse the
phone thing. But I'm not who I was
before, isn't that relevant?

(CONTINUED)

SAM

Mhmm. Can you consider you might
be, say, an asshole right now?

Kate climbs on stage.

HERBERT

I thought identity was a desire.

Kate speaks softly to Sam, so only he can hear.

KATE

You don't have time for this.

SAM

Let me handle it.

(to Herbert)

Tell me then. What's your desire?

HERBERT

Why don't you tell me?

KATE

(whispering to Herbert)

What you're saying is fine. We're
running a little low on time now,
so we're gonna work through this
you and I, is that alright?

Kate walks Herbert off the stage. Sam returns to his
audience, assuming lecture pose. He seems nervous.

SAM

Where were we? Last night, we
satisfied, and therefore
eradicated, our controlling
desires. And yet, here we are.

Sam pauses awkwardly. He suddenly slouches, scratches his
forehead compulsively. His voice becomes nasally.

SAM

(unconvincing, distracted)

You've settled into some identity -
the same or new - automatically.
Unconsciously.

He stops abruptly. He paces faster than usual, brushing his
head from side to side like a vain model. He speaks fast,
with some desperation and an unfamiliar tone of voice. A few
murmurs are about in the audience.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

So if we can kill our core
identity, the question arises--
(suddenly loud and aggressive)
Who the fuck are you really?

He stands in place, studies the many confused faces. He checks his watch. In his usual tone of voice and manner:

SAM

We'll continue this tomorrow. You
may go home early tonight.

He leaves through the stage's back door. Kate speaks to the confusion-paralyzed participants.

KATE

Okay, you heard the man. Go home.

Kate gestures Volunteers 1 and 2 to take charge, then rushes out the front doors.

INT. SAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Sam turns on the ignition. Kate storms into the passenger seat.

KATE

What the fuck was that?

SAM

I don't know Kate.
(pause)
Kate, I need help. I'm asking for
help. I thought I could do this, I
rehearsed it a million times, but I
can't, I don't seem to have it--

KATE

Move.

Kate exits and opens Sam's driver's side door from the outside, dialing into her phone. Sam slides over to the passenger side.

SAM

Where are we going?

KATE

(into phone)
Raoul. Where are you? Give me the
address. Wait, slow down. 1223...

(CONTINUED)

Kate struggles to power on Sam's GPS. She gestures Sam to take charge of it. He prepares for dictation.

KATE
(into phone)
Okay, 1223 what?

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

The car parks across the street from a graveyard. An iPhone, a mad-hatter and a Chupacabra stagger past, clearly drunk, laughing hysterically.

INT. SAM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kate and Sam look from the GPS to the graveyard outside. Kate shuts off the ignition and throws Sam the keys.

SAM
A graveyard?

She exits the car.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - CONTINUOUS

They walk into the graveyard and spot Raoul, waving and smoking a joint. They hurry to him.

RAOUL
KK! Sam! So good to see you.

Kate and Raoul share a hug-and-cheek-kiss. Raoul shakes Sam's hand firmly. Kate and Sam stand somewhat awkwardly as Raoul hits the joint with a goofy smile.

RAOUL
So. What's wrong with the sessions?
Unless you came here just to shoot
the shit. In which case great!

He offers the joint; Sam shakes his head, but Kate hits it.

SAM
I need advice.

RAOUL
Alright. Shoot old buddy.

(CONTINUED)

SAM

It's been going well. Except...

RAOUL

C'mon man, let it out, I'm here to help.

SAM

The demonstration. I can't. I don't know, I froze up.

Kate sits on the ground. Raoul hits the joint.

RAOUL

Oh, that's easy. Go home and do some of those mind over matter exercises. What do you think Kate, maybe three sets of that handball catching bit?

Kate fingers through the grass.

RAOUL

Doesn't sound right, does it? C'mon Sam, what can I tell you that I haven't? You've done all the training, the memorizations, you know the theory. You haven't internalized it.

SAM

What can I do?

RAOUL

You did the Continuum how many times? Personal lessons from me and Kate for months, and you want me to make the crucial step for you here, now, in one night? You're fucked. And without a decent demonstration, this year's program is fucked.

Sam looks distraught. Raoul laughs heartily.

RAOUL

Sam. Who gives a shit? You want my help? Hit this fucking joint.

Kate looks up to watch Sam take a hit. Sam passes it back.

RAOUL

What are you so worried about? That you'll lose your job? 'Cause you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL (cont'd)
won't find another one? Or, what,
Founding Inquiries will fail its
participants? They'll live.

SAM
I know--

RAOUL
Then fucking act like it.

Raoul slaps him, not too hard, across the face. Sam steps back, angry but unsure.

RAOUL
I hit you. What do you think?

Sam swings at him, and Raoul blocks.

RAOUL
There we go! I hit you, you hit me.
And what happened? But, of course,
I blocked you. You couldn't hit
back. So, I win, I stand over you.

Sam swings and Raoul blocks, but Sam follows through and lands one.

RAOUL
This is what I'm talking about.
You're fixating.

Kate rises, lights a cigarette, plugs in headphones.

RAOUL
What's with you?

KATE
You people bore me.

And she walks off.

RAOUL
What's her problem?

SAM
It doesn't matter.

RAOUL
Too easy Sam. Come with me.

Raoul walks deeper into the cemetery, Sam alongside him.

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL

Sam, you have some spirituality about you, no? Maybe not God, but some sense of something, beauty, life, cosmic order, what have you.

Sam offers no reaction other than his attention.

RAOUL

I mean, smoking pot so nonchalantly here, it makes you just a little uncomfortable. Be honest, you've no one to impress.

Sam nods.

RAOUL

Yeah. That's natural. Healthy.

They arrive at a partially dug up grave, a shovel on the ground next to it. The tombstone: "Emily Ramos. April 4 1988 - December 23 2011."

RAOUL

You recognize the--

SAM

Of course.

Raoul picks up the shovel and hands it to Sam.

RAOUL

I mean only to desecrate the resting place of this troubled young woman. For my personal satisfaction. But it'll help you.

Sam hesitates, then digs. Raoul watches.

ANGLE ON: Some distance away, Kate strolls among the tombstones, lightly sliding her fingers across them. She glances back, sees Sam digging, and walks toward them.

A few feet away, she reads the inscription on the tombstone and laughs.

KATE

Oh Raoul. Always the sentimentalist.

(CONTINUED)

She signals for Raoul's joint, which he hands over. A contemplative silence settles as they watch Sam dig. Once he hits coffin, Raoul hands him a folded Founding Inquiries brochure. Sam drops it in. The three of them look down after it in silence, a shared spiritual moment.

Kate looks up at Raoul. After an extended stare, she runs off, and he runs after her. They run in circles, laughing, skipping over tombstones. Sam merely watches.

Circling back to Emily's grave, Kate slows down so that Raoul catches her just as they approach Sam. Raoul jumps at her, and they tumble down.

Their eyes lock. Kate struggles, not very hard. Raoul leans down slowly for a kiss.

KATE

Are you sure? It would change things.

Raoul leans down closer. As he's centimeters away:

KATE

I fucked Sam.

Raoul stops, hovers in place, then slowly pulls himself off her. They both come to a sitting position on the ground.

RAOUL

Fine. That works.

Sam begins to walk away.

KATE

Wait. Stay. Right? Isn't this what it's all about?

Sam stops, looks to Raoul.

RAOUL

Yeah. Stay.

SAM

Okay.

A long, awkward silence.

SAM

What now?

RAOUL
That's up to you.

SAM
We can talk about it. We can get
naked and fuck on the graves.

RAOUL
Anything you like.

He starts to roll up another joint.

SAM
I get it. I really do. Thank you.
I'm gonna go home and think.

He walks toward the entrance to the graveyard.

KATE
Why did you stop mediating?

RAOUL
He'll do fine.

KATE
He's incompetent. But you know
that.

RAOUL
Kate, why...why do we--

KATE
Oh, Raoul, don't. Don't.

RAOUL
I'm working on a surprise for you.

KATE
I fucked him just so I could tell
you I did without having to lie.

RAOUL
You're not as strong as you think
you are.

Kate moves closer to him as she speaks:

KATE
Oh, baby, I'm sorry. I mean, I'm
not. But this is how these things
go. You know this better than I do.

She sits next to him, both their backs against Emily's tombstone. She rests her head on his shoulder, and he rests his head on hers.

RAOUL

You're a real trooper, KK.

He squeezes her shoulder, and lights the newly rolled joint.

ESCHATON IV - INT. TEMPLE - SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

GAMEPLAY: A graniloid guards a doorway. A battle ensues.

CUT SCENE: The graniloid is nearly defeated.

GRANILOID

Nick, no, no! Please, there's another way.

Two lines of text offer the choice to "strike" or "show mercy." Nick decapitates the graniloid.

GAMEPLAY: Nick's "XP" goes from 1450 to 1470. He enters through the doorway.

ESCHATON IV - INT. TEMPLE - JAIL ROOM - NIGHT

CUT SCENE: The SAGE, seventies, voice of the Old Man, stands behind bars. Spiked mechanical walls move in on him from either side.

SAGE

Nick! Thank Soros! You must get me out of here. No, don't!

Nick attacks the bars with his sword, only to be electrocuted. His health bar drops.

SAGE

The bars can only be broken by a graniloid's tentacle. We don't have much time. You must lure one here and trick it into setting me free.

GAMEPLAY: A timer on the screen counts down from 0:59. Nick exits the room.

ESCHATON IV - INT. TEMPLE - SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GAMEPLAY: Nick inspects the graniloid he just killed. Finding it still dead, he enters another door.

ESCHATON IV - INT. TEMPLE - MAZE - CONTINUOUS

GAMEPLAY: The maze is littered with graniloid cadavers. Nick searches frantically for a live one, unsuccessfully. With seven seconds left, he runs back.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nick plays alone, nearly hyperventilating. He checks his vibrating cell phone.

INSERT: "Message from Amy Cunt: Im sorry. Lets talk."

Nick resumes playing.

ESCHATON IV - INT. TEMPLE - JAIL ROOM - NIGHT

GAMEPLAY: As Nick re-enters, the timer reaches 0:00.

CUT SCENE: The Sage is crushed between the two walls.

FADE TO:

ESCHATON IV - EXT. DECAYING LAND - NIGHT

GAMEPLAY: A graniloid attacks Nick, which Nick defeats.

CUT SCENE: The usual choice is presented.

GRANILOID

Oh, please, please, have mercy!

Nick shows mercy, and the graniloid scurries away.

OS: A vibrating sound invades the environment.

The game switches to its PAUSE SCREEN.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nick checks his phone again.

INSERT: "Message from Amy Cunt: Baby I wanna tty." Nick responds: "Okay. I'll be right over."

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Raoul walks to a mailbox. He takes four large manila envelopes out of his briefcase, addressed to CBS, NBC, ABC and Fox respectively, no return address. He drops them into the mailbox.

Raoul scans the nearly deserted street, lighting a cigarette. He heads for a train station across the street. Two young women in revealing, nondescript costumes walk by.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam meditates.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures. Like the last lecture, his tone of voice and body language shift as he speaks. This time, he is much more successful. His personality seems to change completely from one moment to the next - one moment he hunches over, the next he gestures wildly with his hands, etc. The performance is awe-inspiring and a bit disturbing.

SAM

Yesterday we asked: who are you really? It may seem, as we've stripped layer after layer of farcical identity, that nothing remains. So nothing remains. Accept this. Embrace it, love it. As I shift my being on this stage, you might ask: which is the real me? None and all. We are whomever we choose to be at any given moment. And we can choose to be anyone. All of you can do this. In fact, you do, every moment of your lives. You choose the same person every time so you can pretend that it's not a choice. Go to lunch now, and pair off. Converse with your partner as someone else. Do not pretend to be someone else; be someone else. Go.

INT. FOUNDING DINING LOUNGE

Phil and Eva walk along the buffet tables. Eva seems different; her typically slow, distracted demeanor has given way to brisk, focused action. Phil follows her, withdrawn.

PHIL
Something bothers me about this.

EVA
Mmm-hmm.

PHIL
If there's no core me, and I can choose to be anyone, how do I choose? Who's the "I" who's choosing which "I" I am to be?

EVA
Aww, Phil. You think too much. Just do it. Be it.

PHIL
That doesn't answer my question.

Eva makes a yak-yak-yak motion with her hand.

EVA
That's your answer.

PHIL
Okay.

He looks a little hurt. She extends her arms out to him.

EVA
C'mon. Just be it with me.

Phil shrugs her off. Eva throws a chicken leg at his face, barely missing. She laughs.

ANGLE ON: A FOOD SERVER behind a buffet booth snickers.

PHIL
Eva. Why?

EVA
Just be it.

Kate approaches, but stops when Eva grins at her. Kate stands in place and watches.

(CONTINUED)

Eva throws a handful of salad at Phil - it scatters mid-air and falls to the floor. Phil doesn't move. The Food Server bursts into laughter. Eva looks at him and laughs as she throws more food at Phil, making it their private joke. Phil hurries his plate over to a nearby garbage receptacle, empties it, then returns to Eva, now using his empty plate as a shield.

PHIL

Hey Eva, can you stop? I want to talk to you.

Eva's plate empties. The Food Server replenishes her ammo out of buffet trays. Phil lazily blocks incoming food.

PHIL

Eva, this isn't like you.

ANGLE ON: Other workers yell at the Food Server in Spanish.

ANGLE ON: One of Eva's trays empties. Eva notices the Food Server a few booths away, arguing with the other workers. She points at the empty tray and yells at him:

EVA

Hey man, I need more. More.

The Food Server abandons the others and runs to find a tray to give Eva. Phil seizes the momentary pause to lower his plate, and look straight at Eva.

PHIL

(raised voice)

Eva! Hey, Eva. I'm trying to talk to you.

Eva's laughter diminishes. Their eyes lock, and it's as if for that moment they're together, seeing past the show they've put on.

Participants 1 and 3 interrupt. Participant 3 takes charge, half-yelling, as Participant 1 dutifully nods.

PARTICIPANT 3

You should stop that now! This room is rightly for all of us.

PHIL

Stay out of this, it's none of your business.

A meatball lands on Phil's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

PARTICIPANT 3

You see? This bitch is crazy!

Phil drops his plate on a buffet booth, and reaches into his pocket for a pack of tissues. He struggles to open it.

PHIL

She's being someone else, like
we're supposed to!

He opens the pack, but all the tissues go flying out except one. He uses it to wipe his shirt.

PARTICIPANT 3

And who are you being? A fucking
pussy?

A knish smacks Phil hard on the chest as he drops his tissue in the garbage receptacle.

PARTICIPANT 3

You see what I mean? Stop that!

This is too much for Eva; she laughs so hard she can hardly stand. She manages just enough self-control to fulfill the Food Server's high-five request.

ANGLE ON: Kate signals the SECURITY GUARD to walk over.

SECURITY GUARD

Miss, I have to ask you to calm
down.

EVA

(between convulsive laughter)
I love your costume.

The Security Guard approaches her threateningly.

SECURITY GUARD

I'm gonna give you one more--

PHIL

Wait, you don't--

SECURITY GUARD

Stand back, sir!

PHIL

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

SECURITY GUARD

(to Eva)

Do I have to forcibly remove you?

Eva throws her hands up and calms down somewhat.

EVA

Okay, okay.

KATE

What are you doing?

EVA

What are you doing?

KATE

Why don't you answer my question?

Eva breaks up in laughter again. The Security Guard tenses up, but Kate signals him to stand by.

PHIL

She's doing the exercise. She's being someone else.

KATE

Stop throwing shit.

Eva holds her laughter back long enough to nod. Kate looks up to the Food Server, who also nods and goes for a broom. Kate walks away, and Participants 1 and 3 follow, as if they'd been with her all along.

EVA

Hey Kate!

Eva shoots her a goofy smile. Kate does not smile back.

INT. NEWS BROADCAST STUDIO

Broadcast news program. Two NEWSBROADCASTERS, one male and one female, sit at a typical news broadcast desk.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

A Manhattan-based corporation, Founding Inquiries, offers an annual ten-day program called the Continuum, designed to improve the lives of its participants. Founding Inquiries faced controversy last year when one participant, Emily Ramos, took her own life shortly

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE BROADCASTER (cont'd)
 after completing the Continuum. CBS
 has acquired exclusive footage of
 the secretive classes, which some
 experts accuse of brainwashing.

FOUNDING FOOTAGE MONTAGE - SERIES OF SHOTS

The shots are all from Ana's unseen POV, often partially obscured by her blouse.

1. Sam lectures:

SAM
 Let them in. All of them, one by
 one. None better than another.

The camera awkwardly pans to the participants, head down, eyes closed, some slightly convulsing.

2. Participant 1 sitting on a folding chair on the stage, Sam standing over her. Participant 1 is in tears.

PARTICIPANT 1
 I have tried, I've tried and tried,
 but she just won't talk to me.

SAM
 That's your problem, all you do is
 try. How about actually do it?

PARTICIPANT 1
 I've tried, please believe me. I
 need your help.

SAM
 I'm here to help, but you have to
 listen. You haven't done anything.
 Get that first. You never do
 anything.

3. Sam on stage with Phil and Eva.

PHIL
 I think she should take off her
 damn glasses and talk to us like a
 normal human being.

He makes as if it yank her glasses off; she pulls back.

(CONTINUED)

PARTICIPANT

Hey, relax man.

PHIL

Yo, when you're up here you
BEEP-ing relax, alright?

4. In the dining lounge, a participant cries into his phone, pleading in Russian. Ana's wrist, with her bracelet and chain, momentarily engulfs the frame.

5. Sam lecturing:

SAM

So, yes, we do want your money. We
wouldn't do this otherwise. Next
question.

6. Sam speaks to a participant.

PARTICIPANT

(teary)

Well, he...touched me, you know.
When I was little. It wasn't
terrible, it wasn't like with other
people, but--

SAM

I asked you what you want from him.
I didn't ask you who touched what.
You see what I mean? You're not
gonna get anywhere if you can't
answer a simple question.

7. Sam speaks to Participant 2:

SAM

Look, you have a choice. You can be
here with us, not questioning us,
but with us. Or you can go back to
miserable, defensive, lonely, all
the things you listed. Up to you.

INT. NEWS BROADCAST STUDIO

Back at the studio.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

No word yet as to the identity of
the videographer, or what the
video's release might mean for
Founding Inquiries. More as the
story develops.

(CONTINUED)

MALE BROADCASTER

Thank you, Emily. Up next a lighter story as we delve into the world of...pen spinning tournaments. Coming right up.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ana turns the TV off. She notices her silhouetted reflection on the black screen; she screams and digs into her scalp. She scans the room:

ANA'S POV: Her apartment is perfectly organized. Her furniture, appliances and decorations are geometrically arranged, practically color coded.

Ana knocks over chairs, tears down boxes from shelves, slaps a painting off the wall, even breaks her sister's framed certificate. She stops, panting, and observes the result of her tantrum:

ANA'S POV: Though now in shambles, her apartment seems even more deliberately arranged. The scattered papers, broken glass and knocked over furniture form neat patterns, some in the form of the letter "E."

EXT. AMY'S HOUSE - EVENING

The front porch of the two-story house is professionally gardened. Nick rings the bell. AMY, 18, opens the door. They hug tight and long.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nick takes off his shoes and enters carefully. Amy, who's voice is recognizably that of the Game Goddess, briefly exits and returns with a glass of water. She sits on the plastic-wrapped couch, and Nick does the same.

NICK

How's Founding?

AMY

Phil didn't tell you? I left. It wasn't for me.

NICK

I'm sorry to hear that.

(CONTINUED)

AMY

I'm sorry I messed that up for you.
I think you would've enjoyed it.

NICK

That's okay. I've been busy,
actually. Eventful couple of days.

AMY

Yeah?

(pause)

I feel like an idiot and like I've
lost my best friend. Can you
forgive me?

NICK

Oh, that's...there's nothing to
forgive, and if there were, believe
me, it's been done.

AMY

But you won't come back to me?

NICK

Is that what you want?

Amy pouts but doesn't answer.

NICK

Maybe think it over more. Breaking
up is always hard, and getting back
together is always easy. But maybe
it should be hard too.

A long pause.

NICK

I'll be right back.

Nick enters the bathroom and leaves the door ajar. A white
cat follows him into the bathroom.

EXT. PARK SLOPE - DAY

SENATOR LOCHNER, 46, jogs down a residential street. Raoul
bumps into him, wearing a green Nike shirt with the phrase
"Just do it" across the torso.

RAOUL

My apologies, Senator.

Senator Lochner scans the street. Raoul offers his hand.

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL
Raoul N. Founder and CEO of
Founding Inquiries.

SENATOR LOCHNER
What do you want?

RAOUL
You don't mind taking a walk, to
discuss something? I don't want to
assume. You were jogging, let's
jog. I'm a runner myself.

SENATOR LOCHNER
Walking's fine.

RAOUL
I'll get to it. My sources tell me
the Governor has drafted an
executive order shutting down my
company's operations as of tonight.

SENATOR LOCHNER
Your sources, huh?

RAOUL
We all have our sources, Senator.

SENATOR LOCHNER
And why might he do such a thing?

RAOUL
Come now.

SENATOR LOCHNER
"Come now"? Or you have no idea?
Because your sources are full of
it, if you really have sources.

RAOUL
The Disco Volante stalemate is
unanimously blamed on your party's
inactivity. Such a move from the
Governor, days from the election,
would seem bold. People here are
pretty pissed about that video.

SENATOR LOCHNER
So what do you want?

RAOUL
You're meeting the Secretary of
State today. Make sure the Governor
does not sign that executive order.

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR LOCHNER
And why would I do that?

A green car drives by, blasting a pop song.

RAOUL
Oh, that's your choice Senator.

Raoul walks off.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

The bathroom, a tiny cube, houses only a sink, with a mirror over it, a toilet and a litter box. Nick, face and hair wet, interacts with the mirror. He notices the cat sitting in its litter box, face out, staring up at him. Nick makes faces at it, puffing his cheeks and moving his eyebrows. In the middle of a face, a knock on the door.

AMY (O.S.)
Nick?

Amy enters and kisses him violently. When she tries to lift off his shirt, he resists. She whispers in his ear:

AMY
I want to. Don't reject me.

This is enough for Nick - he mounts her on the sink, so that he faces the mirror, looking at himself over her shoulder. The cat watches them have sex.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Senator Lochner walks up the steps of a government building. A green car drives past, blasting the same pop song from before. Senator Lochner turns around. A group of joggers pass by wearing Nike shirts. On a bus-stop shelter, a bright green car insurance ad reads: "Your security. Your choice."

Senator Lochner jogs up the rest of the steps.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam lectures. The participants seem agitated. Phil and Eva sit rows apart.

SAM
Before I send you to lunch, I want
to congratulate you. You've
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAM (cont'd)
completed the bulk of the
Continuum. You're ready for the
final phase, where we'll explore
intentional action within the
metaprogramming circuit.

PARTICIPANT 2

Sam.

All eyes on Participant 2.

PARTICIPANT 2

Who took the video?

SAM

You may all go to lunch.

Sam steps down and heads for the office door. Kate follows him. The participants murmur about in their chairs.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Sam's office is tiny and gray. On a small monitor, Sam watches the news footage from the night before. Kate paces back and forth in the office.

KATE

What are you looking for, I'm
telling you it was that cunt Eva.

SAM

You have no proof--

KATE

Stop saying that. Look at me.

Sam faces her.

KATE

One. We know she works for Disco
Volante, a very politically charged
organization right now. Two. She's
been hiding that, using a fake
name. Three. You can see the
camera's coming roughly from where
she sits. Four. She hides in the
bathroom for ten, fifteen minutes
at a time. When I went in after
her, she reacted suspiciously. Now,
anyone of those not enough, fine.
But all four combined, not enough?

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Enough to consider it, yes--

KATE
Oh, fuck off Sam.

SAM
It's not proof.

He returns to the video. Kate rises.

KATE
Fine. It's not enough for you, you stay here playing with your video. I'm gonna fucking do something.

She makes for the door. Sam pauses the video.

SAM
Kate.

Kate ignores him, opens the door.

SAM
Kate, look!

Kate slams the door closed, turns back to him.

KATE
What?

She walks to the monitor, looks at the paused frame.

ANGLE ON: Paused frame. Sam points out Eva's profile, at the edge of screen left.

KATE
Fuck! Okay. Who then?

SAM
We can try calling Raoul again.

KATE
We have a good idea of where the camera's situated. Make a list of everyone that sits in that general vicinity who's not seen in the video. Check the security camera's recordings for reference.

She makes for the door.

SAM
Where are you going?

KATE
Someone's wearing guilt on their
face. I'll find it.

INT. AMY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

They're still going at it. He whispers into her ear.

NICK
Are you close?

She shakes her head.

NICK
Can I cum inside you?

Again, she shakes her head.

NICK
Let me. Let me.

She nods. He abruptly pulls out and pulls his pants up.

AMY
Baby, what's the matter?

NICK
I'm sorry. I gotta go.

AMY
I said it was okay.

NICK
It's not...I just have to go.

He opens the door. She pulls him back in.

AMY
Nick. Talk to me. What's the
matter?

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Sam steps up on the stage, faces the murmuring mass of participants. Standing by the entrance, Kate inspects the center of the middle section, eyes moving from participant to participant.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
Welcome back.

PARTICIPANT 3
Now.

About half of the participants rise.

PARTICIPANTS
Who took the video, Sam?

Silence. Sam looks at Kate; many participants notice this and follow his gaze. Participant 3 spreads his arms.

PARTICIPANT 3
Hey! We want to know who took the
fucking video!

Some participants cheer. Eva, standing, turns to Phil, sitting, and smiles. Phil looks away bitterly.

SAM
I honestly don't know. But I do
know, we're down to the final phase
of our Continuum. Over the next two
days we'll learn how to consciously
choose whom we choose to be. We--

PARTICIPANT 2
Sam, they're saying they're gonna
shut us down.

SAM
Do you people want to finish the
fucking program or not?

PARTICIPANT 3
We want you to answer our question!

Kate laughs.

SAM
I don't know the answer, I don't
know.

PARTICIPANT 3
You know something. Is there an
investigation? Do you have
suspects? We have a right to know
everything you know!

SAM
Fuck this.

As Sam exits through the stage's back door:

PARTICIPANT 3
This shit wouldn't happen if Raoul
was still mediating.

Murmurs about. Eyes turn alternately to Participant 3 and
Kate. A few participants start to walk toward the door.

PARTICIPANT 3
No, stay! We stay until we get our
answers!

Like many, Ana turns to Kate for a reaction. She squeezes
her neck as Kate meets her stare.

KATE'S POV: ECU, Ana's chain dangling off her bracelet.

FLASH MEMORY

Shot #4 from the news footage; Ana's arm and bracelet-chain
engulf the frame.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

CLOSE ON: Ana registers Kate's realization.

Ana rushes toward the exit. Kate starts after her.

PARTICIPANT 3
What's up Kate, running away too?

Volunteers 1 and 2 intercept Kate.

VOLUNTEER 1
What do we do, what's the plan?

KATE
Figure it out.

She brushes past them, rushing to meet Ana, who's almost at
the door.

ANA'S POV: A young participant with bright red hair,
name-tagged "David," wearing a 2001: A Space Odyssey
t-shirt, walks toward the exit.

Ana, a few feet from the door, stops and stares at the man's
shirt. Kate moves into her line of sight.

(CONTINUED)

KATE
Come with me.

ANA
I'm--

Kate heads back toward the office. Ana follows.

Little by little, participants make their way for the exit.

PARTICIPANT 3
We're not leaving, Kate!

Kate addresses Volunteers 1 and 2 as she walks past them.

KATE
Can you two do your job and get
these fucking people out of here?

Volunteers 1 and 2 look at each other, stunned. Eva watches Kate and Ana enter the office door, and walks after them.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate and Ana avoid each other's eyes.

KATE
Sit.

Ana sits in a folding chair. She looks to the side.

KATE
Are you working for someone?

A second, no more, and Kate moves closer, raising her voice:

KATE
Hey! Look at me. We're not talking
expulsion here. Breach of contract.
That's legal action, that's time,
you got it? So talk.

A knock on the door interrupts. Kate waits. Another knock.

EVA (O.S.)
Kate, open up!

KATE
What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

EVA (O.S.)
Kate, it's Eva, let me in.

KATE
Go home Eva.

EVA (O.S.)
Kate, please. I'm asking you,
please, to let me in.

Kate opens the door, but does not let her in.

KATE
What?

EVA
Let me in Kate.

Kate allows Eva to enter the room.

KATE
Okay, you're in. What do you want?

A pause.

EVA
Well, don't hurt her.

KATE
Jesus, get out of my office Eva.

EVA
Wait--

KATE
This is none of your business--

EVA
Kate listen to me, I'm talking to
you. You talk and you talk, but you
don't listen when someone's talking
to you.

A pause - Kate says nothing.

EVA
I'm saying let's practice what we
preach. Let's talk and hear each
other out. Don't attack her, that's
not what Founding's all about.

KATE

This is about upholding Founding's principles?

EVA

...yeah--

KATE

Do you know it was this cunt who took the video?

Eva looks at Ana, who stares out the window.

EVA

Maybe. I don't know. If she did, I'm sure she had a reason.

KATE

A reason? I don't give a--

EVA

I'm not attacking you Kate.

KATE

Well I am, goddamn it.

Kate's eyes suddenly dart toward the door. Eva's follow. Phil stands just outside the door. Eva smiles at him and he walks away without a word. Kate turns back to Eva.

KATE

Can you get the fuck out of my office already?

EVA

No. Not until we talk this through. Or you let her go. I won't let you hurt her.

KATE

Hurt? You think I'm going to, what, beat her up? C'mon Eliska.

Eva says nothing, but does not budge.

KATE

Okay. You want me to let her go? Ana, you're expelled. Expect a call from our lawyers. Get out.

EVA

No, Ana, stay. We're--

(CONTINUED)

ANA

No, I'd...I'd like to go.

Eva nods, and Ana walks out.

EVA

We could have talked this through.

KATE

I did what you asked. Now get out, you're also expelled.

Kate gathers some belongings.

EVA

You can't expel me.

Kate walks out of the office as she speaks:

KATE

Seeing as you're no longer in the program, you're right, I certainly can't.

EVA

Have you even done the Continuum?

From just outside the door:

KATE

I'm locking the door. Are you in or out?

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Eva steps out, and waits for Kate to lock the office. Kate brushes past her toward the small crowd still gathered near the center, facing off against Volunteer 1.

VOLUNTEER 1

This is your last chance; leave now, or I call security.

KATE

That's not necessary. Listen, all of you. I understand your anger. Come back tomorrow, usual time. You'll have your answer first thing in the morning. You have my word.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam sits, still dressed, watching TV:

CBS - INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The auditorium's design is not unlike Founding's Lecture Hall, wide space and folding chairs. Democratic Party banners and government seals decorate. Senator Lochner speaks to an excited audience that cheers incessantly.

SENATOR LOCHNER

I'll tell you what we believe. We believe that first things must come first. That for America to stand against foreign aggression; against corporate aggression from the fat cats in Wall Street; against imminent natural disaster; if America is to stand against these forces, it must stand as one. But how can we stand as one when corporate cults brainwash our citizens?

Particularly forceful cheering.

SENATOR LOCHNER

Ladies and gentlemen, ours are hard times. Who couldn't sympathize with an American making an effort to improve her life, live it better, more fully? All of us want this. But corporate cults like Founding Inquiries exploit our hard times for a profit! We've all seen the video evidence; we all recall young Emily Ramos, whose involvement resulted in untimely death. Our condolences go to her family and loved ones. Such is the power of the so-called philosophy these evil men unleash upon average Americans. The question is: do we sit back and watch? Do we wait?

AUDIENCE

Noooo!

SENATOR

You bet we won't. I want you to know that the Democratic Party

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR (cont'd)
stands fully behind the Governor's
Executive Order 47369, which as of
tonight, suspends Founding's
operations until an investigation
of their practices is conducted.
Ladies and gentlemen, the reign of
corporate cults ends today!

The audience stands and claps and cheers.

INT. RAOUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Raoul watches the speech, delighted. His phone rings.

INSERT: Incoming call...Kate Donovan.

He lets it ring.

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is tiny and messy, the floor obscured by clothes.
Kate holds her phone to her ear as she rummages for her
shoes. No response, so she dials into her phone again.

INSERT: Calling...Sam Newtard.

She finds her shoes and slips them on, but again no response
from the phone. She shoves it into her jeans pocket, grabs
her keys off a cluttered night table, and storms out.

INT. RAOUL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Raoul plays with his dog's face, ignoring the sound of
muffled but desperate door-knocking.

KATE (O.S.)
Raoul! Goddamn it, it's Kate!

INT. "4" TRAIN PASSENGER CAR - NIGHT

Nick sits scrunched between two passengers, earphones in,
crying his eyes out. The two people at either side of him
share a look over his head. Nick looks up, still crying.

NICK'S POV: A majority of the passengers wears earphones,
and stare into their phones. Some sleep, their phones
clutched protectively in their hands.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Sam's eyes are red and droopy; he's still in last night's clothes. They avoid each other's eyes.

SAM

You think she acted alone?

KATE

Of course she did. It's revenge for her sister, simple as that.

(pause)

Okay, I don't know, maybe not. I don't really give a fuck. We're going today and we're gonna finish what we started.

SAM

Kate, they shut us down. You have to accept that.

KATE

If we want to peaceably assemble, what are they going to do?

SAM

Kate.

KATE

And all our information's in that computer. Everything. No way they're seizing that.

SAM

Kate.

KATE

What? Well, what then?

SAM

We're done. It's a legal battle now, down the road. We wait for Raoul and...But today...

KATE

You're bitching out.

SAM

There's no reason to go there today. There just isn't.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

That's a yes then?

SAM

Make a scene and you'll just make things worse.

KATE

Okay, so that's yes. Yes, I'm bitching out Kate. I'm throwin' in the towel. Say it, I want to hear your position from your mouth.

SAM

I'm trying to save Founding here. I'm telling you, going there, being uncooperative, it can only hurt us down the road.

KATE

Okay, let's try this a different way. I'm going to give you three seconds to say "No, I'm not bitching out." If you don't, I'll assume that you are. Ready? Go.

SAM

You're being stubborn, you're acting like a child, and you're gonna fuck shit up if you do this.

KATE

And that's three. Thank you Sam. I'm glad we cleared up our miscommunication. Now why the fuck have I been sitting here?

She bolts out of the room. Sam throws his head back, so that it hangs down over the backrest of his chair, facing the ceiling, mouth agape.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

The entrance is blocked off by police tape. About 30 participants crowd around the tape, angrily addressing the POLICE guarding the entrance. Some participants, Phil among them, watch from a distance, not directly engaged in the growing mob.

Near the front, Eva is particularly vocal.

(CONTINUED)

EVA

You have no right. No right!

POLICE OFFICER 1

(through megaphone)

Stand back. The building is closed!

ANGLE ON: Kate's car parks across the street. Kate emerges, and marches straight into the center of the commotion.

KATE

Hey! Let us in.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Stand back miss.

KATE

I work here, talk to me.

POLICE OFFICER 1

The building is closed until further notice under orders--

KATE

Is there anyone in there now?

POLICE OFFICER 1

I won't ask you again, stand back!

KATE

I have a lot of power over these people. I tell them to charge in, they'll do it--

POLICE OFFICER 1

Are you threatening me?

KATE

I tell them to back off, they'll do it. So why don't we help each other out? Is there anyone in there now?

POLICE OFFICER 1

Orders are no one enters until the department chief arrives.

She rushes off, and Police Officer 1 makes as if to go after her. The mass of participants blocks his way.

ANGLE ON: Kate emerges from the mob, and pulls Participant 3 aside. She gives him instructions, then turns the corner toward the side of the building. Participant 3 follows. Phil, keeping his distance, follows as well.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Kate goes around the police presence and hides under a scaffold, about two yards from the building's side entrance, protected by a single COP. On the other side of the door, Participant 3 bumps into another participant, then punches him in the face. The nearby police rush toward the scuffle, including the cop guarding the side entrance.

Phil watches all unfold from a distance. He sees Kate about to make a run for it. He notices another cop, POLICE OFFICER 2, standing by, keeping his eye on the door. Phil catches Kate's attention - he shakes his head, and signals toward Police Officer 2.

Phil grabs his phone from his pocket and throws it at Police Officer 2. It nearly strikes him, and he turns, alert. Phil walks toward him, arms in the air. Kate runs for it.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Not another step.

PHIL
Someone took my phone and threw it.

Police Officer 2 glances back to the door - no sign of anyone near it. He glances toward the scuffle, now cleared up, Participant 3 in cuffs. He turns back to Phil.

PHIL
I'm not part of any of this.

Police Officer 2 kicks the phone out into the street. He looks from the door to Phil as Phil walks to pick it up.

POLICE OFFICER 2
Go home.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Eva approaches a broadcast team reporting from the edge of the crowd.

ANGLE ON: Female Broadcaster speaks into a camera.

FEMALE BROADCASTER
Still no sign of calm here, or of
the NYPD Chief who...

ANGLE ON: Eva rushes toward Female Broadcaster. Crew members block her way.

(CONTINUED)

EVA

I wanna talk. I'm Eliska Cerna, the
Disco Volante engineer.

The crew look at her closely, exchange glances.

ANGLE ON: A crew member whispers in Female Broadcaster's
ear, interrupting her report. Female Broadcaster signals the
cameraman to follow her toward Eva.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

I'm standing here with none other
than Eliska Cerna, the famous
engineer behind the Disco Volante
program. Ms. Cerna, are you
involved in Founding's program?

EVA

I am, I'm in it.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

And your view on the Governor's
executive order?

EVA

It's all wrong. This isn't a cult,
or some...Founding helps people. If
these politicians don't like it,
they don't have to do it. But our
country'd be in way better shape if
they did.

A small crowd, about five, surround her and cheer.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

Well, there you have it--

Eva leans in to the microphone.

EVA

These politicians, they say there's
no money to make us a new home,
then waste our resources on this!

She points toward the mob. Female Broadcaster yanks the
microphone away from Eva.

FEMALE BROADCASTER

Thank you Ms. Cerna. Back to you
Sam.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate works on the main computer in the office.

CLOSE ON: The computer monitor. Kate drags some folders into an external drive.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Cops guard the NYPD CHIEF toward the front door. He speaks to the police officer walking alongside him.

NYPD CHIEF
We let everyone go. No one gets
harmed.

The NYPD Chief reaches the front. Police Officer 1 hands him the megaphone.

NYPD CHIEF
(to Police Officer 1)
Fire one in the air.

Police Officer 1 shoots his handgun into the air. The crowd gasps and steps back in unison.

NYPD CHIEF
(through megaphone)
You have five seconds to disperse.

Police Officer 1 shoots again. The crowd backs off and begins to dissipate.

NYPD CHIEF
(to Police Officer 1)
Keep this shit under control.

The NYPD Chief leads a small team of officers into the main entrance.

ANGLE ON: Phil sees the NYPD team about to enter. He turns the corner.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Phil sees one cop still guarding the side entrance.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate watches a status bar approach the end of a transfer in the computer.

OS: the sound of the front door forced open, followed by footsteps.

The status bar terminates. Kate detaches the flash drive from the computer, then scrounges around Sam's desk.

INT. FOUNDING ENTRANCE LOBBY - DAY

The NYPD team heads toward the Lecture Hall.

OS: a sound, like metal clanging, coming from inside.

NYPD CHIEF

This is the NYPD speaking. Come out with your hands up.

(to his team)

Arrest whoever's in there.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Screwdriver in hand, Kate pries open the cover of the computer's main body.

NYPD CHIEF (O.S.)

For the last time, come out with your hands up.

OS: footsteps grow nearer.

Kate reaches into the interior of the computer, pulls out its internal hard drive, and crushes it with her foot. She runs for the door.

INT. FOUNDING LECTURE HALL

Kate runs up onto the stage, and through the back door. The NYPD team chases after her.

EXT. FOUNDING BUILDING SIDE STREET - DAY

Kate bursts out the building's side entrance, only to see the cop standing guard, feet away from her. Phil stands nearby, watching.

(CONTINUED)

Kate reaches into her purse and lunges into the cop. She yells at Phil, pointing straight ahead:

KATE
Go! Don't look down!

The NYPD team arrives from behind, and drags her toward the nearest police car. Phil turns in the direction she'd pointed; on the ground, the flashdrive. Phil picks it up, then looks back to see Kate's head lowered into the backseat of a copcar.

ANGLE ON: Eva notices Phil, and walks to him.

EVA
Hey. I did an interview. For TV.

PHIL
I think my phone's broken.

EVA
I believe it.

PHIL
How do you feel about it? The TV interview.

EVA
Oh...
(pause)
What're we gonna do about all this?

Phil steps to the road, hails a cab.

EVA
Phil?

PHIL
I ask you a fucking question, you can answer it, Christ.

A cab stops for Phil. Phil leans into the window.

PHIL
Queens. Forest Hills.

He gets into the cab. When he tries to close the door, Eva yanks it open.

EVA
Move over.

Phil doesn't budge. Eva lunges in headfirst.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Eva arranges herself into sitting position. The CABBIE turns to them, concerned.

PHIL

It's alright, she's with me.

The Cabbie starts the car.

EVA

I'm sorry I threw food at you. But stop being an asshole, okay?

Before Phil can respond, the Cabbie turns to face them.

CABBIE

Hey, you're that woman from the news. From the cult.

EVA

What?

CABBIE

I saw it on my phone. You're the one from Disco Volante.

EVA

That's right.

CABBIE

I knew it. So you're a real rocket scientist and everything?

EVA

Yeah--

PHIL

Hey, shouldn't you watch the road?

The Cabbie turns back around, but still looks at her through the rearview mirror.

CABBIE

Sure. We don't want the big rocket scientist in an accident.

Eva rests her head on Phil's shoulder, and he rests his head on hers. She takes out her phone.

INSERT: Incoming call...Mitch DiscoV. Eva rejects the call.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick sits on his computer, shirtless, clearly stoned. Phil and Eva arrange their belongings and settle on Nick's bed.

NICK

So how are you guys? Tell me about this crazy riot. Oh! You guys need something, like water?

PHIL

We're fine. Unless, Eva, you--?

EVA

I'm fine.

An awkward silence follows.

PHIL

Can you load this on your computer?

Phil gives him the flashdrive. Nick mounts it.

NICK

It's password protected.

PHIL

Can you crack it?

Nick fiddles about his computer, then gestures uncertainly.

PHIL

Can you try?

NICK

I mean, yeah. Does it have to be now? What is it?

EVA

It's alright. He's right. We can do it later.

Nick offers a pipe. Phil and Eva shake their heads. Nick shrugs and types into his computer.

CLOSE ON: Nick's monitor, open to Georg Hegel's Wikipedia edit page. Nick edits "meow" into the page's content.

PHIL

You're editing Hegel's wiki?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

It's this project I'm working on.
Editing the word "meow"
inconspicuously into wiki pages. I
found these kids on a forum that're
helping me with it.

Phil and Eva share looks, and Eva laughs a little.

PHIL

Nick, that's the dumbest thing I've
ever heard of.

EXT. PHIL & NICK'S BUILDING - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Phil and Eva sit on the front stoop, smoking, avoiding each
other's eyes. Eva rises as a car pulls up.

EVA

The cab's here.

Phil stands and takes Eva's hands, still avoiding her eyes.

EVA

Phil?

PHIL

Hey Eva?

He looks up at her.

PHIL

Let's get Kate out of jail and
finish our program.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is filled with desks, the desks stacked with
paperwork and coffee. POLICE OFFICER 3 sits across from Eva.
She wears her sunglasses.

POLICE OFFICER 3

I'm sorry Miss, I got specific
orders to keep her the night.
She'll be open for bail tomorrow.

Police Officer 3 skims some paperwork. Eva removes her
sunglasses. Police Officer 3 looks back at her and leans in.

(CONTINUED)

POLICE OFFICER 3

Have I seen you somewhere before?
I've been sitting here thinking,
I'm sure I have, I just can't...

Eva simpers.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick sits on his chair, Phil on Nick's bed.

PHIL

It's all simple enough. But where,
that's the thing. Where can we put
150 people without getting raided?

Nick stares at Phil, expressionless.

PHIL

Nick?

NICK

I know a place. On a mountain,
upstate. It's a short drive. An
hour hike up maybe, there's a huge
open space. Totally isolated.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

Eva paces outside. Kate emerges from the precinct's front
doors, sees Eva, then matter of factly turns back toward the
precinct. Eva laughs and runs after her.

EVA

Kate!

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick works on his computer. Phil, laptop on his lap, checks
his phone.

PHIL

Give me the flashdrive, quick.

Nick hands over Kate's flashdrive. Phil plugs it into his
laptop, types.

PHIL

Okay. I gotta write this e-mail -
just order the folding chairs, the
truck, stay on that stuff.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Don't forget to tell them to come
in their Halloween costumes.

PHIL

I won't.

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom has gotten messier. Kate and Eva sit on the bed,
both holding their phones. Kate checks her laptop.

KATE

(reading)

Members of the Continuum. This is
your fellow participant, Philip
Gato speaking.

Eva, phone to her ear, covers the transmitter.

EVA

So it's sent?

Kate nods, types.

EVA

(into phone)

Hi, Robert? Hi Robert, this is Eva,
from Founding. I'm sorry, hold on.

INSERT: Kate's laptop's screen: a word document, list of
contacts. Ana Ramos's information highlight.

Eva sees Kate's finger hovering over the "delete" key. She
knocks her hand away and folds the laptop shut.

KATE

Don't do that.

EVA

(quickly, into the phone)

Robert, check your email tonight.
That's all. Good night.

She hangs up.

KATE

Don't start this again.

EVA

I'll have Phil call her if I have
to, he has the list too.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

You still don't believe she took
the video?

EVA

I don't care.

INT. ANA'S STUDIO - NIGHT

The apartment is still in shambles from Ana's earlier
tantrum. Ana sits in her sofa, eyes puffy from tears,
staring at her reflection in the TV. Her cellphone rings.

INSERT: Ana's phone's caller ID: "UNKNOWN."

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Phil and Nick talk and smoke weed.

NICK

So you're a changed man now?

PHIL

I don't know about all that.

NICK

So why all the effort?

PHIL

Sometimes I think I just wanna be
happy to impress women.

(pause)

Good night. Thanks for helping out.

NICK

See you in a few hours.

The moment Phil's out the door, Nick powers on his TV.

ESCHATON IV - EXT. SHACK IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

GAMEPLAY: Nick's "XP" rests at 1490. The shack is guarded by
four giant, gruesome graniloids. As Nick battles them,
hordes of graniloids appear from behind the shack. They
surround Nick, slowly subdue him, and drag him to the shack.

ESCHATON IV - INT. SHACK IN THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

CUT SCENE: The small wooden shack hosts an elaborate mad-scientist laboratory. Four graniloids drag Nick in, and hold him down as the Game Goddess hovers over him.

GAME GODDESS

Call me Dr. Nichtsberg. Surprised? Maybe you shouldn't trust the first person you see when you wake up in a room with no memories. You don't have amnesia Nick - you were born in that room. I created you, and set you against me, as a personal challenge to myself. You had all the tools necessary to stop me - but were too weak to use them. Too weak to question me, or the Sages. You stopped killing graniloids, and now your experience is pathetic. The army that defeated you are all the graniloids you spared. You made the wrong choices, Nick. You lost. Any last words?

ESCHATON IV - BLUE SCREEN

A virtual keyboard appears on the screen. Above it: "Enter your last words." The time counter counts up from 22:59:12.

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick stares at the screen in disbelief. He stands and paces in the tiny room. He grabs the controller, then drops it. He manually powers off the Evolver. He stares at his reflection in the blank TV screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

A truck is parked at the base of the mountain, back open, dozens of folding chairs piled inside. Phil and Kate stand at either side distributing chairs - Phil dressed in a black cloak and hood, leaning on a wooden walking staff. Kate is dressed as usual. The participants, many in costume, form two neat lines (one leading to Kate, one to Phil), and after receiving a folding chair, join the back of a third line, of people already hiking up the mountain.

(CONTINUED)

KATE

Keep it moving everyone. Grab a chair and follow the line up.

Kate notices Ana on Phil's line and glares at her as Phil hands her a folding chair. Ana then starts to hike up along a path parallel to the hiking line. About ten feet up, she stops, and looks down over the entire scene.

ANA'S POV: The two lines of people waiting for chairs, the symmetrical curves that people make from the truck to the hiking line, everyone on the hiking line holding a folding chair. A neat ant-colony working in synchronized unison.

Ana snaps out of it and cuts across toward the hiking line.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - EVENING

Nick, dressed as a piece of graph paper with a guitar strapped over its torso, leads the hikers up the mountain. Eva, dressed as a hippie, hikes alongside him. Volunteers 1 and 2 secure checkpoints.

Continuing up, Nick notices a heavily tattooed participant in his forties, wincing. Nick stops, closes his eyes, then moves on. Seconds later, the participant slows his stride and clutches his hand over his chest. Others start to drag their steps and breathe heavy. Some seem fine. When Participant 1 vocalizes a loud groan, Eva whispers in Nick's ear. They both turn around to face the group.

PARTICIPANT 1

Something's wrong.

NICK

Okay, checkpoint.

The hikers crowd below Nick and Eva as the rest of the line makes its way up. About two thirds of the participants show signs of discomfort, as the rest slowly realize that something is off. Phil and Kate bring up the rear.

PARTICIPANT 3

What is that?

NICK

We're very close.

PARTICIPANT 3

I said what the fuck is that man?

(CONTINUED)

Nick continues up and the crowd follows, forming a horizontal line perpendicular to their course. As the shack comes into his view a few meters away, groans cue Nick to look back again - symptoms have worsened, though some hikers remain perfectly fine, including Eva and Nick himself.

Participant 1, particularly stricken, falls to her knees. Nick drops his guitar and rushes to her side.

Eva walks toward Phil, who seems fine from a distance.

EVA
What's happening?

Now closer, she sees his shaking fist under his sleeve.

EVA
You feel it?

PHIL
You don't?

She closes her eyes, as if to check, then shakes her head.

EVA
How bad is it? Can you walk?

Phil nods. Eva takes his hand, and he takes a few small steps forward. To their left, a participant falls to his knees with a groan. Eva looks at him, then back at Phil.

EVA
But you're okay? You're sure.

Phil nods.

EVA
Okay, I'll be right back, okay?

PHIL
I'm fine.

Eva runs to the struck participant, tries to help him up.

Phil struggles on, staring at Nick. He finally catches Nick's eyes; Nick quickly looks away. Suddenly, Phil seems worse, his knees buckle and he lets out a muted cry. Eva abandons the fallen participant and runs back to Phil.

EVA
What is it?

PHIL

I'm fine.

Kate struggles up past them, alone, her body tense and her face red, leaning in, as if breaking through a barrier with her head. Her movement is slow but steady. She passes by Ana, who stands in place unable to move, and pushes her to the ground.

EVA

Kate!

(to Phil)

I'm sorry, I--

PHIL

I'll be fine, go.

Eva runs up to Ana, who is on her hands and knees.

EVA

Are you alright?

Ana nods.

EVA

Come, let me help you up.

Ana looks ahead and to the right.

ANA'S POV: A woman dressed in a Ghostbusters costume smiles down at Ana as she helps another participant up.

Ana refuses Eva's hand. Eva rubs Ana's shoulder.

EVA

It's okay Ana. It's okay.

Phil struggles up past them, heading straight for Nick.

Some feet away, Participant 1 is arm-locked at either side, being practically carried up by two participants, one who seems fine, but the other who isn't having an easy time of this either. Folding chairs are dropped left and right. Kate hikes on past everyone, struggling her way toward the shack.

As some participants give in and run down the mountain, many of those that remain form a wall by holding hands. Nick runs from participant to participant, helping them toward the human wall. The other unaffected participants follow his lead. Phil finally reaches Nick, and almost collapses. Nick helps him up, walks him to the human wall.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

You knew about this?

Nick ignores him, scanning about for other participants in need. He drops Phil off at the wall of people, then heads back down to help Participant 3.

PHIL

Nick. Answer me.

Participant 3 drags his way up, and Nick offers his hand. Participant 3's discomfort subsides for the duration of a split-second shared look - then he runs down the mountain.

Herbert, near the center of the human wall, suddenly yanks his right hand up toward his ear, so that he pulls the person who held his right hand. The long line of hand-attached people to his right all feel the pull, and barely manage to maintain balance. Herbert clutches his ear, screams, and falls sideways. Still covering his ear, he speed-crawls down the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SHACK - CONTINUOUS

The remaining members stand in place, side by side, a few meters from the shack; those afflicted display great effort to stand their ground, while the unaffected remain at their sides, holding them, comforting them. Only Kate moves on, until finally, she rests both palms against the wall of the shack. She turns around to face the participants and spreads her arms out. A few participants take tiny steps backwards.

KATE

No! Stay! Please. Remember what we've learned. We've come here. Now choose to stay. Choose to be here.

One participant takes another step back.

KATE

Choose it now. And now.

The participant pauses, then runs down the mountain.

KATE

Every moment choose to stay.

The remaining participants' faces express gargantuan effort. But they stay, and the symptoms begin to subside.

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SHACK - NIGHT

The participants sit cross-legged on the ground. A huge bonfire burns between the participants and the shack. On a retrieved folding chair, Nick sits off to a side and strums his guitar casually, not commanding much attention but contributing to a gentle atmosphere. Kate stands on the shack's roof addressing the participants.

KATE

Members of Founding. I'm Kate Donovan, and I fucking love all of you.

People cheer and yell her name.

KATE

Sam couldn't - or rather, wouldn't be here today. To me, he said, quote, "it's done." As in, Founding's done. Well, we showed him, didn't we?

Cheers.

KATE

Though I am not your Medium, there are a few words I'd like...

The participants' attention shifts to their left, where Raoul emerges from below. Besides Nick's softly strumming guitar, everything quiets as all eyes fall on Raoul.

Raoul walks to the shack and climbs to the top, where Kate stares him down and blocks him from stepping on. He kneels down on the roof with one knee, the other leg still dangling off the roof, and looks up at Kate.

RAOUL

May I?

KATE

Another step up and I'll stomp your fucking face.

He smiles, then awkwardly twists his torso to face the participants. He raises his arms, so that his body, balanced on only one knee, becomes somewhat wobbly.

RAOUL

(to the participants)
Call me Raoul.

(CONTINUED)

Dust particles rise and scatter from the cheer and stomping. Kate looks from Raoul to the participants.

PARTICIPANTS
(scattered yells)
Let him up! Let him up!

Kate stares down at Raoul. He makes as if to step up, but stops when Kate threateningly raises her foot. Emily leads a small handful of participants to the base of the shack.

EMILY
Let him up Kate.

Kate keeps her eyes down on Raoul, who makes a show of resting by pressing his feet up against the base of the roof and holding on with out-stretched arms, his body dangling comfortably.

Emily climbs the shack and approaches Kate.

EMILY
Kate, we want to hear him speak.

Kate looks at her, then at the participants, resigned.

KATE
(whisper)
Idiots.

She steps back, allowing Raoul to climb up. The participants cheer. Kate climbs down, and stands off to a side. Emily stays on the roof, smiling at Raoul - he gestures her to step down, and she does. Raoul faces the participants ceremoniously.

RAOUL
Raoul N.

Tremendous applause.

RAOUL
N for nigger.

ANGLE ON: The uncomfortable faces of the participants.

Emily runs down the mountain - Ana ineffectively reaches an arm out to her.

Then, from Raoul, a sudden eruption of violent laughter.

(CONTINUED)

RAOUL

Oh man. I'm just kidding everyone. "J" slash "k," y'know. It's a nice spot y'all found here. Cozy. You can see the stars - any of you notice that? Can't see the stars in the city, but here...

He sweeps an arm across the sky.

RAOUL

Stars fucking rule.

(pause)

Let me tell y'all a true story. In the 1920's, it was a taboo in our society for women to smoke cigarettes. Certainly in public, it just didn't happen. Along comes Edward Bernays, a guy hired by the American Tobacco Company to promote cigarette sales. Here's what he does. There happens to be a march in New York City, and Eddie informs the press that a group of women's rights activists are going to march and, check this out, light "torches of freedom."

The participants are now just plain confused. Raoul lights a cigarette.

RAOUL

Meanwhile, he just hires a bunch of fucking models to march and just, y'know, start puffin' away. New York Times headline, April fucking Fool's Day, 1929: "Group of Girls Puff at Cigarettes as a Gesture of Freedom." Immediately, cigarette sales skyrocket - like that. Women all over the country start smoking. For freedom - you believe that? Cigarettes fucking kill you. It was fourteen years ago, sitting under some shitty lamp because the overhead lights didn't work, that I first read about Eddie Bernays. And I thought: if humans are this dumb...so anyway, then I came up with Founding.

He laughs again, still smoking his cigarette. A few participants cry. Most watch blankly, numb.

(CONTINUED)

For the next part of his speech, Raoul does the personality-switching performance. His version is substantially more impressive than Sam's. Where Sam would suddenly shift from one personality to the other, Raoul gradually morphs, so that he never seems to be any one particular personality, as much as always in the process of the change.

RAOUL

I mean, think people. This, this fucking wowed you guys.

(mocking voice)

"You're nothing, you're any person you choose to be."

(then:)

It's called acting! You watch movies, don't you? And now look at you, all liberated and shit - a bunch of fucking hippies dancing around a campfire.

He drops the performance, and drops his arms, as if suddenly tired of speaking.

RAOUL

Nothing personal with you guys. I just got bored with the company, that's all. I'm sure you're all nice people.

He steps down off the roof. Kate intercepts him. Raoul searches into her eyes with a friendly tilt of the head.

RAOUL

Hey. It's still me in here.

ANGLE ON: The participants remain mostly quiet; a few cry. Participant 2 plugs in earphones, runs to the fire, and dances.

CLOSE ON: Ana slowly scans everything around her; she looks to the sky, at Raoul, she grabs dirt from the ground and studies it, and examines the faces of the participants around her. As in a trance, she walks toward the shack.

ANGLE ON: Eva looks straight down, vibrating from fury. Phil places a hand on her shoulder.

PHIL

It's still okay though.

Eva suddenly ups and sprints toward Raoul. Phil watches after her and notices that she carries a decently sized stone in her hand. He rises but does not follow her.

(CONTINUED)

Eva runs at Raoul, concealing the rock. Raoul faces her with a mocking smile until, just a few feet from impact, he notices the rock. He gasps and ducks. As Eva leaps off the ground and winds her arms back for a swing, Kate knocks into her, clutches her arm, and holds her up into a forced hug. Eva sobs. Kate glares at Raoul over Eva's shoulder.

RAOUL
I'm not leaving.

Eva screams and tries to go after him. Kate holds on to her and calms her down, caressing her hair. She guides her away.

ANGLE ON: Phil still stands in place.

PHIL'S POV: He sees Kate and Eva, hugging, Eva still sobbing. He sees Raoul watching them. He watches Ana enter through the shack's front door, closing the door behind her. He watches Nick, still playing guitar peacefully; Nick catches Phil watching and smiles at him. Phil sees four participants gathered around the bonfire, earphones in, dancing, inviting the rest to join in.

Phil slowly moves in the direction of Kate and Eva, politely tapping the people in his way and gesturing them to make room for him to walk.

FADE TO:

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Kate sleeps. Her room is clean and neat. She calmly awakes, then notices Raoul sitting across the room, watching her. She clutches her bedsheet to her chest. Raoul walks to her bed and crouches beside it. He looks up at her.

Kate stares at him, fully awake now.

FADE OUT.

THE END