

PERFECTING THE WORLD

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FADE IN:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A coffee shop, with the normal activity - plates clinking, espresso machine whirring and steaming. Three or four pairs of people sit at tables, chatting.

DEREK, late thirties, your average suit-and-tie weatherman is sitting in a coffee shop soft chair. He grips the chair arms with nervous fear. Looks around, confused and disoriented.

A middle-aged man with greying but well cropped hair (GOD, but we don't know this yet) enters the coffee shop. He walks toward Derek and nods at a few people he passes, exuding friendship. He sits down on soft chair across from Derek.

GOD

You're right on time.

DEREK

(strangely  
compelled)

I.. know.

GOD

How are you?

DEREK

(Normalizing)

Good.. Good. How are you?

GOD

Never been better. Earl Grey tea latte with vanilla?

DEREK

Yeah, that's right.

GOD

Okay - be right back.

Derek studies the coffee shop with slight disorientation. It's a regular coffee shop - people are sitting, drinking coffee, chatting, ordering. Two baristas, one taking orders and one working the espresso machine.

But something isn't right.. Derek just can't put his finger on it. He stares at the steam coming out of the espresso

machine.

GOD

Here you are.

GOD returns with two steaming drinks. Hands one to Derek.  
Sits down.

DEREK

Thanks. I'll get it next time.

GOD

You're welcome. (blows on his drink)  
Black coffee for me. (takes a sniff  
over his cup) This is the most robust  
yet well balanced dark roast you'll  
find anywhere in this city.. that  
hasn't passed through the intestinal  
track of a civet anyway. (smiles) They  
import their coffees from countries  
most others don't. (pause) Ever wonder  
why it's the bitter things that offer  
the most refined tastes?

DEREK

I've never been a coffee guy.

GOD

Except in college.

DEREK

Yeah. Had to. Hated every drop though.

GOD

Why didn't you just drink tea?

DEREK

My dorm only had a coffee maker.

GOD

No kettle?

DEREK

(bashfully)

I didn't know how to make tea.

GOD

Oh right. I remembered that. I just  
like hearing you say it.

DEREK grins shyly.

GOD

So, how are you?

DEREK

Good.. Well, I'm not sure- I'm not actually sure where we are?

GOD

Well you've never been here before, but this is my regular coffee shop. Do you think something's wrong?

DEREK

(concerned)

Something must have happened to me. Something's not quite right. I'm having trouble remembering things.

GOD

What are you having trouble with?

DEREK

(scared)

Uh..Us.. do we know each other?

GOD

Yes and no.

DEREK

(tearing)

I'm sorry.. Maybe I should.. go to the hospital.

GOD

Do you think you are unwell?

DEREK

(serious)

I think something bad has happened. Something really bad.

GOD

What do you think happened?

DEREK

I don't know.. I'm scared though.

GOD

I know.

DEREK

Why-?

GOD

How is your daughter?

Derek thinks, then cries.

DEREK

(composing himself)

She's so beautiful. She's not doing well.

GOD

I'm sorry to hear that.

DEREK

Thanks.

GOD

It's been hard.

DEREK

Yeah.

GOD

It's for the best.

DEREK

(still with tears)

I know.. Why? Why is it for the best?

GOD

That answer will take a while to explain. But I'd be glad to-

DEREK

(anger roused)

No. No. How dare you say that? How dare you?

GOD

You think that's being trite.

DEREK

Damn right that's being trite. If you knew what she's going through.

GOD looks deeply into Derek's eyes.

GOD

I know.

DEREK

(disarmed)

I know.

GOD

I'll tell you anything you want to know.

DEREK

Can you tell me what's going on?

INT. - NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Two news anchors, Allan and Brenda, are delivering the evening news. Weather and sports anchors are at their respective posts, off-camera. Cameras are rolling and the studio has its regular cadre of support staff.

ALLAN

...The snake was most likely flushed down the toilet by a former owner, and had been living in the sewers for years before making its unwelcome appearance in the home. Pest control says not to worry though, these cases are very rare.

Allan finishes the story and now moves to some banal chit-chat with his co-anchor.

ALLAN (CON'T)

So don't worry Brenda, they're very rare.

BRENDA

I.. cannot imagine.

ALLAN

No, it's about as crazy as it gets.

BRENDA

I would freak out and probably scream.

ALLAN

Not a snake person?

BRENDA

No. Not at all.

ALLAN  
(chuckling)  
I think *I* would freak out.

BRENDA  
I don't know if I'll be able to use my own bathroom anymore.

ALLAN  
That's - yeah - I mean how do you know?

BRENDA  
I can't stand snakes. Now I can't get the thought out of my head. Aahh (mock scream) Sorry. Well thanks for that Allan. We'll now hand things over to Derek Smalley for a quick look at the weather. Things are looking to cool off, are they, Derek?

DEREK  
(average and jovial)  
Thanks Brenda. Yes, you're absolutely right. Say goodbye to these unseasonable highs we've been seeing over the last two weeks. They will finally diminish due to a massive cold front descending on us from our friendly Canadian neighbor to the north. It's looking like it will come in over the next two to three days bringing temperatures in the 40s over the whole state, and then dig in its heels, and not go away any time soon. It may be Canadian, but it's not going to be very polite. It didn't even ask to move into the neighborhood, Brenda.

BRENDA  
Ugh. That's very unfortunate. Sometimes you just can't trust the polite ones.

DEREK  
No, you can't Brenda.

BRENDA  
Okay, well thanks for that unfortunately frosty report Derek.

DEREK

You're welcome Brenda. It should help keep the snakes at bay though.

BRENDA

Well there's a silver lining I guess. And with that. We'll move it over to Jerome with sports.

JEROME

Thank you Brenda.

Derek walks off-set into the programming room as Jerome begins his report.

JEROME (CON'T) (OS)

The Avalanche were destroyed by the Calgary Flames tonight...

Derek walks past the producer, and into an adjoining hallway towards his office.

PETER

Making fun of the Canadians again?

DEREK

Well, they're not going to complain.

Peter smiles as Derek continues by.

PETER

Oh Derek, when is your daughter's surgery again?

Derek stops and turns around.

DEREK

Day after tomorrow.

PETER

How are you guys holding up?

DEREK

We're really hopeful. The doctors say this one should make a big difference for Amanda.

PETER

That's great. That's really great Derek.

DEREK

I gotta hurry though. Meeting Julia for a date tonight.

PETER

I'll let you go then. See you tomorrow. Give my best to Julia.

DEREK

Thanks Pete.

Derek continues walking down the hall to his office. He opens the door and enters.

INT - OFFICE - DAY

Pictures of Derek's wife and daughter are stuck up and down the sides of his monitor. Drawings that his daughter has drawn are scattered over the desk. Derek loosens his tie and removes it and hangs it up in a wardrobe closet, also bearing photos.

He catches sight of a picture of his smiling daughter. He stares at it, caught in the moment, he touches it.

He pulls out his smart phone, starts a call, turns it to speaker phone, walks over and puts the phone down on the desk. He walks to the window, gazes out as the phone rings.

JULIA

Hello.

DEREK

Hey Babe. I-

JULIA

(drunk, slurring words)

Derek, I know you're going to be mad - I can't do the waiting thing - it's too hard-

DEREK

(pained)

Oh babe, don't tell me- You've been- Babe, we've been making such good progress.

JULIA

(crying)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I couldn't stop. Amanda, she's hurting again. It's really bad.

Derek closes his eyes, and takes in all the bad news.

JULIA

Do you hate me, Derek?

DEREK

No, Babe. You know I love you. Julia, I know it's hard but we're going to get through this. I know Amanda is hurting so much but we have to be strong for her. That's what she needs from us.

JULIA

(crying)

I know.

DEREK

Have you called Miriam?

JULIA

Yes. She's here.

DEREK

Okay good. I'll be home soon.

JULIA

I'm sorry about our date night.

DEREK

It's okay, we'll reschedule. But.. you know what we talked about if this happened again?

JULIA

(displeased)

Yech. Not the God-people meeting. I'll go read Amanda's fairy tales if I need help from non-existent God-Jesus..

DEREK

It's just "A higher power" not God specifically.

JULIA

Todd and Linda, they believe in Jesus. They were spurting- spewing- out- all about him, after the meeting.

DEREK

That's just Todd and Linda.

JULIA

I think the leader is a Jesus-lover too. Even though He doesn't say anything. I just get that wooty, clappy, ye-haw vibe from him..

DEREK

Look. Thousands of people find help there - maybe praying to Santa Clause reminds you that you better help yourself - I don't know. These are people who are stronger than you right? And anyway it's not negotiable. We talked about this. I'm sorry.

JULIA

Okay. I'll go. You'll go with me right?

DEREK

Of course I will. We're in this together babe. I'll be home soon and then we'll go get you some coffee.

JULIA

You should be with Amanda.

He looks over at a picture of Amanda happily eating an ice cream cone.

DEREK

I'll sit with Amanda and let her know we've got plans. Miriam can handle it - that's why we got her. Right now I need to be with you.

JULIA

Okay.

DEREK

What can we offer Amanda, if we're not strong ourselves?

JULIA

I know.

DEREK

I'm not mad, Julia.

JULIA

(crying)

Thank you. I love you, Derek.

DEREK

I love you too.

INT. AA MEETING - CHURCH BASEMENT - EVENING

ORGANIZER

It isn't until we acknowledge the truth about our own shortcomings that we see any change in our behavior. Why is this? Because we humans are weak creatures. Look at how easily we fall prey to any of the plethora of things that can control us. We think we're just playing around when we overdo it with something. But before you know it, we're not playing anymore and that thing, whatever it is, is playing us. So we have to acknowledge our weakness - it's essential. But the other critical thing, and this is at the core of this program, is after we have acknowledged our weakness, every other 12-step program says to do your best, try hard to develop the strategies to fulfil each step, because 'you have the power within you'. But we're different - yes, we have steps, yes we have strategies to help set yourself up for success, but what sets us apart, is that we stay true to the vision of our founder, and before we start any steps, immediately after acknowledging our weakness, we intentionally and consciously reach out to a higher power for the help we need to stick with the program. Yes, some people may have quit using other programs, this isn't that program. We ask for help from a higher

power, and honestly, call Him whatever you want, but that higher power is there, willing to give the power to change our lives if we come on the right terms.

Julia, coffee in hand, rolls her eyes at Derek.

INT. AA MEETING - REFRESHMENT TABLE - EVENING

JULIA

I'm not singing, if they want us to sing.

DEREK

(joking)

Sorry, I already signed you up for the choir.

JULIA

(mocking)

Hey, higher power, can you fix my problems? - and don't worry, I won't ask why you gave us all the shit that lead to the problems in the first place.

DEREK

I know, babe. Just go along with it. This is still the best program out there that's offered for free.

JULIA

How does this get results? People tricked into feeling they're being helped by a higher power? It's false hope - it's cruel.

DEREK

The brain is a complex network, not fully understood. See, neurons, since they function on electrical impulses passing through the axon to the dendrite.. (loses Julia, he smiles) Anyway, it's just fascinating - like a never-ending lightning storm going on in your head right now.

JULIA  
(wryly)  
You and lightning.

The Organizer walks over to them.

ORGANIZER  
So glad to have you with us Julia. How  
is the coffee?

DEREK  
Tea actually. Good.

JULIA  
It's good, thanks.

ORGANIZER  
Sometimes Linda makes it a little too  
strong. But when I make it, she says  
it's too weak. One day I'll learn to  
nail it.. So do you two have any kids?

DEREK  
One. She's nine.

ORGANIZER  
Wonderful. Just decided on the one? No  
brothers or sisters for little...

DEREK  
Amanda. No, she was diagnosed with a  
disorder... and we didn't want to take  
the chance on it happening again.

ORGANIZER  
Oh, that's difficult. I'm so sorry.

DEREK  
Thank you.

ORGANIZER  
I watch you on the news. I bet you get  
recognized all over the place.

DEREK  
Well, we're only the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest station  
in the city, so, not all the time, but  
often.

ORGANIZER  
How long did you study meteorology?

DEREK

6 years.

ORGANIZER

Such a fascinating science, not that I know anything about it. Way above my head.. In more ways than one.

Derek and Julia catch a glance at each other - lame joke.

DEREK

That's good.

ORGANIZER

I know. You used it on your show once.

Julia smiles and gives Derek a look (she can believe that).

INT. CAR - CAR RIDE HOME - EVENING

Derek drives the suburban streets. Overcast day.

JULIA

Do you think there actually could be a... higher power?

Derek considers his response.

DEREK

(serious but  
compassionate)

No. I can't lie to you, even though I want you to go to the meetings.. Sure, technically there could be a higher power that might be able to help us, but not one that really cares about us. A loving God wouldn't allow what's happening to Amanda. It's just not logical.

JULIA

I know, exactly. But, devil's advocate - there's a lot of good in the world too. I mean, logically, that has to be taken into account too doesn't it?

DEREK

Why? Goodness and pain mixed? It's just another kind of pain. Like, what? God is just *sometimes* a dick? Is he just

playing with us?

Julia is quiet, thinks.

DEREK (CON'T)

You're a feeler babe. Of course it's the good part that you're going to consider. I'm a thinker. Cold hard logic is what's at the foundation. This feeling stuff just emerges out of that, but it's not real, it's literally just that weather pattern in our brain - not even a joke.

JULIA

What about the love we have for Amanda?

DEREK

Yes, that's a good thing.. There's just no God behind it. Look, thinking there's a higher power obviously helps a lot of people, probably because it makes you let go of the burden of fixing your own problems for brief periods of time - and whatever it is, if it helps people stay sober, I say go for it.. Just don't stop trusting in the help of the *real* people around you who love you.

Julia smiles at him. They pull up to their home, driving up on the driveway and Derek puts the car into park.

DEREK

You know what? Let's get burgers and fries tonight.

Derek moves to shift the car back out of park, but Julia interrupts.

JULIA

That sounds great, but I'll jump out. I want to see Amanda.

DEREK

Okay.

She gets out and closes the door. She walks around the front of the truck to towards the front door. Derek rolls down the his window.

DEREK

What do you want?

JULIA

Get me a bacon cheese. And get Amanda a cheeseburger just ketchup and pickles

DEREK

Pickles?

JULIA

Yeah, she said she liked those the last time she tried a bite of mine - and get her the special fries she likes. We've got soda in the fridge so you don't need to get any drinks.

DEREK

Got it.. Come here.

Julia walks up to the truck window. She sees Derek's intent in his face. They kiss.

DEREK

Thank you for going tonight. I love you.

JULIA

I love you too. Hurry back.

DEREK

(smiling)

Will do.

Derek closes the window and drives off.

EXT. ROAD - DRIVING - EVENING

It begins to rain. He drives on a major thoroughfare.

EXT. PARKING LOT - BURGER STOP - EVENING

The sign includes "Always Open". He gets out into a light but steady rain, and hurries into the restaurant.

INT. BURGER STOP - EVENING

He cues up. A few people stand in front of him in the line. For a moment, he watches the bustle of the employees working at their duties. The person in front of him turns and recognizes him.

PATRON

Hey, it's the weatherman. (joking)  
What's up with this rain? Couldn't you,  
like, do something about it?

DEREK

(smiling)  
That's not how it works unfortunately.  
I just *know* the future - I don't have  
the power to control it.

PATRON

That's too bad. So what you're saying  
is, you use all those incantations and  
magic runes to foresee the weather, but  
you're not God Himself?

DEREK

Exactly. You understand now.

EXT. ROAD - DRIVING - EVENING

Derek drives home, bag of burgers beside him. It's raining quite hard now, and very windy. Derek stops at a light. He's beside the trailer of a semi-truck. Derek looks at the load on the flatbed.

The light turns green - the cars beside him start to move - the semi truck is on it's way. For some reason, Derek's lane stays stopped for a few moments longer. Derek gets impatient, silently lifts his hand in irritation. Now he's moving.

The wind gets intense. The trees bend at the pressure.

It's a thoroughfare - vehicles get up to highway speed.

Derek turns up the wiper speed.

Suddenly LIGHTNING STRIKES A RICKETY OLD BILLBOARD. The forces blows out several boards and pieces of plywood - the wind blows a large sheet of the plywood onto the road DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE SEMI TRUCK.

The truck swerves into the vehicle ahead of Derek, causing Derek to SWERVE OFF THE ROAD, CLIPPING A CONCRETE BARRIER, TWISTS AND ROLLS DOWN A STEEP EMBANKMENT, CATCHING FIRE AS IT FALLS. (Derek's body is not seen at all at this time.)

INT. AMBULANCE - EVENING

A badly wounded and burned Derek is strapped down inside the ambulance as it rushes with sirens blaring down the road. IV is attached. The paramedics are busily applying treatment and preparing supplies.

PARAMEDIC 1

IV is steady.

PARAMEDIC 2

Blood pressure.

PARAMEDIC 3

I need more burn salve.

PARAMEDIC 1

Blood pressure is 80/50. Give him 20 more cc's.

PARAMEDIC 2

Heartbeat is irregular. (intense) We're losing him.

They hasten their efforts.

PARAMEDIC 2

We're losing him!

The heartbeat monitor goes to flatline.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The conversation resumes after God has detailed the scene we've just seen. Derek takes a moment to gather it all in. In the conversation, Derek occasionally gets emotional, but God is calm and genuinely compassionate though at times speaking with firmness. They sip from their cups occasionally as they converse.

DEREK

So you're-?

GOD

Yes.

DEREK

And this is-?

GOD

-a conversation.

DEREK

Okay.. So am I supposed to realize what a jerk I am and then learn my lesson - Christmas Carol part 2?

GOD

(chuckles)

I like that one.. (pause) Your heart stopped Derek.. One thing you need to know is that both life and death are real.. that's why I need to look back on a people's mode of existence after they die.

DEREK

Another question - did you have to let me die because of a rainstorm? I'm a well-known meteorologist and it's just sooo - you know..

GOD

Every once in a while I do things with.. symmetry.

DEREK

So what is this about then?

GOD

(speaking kindly)

I'll be honest with you Derek. You did many honorable things in your life, but you failed in the biggest thing. I wanted to be a part of your life and you didn't let me..

DEREK

Great - so what now?

GOD

You know how every test has an answer key?

DEREK

Sure.

GOD

Consider this the answer key.

DEREK

Wouldn't it better to get the answers

beforehand, if they're that important?

GOD

(smiling)

I did give them to you. For every test I give, enough information is given beforehand. Everyone can pass... if they really try.

DEREK

I guess you'll have to prove that to me because I sure don't think I was given enough of a shot.

GOD

I showed you my goodness, my beauty, all throughout your life. Beauty is my signature. But more than that, you heard my name, my message, many times.

DEREK

Goodness.. What about-? (pauses)

GOD

Go ahead, say it.

DEREK

-your evil.

GOD

What do you mean Derek?

DEREK

All the pain and suffering in this world! It's not good at all, and it causes so much anguish that, that..

GOD

So you think I did alright with the goodness, but royally blew it with the suffering?

DEREK

Yes. You can't expect people to think about you because of the goodness, if the opposite of goodness is all around too.

GOD

You realize that people have free

choice?

DEREK

Yes, but not all evil is caused by people.

GOD

So it's the earthquakes and hurricanes then?

DEREK

Yes, exactly. You could have completely avoided those - it's like a blatant act of... act of hate towards us.

GOD

One of the reasons the physical earth isn't completely safe is so that people don't put their trust in earthly things, to help them look for safety. Real safety.

DEREK

A lot of good that does the people who die in the earthquakes.

GOD

They were aware that earthquakes existed. They all had a chance to think about what true safety meant.

DEREK

Yeah, well there was a first earthquake right?

GOD

Sure.. but what if I allowed the first few to be bad but not bad enough that anyone died? - Just enough to show that worse ones could be a reality - that people better.. respond correctly.. or they may face a worse fate.

DEREK

Right, the earthquakes are helpful nudges..

GOD

The truth is deeper than you realize Derek. How powerful am I? If I can make

humans, could I not make beings stronger than humans? And what if they're choosers too. See I can make choosers - of all strengths, both visible and invisible. What if the others I made were supposed to protect and keep watch over the earth, and instead some chose to rebel and worked towards its detriment. I am both forgiving and much more powerful, but what if they mistook my kindness for weakness and instead of serving me, they found themselves rejected, and here on earth, wreaking untold havoc, until-

DEREK

And humans just die in the crossfire?

GOD smiles, heard this so often.

GOD

See, even if I did cause earthquakes directly, myself, at this stage of the plan - it would serve as a stark reminder about death. People have forgotten about death. They have made peace with it.. when I added it to be the greatest crack in my perfection - a sign above all signs, that things are not right - and an appropriate, just response to humanity for rebelling against her creator. Should not a God be faithful to discipline that which He creates?

DEREK

But as I understand it, we don't get to choose after we die, so those people who die because of your "sign", before they get a chance to "see the light", how is that fair?

GOD

Everyone gets a chance to turn around.. before they die.

DEREK

Some pretty young kids die in those

earthquakes.

GOD

I know when a child is of age to choose me. Those who are younger, I apply grace. Those who are older, I give opportunity. Everyone gets an opportunity.

DEREK

What - you make sure there's a TV preacher that they see, flipping through the channels?

GOD

I can use many things - songs, dreams, beauty, but my invisible Spirit is the most dedicated missionary. A human face is often ideal for presenting the good news of my open offer of amnesty, but there has been a vast number who have chosen to respond to the invitation given by my Spirit directly. He knocks on the door of all hearts. He knocked on your door too.

Derek is pensive, he can recall something.. But he doesn't stay there long.

DEREK

Well what about famines? It's like you're just straight up killing people in the most torturous way.

GOD

(politely)

One - as I've already said - they are condemned to death one way or another, already. Some people just get more time to accept my grace than others. And two - I actually put enough food in the world that there's enough to meet needs everywhere.

DEREK

Oh so I really was supposed to send my left over brussel sprouts to Ethiopia? That's just great.

GOD

I moved my people to create several organizations that receive donations and have reach. If only people actually wanted to share. Unfortunately, as it stands, this one is much more of a free will evil of man, not one of mine. Sorry.

God smiles.

DEREK

Okay. But you still let it all happen! And you could just do something about it.

GOD

If you take away free will.. you don't have people. I wanted real people. And a good world, plus choice, equals the possibility for people to choose themselves over others - it doesn't matter how good I make the world - it's always possible.

DEREK

My daughter is going through.. More pain than anyone.. more pain than she deserves. Without question. There is no answer you can give me that will satisfy that.

GOD

Say what you're feeling.

DEREK

You're cruel. You're a cruel, heartless God for allowing her suffering.

GOD

I feel your pain.

DEREK

(coldly)

Sure.

GOD

It took a lot of time to make this world.

DEREK  
I'm sure it did.

GOD  
Took a lot of thought.

Derek is silent.

DEREK  
(Bitter)  
I suppose I'm going to hell now.

GOD  
It hurts me when people think they can  
convict me, but they just don't know.  
Don't know what it takes to make a  
world that actually produces the proper  
end result.

Derek is still silent.

GOD (CON'T)  
You claim to be able to do a better  
job?

DEREK  
Well, I can't create a world, but I  
could define the rules better, yes.

GOD  
Well this is the answer key - an  
interactive one, so you get that  
opportunity. Which change would you  
like to make first?

DEREK  
What? What do you mean?

GOD  
I am giving you control over the world.  
You can make the alterations you want.  
However, these are the rules: you may  
only make one change at a time, and you  
must see the implications of your  
changes through for one full year  
before you may make another change.

DEREK  
Why?

GOD

Would you not claim that even a single change of your choosing would make the world better, no matter the starting point?

DEREK

Yes, I would.

GOD

(smiling)

Well this will let us see if you're right.

DEREK

Why are you doing this?

GOD

I have my reasons. Do you accept this challenge?

Derek stews.

DEREK

I'm not wrong.

GOD

The standard of measurement will be how much goodness and beauty you can keep in the earth.

DEREK

What do you mean by goodness and beauty?

GOD

Things like friendship, love, progress, courage, sacrifice-

DEREK

Certainly. I get it. That won't be a problem. At least I -

GOD

Unless you feel your changes will not be sufficient to achieve your claim that you can make a world better than mine?

DEREK

No. My claim stands. I accept your challenge.

GOD

Very well. What is your first change?

DEREK

I - wait, I have another question..

GOD

Of course.

DEREK

Are the people in this world, real?

GOD

Why do you ask?

DEREK

I just want to know.

GOD

I cannot tell you that.

DEREK

Why not?

GOD

For the purposes of the authenticity of the results, you cannot have this knowledge as it may affect your choices or your understanding of the results. They may be real, they may not.

DEREK

Okay.

GOD

Are you ready then?

DEREK

Yes. I wish to remove all pain from humanity.

GOD

Do you mean all physical pain? You must be specific, as I said, there can only be one change at a time.

DEREK

Yes, fine, physical pain. I want it gone. Obviously people still have the sense of touch, sensations, just not pain.

GOD

Very well. It is so. When you walk out of this coffee shop you will enter your world and the change will be in effect.

DEREK

How do I-

GOD

You are simply an observer in your world. You can feel it but can't interact with it. But feel free to walk through walls whenever you want. Float around. Fly. Whatever.

God stands up.

GOD (CON'T)

In one year's time, let's meet back here. (pause) Until then, Derek.

DEREK

Until then.

God brings his empty mug to the counter, placing it on the counter as he walks by.

GOD

Thanks Katherine.

The server smiles. Derek watches as God exits through the front door. Derek finishes the last of his drink. He takes a breath. He gets up, takes his cup and places it on the counter in the same place God did.

DEREK

Thanks..

But Katherine is on the other side of the store out of earshot.

Derek approaches the door with trepidation. He touches it and holds for a moment. He pushes open the door and walks through.

EXT. STREET - FRONT OF COFFEE SHOP - DAY

It is a bright, sunny day. Cars are driving on the commercial district street. People are walking on the sidewalks.

Derek walks along the sidewalk in no particular direction. He overhears general conversation. Some people talk on their cell phones.

Then one person walking by on their phone strikes his attention.

PHONE GUY

You wouldn't believe it - it was the strangest thing - my migraine just disappeared. Yeah, like just now. It was shaping up to be a bad one, and then, poof, gone. I have no idea.

DEREK

(mildly surprised)

You're welcome.

Derek continues walking. People are mostly going along as per usual. He has a thought. He turns onto another street in a purposeful direction.

EXT./INT. HOSPITAL - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Derek walks through the parking lot and into the hospital emergency entrance. The normal hustle and bustle of operations are happening. Phones are ringing. Patients are being admitted.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY WAITING AREA - DAY

Derek walks to the waiting in the waiting area. One is holding a blood-soaked bandaged arm. One is holding a balled-up cloth to his head. One is holding an icepack on her knee. A few look very nervous.

Derek notices two people, one of whom is on crutches, are speaking loudly at one of the admitting desks.

PATIENT 1

No. This is different. Not just what I came in with. I really think I should see a doctor now.

ADMITTING NURSE

I'm sorry, we have a strict policy for the order in which emergency patients are seen.

PATIENT 2

This happened to both of us at the same time. That's just not normal, not even for one person.

ADMITTING NURSE

Did you take any pain killers?

PATIENT 1

Well- Yes, an hour ago, but this is not anything like the kind of pain relief you get from aspirin.

PATIENT 2

What if it's some sort of virus going around?

ADMITTING NURSE

Do you feel any head congestion?  
Coughing, runny nose?

PATIENT 1

No, nothing like that, but-

ADMITTING NURSE

Well then, I highly doubt it's a virus. Now would you please go sit down and wait your turn.

PATIENT 1

(angry)

No! Something is wrong!

ADMITTING NURSE

If you don't return to your seat, I'm going to have to call security. I've done it before, even with someone with more of an injury than you. If you cause a disturbance then you are interfering with the treatment of others, and that's a serious offence.

DEREK

(to himself)

Calm down people. You'll enjoy it soon

enough.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY/ICU - DAY

Derek moves out of the waiting area into a hallway that leads to the ICU. He passes a couple in their fifties, holding each other and looking worried.

Derek walks into the ICU and sees two doctors huddled over a male patient, late 50s, who is lucid and quiet, but looking worried.

DOCTOR 1

Do you have any known allergies to morphine or painkillers?

ICU PATIENT

No, not that I'm aware of. I have an allergy to shellfish and certain cosmetics.

DOCTOR 2

Have you been noticing an increased sensitivity to your allergies at all lately?

ICU PATIENT

No. Can't say that I have.

DOCTOR 1

Is it possible that something happened to his nervous system?

DOCTOR 2

Well anything's possible but I don't see how the pain goes, but regular sensation stays.

DEREK

Something did happen to his nervous system - I did.

Suddenly A PIERCING SCREAM from the other side of the room. A female patient is standing next to her ICU bed having removed her arm bandages. BLOOD IS FLOWING OUT OF A DEEP SLASH WOUND onto the floor.

Doctor 1 rushes to her. Doctor 2 grabs some gauze and rushes to her and presses the gauze into the wound he knows is the source of blood.

DOCTOR 1

What the- (yells) Get me that gurney!

DOCTOR 2

Bethany, you need to lie down right now.

A nurse runs and brings over the gurney. The doctors calm Bethany and lie her down.

DOCTOR 1

That's right, you're okay.

DOCTOR 2

That's good Bethany. You can't get up like that. Why did you remove your dressings?

BETHANY

I don't know. I felt a lot better.

DOCTOR 1

She's still under the anesthesia.

DOCTOR 2

(concerned, at  
Doctor 1)

She said she felt better.

The Admissions nurse enters the room.

ADMISSIONS NURSE

Doctor Petersen, something odd is going on in the waiting area. You may want to come and check it out.

The doctors briefly look at each other.

DOCTOR 1

What is it Michelle?

ADMISSIONS NURSE

People are saying all of their pain is gone.

DOCTOR 2

How many people?

ADMISSIONS NURSE

All of them.

DOCTOR 1

Oh my-

DOCTOR 2

(disbelief)

This has got to be viral. We've got go to quarantine.

DOCTOR 1

Michelle, begin quarantine protocols. Get security to the doors. Nobody comes in or leaves, understand?

ADMISSIONS NURSE

Yes, doctor.

DEREK

Really? We have to go through all this? I mean, sure.. Just wait.

The nurse rushes away. Derek continues down another hallway and reaches the pediatrics unit. He walks through locked security doors like a ghost. Several newborns are behind a window in cribs, some are in incubators. Derek smiles.

He notices a couple coming in from the hallway ahead. The mother is holding a newborn, the father is holding the hand of their 9-year old daughter. Smiles all around.

Derek tears up. He rushes away.

INT. HOSPITAL - SURGERY ROOM - DAY

Doctors and nurses are hurriedly preparing.

SURGEON 1

Allison, would you get the trays from room 2, we're going to need them for the prelim.

ALLISON

Yes doctor.

Allison walks out. Another doctor walks briskly up to surgeon 1.

SURGEON 2

What I miss?

SURGEON 1

Big accident on the 17. At least ten

seriously injured, in need of surgery.  
Six went to Saint Mary's. Four are  
coming here, along with one DOA.

SURGEON 2

I guess I'll stay around a bit longer  
today.

SURGEON 1

Dan will be here in 20 minutes but we  
could sure use the help.

DEREK

The morgue..

Derek begins to leave, but hesitates when he hears the  
comment by Allison who walks up to the doctors.

ALLISON

Doctor Richards, I just got notice that  
the hospital is under quarantine.

SURGEON 1

What? The whole hospital?

ALLISON

They say it's something fast.

SURGEON 1

Did they say which one they think it  
is?

ALLISON

It's something new apparently.

SURGEON 1

Who called for the quarantine?

ALLISON

Doctor Petersen in Emerg.

SURGEON 1

Can you get him on the phone for me?

ALLISON

Yes Doctor.

SURGEON 1

Thanks Allison.

Derek continues on, leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - DAY

Derek enters the morgue, to see two covered bodies being wheeled to the back behind secure doors. He is about to follow them into the back room, when he hears Julia's voice entering from other doors. He walks up to them.

JULIA

Come on Amanda, let's go.

Julia walks up to the front desk with Amanda in hand. Derek watches in surprise. He doesn't know how to feel.

JULIA

I'm here to see a body.

DESK NURSE

Of course. What is the name of the deceased?

JULIA

Derek Smalley.

DESK NURSE

And what is your relationship to the deceased?

JULIA

Wife. My name is Julia Smalley.

DESK NURSE

We don't allow children into the cold room. She'll have to wait out here.

JULIA

I don't have anyone else to watch her.

DESK NURSE

I can call for a nurse or chaplain, if you're okay with that.

JULIA

That would be great, thank you. (pause)  
A nurse please if possible.

DESK NURSE

Have a seat. I'll let you know when a nurse can be here.

JULIA

Thank you.

Julia turns and walks towards the seating area with Amanda.  
The nurse makes a call.

DESK NURSE (OS)

Jenna could you come help a visitor in  
the morgue?

JULIA

Come Amanda, let's sit down.

AMANDA

When will we see daddy?

They sit. Derek moves up close to Amanda, and crouches down  
to her level, even though they cannot see him.

JULIA

Honeybear, they don't let kids into  
where Daddy is, so you won't be able to  
see him today, okay.

DEREK

(to Amanda)

Hey Honeybear. I'm right here.

AMANDA

Why?

JULIA

That's just the rules. I'm sorry baby.

DEREK

I love you Amanda. Never forget that.

Amanda plays with her hands and looks at the floor.

DEREK

You're going to have a new life now  
baby. You're free from all the pain. I  
found a way. I know you're going to  
miss me, it'll be hard, but mommy's  
going to take really good care of you,  
and you're going to be just fine, okay?  
And I'm gonna be right here beside you  
baby girl.

Jenna, a nurse, walks up to them.

JENNA

Hello, do you need someone to watch  
your child while you go inside?

JULIA  
Yes, thanks so much.

JENNA  
Jenna.

Jenna reaches out her hand. Julia grabs it and they shake.

JULIA  
Julia.

Jenna bends down to face Amanda on her haunches.

JENNA  
Hi, I'm Jenna, I work here at the hospital. What's your name?

AMANDA  
Amanda.

JENNA  
Hi Amanda. Can I sit with you while your mom goes into the back room for a few minutes?

AMANDA  
Okay.

JULIA  
Mommy's going to be right back, okay Amanda?

AMANDA  
I'll be okay.

DEREK  
Of course you will - you're a brave girl.

Julia kisses Amanda and then walks to the desk.

JULIA  
I'm ready.

DESK NURSE  
Okay, follow me.

The Desk Nurse leads Julia into the holding area, to a body covered by a sheet. Derek follows.

DESK NURSE (CON'T)

He- You know the condition of the body  
right?

JULIA

Yes.

The nurse pulls off the sheet, uncovering his head. It is  
badly burned and lacerated.

Julia breaks down and sobs.

INT. - JULIA'S HOME - MORNING

Amanda comes into kitchen in pajamas. Julia prepares a bowl  
of cereal. Derek is sitting at the table.

JULIA

Morning baby. What do you want for  
breakfast?

AMANDA

Cereal.

DEREK

Give her Lucky Charms - I know it's  
mid-week, but she deserves it.

Julia looks at cereal, contemplates. Passes over the no-  
name flakes cereal and pours a bowl of Lucky Charms and  
adds the milk.

DEREK (CON'T)

Atta girl.

Julia brings the bowl over and sets it in front of Amanda.

AMANDA

Don't call me baby.

Julia is taken aback for a moment.

AMANDA (CON'T)

You called me baby until I was in grade  
one. Now all of a sudden when dad dies  
you're calling me baby again.

JULIA

Sorry b- Amanda. No more 'baby' you got  
it.

AMANDA

When is grandpa getting here?

JULIA

He'll get here tomorrow. He took the first flight he could. He said he would bring you a gift from Disneyworld. Maybe he'll bring you Hercules. Isn't that the last one you need?

AMANDA

For the title characters. But then I need all the secondary characters.

JULIA

Oh. You're going to collect all those too.. that sounds fun.

Julia continues preparing food. Suddenly Amanda pushes her bowl of cereal onto the floor. She's in tears.

JULIA

(compassion)

Oh baby.

Julia embraces her.

AMANDA

(crying)

I don't want Hercules. I just want daddy back.

Derek is overcome with emotion and bends down as close to Amanda as he can.

DEREK

It's okay baby. I've made things better now. It's gonna be different. You're gonna make it. When you realize that you're not hurting any more from the nasty gene.. You'll feel so happy.. that it's never coming back.. that you'll live a normal life. I did that for you. I love you.

JULIA

It's okay. You just cry.

Amanda keeps crying, moaning. Derek has to leave.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Derek walks down a busy sidewalk. People going about their day as usual, but Derek spots several excited conversations where people are amazed and happy. People everywhere are in shock. Some are worried, but most are excited.

Derek smiles.

Derek passes people who are rubbing or pointing to parts of their bodies to show where their pain has left.

Derek drinks it in.

Then suddenly, A SCREAMING MOTHER, standing beside her toddler in a stroller. Blood all over his face, hands and clothing, but not crying.

MOM

(beside herself)

Someone help me, someone please help!  
My son, something's happened to him!

PASSERBY 1

What happened?

MOM

I don't know. I was just walking him in the stroller, and someone told me he was bleeding. What's going on?

PASSERBY 2

I'm a nurse, can I examine your child?

MOM

Yes, please, help.

Passerby 2 examines child's mouth and then his hands. The child has his right thumb tucked under his fingers. The nurse gently opens his hand and sees the child has BITTEN THROUGH HIS THUMB, RIGHT TO THE BONE.

As soon as the mother sees the deep wound, she screams. The baby starts to cry. The small gathered crowd reacts with gasps.

PASSERBY 2

Has this happened before?

MOM

No never.

PASSERBY 2

This child can't feel pain. He's bitten through his thumb.

MOM

(sobbing)

What? Why?

Suddenly a car veers to the side and clips a pedestrian violently, and screeches to a stop. People scream. The hit victim is thrown forward and onto the ground. Driver gets out of his car.

DRIVER

(afraid)

Oh sh- I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.  
Please be okay.

Passerby 4 and a couple of others, rush to the hit victim. Passerby 4 bends down to attend to him.

PASSERBY 4

Are you okay?

The hit victim feels himself, but doesn't feel anything wrong.

HIT VICTIM

I think so.

The hit victim tries to stand up.

DRIVER

(very sorry)

Oh, I'm so sorry man.

PASSERBY 4

Easy there. I think you should stay where you are.

Man ignores this and turns his attention to the driver.

HIT VICTIM

You gonna get your ass beaten now bro.  
Why aren't you watching where you're going?

The hit victim approaches driver. The driver backs away.

DRIVER

(afraid)

Hey take it easy. You don't want to do this.

HIT VICTIM

(angry)

Oh I don't want to do this? Really?

He speeds up and takes a swing, which the driver dodges, rushing around to the opposite side of the car. The hit victim spins from the force of his swing, and leans on the side of the car. HE COUGHS A LARGE SPRAY OF BLOOD ALL OVER THE CAR WINDOW. People gasp.

PASSERBY 4

Hey buddy you're not alright.

HIT VICTIM

(dazed)

I feel fine.

The hit victim coughs again, spewing more blood. Clearly suffering from internal injuries. He stumbles, then falls, just out of the grasp of Passerby 4. More gasps and people bending down to help.

Derek backs away from the scene. He glances again at the mother of the injured child. She is still beside herself. People trying to calm and console her. Derek leaves.

DEREK

Come on. Figure it out people. Figure it out and just be careful. This can't... No, there will always be freak accidents. It's unfortunate but completely normal.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Chaos. Men in hazmat suits are erecting a plastic barrier around the doors of the hospital. Derek follows one of them into the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL FOYER - DAY

People are screaming. Security guards in gas masks are holding them back from leaving.

## HOSPITAL PATRON 1

They're saying it's an airborne virus that affects the nervous system. You lose sense of pain - like leprosy. (listens) I don't know. I don't know if it's deadly. Nobody is saying anything else (sobs) I'm sorry baby, I can't leave. I'm so sorry.

A screaming, blood-soaked mother follows a team of paramedics pushing an adolescent boy on a gurney through to the emergency area. A doctor comes rushing out to check the boy's vitals. The boy is bleeding from the head and neck.

## DOCTOR 3

What happened?

## PARAMEDIC 1

Blunt force trauma to head and neck. He's lost a lot of blood. Likely arterial bleeding.

## BLOOD-SOAKED MOTHER

(beside herself)

He wouldn't stop. They wouldn't stop fighting. He was getting hurt, they both were, but he just kept going. Why? Why did this happen? Oh Riley, Riley!

They exit into the operating room. Derek is concerned.

INT. NEWS DESK - EVENING - 1 WEEK LATER

Super: "1 Week Later"

## NEWS ANNOUNCER 1

It's now been a week since the viral outbreak that has left thousands, perhaps millions without the ability to feel pain. Health officials are still advising people to perform a simple self-assessment, a pinch test to gauge how many people are affected, but the news from major cities around the world is very sobering as it appears this virus has simultaneously struck every major city in the world. There are still no answers as to where it came from or what can be done to stop it. To

those who are affected, the message is still very clear - cover your skin, avoid strenuous activity, and stay indoors if possible. Perform self-checks regularly for cuts or other injuries. Treat this condition with the utmost care and attention. Although this virus does not appear to cause death directly, fatalities are being reported in increasing numbers from accidental injuries that are not immediately noticed and yet deadly.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

People walking on the street, cautious tone all around. A police car drives slowly down the street. A police officer in the passenger seat speaks on a megaphone out the window.

POLICE OFFICER

Please take time to perform a simple pinch test to see if you are affected by the virus. If you are affected, go to your home and stay there. Contact the health line and you will be given further instructions.

A teenage boy with ear buds in skateboards past the car.

POLICE OFFICER (CON'T)

Hey! What are you doing? Have you been tested?

The boy ignores him. He skates smoothly, carving around pedestrians, jumping curbs. He rail-slides a hand rail down some steps, lands it. He takes a few more hard strides on his board, right before an oncoming cyclist dodges an errant child, CUTTING RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE SKATEBOARDER.

The skateboarder has to bail sideways, onto some stacked up construction material for nearby building project - metal pails, wood planks, rebar, concrete blocks. His momentum carries him, battered, over and through the material.

BYSTANDER

Are you okay?

The skateboarder gets up immediately, feels himself and is somewhat surprised that he came out unscathed. He trots off to pick up his board, and continues on his way.

BYSTANDER 2

Hey, don't you know there's a virus  
going around? You could be hurt!

Derek walks by and watches with interest, as the skater  
skates off ahead of him. Derek looks at the people around  
him. Most are somber as they walk and talk with each other.  
Some are wearing masks. Some children are wearing helmets.

BYSTANDER 3

Hey! What do you think you're doing  
still riding a bike?

A bystander who is taking issue with a different cyclist.  
No injury has happened - they are arguing whether the  
cyclist should be out on his bike because of the safety  
issue. The shouting escalates.

CYCLIST 2

I ride safely!

BYSTANDER 3

You're going too fast!

CYCLIST 2

I know how to ride my bike!

BYSTANDER 3

You can't control everything!

Derek takes it all in as he continues walking.

He turns a corner, to see the skater on the ground, an  
ever-expanding pool of blood coming from under his arm,  
close to his chest. People are quickly gathering around  
him. Some yell "Call 911", "Is he breathing?".

One man kneels down to inspect the wound - blood exits a  
deep wound in his upper arm. Another man sits beside him,  
checking his own body for injury.

TACKLER

I had to tackle him - he didn't see he  
was bleeding. I think he's unconscious.

BYSTANDER 4

That was stupid man. You've got to look  
out for your own safety.

Suddenly the skater WAKES UP AND SCREAMS. People recoil.  
The skater jumps up and runs away, blood trailing behind

him. People yell "Stop him", "Hey, you're injured".

He gets a few dozen feet and loses energy, and runs into someone and they both fall. More screaming as new people see his injury. Derek is horrified.

BYSTANDER 5

(yelling)

What's going on?! What's happening to all of us!? Are we all going to die?! What are we going to do?!

DEREK

(yelling)

Just be careful, okay! Just take precautions, that's all! Come on people! Pull it together. (calms himself) It's okay Derek. It's okay. It'll level out. It's a cold front meeting a warm front - it'll level out. And people will get it. There will be some casualties, but on the whole, it will be for the best. It will get to the point of perfection.

EXT. JULIA'S HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

A group of 15 or so adults and children are celebrating Amanda's birthday. The children wear party hats. Julia stands next to Amanda holding a birthday cake with 12 candles, which are not lit. They are just finishing singing Happy Birthday. A swing set with the swings/chains removed is in the yard. Derek sits in the treehouse, silently observing.

GROUP

...Happy Birthday to you !

Amanda pretends to blow out the candles. Everyone claps. Julia cuts the cake as adults chat and some kids jump on the spot, and some line up for cake. Three friends congregate around Julia.

FRIEND 1

How have you guys been doing?

JULIA

Good. Really good.

FRIEND 1

Are you getting any help?

JULIA

No, not really.

FRIEND 2

How has Amanda been doing? Have there been any attacks lately?

JULIA

No.. Not for a long time..

FRIEND 1

How long has it been?

JULIA

I'm not sure. Since before Derek...

FRIEND 2

Does she have-?

JULIA

That's what they think.

The group is silent for a moment.

FRIEND 1

Well at least that's one good thing to come out of all this.

FRIEND 2

If only Derek could be here to see her without pain.

FRIEND 1

Oh, he would be so happy to see her, wouldn't he?

JULIA

Yeah. He would.

FRIEND 3

(bluntly)

We all have it.

FRIEND 1

What?

FRIEND 2

What are you talking about?

FRIEND 3

They say we all have it. The last I heard. Every single person they test, 100% of people, have it. It's worldwide and it's everybody. It's probably not even a virus.. it's that friggin' Monsanto.. or something else.

FRIEND 1

But the pinch test. Some of us - we didn't-

FRIEND 3

Do it again Lisa. They're saying anyone who didn't get a positive result probably didn't do the test strong enough.

FRIEND 2

When's the last time you tried? You better do it again.

FRIEND 1

But I'm fine. I feel fine. I haven't had any injuries.

FRIEND 3

Do it again.

Friend 3 reaches for her arm, Friend 1 pulls back fast, not wanting anyone to touch her. She pinches her arm, but gently.

FRIEND 1

There's full feeling.

FRIEND 3

That's not hard enough.

Friend 3 lunges in and pinches hard, holding it as long as she can as Friend 1 pulls hard away, protecting her arm.

FRIEND 1

Leave me alone!

JULIA

(at Friend 3)

Denise!

Friend 1 looks at her arm. It's bleeding where Friend 3

pinched her. She has sharp nails and used them.

FRIEND 1

(crying)

No. Why is this happening? Why?

Derek is at a loss. He tears up.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teens dancing. Drinking. Loud music. Colorful lights. People laughing and smiling. Others dancing, caught up in the groove.

Taking group selfies. Taking silly selfies. People laughing loud.

Someone trying to walk but stumbling over furniture spilling drink. People laugh, some are concerned and help him up. He stands up clumsily and does a self check and gives the thumbs up that he's ok.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

People laughing in hallway beside bulletin board. One of them has removed a dozen thumbtacks and stuck them in a row up the side of his arm from his elbow to his shoulder. He flexes dramatically, without pain.

By the bottles of hard liquor, someone takes a big swig, puts their lighter in front of their mouth and blows a jet of fire into the air, causing curtains to catch fire. Laughter - one person spits their drink into the face of another person just as someone pulls the curtains down on top of him, lighting his face into flames. Some exclaim in worry, but the burning person is too drunk to stop laughing, he plays it up, letting his face burn.

The man with the burning face pretends to be a monster, scaring others at the party. Each time he scares someone, some gasp in horror, some erupt in laughter.

EXT. STREET CORNER - AFTERNOON

SUPER: "Six Months Later"

A woman pushing a shopping cart wearing full hockey gear and large boots. Other pedestrians are all wearing thick clothing, pads, or improvised armor of some sort - garbage can lids, bent sheet metal, hard plastic or rubber pieces, etc.

The street is almost totally devoid of traffic. A lone car drives slowly (around 10 mph) on a main thoroughfare. People give it a wide berth - leaving the sidewalk entirely as it comes near. Some stop and watch it pass, some run away out of fear, even though there is no immediate danger.

The shopping cart lady, enters the grocery store. Others in their padded attire are shopping for food, filling their baskets, or pushing their carts.

As she rolls past a man picking up a large frozen turkey from the freezer, another man reaches in to grab a small item next to the turkey's, the turkey slips from his hands and lands on the other shopper's foot.

SHOPPER 1

Oh sh-!

He pulls his foot away, too late, looks down, and then immediately back up at the man - not in pain, just angry over what is likely broken toes.

SHOPPER 2

(irate)

Hey! Are you kidding me?!

SHOPPER 1

I'm so sorry.

Shopper 2 lets his anger take over and pushes the man as hard as he can, down the aisle. Shopper 1 flies back and lands on the floor, his head, clad in a bicycle helmet, slams against the base of a shelf. A worried look spread across his face.

The other patrons in that aisle are taken aback - they gasp, and stand back. Some run away entirely. One immediately takes out his phone and dials 911. Shopper 2 immediately regrets the decision.

SHOPPER 2

(afraid)

Oh no. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Shopper 2 hurries over to help Shopper 1.

SHOPPER 1

(loud)

Stay back!

Shopper 2 stops, highly concerned. Shopper 1 stays down and performs a slow self check.

SHOPPER 2

(afraid)

He started it - it was equal blame.

SHOPPER 3

Hey, nice try, we saw it all.

SHOPPER 4

(on phone)

I'd like to report an attack - an attempted murder.

SHOPPER 2

(at Shopper 1)

Oh please. Oh please sir, don't press charges. I can't- Please, I'm so sorry.

SHOPPER 1

Screw you.

Minutes later the police arrive in their heavier armour and all the shoppers watch as they haul a dejected Shopper 2 into the paddy wagon.

PADDED COP

Let's go.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Garbage from months of inactivity is strewn across the field.

EXT. MAJOR STREET - DAY

Street without cars. No people in sight.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

No kids in sight.

Super: "1 year later"

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

A lone news anchor in a dimly lit studio.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Today marks a year since the first cases of Nerve Condition Omega were

discovered. I wish I could tell you that in a year, something in the way of substantial progress or understanding has taken place, but I cannot. Even after a year, scientists have no more clear an understanding of this worldwide condition than the day it began. The world, changed beyond recognition. Fear of injury has taken the position of primary concern in collective humanity. Vehicle travel - cut down to a minimum. Outdoor activities are nearly a thing of the past. Sports - all but a memory. Life as it has been for hundreds of years, is no longer, and there are no signs of things returning to how it used to be.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE - DAY

A man yells, as if to a crowd, but there are only a handful of people who are walking slowly. One stands still, listening to him. The rest walk slowly by, going about their business ignoring him.

CRIER

This is punishment! This is punishment!  
 Look at humanity's record. What a  
 friggin' shit show. Racism. Genocide.  
 Hoarding wealth. Oppressing the  
 defenseless. Killing babies in the womb  
 - I mean, if the powers that be cared  
 about any of that - holy shit!

Derek walks by, glancing at Crier.

He walks down the sidewalk, slowly, introspective concern on his face. He turns a corner.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Derek sees the coffee shop, and stands still. He thinks for a moment, and then continues towards it. Walks through the door.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Inside, the world has not changed - it's just like it was during their initial conversation. Derek takes it in for a moment, then sits down at the same table as before. God is

there, waiting.

GOD

Hello.

God pushes a drink, already ordered, towards Derek, but he ignores it.

DEREK

No. No. See this is what you do - you let people who are ill-equipped make all sorts of decisions that affect people, that kill people, and do nothing to stand in their way. If you made these real people.. you're more despicable than I thought before.

GOD

You claimed you could help them.

DEREK

(angry)

So people suffer for my mistake? I wasn't qualified to-

A thought he can't finish.

GOD

(matter-of-factly)

I gave the power to you. This was the deal. You said you can do it better. You save them.

DEREK

What does that even mean? All I know is that people have already died, so no matter what I do, it's not really fair for them.. Save them? I mean- you didn't even do it. Even the good people-

GOD

(ever calm)

You expect a better life for society, just as I do. A society has built in limitations, but even so, you suggested you could make it happen. If you want to talk about 7 billion individual universes populated by one person each, that's another thing entirely. Do you

have another change?

DEREK

You bet I do. See, I know I'm not qualified to do this - make decisions that are this important. I get that. But I know - I know - I can still do better than you. Life can be so good. So sweet. And then - all the shit gets in the way. All the pain and destruction - I haven't forgotten. I've had a year to think about this. One change at a time? Another sick game- Whatever - I don't care. I'm gonna show you exactly how you have failed.

GOD

(calmly)

Do you realize how much damage you do when you claim to be able to understand me, or say what I could do better, without really knowing what you're talking about?

DEREK

(incredulous)

I'm hurting you? I thought you were omnipotent.

GOD

I didn't mean damage to me.

Silent. Thinks.

DEREK

I can only conclude that you're evil. You're an evil god who has grossly mishandled humanity (pause) No harm! No damage to the human body - ever. That's one change - and it means no one can get injured and no one can die. I get that it bends the laws of physics and biology - I'll leave it up to you how you want to deal with that, but it's one change: No physical harm allowed to any person. (pause) That's me - one human - improving on one scandalously inept, or evil, god.

GOD  
 (unfazed, positive)  
 Okay. So it shall be.

DEREK  
 I get that this is what your "heaven"  
 is, but you asked me if I could do  
 earth better, and I'm going to do what  
 you should have done from the start..  
 if you actually cared for people. I  
 mean it's some kind of cosmic torture  
 to allow harm until some future point  
 where it goes away. It's psychopathic.

GOD gets up to walk out.

GOD  
 (smiling, calmly)  
 See you in a year.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Streets are empty. A cat runs across the street.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

A man speeds down a curving street. He is emotional - lost everything he had to live for. He takes a swig from a bottle within a paper bag. He drifts around a corner and recovers. He presses down on the gas.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A deer ambles onto the street from a wooded park.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The man rounds another corner, and the deer is right in front of him. He veers to miss it but slams into a thick tree trunk, sending him flying through the windshield, full-force against the thick trunk, while the vehicle wraps itself around the tree, cracking the trunk where he made contact. The top part of the tree falls down, while the man lays still on the hood of the vehicle. Silence. He Blinks.

DRINKING DRIVER  
 (thoughtful, clear)  
 Shit. (pause) Cracked ribs. Severe  
 lacerations. Bleeding out. Good night.

He lies on his stomach, staring to the side. He gazes at

the stars in the night sky, waiting to die. He clears his throat and scratches his head. He doesn't perceive any damage. He feels his chest and arms, nothing in pain, nothing bleeding.

DRINKING DRIVER

Huh! Just let your body go limp..

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A lady in a hospital gown and hooked to a rolling IV, walks down the hallway to the nurse's desk.

STATION NURSE

Hi Tina, can I help you?

HEALED PATIENT

I'm not sure. I think something's wrong  
- I had a skin infection - there were  
sores - they're gone.

The nurse looks at her with confusion and disbelief.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A wife crying in the kitchen, bent over the sink. She sobs hard, but nearly silently. Then she grits her teeth and slams her fists on the counter, still through tears.

HUSBAND (OS)

Hun, you coming to bed?

Wife reaches into the back of an open kitchen drawer and pulls out a hand gun.

Husband walks into the room, shirtless, pajama bottoms.

HUSBAND

Hey, how-

Wife lifts the gun and FIRES INTO HUSBAND'S CHEST. He stumbles back and rests against the dining room table. The bullet has flattened into a disc on his chest, like it hit a bullet-proof vest, but this goes unnoticed.

He looks at his wife with confusion, then anger. He clenches his fists, full of adrenaline, and stands up straight. Wife, crying, fires twice more center mass. This time he doesn't fall backward - he keeps his gaze locked on his wife.

But something's not right, he feels his chest and his hand passes over one of the bullets and it falls off and clinks onto the hardwood floor. They both look at it. The husband feels the next bullet and it falls too, then the last, same thing.

HUSBAND

What's going on?

WIFE

(not missing a  
beat)

I'm so confused right now.

HUSBAND

I think.. I'm an X-man (confused) How did you know?

INT. NEWSROOM - MORNING

NEWS ANCHOR

Reports are coming in from hospitals around the city and the state that the phage has mutated and taken a huge turn in its profile. Doctors are reporting hundreds if not thousands of patients have suddenly been completely healed. Apparently this occurred for those with injuries and those with sickness. Some of the injuries that were healed were minor cuts and others were life-threatening conditions. At this time, it is not known what has caused this change, and doctors are unable to say how dangerous this mutation may be.

INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Half a dozen black men in suits and bling, and their girlfriend are having a chill party with music, some drinks, and playing pool. Room has a couch, tv, pool table, stereo, bar counter, pillow corner.

Girlfriend 3, is louder than the rest - often laughing in an obnoxious way and saying loud things throughout the scene (Things like "Oh, you know it, girl! Girl you know it!" "You Crazy! You crazy! You crazy!" "I was like, you did not just say that to me. No way! Nah uh.").

One of the couples, BOYFRIEND and GIRLFRIEND, are watching

news in the tv, and hear the news about "the mutation".

TV REPORTER

Officials are at a loss to explain how  
the whole population could have been  
experienced this mutation so rapidly.

The couple looks at each other. Boyfriend grabs a steak  
knife from an empty eaten-from plate on the coffee table  
and presses it against the side of his hand, and SLASHES  
HARD - BUT THERE IS NO CUT. Girlfriend's eyes get wide.

Boyfriend pulls out his handgun from a chest holster under  
his jacket. He pushes it against the center of his palm. He  
makes sure there is no one in the path of the bullet should  
it go through.

GIRLFRIEND

No. No! don't do it.

He pulls the trigger. The whole room ducks. The other guys  
pull out their guns and try to pick out the danger.

BOYFRIEND 2

What the-

BOYFRIEND 3

Bro! What's going on?

People ignore Girlfriend 3. Boyfriend looks like he's  
writhing on the floor, in pain. They all look at  
Girlfriend.

BOYFRIEND 2

C-low!

GIRLFRIEND 3

Oh no! What happened? Was this a hit?  
Are we compromised?

They all rush over to Boyfriend. He continues to writhe,  
but then turns over and it is revealed that he is laughing.  
He holds his hand up, it is unharmed. The flattened bullet  
falls from his hand.

BOYFRIEND

J-dog, J-dog, hand me a pool ball.

Boyfriend 2 is hesitant.

BOYFRIEND

Come on, come on, it's cool.

Boyfriend 2 hands him a ball from the table.

As soon as Boyfriend has it he THROWS IT FULL FORCE AT BOYFRIEND 3. Everyone gasps. Girlfriend 3 screams annoyingly. Boyfriend 3 is shocked but can't react in time, the ball bounces off his face, leaving Boyfriend 3 unhurt.

BOYFRIEND 3

Shit man!

He pulls his gun out and FIRES A ROUND INTO BOYFRIEND'S CHEST. Everyone screams. Boyfriend turns, absorbing the shot. Everything is quiet. He slowly straightens up. He takes off his hoodie and shirt. The bullet is flattened onto his chest. He pulls it off and holds it up and nods his head.

BOYFRIEND

Dat's right.

BOYFRIEND 2

Damn bro! You Wolverine!

BOYFRIEND

Bro, we all wolverine. Newsman said the virus mutated and everyone has it.

He pulls out his gun and shoots Boyfriend 3 in the neck. Everyone yells "Ooooooh". Girlfriend 3 screams annoyingly again. Boyfriend 3 is shocked but unharmed and soon chuckles. He pulls off the bullet.

GIRLFRIEND 3

Oh Baby, baby, we gotta call the ambulance. Someone call the ambulance.

BOYFRIEND 3

Oh shut up for once.

He shoots Girlfriend 3 in the leg.

She gasps and holds up a wagging finger, about to give him an earful.

EXT. ARMY BASE - MIDDLE EAST DESERT - DAWN

An army MAJOR and CAPTAIN stand in front of a mobile command station, looking at an outdoor map on a table.

LIEUTENANT sits at a communication station in the command unit, listening to a radio communique through a GPS handset.

CAPTAIN

The unit is surgical. No problem there.

MAJOR

Still doesn't change the fact that it's an orphanage. The latest intel says it was still housing children as recently as three days ago.

LIEUTENANT

Major, communication from Command.

Major steps away from the map and to the Lieutenant, who hands the handset to the Major.

MAJOR

It's Greenway.

He listens to the update.

MAJOR

How much of the population is affected?

Listens.

MAJOR

Is there any other information about this?

Listens.

MAJOR

I understand. Greenway out.

He puts down the phone on the table and then takes a deep breath.

MAJOR

(to CAPTAIN)

Ready the unit, we push in now.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A line of ten soldiers walk side by side, towards a two-story concrete building with a stone wall around it. They are visible, but walking with readiness and purpose.

Suddenly A SHOT RINGS OUT from a window in the stone building and one of the soldiers drops. The soldiers all kneel and open fire on the open windows of the building.

Fire continues as a medic soldier scrambles to the fallen soldier and closely inspects the bullet hole on his waist. There is a hole in the uniform but there is no damage to his body. He gives him a pat and a thumbs up.

The medic looks over to the captain, who is watching to assess - the medic nods at him. The Captain signals the troops forward. They rise and walk forward, still firing.

The occupants of the building see this and some rush out to take positions at the wall. They open fire so all are firing. Several bodies are hit on both sides, falling when hit. When the US soldiers drop, they rise shortly after and continue firing.

The soldiers who reach the wall first, pull pins on grenades and toss them over, while another soldier fires at the lock on the metal gate, bursting it open. Brief interruption in enemy fire. The US soldiers toss a flashbang through the open gate - pop - and then enter, while cover fire on the windows is provided.

The first to enter are cut down with several shots. More enter and open fire on the now exposed enemy soldiers, dropping them. Both sides rush close-in to each other and fire at close range - enemy-side of the close-in encounters fall when hit and drop their weapons, while US soldiers are mostly protected by body armor. Some close-in combatants add a melee hit with their rifle. When the US soldiers stay up, they hover above their fallen enemy and fire more rounds into their chest, neck and face - these enemies scream as they eat bullets.

The bullets stop flying as the shot enemies think they are dead... yet they are still breathing. Flattened bullets, slide off an enemy face as he moves. He fires another bullet at his forehead and it falls off the same way. The soldier sees this, drops his gun, and falls on his knees beside the enemy, both breathing hard, the US soldier puts his head in his hands.

The rest of the soldiers look around at the situation - none of the shot victims are harmed - everyone stares in confused shock. After a few moments to take it in, they look at each other, and then lower their weapons. One takes

off his helmet and drops it on the ground. He drops to his needs.

An enemy soldier hears the lull in fire and peeks out of a window. Unnoticed, he fires his rifle into the face of the soldier without a helmet. Direct hit but the bullet bounces off his skin.

The US soldier raises his hands as if to say, 'why bother'. He pulls his side arm and points it at his own head. The enemy soldier watches wide-eyed. At the last moment, he points the weapon at the enemy in the window and fires, hitting him between the eyes. The bullet flattens and falls. Disbelief.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

A couple on the ferris wheel, holding hands. They look out over the carnival. He looks into his girl's eyes. They kiss. They near the pinnacle of the wheel's height.

FERRIS RIDER MAN

Ready?

FERRIS RIDER WOMAN

Yeah.

FERRIS RIDER MAN

We got nothing to worry about. You know that right?

FERRIS RIDER WOMAN

Yeah, I know.

FERRIS RIDER MAN

Okay, here we go.

They reach the peak. They clasp hands.

FERRIS RIDER MAN (CON'T)

Three, two, one-

THEY LEAP OFF. They scream, falling to earth. At full falling speed, they hit the pavement, making large indents. Two friends, middle-aged, scream, all others look on and smile, unfazed.

The two jumpers get up on their feet, stumbling, laughing. They embrace and kiss again, and keep walking. Almost immediately ANOTHER COUPLE COMES CRASHING DOWN BEHIND THEM, in the same way. The same middle-aged couple, too busy

consoling themselves, to see the result of the first fall, see the new jumpers hit the ground and scream again.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - FRONT WINDOW - MORNING

A rough looking middle aged white man runs up to the storefront window from outside and throws a brick through, shattering it to pieces. Alarms ring, he goes inside and grabs about a dozen video games, but slowly, selectively.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

A cop arrives and draws his gun. He looks at it and puts it back in the holster and, unsure what to do, looks around at his police SUV, complete with winch.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - CONTINUOUS

Thief continues to pick out games.

COP(OS)

Hey! Get outta there.

THIEF

Screw you!

COP (OS)

Hey, man. You gotta ask yourself - what kind of world you want to live in.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - CONTINUOUS

The thief exits through the window with an armful of games.

THIEF

I've got it. (insinuating the games)

COP

You know we gotta keep the law going.

THIEF

Why? There's nothing you can do to hurt me. Therefore - I do what I want. Simple.

The cop walks up to the thief, slowly, grasping his club in his left hand, his right hand subtly held behind his back, unseen.

COP

I could bring you in.

THIEF

You could try, but then we fight, we just tire ourselves out, and both go home at the end of the day. Why don't we just save ourselves the hassle?

COP stops within arm's reach of Thief, who is keen and prepared for anything.

THIEF (CON'T)

Why are you hiding your hand, you can't shoot me. I know, I've tried it - bullets bounce right off.

COP hangs his head dejectedly - and then IN A FLASH, SWINGS HIS RIGHT HAND AROUND CUFFING THE PERP. The other cuff is cuffed securely to the loop at the end of the winch cable, which COP has been pulling behind him unnoticed. He lifts his head and smiles.

COP

I'm taking you in. Now, you gonna get into the vehicle?

THIEF

Screw you.

COP

(smiles)

Good.

Cop walks over to his cruiser, gets in, and drives off. Thief is dragged from his feet, goes a'flying, and has no choice but to be dragged along. He slides around corners, tumbling and slamming into various items on the sides of the street.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIKING TRAIL - DAY

A group of four friends hike along a mountain trail. They reach the top of the mountain. There is a high cliff that drops off at the top. They walk to the edge. They are wearing no backpacks of any sort. Just shorts and t-shirts and running shoes.

HIKE JUMPER

Everyone remember to pack their chute?

HIKE JUMPER 2

Check.

HIKE JUMPER 3  
 Harness check.

HIKE JUMPER 4  
 Check.

HIKE JUMPER 1  
 Ready?

HIKE JUMPER 2/3/4  
 (together)  
 Ready!

They jump.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF - FALLING - DAY

The four hike jumpers scream in joy as they freefall. One of them clips a jagged outcropping and the force of contact causes him to spin furiously. He yells in joy.

EXT. CYCLING TRAIL - DAY

Two mountain bikers riding a dirt trail. It takes a steep down turn, with several challenging corners, which they take in stride, both being very skilled.

Then A LOOSE ROCK on the trail causes BIKE RIDER 1 to veer to the side and clip a branch, which snaps as he flips off the side of the trail, smashing against a large rock face, bike flying. He drops hard to the ground, his bike tumbling down a few meters away.

Bike rider 2 rides up to Bike Rider 1 and stops, unworried.

BIKE RIDER 2  
 Woo! Epic bail! That's a ten, bro!

Bike Rider 1 chuckles, gets up and dusts himself off, and walks to his bike. He inspects it: one peddle is broken and hangs off the bike, limply. The handle bars are bent, brake cable is snapped.

BIKE RIDER 1  
 Uh oh.

He squats down to look closer. He's concerned.

BIKE RIDER 1 (CON'T)  
 Dude. I think we gotta be more careful after all.

Bike Rider 2 pauses to take a closer look.

BIKE RIDER 2

Totally Fixable. We just need a few parts.

BIKE RIDER 1

I was just thinking though.. What happens when there are no more parts?

BIKE RIDER 2

Dude. If North Cycle runs out, I totally know how to order from Amazon.

BIKE RIDER 1

What if Amazon goes away?

BIKE RIDER 2

Why would Amazon go away?

BIKE RIDER 1

Didn't we totally blow off work to go riding today? Don't you think other people are going to get the same idea? I mean nobody needs to make money anymore.. There are parts now. But for how long?

BIKE RIDER 2

Oh shit... (thinks some more) Oh shit.

EXT. URBAN STREET - DAY

A truck flies down a downtown street. A few pedestrians on the sidewalk. People are in the back holding up bottles of hard liquor, cheering, taking swigs, driver too.

The truck veers around a corner, too fast. It fishtails and leaves the street SMASHING INTO A MOTHER PUSHING HER BABY IN A STROLLER, sandwiching them into the brick wall of a building.

The inhabitants of the truck fly everywhere. The driver crashes through the windshield but only halfway. The brick wall is indented around the mother's body, the stroller is crushed, they are pinned but fine.

STROLLER MOM

Oh, that's just great. Just great!

The driver gives his head a shake, and brushes broken glass

from his hair.

STROLLER MON (CON'T)

Now you've done it, scumbag! Look what you've done to my stroller! Are you going to fix this? Or get me a new one? Where's that going to come from huh?

The driver pulls himself back into the driver's seat. He starts the truck and backs up, freeing the mother. She pulls herself out of the wall and then pulls the stroller out.

She pulls apart cracked plastic and bent metal to get into the stroller, finally pulling out her infant son, who is unharmed and calm.

STROLLER MOM

Come on Luther. Aren't you tough? A little spill can't hurt you - no, it can't. Let's go. We gotta go see if Walmart has anymore strollers to loot.

The party truck driver searches the floor of the truck for a bottle, which he finds, lying on its side but still half full. He picks it up and holds it up out the window.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

Mount up boys!

The other passengers, who have been getting up and brushing themselves off, saunter over to the truck and pour themselves into the box. He watches them enter, then takes a swig from a bottle. But the Bottle is swiped from his hand by Stroller Mom.

STROLLER MOM

You can't get drunk anymore. You know that right?

He gives her a glare as if to say 'I know'. He revs the engine, loud.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

(yells)

Ready boys! Wooo!

He throws it into forward gear, but the truck is too damaged, moving painfully slow. Stroller Mom watches him leave, has time to wave in his view, awkward.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

Aww come on!

He continues driving at the slow pace.

BOX PASSENGER

(sarcastic)

Wooooo! Yeah!

EXT. MECHANICS GARAGE - DAY

Party Truck Driver pulls into the garage parking lot and parks. He gets out and walks into the front office. No one is there. He rings the bell. No answer.

He hears some clanking inside the garage. He walks into the garage from the interior door which is unlocked. He sees a man walking a motorbike past some tool boxes heading out the rear bay door.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

Hey!

Ignored.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

(serious)

Hey my truck is messed up. I think it might be the engine.. `er something.

MECHANIC

(not looking up)

Sorry, I just went out of business.  
Feel free to use the tools.

PARTY TRUCK DRIVER

Hey man, I'll trade you something,  
booze. Please. Do a guy a favour.

Mechanic ignores him. He gets outside and hops on his bike, fires it up, and takes off.

Party Truck Driver is deflated. He walks over to an air ratchet, picks it up, studies it. He moves it how he thinks it should be used, but awkwardly. He gives up and throws it down.

INT. FACTORY - ASSEMBLY LINE - DAY

A row of seven workers are assembling components. One, PRESS WORKER, works at a large hydraulic press device that

is stamping down on metal plates with great force. The operator maneuvers the plate under the press using a marked guide on the wide base surface.

Other workers are using other machinery, drills, welders, etc. to work with metal components. All are working fastidiously, efficiently, emotionless, like robots.

The PRESS WORKER becomes more and more focused on the press, taking long glances at it as he works. He puts a metal plate under the punch and it receives the full force of the pneumatic action, producing a molded plate.

He picks up the molding and stacks it on a stack of others just like it. He picks up the next plate from a stack of those and resets it for the next press. He eyes the punch again, watching it exerting its great force.

His SUPERVISOR looks over and notes his lack of concentration. Supervisor walks towards Press Worker just as Press Worker slowly moves his hand under the punch.

SUPERVISOR  
(shocked)

Hey!

Press Worker hits the foot peddle, causing the punch to SLAM DOWN ONTO HIS HAND, but as soon as it makes contact it stops suddenly and a piston cylinder on the punch cracks open, LOUDLY.

The other workers recoil and stop their tasks, concerned. A couple get up to look at the drama.

SUPERVISOR  
Smithy, you ass! Dammit. What are  
thinking?

SMITHY  
I... I... sorry, I-

The Supervisor grabs his hand and looks at it. Sees what he expects - no damage. He throws the hand down and touches the punch, assessing the damage.

SUPERVISOR  
Oh this is toast. We can't afford this  
slow down. You've put us behind Smithy.

SMITHY

I - know - I'm not myself.

SUPERVISOR

Yeah, well. Get used to it. We've all got to get used to it. It's the only way we're gonna keep this ship afloat.

SMITHY

I think I.. need to take a break, er-

SUPERVISOR

A break? Look, I'd be firing you right now if I could, but I can't spare anybody for any amount of time.

SMITHY

Peter. I think.. I'm done.

Smithy gets up and walks out. Supervisor can't believe it.

SUPERVISOR

What are you going to do? There's no work out there and you ain't coming back here, I can tell you that!

SMITHY

I don't need to work. I don't need to eat. I mean everything works like normal if I do eat. But I've gone a week without food already just to test it out, and I haven't noticed any problems. If I don't need to eat, I'm not- I can't keep doing this- sorry.

He turns and leaves. Supervisor is speechless, watches as Smithy walks out.

INT. NEWSROOM - EVENING

Standard evening news broadcast. A Picture window with a virus image pops above the news anchor's shoulder. As he speaks, corresponding images are shown in the window.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Effects of the phage mutation are now being seen in the worldwide economy. Industries around the world continued their decline due to mass employee job abandonment. Oil production has now

dropped to 18% of expected amounts. Manufacturing, agriculture, and auto sectors have all reported nearly the same losses - losses that analysts are saying are likely irreversible.

Several world governments, including the Whitehouse, are proposing measures to ensure workers cannot leave their jobs without cause, however it is not known whether such measures could be enforced any longer as the law enforcement sector and even the governmental sector itself have seen their own significant losses in personnel, potentially crippling any attempts made to stem the tide of these massive industry declines.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Five men are unloading a large cube van full of boxes of alcohol, crates of high-end scotch. Four men brake the door down with a steel door breacher. The unloaders take notice and group up making a wall in front of the open box door of the van. The breakers walk in calmly and line up in front of the workers. They size each other up.

BREAKER

We'd like some of your booze.

SCOTCH RUNNER

Sorry, that ain't gonna happen.

BREAKER

We live in a different time now. It ought to be a time of peace and sharing.

SCOTCH RUNNER

Except that possession is still nine tenths of the law.

BREAKER

Didn't you just steal this van full of premium scotch.

SCOTCH RUNNER

What I possess, now, is still nine tenths of my law.

BREAKER

What if I'm the one tenth?

They glare at each other.

SCOTCH RUNNER

What are you gonna do? I mean really.  
We fight. We're just going to get all  
hot and bothered, and nothing's gonna  
be accomplished.

BREAKER

(loud)

If you aren't sharing, you get nothing!

Scotch Runner looks worried but sizes up the competition  
and feels confident.

BREAKER (CON'T)

Last chance.

SCOTCH RUNNER

I'm ready for some cardio.

Breaker and his boys take a few steps back as they each  
pull out a grenade. The Scotch Runner boys are confused for  
a moment. Breaker boys pull the pins and toss the grenades  
into the wide open van box, and B1 holds his grenade above  
the stack of crates standing on the floor that has already  
been unloaded.

SCOTCH RUNNER

(horror)

Nooo!

Scotch Runner rushes towards Breaker, but THE GRENADE  
EXPLODES SHATTERING ALL THE BOTTLES IN THE CRATES. And at  
the same time the other grenades do the same in the van  
box. The boys duck and cover their heads out of habit.

Scotch Runner sits down on the floor. He is deflated and  
starts sobbing. His boys just stare at him.

BREAKER

Why didn't you want to share? We live  
in a new time now.

SCOTCH RUNNER

(crying)

I don't know. Why don't I want to

share? Why is it not in me?

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Loud music thumping. People talking loudly.

PARTYGOER 1

This is what I'm saying. This is what I'm saying. Whatever this virus thing is - it's mutated and then - here's my theory - it unlocked the next stage in human evolution. No more pain and total indestructability. What we were always meant to be. But (has them on a string) what does it mean if no harm is possible?

PARTYGOER 2

Other than no more buzz from alcohol?

PARTYGOER 3

What? What does it mean?

He looks around at everyone.

PARTYGOER 1

World peace.

PARTYGOER 2

What?

PARTYGOER 1

World peace. It's inevitable. No one can hurt or harm another person. It doesn't matter that any countries or groups have grudges against anyone anymore. If you can't hurt your enemy and they can't hurt you - what have you got? You've got peace. To peace!

He raises his drink, they all follow suit and cheer ecstatically.

EXT. THAI VILLAGE - DAY

A group of a dozen Thai men with ropes, bands, and chains are walking through the town. The Thai villagers have grouped up in a circle at one end of the street. Ready.

The men get closer.

A few of the front line of villagers pull out maces from behind their backs and start swinging them above their heads.

One of the man lifts up an RPG. He aims at the villagers. In response, a man behind the front row of villagers pulls out an Ak47 and fires as best he can into the RPG tube.

The man pulls the trigger on the RPG but it explodes in his hands, sending the men recoiling slightly but they soon continue moving.

Another of the attackers pulls out a brick of c4 with an electronic detonator attached, he holds his thumb over a large button. He sprints towards the villagers. In response, three villagers pull out grenades and throw them at the man's feet. They explode just as he dives towards the villager's feet. They bend down and try to reach for the c4, but it explodes with massive force, sending the first row of villagers flying into the air and far away from the group. Other villagers are blown backward.

When the smoke clears. The villagers at the center of the group are young girls, teen and pre-teens, who are now laying on the ground. The men pull out cable band neck straps and tethers, like those used for strong animals. They rapidly loop the bands around the girl's necks. The loop holders drag them away while the back row of men, make a line in between them and the remaining villagers. One of them holds up another brick of c4. The villagers stay down, defeated.

One of the men look into the eyes of one of the girls - she is terrified, gripping the neck band, but not able to do anything. She knows what's coming.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

GROUP FRIEND 2 is sitting on a curb spinning a bottle on the street. It spins and slows and stops. He repeats. Group Friend 1 walks up and sits down beside. Both are somewhat drained of emotion.

GROUP FRIEND 1

Yo. Living hard? Living large?

GROUP FRIEND 2

Yeah man. Yeah man.

GROUP FRIEND 1

Oh yeah. I know it.

Group friend 2 spins the bottle again. They watch it.

A MAN DROPS FROM THE SKY, LANDING WITH EXTREME SPEED A FEW METERS IN FRONT OF THEM on the street - the asphalt is compressed underneath him. He lies still. The two look over to the man with disinterest, but then right back at the spinning bottle. Group friend 1 reaches for the bottle

GROUP FRIEND 1

Hey. Let me-

Lightning quick, Group friend 2 grabs his hand firmly, glares. Group friend 1 is silent, compliant. They let the bottle finish spinning. When it stops, Group Friend 2 hands it to his friend.

Meanwhile, the jumper slowly gets up, dusts himself off, ignored by all around. Group friend 1 spins the bottle. They watch it spin.

GROUP FRIEND 2

Round and round.

GROUP FRIEND 1

Party tonight. Kyle's. Big livin'

GROUP FRIEND 2

Yeah yeah.

EXT. FARM HOUSE YARD - FIRE PIT - NIGHT

A group of 10 friends sit on lawn chairs around a fire pit. They stare into the fire, no one speaks. The fire crackles. A generator can be heard in the distance.

GROUP FRIEND 3's smart phone alarm goes off. He takes it out of his pocket. Everyone stands up and gathers around his chair so they can watch. He opens up a Candy Crush-type app and starts playing, level 255. Everyone is transfixed, but no one speaks. He plays.

In the distance it can be heard that the generator starts sputtering. Everyone looks over at the generator.

EXT. FARM YARD - GENERATOR - SAME

Generator has a power bar plugged in which has five smart phones plugged in, charging. An empty gas can lies on its

side on the ground nearby. The generator dies and goes silent. The phones light up having lost the charging source, then go black.

EXT. FARM YARD - FIRE PIT - SAME

People hang their head. Some look over to Group friend 3.

GROUP FRIEND 4  
(to group friend 3)  
Is that all of it?

Group Friend 3 nods. Everyone considers this in silence, concerned. Some grab their heads.

GROUP FRIEND 5 stands up and screams in anger. He picks up his lawn chair and throws it with full force into the fire causing embers to fly all around. Group Friend 3 reacts immediately to the act, lunging for the chair, pulling it out, brushing away some small flames.

GROUP FRIEND 3  
(angry)  
Hey!

He grabs Group Friend 5 by the collar.

GROUP FRIEND 3 (CON'T)  
What do we say? What do we say?

GROUP FRIEND 5  
(deflated)  
'Take it out on people, not on things.'

GROUP FRIEND 3  
That's right. They don't make chairs anymore. Okay? A pound of gold, is not worth as much as any product.

GROUP FRIEND 5  
Ok. Yeah. I know. I get it.

GROUP FRIEND 3  
There's no war. There are no zombies. This is the age of calm, okay. There's no need to damage our things. No need.

GROUP FRIEND 5  
I get it.

Group Friend 3 pats him on the chest, they're good.

GROUP FRIEND 3  
(gesturing to Group  
Friend 1)  
Punch Rick in the face next time.

GROUP FRIEND 5  
Okay. I will.

GROUP FRIEND 1  
What about the enslavers?

GROUP FRIEND 3  
(serious)  
They're a myth.

GROUP FRIEND 2  
I don't know man - I heard there's some  
sick shit going on some places.

GROUP FRIEND 3  
(loud)  
They're a myth!

All are quiet for a moment.

GROUP FRIEND 6  
(growing paranoia)  
Fine, but what are we going to do? What  
are we going to do? What is there to  
do?

GROUP FRIEND 7  
Calm down. We'll find something.

GROUP FRIEND 8  
Let's go somewhere.

GROUP FRIEND 6  
Where? Where are we gonna go?

GROUP FRIEND 7  
Let's just trade our chairs for  
backpacks, walk down to the Amazon.  
Make canoes and sail.

GROUP FRIEND 6  
Right. And then we go over a waterfall  
and caught in the undertow. Sounds like  
a ticket straight to suspension.

GROUP FRIEND 5

Forget that. I ain't getting suspended.

GROUP FRIEND 4

Just being on the water freaks me out - I mean, I know it's not the ocean or anything, but still. It seems like you could get tangled up or something.

GROUP FRIEND 8

Come on - seaweed? If you get tangled in seaweed, you just pluck it out of the ground, one by one. You can't get suspended by seaweed. No. Now, the thing you want to avoid is pits. Deep holes with no way to climb out of. Water, you can swim.

GROUP FRIEND 10

Oh that's a horrifying thought.

GROUP FRIEND 8

Unless of course you're chained to a weight of some sort. No way out of that. In the.. before.. you could have cut off your own hand with something sharp. Not now.

GROUP FRIEND 7

I always used to think murder was the worst thing you could do to someone - the most you could take. But suspending them - that's next level shit.

GROUP FRIEND 6

Let's not talk about this.

GROUP FRIEND 1

I heard - I mean one of the myths is - that in Somalia, there were groups - roving gangs - who suspend people, just for fun. (Looks around) What's to stop them from coming here?

GROUP FRIEND 6

What in the... Flying Freak - did you say that for?

GROUP FRIEND 1

They've got boats - what's stopping

them?

GROUP FRIEND 5

We could have had perfection. I mean if everyone had just kept working - making things. It would have been life as we always dreamed heaven would be like. You know.

GROUP FRIEND 4

(scoffing)

Heaven.

GROUP FRIEND 8

I always - before - kind of worried about going to hell - you know, just the thought - you can't help but be afraid. But now - even though you can't die - hell is actually closer.

GROUP FRIEND 2

You know what the astronomers say, don't you? (Looks around at everyone) In a few million years the sun is going to start expanding as it runs out of fuel, eventually it will expand to envelop earth. We'll literally be inside the sun and the earth will burn away.

Group friend 6 is speechless, horrified.

GROUP FRIEND 7

At least we won't feel any pain.

GROUP FRIEND 1

It'll still be hell.

GROUP FRIEND 2

Don't kid yourself. I mean - you know we'll be in hell long before that.

Derek stands beside the group, previously unseen. He stares deep into the fire.

EXT. LARGE HOTEL - FRONT DOORS - DAY

A group of hundreds of people, mostly young, mostly women, are lined up at the front doors of a posh looking hotel. They are quiet.

An attendant is walking an attractive young women into the building. When she enters, another well-dressed attendant, standing at the front of the line jots notes on his clipboard. He looks at the next person in the line, another attractive young woman.

ATTENDANT

Name.

LINE MEMBER 1

Rebecca.

ATTENDANT

Age.

LINE MEMBER 1

24. (pause) Is it true that you have  
cheesecake inside?

Attendant looks at her, smiles, then back at his clipboard.

ATTENDANT

It's true.

LINE MEMBER 1

What kinds?

ATTENDANT

Does it matter?

LINE MEMBER 1

I'm allergic to cherries. I wouldn't  
want to.. if I couldn't eat the  
cheesecake.

ATTENDANT

(consoling)

We have several other fruit toppings,  
and chocolate.

LINE MEMBER 1

Is it good?

ATTENDANT

(incredulous)

It's cheesecake!

She's silent, doubtful, but then smiles. Attendant looks  
her over again.

ATTENDANT (CON'T)

You make the cut. You know the price.  
It's up to you.

LINE MEMBER 1

How many of you are there?

ATTENDANT

Eighteen.

She thinks briefly.

LINE MEMBER 1

Okay.

ATTENDANT

Excellent. Come this way.

He ushers her towards the door and hands her to the other attendant who has returned from inside, and who takes her the rest of the way inside. Attendant returns to the line of people.

ATTENDANT

Sorry folks, that's the last one for  
the day. Come back tomorrow.

People remain quiet. Some sit down - nowhere else to go.

EXT. ARIZONA MOUNTAIN FARMYARD - DAY

A young man dressed in dirt bike gear, but no helmet, fills up his dirtbike from a large farmyard elevated fuel tank, complete with a nozzle lock.

He finishes the fill up, replaces the nozzle, locks it, jumps on his bike, and fires it up.

EXT. ARIZONA MOUNTAIN - DIRT BIKE TRACK - DAY

The rider swerves around a corner, high speed. He straightens out and sees a jump ahead. He guns it. Hits the jump and soars into the air - he lays the bike flat and sticks out his leg, hangs in the air, before landing it smoothly. He speeds on.

He maneuvers around a winding mountain track, an expert rider. He comes to a large vertical incline and continues following the track straight up.

He gets to the top, and rides slower now, right alongside

the edge of a high cliff, just because. He looks down and sees a deep crevasse below - too dark to see the bottom - it has steep and smooth sides. He continues riding slowly along the edge, in control.

He turns inward away from the edge. As he passes some brush, A MAN JUMPS OUT FROM IT AND THROWS ONE HAND ON THE RIDER'S SHOULDER AND GRABS THE RIDERS WRIST WITH HIS OTHER HAND. This causes the throttle to gun for a moment, sending the bike forward and to the side as the rider is pulled backward off of it. The thief tries to grasp the bike but it gets away from him. It thrusts forward without a driver and falls on its side a few meters ahead, and slides towards the edge of the cliff. The two of them watch in horror as the bike comes to A TEETERING STOP RIGHT ON THE EDGE. They both scramble forward on all fours and lunge for the bike.

Dirt Biker's momentum carries him into the corner of the bike and swinging past it over the edge, while Bike Thief's momentum carries him into the rear bike tire, which he grasps, his legs swinging around over Dirt Biker, who SLIDES OVER THE CLIFF EDGE FEET FIRST BUT GRASPS HOLD OF THE EDGE, his full weight supported by his arms.

Feeling he can keep the bike from falling, the Bike Thief looks at Dirt Biker struggling to pull himself up. HE KICKS HIM IN THE HEAD, HARD. Dirt Biker's head flies back and he grunts loudly, but retains his grip. The bike thief grips the bike as it teeters.

DIRT BIKER  
(terrified)  
Don't- don't do it.

BIKE THIEF  
(impassive)  
I just want the bike.

DIRT BIKER  
(enraged)  
You- dirty- suspender!

Bike Thief hesitates for a moment... but then kicks him again. Dirt Biker falls, screaming into the black void.

Bike Thief breathes heavily in the now eerie silence, still gripping the bike firmly. He adjusts his position to bring his lower body into a better position, but THE BIKE SLIPS

FORWARD, slowly, dragging the still-gripping Bike Thief behind it. He grunts and digs in his feet and tries with all his might to keep the bike from being lost, but he can't stop the momentum. He screams with all his might, not letting go of the bike, fighting all the way to his own fall over the edge. He screams his way into the black void.

INT. - HOUSE - EVENING

A family of four in a dark living room. A candle burns on the coffee table providing the only light. Father in the easy chair. Mother on the love seat. Boy, 7 on the couch. Girl, 5 lying on the floor, coloring.

The Girl grips the smallest nub of a white crayon possible. Everything on the page, a day at the circus, is coloured in white. She finally can't grip the nub and presses it in between the tip of her finger and the page, using up as much as she can - until it's gone.

She starts to cry. The mother and father ignore her. Father continues to stare blankly. Mother hangs her head.

FAMILY DAD

(calmly)

Lisa.

Family Girl stops crying.

FAMILY BOY

Dad, can I jump off the roof again?

Dad looks over.

FAMILY DAD

Go ahead.

FAMILY BOY

Will you come catch me?

FAMILY DAD

You don't need me to catch you.

FAMILY BOY

I like it better when you catch me.

FAMILY DAD

Not today. Just go.

Family Boy looks at his dad, sad. Goes. Sister, follows.

Silence.

FAMILY MOM

Have you heard of any good books on happiness?

Family Dad looks at her.

FAMILY MOM

Like, that I could find at the library.

Family Dad looks down.

FAMILY DAD

People are burning down libraries.

FAMILY MOM

(aghast, but cold)

Why?

Family Dad looks out the living room window.

FAMILY DAD

They didn't help.

It is seen that Derek is sitting cross-legged in the corner of the room, listening.

He gets up. He looks at the family.

He walks out.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - EVENING

There is a 40-foot ladder leaned up against the side of the two-story house, on the drive way. The concrete driveway is broken and crumbling in the "landing zone".

Derek walks away, down the street. With Family Girl looking on, Family Boy jumps off the roof from the highest point of the house, above the crumbled landing zone.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - EVENING

The news studio is dark and in shambles. Equipment and garbage is strewn all over the floor. The set is torn up and broken. A generator is seen to be running in the furthest corner across from the control room.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - CONTROL ROOM - EVENING

A man is sitting on the floor with a microphone. Only the

lights of the equipment around him, provide light. His transmission is part news report and part swan song. A dial on the equipment above him says "Antenna strength" it shows the strength is weak, but there.

PAUL

It's the evening news with Paul Polson. The temperature is... cool - I think it's January.. I saw someone hang gliding this morning. He just flew right overhead. It was surreal. A group of locals followed him to see where he would land.. A woman, sang a sad song on the corner of Henderson and 25<sup>th</sup> avenue. It was.. beautiful. It attracted several onlookers - one of whom proceeded to.. take advantage of her. No one intervened.. (pause) What was the name of the song? I forget the words. But it meant something, it wasn't just a song. I remember, it meant something..

Silence.

He grabs a globe on the floor beside him and studies it.

PAUL (CON'T)

In international news... Ulaan Baatar is the capital of Mongolia.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Derek walks down a familiar street. With purpose he continues past several people sitting on the street, heads hanging down. He moves past them directly to the broken coffee shop - door, hanging on one hinge.

He looks at the door. Pulls it open - it falls of the hinge causing a loud clatter. He looks around, but no one looks up.

He walks through the door into the shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Once again the world inside the shop is unchanged. Derek looks past the chatting crowd, to "the table". God is there, waiting.

Derek walks over and sits down.

GOD

Hello.

DEREK

Hey.

GOD

You don't look well, Derek.

Derek looks at Him.

DEREK

Go ahead.

GOD

(caring)

Say I told you so? I would but you're not done. You still think you can do better.

GOD looks around, out the broken front window.

GOD

I know you thought it shouldn't be hard. (pause) So why is it Derek?

DEREK

But isn't this what your heaven is? A life with all your friends and relatives - no one can die and no harm can come to anyone?

GOD

(caring)

No one can die, yes, and no harm can come to anyone.. But there's still a difference.

DEREK

What difference? I mean what keeps people in your heaven from - this?

GOD

Something that I offer to everyone.

DEREK

What? Join a church, sit in a pew, learn the rules..for all eternity? I see, so it's either desolation or

boredom. The only two options.

GOD

So you say.

DEREK

Well I admit I miscalculated again, but yes, I can still do better. And it doesn't require selling your soul to religion... your painfully, merciless delayed offer of a pain-free but mind-numbingly boring future, while going through a sadistic, twisted hell in the present.

GOD

(smiling)

Well why don't you tell me how you really feel?

DEREK is not amused.

GOD (CON'T)

You're ready then? Go ahead.

DEREK

I want a new gland in the human brain - that's one change. Now, let me describe how this new gland works: it provides baseline pleasure control built into every human being. It has an ever-present minimum dopamine release in the brain that equates to perpetual happiness - not elation, for the baseline, just regular happiness - but also Fine-tuned control of dopamine release, so that people can self-moderate to have elation whenever they choose - to heighten the enjoyment of any experience. I mean, if you create people with feelings of happiness and pain - and you promise a future of happiness - why put them through hell in the present? All this sickness, tornados, aggression.. Just let them have their heaven - create them with it. People will enjoy everything more if they can control their happiness level as they do something - even work

- even sacrifice. The fact that you didn't build that into the human body right off the bat... it's almost laughable ineptitude. Or is that what the appendix is for? And you just didn't quite.. get it right?

God takes a moment to absorb the insult.

GOD  
(calmly)  
Very well. I'll see you in a year.

God smiles at Derek with kindness, but Derek is unmoved.

DEREK  
If you can show your face in defeat.

GOD looks at him and LITERALLY DISAPPEARS, without a sound.

Derek stares at the chair where GOD was sitting, soaks in their discussion. After a moment he gets up, walks over to the counter, runs his finger across the dusty surface, and then looking at it.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Derek walks out, and sees the people stirring on the street. A few of those who were sitting are now getting up. Stretching. Then as he walks, he sees them chatting with each other. Smiling.

Derek continues walking and turning corners seeing people shaking off the haze, talking, now even laughing. He listens in on conversations as he goes. He hasn't heard laughter in forever.

PEDESTRIAN 1  
Pretty nice day, isn't it?

PEDESTRIAN 2  
Yeah, hasn't been this nice out in a while.

Derek walks further and overhears others.

PEDESTRIAN 3  
I don't know, I've just been really down lately, but, I don't know, it feels like I'm turning a corner.

PEDESTRIAN 4

Yeah, me too.

Derek walks on.

PEDESTRIAN 5

This whole immortality thing seemed like a curse, but I think it might just be alright.

Derek walks on, pleased.

PEDESTRIAN 6

I don't know what's changed - I just feel different, I feel happy.

Derek stops and looks all around at the world he has made. He nods and then looks up. He spreads out his arms, and traces out a wide presenting sweep with his arms.

DEREK

There you go.

INT. SOUTHERN COUPLE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Two lovers lay awake in bed, holding each other, smiling. The blanket is bunched up at their waist. She is in an elegant one-piece red lingerie, with lacey shoulder straps. He runs his fingers on a shoulder strap, gently playing with it. She smiles at him. They have a faint southern tinge to their speech.

SOUTHERN WIFE

That was.. the most.. unbelievable..

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

I know. I thought I was gonna go crazy. You were amazing.

SOUTHERN WIFE

It was the best ever, baby.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

It had to be. Seriously.. Why?

SOUTHERN WIFE

It's almost as if, right when it was, like, the best, I could make it feel even better.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

Exactly, I felt it too.

He looks her in the face.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND (CON'T)

And I got to share it with you.

She smiles lovingly at her man. He drinks it in, but something is too much.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND (CON'T)

Screw it. I was going to wait but...

He gets up and goes to the closet, and moves some stacked boxes down onto the floor. SOUTHERN WIFE turns and looks curiously. He opens the one he exposed and pulls out another small box, a hard-shell eye-glasses case, and hops back onto bed. They kiss.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

This was gonna be an anniversary present, but I don't know why - everything just feels so - it just feels right to do it now.

He hands it to her. She takes it, looking at him with heartfelt thanks and excitement. She opens it to find two pristine cigarettes. She laughs.

SOUTHERN WIFE

Cigarettes? How?

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

I came across some, and just hid 'em, for this. One for each of us.

SOUTHERN WIFE

You battled for years to help me quit.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

And I would do it again.. But it sure as shit don't matter now.

SOUTHERN WIFE

(thankful)

Thank you.

They kiss deeply. Then she interrupts.

SOUTHERN WIFE

And you've never smoked a day in your life.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

(smiling)

Teach me?

SOUTHERN WIFE

(smiling)

You bet babe.. These might even be the last two cigarettes in existence.

SOUTHERN HUSBAND

No one I'd rather burn them into ashes with.

That was cheesy.

SOUTHERN WIFE

(sarcastic)

Awwwww!

EXT. HAWAIIAN COAST - BEACH - DAY

A Native Pacific Islander man and woman prep kite surfing kites and boards. They unfold the kites and attach them as needed. The man finishes first and drags the equipment out into the water and wades out deep enough, gets onto the board, stands up and begins to surf.

EXT. HAWAIIAN COAST - ON WATER - SAME

The wind carries him out and he rides the breeze, pulling turns into the waves, catching air, and drinking it in like it is the ultimate high.

He pulls up to a higher wave, and thrusts his board straight into it and launches high up into the air, spray glistening in the sun. He seems to hang in the air forever. All smiles.

EXT. HAWAIIAN COAST - BEACH - SAME

The woman watches his friend on the water in awe. All smiles. When he takes the big jump, she is overcome by a thrilling feeling, she's not expecting. She brings her hand to her chest.

## ISLANDER WOMAN

What? Wow.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

People are congregating in the square. They talk and laugh together. Many different conversations are happening - things are positive.

Two women are handing out fliers reading "Back to Work. Let's resurrect production and bring back all the good things in life." Written in pencil, thickly. They speak out to each person as they hand out each flier.

FLYER WOMAN 1

Let's go back to work!

FLYER WOMAN 2

Let's capitalize on our positivity and transform it into the products we all remember.

Some people ignore them, some people take the fliers and read them and consider it, others read it and laugh and crumple the flier and throw it on the ground.

EXT. ALBERTA ROCKY MOUNTAINS - CLIFF WALL - DAY

Four friends scream as they fall from a high mountain cliff. They are overjoyed. Not just adrenaline, but extreme elation.

FALLING FRIEND 1

Wooooooooo!

FALLING FRIEND 2

Hahaaaaaaaaa!

FALLING FRIEND 3

Yeeeeeeaaaahhhh!

FALLING FRIEND 4 has his eyes closed, all smiles.

After a few more seconds, the ground closes in, and the slam into the grassy base of the mountain. They make large impact craters.

They climb out of the craters, stumbling and laughing.

FALLING FRIEND 1

That was insane!

FALLING FRIEND 2

What the Hhh-illary Swank was that?

FALLING FRIEND 1

We've done this at least a hundred times, but that - that was something different!

FALLING FRIEND 3

It's like I could make it more fun, as I was falling!

FALLING FRIEND 4

Me too.

FALLING FRIEND 2

We have got to do that again.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

MESSAGE MAN is sitting on the couch, giving a massage to MESSAGE WOMAN who is sitting on the floor.

MESSAGE WOMAN

Oh that's nice.

MESSAGE MAN

Yeah?

MESSAGE WOMAN

Oh yeah.

MESSAGE MAN

Now - focus on the feeling - not just the muscles, but the feeling of the pleasure.

MESSAGE WOMAN

Like, just, think about it?

MESSAGE MAN

No - acknowledge it's there, but just let it come into focus, like a conversation in the background that you slowly start to pick up on.

MESSAGE WOMAN

I'll try, but -

MESSAGE MAN

You'll get it, don't worry. And then -

once you've got the feeling of pleasure  
in focus, just try lifting it -

MESSAGE WOMAN

Lifting.. it?

MESSAGE MAN

Exactly, just take in the pleasure, and  
fuel it in your mind into something  
more, something, higher.

She closes her eyes, and takes in the pleasure of the  
massage. After a few moments.

MESSAGE WOMAN

Oh- (pause) Oh wow.

MESSAGE MAN

You feel it?

MESSAGE WOMAN

Oh yeah. So nice.

He stops, but keeps his hands on her shoulders.

MESSAGE WOMAN

Don't stop!

MESSAGE MAN

It's okay. Stay focused. Keep your eyes  
closed. Hold onto the way you're  
increasing the pleasure. The best  
thing about this.. is that you can do  
it any time. You don't even need to be  
doing anything that feels good.

MESSAGE WOMAN

You mean I can just -

MESSAGE MAN

Try it. Just lift the same way.

She focuses.

MESSAGE WOMAN

Oh yeah!? Yes!

She opens her eyes, and spins around to look into Massage  
Man's eyes. She smiles big time. He does too.

EXT. FARMHOUSE YARD - FIREPIT - DAY

Twelve friends around the firepit - there is no fire. All smiles, everyone attentive to Group Friend 1 who is regaling them, but everyone's eyes are not focused on anything particular.

GROUP FRIEND 1

And then, I was like... Yeah, I could handle that...

Everyone laughs deeply.

GROUP FRIEND 1

Bring it on!

Laughter increases. It lasts a few moments, and then slowly dies down to silence. Silence remains for an awkward amount of time.

GROUP FRIEND 3

Bring it on!

Loud laughter returns to the circle. It lasts an awkward amount of time. Then it slowly dies down as before.

Group Friend 4 looks around partially. He smiles.

GROUP FRIEND 4

This is awesome. This...is...just so great.

People smiling, nodding.

GROUP FRIEND 5

I love you guys.

People look in the general direction of Group Friend 5, smile.

GROUP FRIEND 6

I love you too, man.

Without looking at him, Group Friend 6 awkwardly grabs Group Friend 5's hand and pats it.

Something's not sitting right with Group Friend 7.

GROUP FRIEND 7

Why are you just saying that now? I mean, you've never said it before... What makes you love us, now?

People, still smiling, contemplate the question. Group

Friend 6, smiling, thinks about it too.

GROUP FRIEND 6

I... don't know... I just feel...love for you guys.

Group Friend 7 sheds a tear, through a faint smile. Then more tears.

GROUP FRIEND 7

How long have we been here, partying?

GROUP FRIEND 3

What do you mean?

GROUP FRIEND 7

Like, how long have we been together, here?

GROUP FRIEND 2

I don't understand the question.

GROUP FRIEND 4

Tina, What are you trying to say?

GROUP FRIEND 7

(tears)

We've lost something. I don't exactly know what.

She stands, looks around.

GROUP FRIEND 7

(at group friend 6)

What if you only love us because you're lifting?

People smiling, contemplate this. Group Friend 6 smaller smile, thinks.

GROUP FRIEND 6

I don't know. Does it matter?

Silence.

GROUP FRIEND 1

Bring it on!

Circle laughs loudly. Dies down.

## GROUP FRIEND 7

I'm just a little bit afraid... what if we all start to... lift more than we should.

## GROUP FRIEND 8

There is no "more than we should" - everyone can do what they want. (growing more firm) We can't suffer. No one is telling us what to do. So what else is there to do, but whatever we want to do.. Come on, lift away that negative Nancy face.

More tears drip from Group Friend 7's eyes, but she wipes them away.

## GROUP FRIEND 7

Yeah, I know, you're right.

EXT. YARD - SEVERAL YARDS AWAY FROM THE FIRE PIT - SAME

Group Friend 9 is lying on the ground, face-up, smiling, caught in the pleasure of lifting.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

A man walks into the square from around a corner. All smiles.

People lay strewn about the grassy square and the surrounding roads. The two women seen handing out fliers earlier, are lying down sprawled out, just like everyone else. Their fliers are blowing in the wind.

The man walks up to the grass in the square and lies down. All smiles.

Everyone is lifting 100% strength, 100% of the time. Nobody has any reason to stop.

EXT. CITY CENTER OF A DIFFERENT CITY - DAY

People lay strewn about the ground, all smiles.

EXT. CITY CENTER OF A DIFFERENT CITY - DAY

People lay strewn about the ground, all smiles.

EXT. CITY CENTER OF A DIFFERENT CITY - DAY

People lay strewn about the ground, all smiles.

EXT. ALBERTA ROCKY MOUNTAINS - CLIFF EDGE - DAY

Falling Friends lay strewn about the ground, all smiles.

INT. SOUTHERN COUPLE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Southern Husband and Wife lay on the floor, clothed, apart from each other, all smiles.

INT. DEREK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Julia and Amanda sitting slouched on the couch, apart from each other, all smiles.

Derek is in the room, walking around the perimeter, looking at the family pictures hanging on the wall.

One is the three of them, Amanda on Derek's lap, his arm around his wife. All smiles. He touches the picture.

Another of Amanda's laughing face.

Another of Derek and Wife looking into each other's eyes, perfectly contented.

Derek turns around and looks at his family, still smiling, but both are motionless on the couch, caught in lifting. He sheds tears.

DEREK

I did it. I know I didn't retain the quality of life that you wanted, but I succeeded for my daughter. She's perfectly pain-free.

God, previously unseen, comes into view.

GOD

I would have given them so much more.

Derek scoffs.

DEREK

What?

GOD

A good world. Not an evil one.

DEREK

(irate)

You made this world!

GOD

(caring, but with a  
point)

You made this, Derek. A world devoid of friendship, devoid of progress, devoid of courage, devoid of love. Yes, I made choosers, and put them in a pristine physical world, which the choosers ruined, by their choices - and which I had to curse, but only to show them their sorry state.

DEREK

-Okay fine! But what motivates people to be good?! We need evil? Yin and yang? What bullshit! You're not all-powerful, if you can't make a world that is good without pain and suffering. Your heaven can't even exist. Or is this cesspool, it?

GOD

I assume you mean the "cesspool" before you made your changes?

Derek is silent.

GOD (CON'T)

Have we changed our agreement?

Derek is silent for moment.

DEREK

Why does pain have to be so bad sometimes?

GOD takes in the question, silently moved with compassion, but passion is also stirred.

GOD

Pain is in degrees, but it's all the same. By your logic, any amount of pain is enough to convict me. Derek, it's my curse, death itself, that is more scandalous than pain. But when I came to earth I worked to get rid of death -

not just physical death - but the death of having an uncaring heart - but people don't want it.. because they'd rather have a life where they don't have to accept change.

DEREK

Why did you make us then? It would have been better...

GOD

Non-existence? Really? What if I have a better world prepared for everyone - anyone who is willing to give up their weak life here and accept my gift of perfect help in this world, which includes pain, difficulty yes, but also the strength to get through it. The offer of being made into people who are fit for the next world. You see, evil, is thinking only of yourself. And don't kid yourself, people claim they can be good without me but this goodness falls entirely short of what I expect - half of the good deeds people do in this planet is to make themselves feel better, not true selflessness - and the other half are people who don't really want to do good, but do it to try to appease whichever false god they happen to subscribe to. And that's simply not good enough - only I can make people to be truly selfless.

DEREK

So how do you do it then? Make people with good hearts?

GOD

I offer them mine.

Derek closes his eyes and drinks it all in.

GOD

Don't forget that, Derek.

Derek, eyes closed, in silence.

Derek opens his eyes and begins to speak but notices GOD

has disappeared.

DEREK

I-

Derek hears screeching tires and a car crashing - he glances towards the window. Then everything goes black.

In the blackness: Sirens. EMS personnel calling to each other to get to the body, check vitals.

EXT. EMBANKMENT BESIDE THE ROAD - DEREK'S CRASH SITE - DAY

Derek lays on the ground, several yards in front of the car.. motionless. He was tossed from the car before the fire fully engulfed it.

Paramedics get to him and put their hands on him, is it too late? They assess his injuries, feel for a pulse. Nothing.

Suddenly Derek takes in a BIG DEEP BREATH.

A beating heart.

FADE OUT

THE END