

DISPATCHES FROM ELSEWHERE

Episode one - "Peter"

by
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Based on the documentary, "The Institute" by Spencer McCall and
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SOMEWHERE - NOW

Close on a man's face against a maroon red background. Mid sixties, smiling, unblinking, wordless. He stares at us for far too long. He is not frozen, he moves enough to let us know he is alive, present, and watching us. This is OCTAVIO COLEMAN ESQ. Beneath him on the screen is a timer that is counting down from 80 minutes.

OCTAVIO

And now that I have your attention,
I will begin.

He speaks directly to us, the audience. He does not break the fourth wall, but rather makes us uncomfortably aware that there is no wall.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

Welcome. As you know this entertainment is called Dispatches From Elsewhere - A title that I assure you will have more relevance as the story progresses. Unless this is your first experience with a limited run episodic, which our records indicate it is not, then you are aware of the storytelling convention which dictates that the filmmaker spend an unnecessary amount of time to introduce you to your protagonist, his occupation, the particularities of his life and most importantly the obstacles which stand in the way of his happiness. As the first of my many gifts to you, my friends, I propose we skip this convention and get on with what you came here for - the story. I propose I return to you twenty minutes of your life by reducing this standard introduction to a mere two minutes.

Octavio snaps his fingers. The timer changes from 79:13 to 59:13. He smiles, then we cut to:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

An ordinary 35 year old man lays in his bed sleeping. We watch.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

This is Peter. Think of him as you.

His phone alarm goes off.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

He is you if you lived alone and woke every weekday to your iPhone alarm, still set to the default chime "radar."

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - LATER

Peter walks down the street in a button-up shirt and jeans drinking a Pete's coffee, not making eye contact with the other walking commuters.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

Peter is you if you walked to work in the morning, which he neither enjoys nor does not enjoy. He drinks Peet's Coffee because the line is shorter than Starbucks, not because it allows him to hold a cup which says his name in the possessive, despite it's obvious humor. He never makes eye contact with his fellows, and assumes his fellows never make eye contact with their fellows either.

CUT TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE - DAY

Peter sits in a cubicle in front of a computer.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

Peter is you if you worked a reliable job at a company which offers on-demand listening of over two million songs for a modest monthly fee. In addition, the company's innovative algorithm conveniently informs you of songs you will enjoy based on your prior listening history - saving you the hassle of unpleasant and unnecessary musical exploration.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - EVENING

Peter walks home on the same street.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

Peter is you if you walked the same route home as you did to work, only, as I'm sure you understand, in the opposite direction. He generally stops into his corner bodega to procure dinner-

He ducks into the store.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

Which often consists of packaged sushi with a small packet of brown liquid salt and spicy green putty. The origin of this package is unknown to all.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Peter lays in bed eating store bought sushi and watching television.

OCTAVIO (V.O.)

Peter is you if you ended your day in the same place you began it. With no change. Every day like the others with the exception of meaningless and arbitrary deviation - a burrito instead of sushi perhaps.

CUT TO:

INT - SOMEWHERE - NOW

Back to Octavio's face.

OCTAVIO

And this is tragedy in it's most quietly devastating costume. A life without risk. A life without real pain. A life without real joys. This is existing. Not living. At least that is my philosophy. And at the end of the day... that's all I've got.

Octavio gives us a long smile and a deep breath.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

So my friends, I think we've got the idea. Now you know Peter.

(MORE)

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

Squint your eyes, and Peter is you.
Enough so at least, that I think we
can jump right into the day
something changes. I should like to
confess now, that I lied to you
once and only once during my
introduction. I can assure you
however, that I remain a reliable
narrator.

The timer is at 57 minutes and change. Octavio snaps his fingers and we cut to blackness.

DISPATCHES FROM ELSEWHERE.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Peter sleeps just as we first met him. His alarm goes off - "radar." He reaches over and silences it.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter stands in the shower. He does not sing.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter's clothes are laid out anatomically on the bed, like a flat man. The belt is already laced through the loops in his pants. He gets dressed.

CUT TO:

INT. PEET'S COFFEE - LATER

Peter stands waiting for his name to be called among a small group of morning commuters. Everyone waits in silence.

BARISTA

(calling out)

Norman? NORMAN? Cafe Mocha. NORMAN?

No one responds.

BARISTA (CONT'D)
(to Peter)
Normal? Are you Normal?

PETER
I'm sorry?

BARISTA
Are you Norman?

PETER
Oh. No.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - LATER

Peter walks down the street in his button up shirt and jeans drinking a Peet's coffee. He does not make eye contact with the other walking commuters.

Suddenly and without warning, a tall, bald headed man accidently bumps into Peter, causing him to spill his coffee.

TALL BALD MAN
Oh man. Sorry.

Peter doesn't look up as he tries to wipe the hot coffee from his clothes.

PETER
That's ok. Shit.

TALL BALD MAN
Can I help?

PETER
(barely looking up)
No, it's an accident. No problem.

TALL BALD MAN
Ok. Sorry again.

He walks off. Peter sets his coffee down next to a lamppost and continues wiping himself off. It does little good but he clears away the excess drips before they can do any further damage.

PETER
Shit.

He picks up his cup and as he rises he notices a flyer on the lamppost:

DOLPHIN COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM TESTING

The flyer has the little phone number pull tabs at the bottom, none of which are pulled. Peter looks at the flyer for a moment, confused. He imagines:

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Peter stands in front of a large tank wearing some sort of helmet. A wire runs out of his helmet and into the tank where a dolphin is wearing an identical helmet.

PETER
(to the dolphin)
I understand.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Back to "reality." Peter considers taking the number on the pull tab, but ultimately declines and continues down the street.

He walks for a minute, still perplexed, but lets his confusion settle back to indifference.

He takes another sip of his coffee as he passes another lamppost down the street. He notices another flyer and stops to read it:

HUMAN FORCEFIELD EXPERIMENT

Again there are phone number tabs at the bottom, only one of which is pulled. Peter looks around confused. No one else seems to be paying attention to anything but their path to work. He stares at the flyer.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Peter stands in the center of a large concrete room. Around him are a circle of scientists in military protective gear. They hold a variety of weapons. An alarm buzzes.

EVERYONE DISCHARGES THEIR WEAPON IN PETER'S DIRECTION.

Bullets, flame throwers, a cannon.

They all are stopped dead by the invisible forcefield surrounding Peter.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Back to "reality." Peter stares at the flyer.

He deliberates taking the phone number, but ultimately declines and moves on.

Head down, he resumes his routine. He walks. Past his fellow man and woman aware of nothing but his separateness.

As he walks our camera helps us notice the other signs he passes. Warnings. The guidelines of modern adult life:

DO NOT ENTER

NO PARKING

TOW AWAY ZONE

NO SOLICITING

All in the span of one block. No one pays any mind. Existence.

CUT TO:

INT. NONDESCRIPT OFFICE - DAY

Peter sits at the communal table working. A man approaches, presumably his boss, though he wears casual clothes.

CASUAL BOSS

Work stuff, work. Work. Work stuff.
Work. Work. Work stuff.

PETER

Yes.

CASUAL BOSS

Great.

Casual Boss walks away.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - NIGHT

Peter walks home. The same walk as before, only the other direction. He passes the signs of adult life, but pays them no mind.

Then, he passes a lamppost and notices a new flyer:

MEMORY TO MEDIA CENTER

A picture of a brain emanating waves towards an analogue cassette tape.

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Peter sits in front of a bank of television screens. On each one a memory of Peter's plays. Some date back to his childhood.

-Perhaps a shot of him fishing with his mother.

-A shot of his mother cleaning up his bloody nose after being in a fight.

-A shot of him awkwardly standing alone at prom.

- A shot of him from moments before - staring at the Memory to Media Center flyer.

- A shot of Peter standing before a statue of **Three Shrouded Goddesses**.

- A shot of Peter and a young woman sharing earbuds, walking through the city looking at a map. She has a streak of blue hair.

- A shot of an old Peter on his deathbed.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Peter stares at the flyer. He does not pull a tab.

He continues walking. A TALL MAN shrouded in a hooded sweatshirt and huge Blue Blocker Sunglasses stands next to another lamppost. He is affixing another flyer. He turns and sees Peter... **And runs**.

Peter does not know what to make of this. Nonetheless, he approaches the lamppost and looks at the new flyer:

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN?

Below is a sketch of: a tall man shrouded in a hooded sweatshirt and Blue Blocker sunglasses.

Peter looks at the sketch, then looks after the man who has just run away, then back at the sketch. He shakes his head in confusion.

THEN HE PULLS A TAB FROM THE FLYER. He looks at the number, pockets it, and continues home.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter eats a bowl of microwave ramen watching television. He picks up the pulled flyer tab from his coffee table and examines it. After a long deliberation, he picks up his cell phone and enters the number. Considers-

But he does not initiate the call. He sets the phone down. He watches television for a while then looks at the number again. He picks up his cell phone, considers, and this time he initiates the call. It rings. It rings. It rings.

No answer.

Peter hangs up. He shakes his head, crumples the tab and throws it towards the trash - but misses.

RING. RING. RING.

Peter, confused, looks to his phone. He does not often receive calls. The Caller ID reads:

THE JEJUNE INSTITUTE

He answers tentatively.

PETER

Hello?

A woman responds in a formal British accent.

BRITISH WOMAN

Peter?

PETER

Yes. How did you know that?

BRITISH WOMAN

You called?

PETER

Well yes. I saw the man - from the sign. He was hanging up his own "have you seen this man" flyer.

BRITISH WOMAN

I'm not surprised. Thank you for calling The Jejune Institute, San Francisco Headquarters. We would like to invite you to a special orientation session.

PETER

Orientation?

BRITISH WOMAN

We are located at 580 California Street, Suite One Thousand Six hundred and Seven.

PETER

What? Let me grab a pen.

BRITISH WOMAN

Saturday at 2pm. Pacific Standard Time.

PETER

I'm not sure if I can-

BRITISH WOMAN

For those Dark Horses with the Spirit to look up and see... A recondite family awaits.

The call ends. Peter, caught off guard, hurriedly looks for a pen, finds one and writes:

580 California Street, Suite 1607, Saturday 2pm.

He sets the pen down and takes a deep breath. Then he sits for a long beat, silent and bewildered.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRISTS OFFICE - DAY

Peter sits on a couch across from a nice female psychiatrist.

PSYCHIATRIST

And how has this week been, socially? Have you had lunch with a coworker? Any interesting conversations?

PETER

(thinking)

No.

PSYCHIATRIST
Try any new restaurants? Watch
anything new on tv?

PETER
(considering)
No.

She sets down her pad.

PSYCHIATRIST
Peter can I ask you a question?

PETER
Of course.

PSYCHIATRIST
This session has been very similar
to our other sessions. I don't know
if you are aware of that. And from
what I gather, most of your days
seem to be relatively similar to
one another. I know occasionally
you'll have a burrito for dinner
instead of sushi but that is a
somewhat meaningless deviation.

PETER
I don't see it as meaningless but I
do understand your larger point.

PSYCHIATRIST
My question I guess is this - what
do you hope to gain by coming here?

PETER
Gain?

PSYCHIATRIST
Why do you come see me?

PETER
Well... it's free. It's included in
my medical benefits. I've never had
medical benefits until this job and
it just seemed as though I should
take advantage of the opportunity.
See what psychiatry is all about.

PSYCHIATRIST
And what are your thoughts so far?

PETER

I like it. I think our conversations go pretty well. Though you do a lot of the heavy lifting. I wish I had more to bring to the table. There are times after our visits I feel guilty about that. That maybe I am boring to you. But then I try to remember that in an indirect way, through my insurance benefits, I am contributing to your livelihood by coming here; so then I figure I should go a little easier on myself.

She smiles.

PSYCHIATRIST

I don't find you boring Peter. But I do think maybe there are things about yourself you choose not to tell me. Maybe even things you choose not to acknowledge to yourself. Is that fair?

PETER

I don't really have an answer as to whether or not that is "fair" because that raises a sort of abstract question which I don't think was your intention. But I do know what you're asking and I just... I don't...

He trails off. She senses she may finally be getting somewhere.

PSYCHIATRIST

Keep talking. Don't think. Just talk-

As they continue talking we cut to:

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

Peter stands on a bustling San Francisco street staring up at an ominous skyscraper. He looks down at his paper and confirms the address he jotted down: **580 California Street Suite 1607, SATURDAY 2PM PST**

PETER (V.O.)

Well, I guess I am settling into the idea that this is it.

(MORE)

PETER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That this is what life is and I
 don't really have much to say about
 that yet. Maybe I will, but right
 now I think I'm dealing with a sort
 of bewildered disappointment.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
 Disappointment at what?

He looks up to see that the top of the building is adorned
 with statues of **THREE SHROUDED GODDESSES**. It is undeniably
 creepy and out of place in the heart of the financial
 district. He takes a deep breath and heads inside.

INT. 580 CALIFORNIA STREET - CONTINUOUS

Peter enters the large lobby, filled with people coming and
 going. On the other side of the expanse is a security desk.
 Peter makes his way, head down, through the sea of people.

PETER (V.O.)
 I once heard a guy give this speech
 to college kids where he said "you
 don't really understand what day
 in, day out really means yet." The
 grown-ups in the crowd chuckled
 knowingly and I understand why now.

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
 You feel stuck.

PETER (V.O.)
 I feel nothing mostly. Maybe kind
 of a sense of loss, but I'm not
 sure for what.

He finally arrives at security desk. The uniformed man looks
 up from his paper.

SECURITY GUARD
 Where you headed?

PETER
 Um. I'm not sure. The Jejune
 Institute.

The man nods and hands Peter a visitor's badge without
 fanfare.

SECURITY GUARD
 Sixteenth Floor.

He returns to reading his paper. Peter takes his badge and heads for the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. SIXTEENTH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

DING

The door opens to the sixteenth floor. A perfectly nondescript office space. A receptionist waits and browses the internet. Peter approaches her desk.

PETER

Hi. I don't see any signs, is this the Jejune Institute?

She crosses off a name on a clipboard.

RECEPTIONIST

Peter.

She hands Peter a key, then returns to her computer. Peter looks at her expecting more. Nothing.

He looks down at the oversized key chain. One side has a map of the sixteenth floor. The other side has instructions on how to navigate it.

1. Walk down the hall until you reach the third cubicle.

He does. Tentatively at first. The entire floor is empty. No one, save the receptionist. Every cubicle completely vacant. He reaches the third cubicle.

2. Proceed left until you have reached the end of the hall.

He does. Past cubicle after cubicle. Not so different from his own place of business.

3. At the end of the hallway take a sharp right. Find the third door on your left.

He does.

4. Use this key and enter.

Slowly Peter inserts his key into the lock. It works. The door opens. He enters:

INT. INDUCTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As though he has entered another time and place, this room is COMPLETELY alien to the rest of the building.

It feels straight out of a 1960's episode of Star Trek. Steampunk meets mid century modern. Old fashioned tech is everywhere, with a lone antique lounge chair in the center of the room waiting to be occupied. It faces a large flat screen television which has been modified to fit into a retro wooden television console.

SUDDENLY, THE ROOM REVEALS ITSELF TO BE COMPLETELY AUTOMATED. The lights change and random pieces of tech begin to power on.

A VOICE COMES FROM SEEMINGLY NOWHERE. It is the same British Woman from Peter's phone call.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
Greetings. Welcome to the Jejune Institute, San Francisco Induction Center. Please close the door behind you and have a seat in the armchair which has been provided for you.

He looks at the chair and considers.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
Orientation will begin in
5...4...3...2...1...

The lights dim and the TV sparks to life. Peter rushes to sit in the chair. Devices of unknown function begin oscillating and blinking. The overhead lights begin to dim until the room is lit only by the glow of the television - as the Induction Video begins.

OMINOUS and DISSONANT TONES over undulating waves of color:

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
You now sit in a satellite induction office of the Jejune Institute, located in the deep forests of San Francisco.

A grainy split screen of people working at very old mainframe computer equipment.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
The room in which you are currently located, is exactly six floors beneath our global headquarters. The California Center is one of many such stations spread around the world in locations such as-

The screen splits into quadrants showing architecturally unique headquarters throughout the globe:

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
Oslo, Seville, Algiers, Bombay,
Quebec and Santiago. But the
Origins of the Jejune Institute are
right here.

This image dissolves to a photo of a man we recognize as our old narrator from the opening, Octavio. He is forty years younger here. He looks handsome and intrepid.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
During the 1970's under the
leadership of luminary
metaphysicist Octavio Coleman Esq.
The institute gained the wide
influence and prestige for which it
is now known.

New Age imagery of men and women engaged in psychological training and experiments. Some look painful, some border on emotional orgy.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
Along with contemporaries Werner
Erhard and Stewart Emery, Coleman
helped spearhead the still nascent
movement of personal growth and
self help. The work they did
cooperatively amid the breeding
grounds of EST, Eschelon and
Dianetics helped to spawn a
thousand like minded profits of pop
psychology.

This picture fades to informational, borderline propaganda advertisements for the inventions described.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
But what the Jejune Institute is
most celebrated for today are the
many advanced technological
products and services they have
brought to the international
marketplace.

Water molecules stretch and morph like a lava lamp:

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
These developments include
Poliwater, a more condensed form of
water...

(MORE)

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 with a higher boiling point, lower
 freezing point, and astounding
 regenerative properties upon all
 organic compounds.

Vitruvian Man surrounded by a pulsating geodesic dome.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
 The Vital Orbit human forcefield. A
 hydrodynamic conductor based upon
 the Tesla Coil, which acts as an
 external ambassador to your body.
 And our foremost project, which
 will utterly revolutionize the way
 that human beings interact, both
 interpersonally and socio-
 politically,

Slow scanning shot of an intricate mathematical formula, some
 of it redacted to avoid full revelation in the video.

BRITISH WOMAN (V.O.)
 Jejune's Algorithm. A small, mobile
 device encasing a complex
 mathematical code that will
 instantly and permanently reduce
 all human conflict, violence, and
 heartbreak... patent pending.

On screen the words flash very quickly: THE ALGORITHM. Then
 they are gone and the screen fades to dull grey for a moment.

Then, in a flash, on TV - **OCTAVIO COLEMAN ESQ.**, as we met him
 in our opening, late 60's, sits at a desk and addresses the
 inductee, Peter, through the screen.

OCTAVIO (ON TV)
 Hello. And welcome home. I hope
 truly that our introductory video
 has provided you with at least some
 context for where you find yourself
 now.

Peter just stares at the TV.

OCTAVIO (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Nod if you agree.

Peter is confused. Can Octavio see him? Peter shakes his head
 "no."

OCTAVIO (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Then perhaps I can offer you a
 simple explanation.
 (MORE)

OCTAVIO (ON TV) (CONT'D)
For often, in my experience, it is
only through the greatest
simplicity that we find
understanding, and from
understanding - truth. Nod if you
agree.

Peter nods. Octavio continues.

OCTAVIO (ON TV) (CONT'D)
My name is Octavio Coleman Esq. And
for more than forty years I have
given my life, my spirit, and my
vital energy in pursuit of one
endeavor. To illuminate the oneness
which lays hidden in plain sight
right before your eyes and under
your nose. To highlight the
illusion of separateness which
permeates our thinking and is
responsible for all forms of human
strife. This has been a long road,
my friend, and there have been many
times along the way that we as a
collective, and I as a leader, have
questioned the fruitfulness of this
undertaking. Dark nights where
voices whispered that I had indeed
been laboring under a delusion and
that my vision-quest was in fact a
fool's errand.

A smile slides across Octavio's face.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)
But I have proved myself wrong by
proving I was right. And you are a
key to unlocking our vision. You
see, my friend, it is a very unique
person indeed who finds themselves
in the chair in which you sit. It
is a rare soul who pulls the tab
from the flyer. A rarer soul who
calls the number. A rarer soul
still who reports to our humble
headquarters as directed and the
rarest of souls who sits before me
prepared to answer my future call.
Know it or not my friend, you
CONTAIN something. Perhaps
something hibernating, perhaps
something not yet born, but
something that I promise you is
unique, vital and essential.

Peter can't help but feel special despite his confusion.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

We all share one common wish. A secret. One rarely uttered but more universal than any hope ever hoped. That one day it will be revealed that there has been a mistake. That one day you will learn that you are meant for more. That one day someone will arrive from the mundane nothingness and say the words "No my friend, not you. You don't belong here. Come with me. You belong with the special ones."

This touches Peter in a way he was not prepared for.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

Well I am here and that day is upon you.

Octavio takes a pause and looks meaningfully at Peter through the television screen.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

"No my friend. Not you. Come with me. You belong with the special ones."

Unexpectedly... **PETER BEGINS TO CRY.**

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

I do believe that this moment of emotional revelation is quite enough for one day. Our relationship with one another will evolve and unfurl in stages, should that be your wish. In the drawer beside you, you will find an induction card.

Peter glances to his side and sees a wooden drawer.

OCTAVIO (CONT'D)

Should you desire to explore this relationship further simply provide us with the requisite information and we will gladly find you when your moment has come. Thank you my friend.

And just like that --- the screen fades to black. Like a robot running out of battery, the room returns to it's lifeless state. The overhead lights flick harshly on. Peter is alone, back in "reality."

Peter takes a moment to wipe away a final tear and tries to process the bizarritude of what just occurred. He glances to the desk drawer next to his chair, reaches over and slides it open.

Inside we see a perfectly stacked pile of bookmark sized cards which say: **INDUCTION CARD.**

Below the header are a few standard questions, name, address, email, phone number etc. Peter takes the top card off the pile revealing the stack below.

ON THE NEXT CARD IN THE STACK, SOMEONE HAS WRITTEN IN RED CRAYON:

DO NOT FILL OUT THAT CARD...

He picks up the card to examine it. On the one below in crayon:

THIS PLACE IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS...

On the next card:

THEY ARE TRYING TO STEAL IT FROM YOU...

Next:

THEY TOOK HER. THEY STILL HAVE HER...

FINALLY:

DO NOT WAIT --- TAKE THIS CARD AND RUN...

Peter examines this card. He flips it over:

RUN PETER

This freaks him out. Below these words are what look to be the writings of a mad man. Upon further inspection though he sees that they are instructions for a back route out of the building.

PETER
(reading frantically)
"Do not return to reception."
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)
 Head through the fire door, alarm
 has been disabled."

Peter quickly exits into the hallway

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He looks both directions and sees the FIRE EXIT door. It is propped open. Peter looks over and sees the receptionist across the floor, browsing the internet. He moves quickly for the exit.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Peter reads the card as he hurries down the stairs.

PETER
 (reading)
 "Take stairs to parking level one.
 Do not run but do not go too
 slowly. By now they will be coming
 for you."

Peter hears the stairwell fire door open a few floors above him. He quickens his pace.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING LEVEL 1 - MOMENTS LATER

Peter emerges into the parking lot. He is scared and sweating a bit now.

HIS PHONE RINGS. He does not reach for it. He is too busy navigating out of the building.

He reads the escape card:

PETER
 (reading)
 "Answer your phone."
 (to himself)
 Oh. Shit.

He retrieves his phone and answers. A man with a very OLD TIMEY VOICE is on the other end. This is **COMMANDER 14.**

COMMANDER 14
 Don't speak, just listen. This is
 Commander 14. Peter, you don't know
 what you've gotten yourself into,
 not yet. But you will.
 (MORE)

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)

For now don't talk, don't think,
don't worry. Just report to Mission
and 14th street. The exact address
will arrive on your phone via end
to end encrypted multimedia
message. Until we meet again.

The phone hangs up. Then dings. Peter reads his text:

From Unknown Number:

427 Mission Street. Look for the signs at your feet. They
will guide you. Along with your Nonchalance. NEVER relinquish
your Divine Nonchalance. - **Commander 14.**

Peter stops to try to make sense of what is going on.

PETER

(to himself)

Divine Nonchalance? What the fuck
is going on?

THE FIREDOOR OPENS... before he can see who it is PETER TAKES
OFF RUNNING OUT OF THE PARKING LOT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Peter, looking genuinely scared, walks very fast down a San
Francisco street. For the first time in a long time, maybe
ever, he is taking in his fellows.

He scans the crowd looking for anyone who might be chasing
him. People are very scary to Peter. Eye contact is new for
him. He is growing overwhelmed.

Peter reaches 427 Mission Street, it is an abandoned
storefront. He looks around, nervous and confused. He rereads
his text to confirm the address.

PETER

(reading)

"Look for the signs at your feet--"

Peter looks down. There at his feet is a bronze emblem
literally baked into the sidewalk as though it has been there
forever.

**It is: An arrow pointing to a gate beside the building. Under
the arrow is inscribed: E** (note: this is our first clue)

Peter follows the arrow through the gate into:

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Peter finds himself on one end of a long alley. The sides of the alley are brick wall, no doors. On the other end is a storefront. Given it's location this feels more like Diagon Alley than a normal shop. The unassuming sign reads:

THE STORE WITH BEAUTIFUL THINGS.

Peter considers his next move when he notices a PAIR OF SHOES arrive outside the gate. He hustles down the alley and into the store.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STORE WITH BEAUTIFUL THINGS - CONTINUOUS

Peter enters, breathing heavily, sweaty, to find a small shop of curiosities. There is no one behind the counter. Across the shop though, there is a beautiful young woman. This is **Simone**, late 20's. She has a streak of blue hair and has earbuds hanging from her pierced ears. Simone is transgender, which will not be mentioned except for this stage direction.

She sees the panicked Peter and walks over, removes her earbuds, AND GRABS HIM BY THE COLLAR:

SIMONE
(screaming, threatening)
YOU TOUCH ME AND I'LL FUCKING KILL
YOU!!!

Peter cowers.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Real fucking tough now, aren't
you?!? You cocksucking piece of
shit! No one tricks me, you dirty
fuck. You fucker. Fuck you!!!

PETER
Please... I'm not trying to trick
you. I'm not the fucker.

Simone takes him in, a bit confused. She rages again.

SIMONE
Oh you're the fucker, fucker!

PETER
I swear I'm not. I'm not the
fucker!

SIMONE
You're the fucker!

PETER
(pleading)
Please I'm not. I'm just me.

Simone sees that Peter is very scared.

SIMONE
Wait, are you not... part of the
thing?

PETER
I have no idea what is happening.
I'm so confused. Please don't-

SIMONE
(guard dropping but still
defensive)
Don't lie to me! Are you with the
Institute!?

PETER
Huh? No, I'm... I don't understand
what's going on.

SIMONE
(laughing)
Oh. You're like me. I have no idea
either, it's fucking fun right?!

PETER
I'm really confused and scared.

She can see that he is not exaggerating. He is having a very
different reaction to this experience than she is.

SIMONE
Oh. It's okay I think. I think it's
just... a game or something.

PETER
A game?

SIMONE
Yeah. I was just - role playing.
Sorry.

PETER
You seemed very authentically
threatening.

SIMONE

I know. My insides don't match my outsides.

PETER

Oh. Ok. I still don't understand what's happening.

SIMONE

Me neither but I'm thinking it's some kind of like - new ad campaign or something. I bet at some point someone will try to sell us something. "This experience brought to you by Hershey's."

PETER

Really? Hershey's?

SIMONE

It has to be something like that. I mean, this shit can't be cheap. People don't spend money unless they're trying to make money.

PETER

I spend money on things that don't make me money. Like Netflix.

SIMONE

That's true. I guess someone could be trying to entertain themselves.

She looks around the empty store.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

(calling out, threatening again)

You watching me, you Hershey's cock-fucks? I'll shove your kisses right up your tight corporate assholes.

She turns to Peter as friendly as can be.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Do you want to do the next part together?

PETER

Next part?

She holds up a folder and takes him over to the counter where there is a stack. There is a sign on the counter which says:

TAKE ONE FOLDER. FIND HER.

Simone hands him a folder. She then points at another sign hanging behind the counter:

HONOR SYSTEM. ALL ITEMS ARE AVAILABLE FOR A REASONABLE DONATION. WHATEVER FEELS FAIR.

SIMONE

Honor system. You can only pull that off in a hidden alley.

Peter nods. He may be relaxing a bit, but it is hard to tell.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

See anything you want before we go?

Peter glances around the shop for the first time. It is filled with items of unclear purpose and meaning. There is a small stack of bricks in the corner. On each is inscribed the word:

ELSEWHERE

PETER

Elsewhere?

SIMONE

Who knows? We can always come back. I think? Fuck this is cool. You ready?

She pulls the materials from her folder and shows Peter instructions and a map.

PETER

Are you sure it's allowed?

SIMONE

Allowed?

PETER

Going together... Aren't there rules?

SIMONE

It's... we're grown adults. It's your life, you can do whatever you want. Right?

Peter really considers this.

PETER

I've never really thought about it.
I'm not sure.

Simone looks at him bewildered. She pulls her headphones off and offers them to Peter.

SIMONE

Do you like music?

PETER

No.

SIMONE

Oh my God. I'm not one to call someone weird but you're being weird. Everyone likes music. Even deaf people.

PETER

If that's a joke it might be a little un-PC.

SIMONE

It's not a joke and they can't hear me.

(she hands him an earbud)

Here, try this. It'll calm you down. This is supposed to be fun and things like this don't happen, so don't waste it. Trust me. You can't post-enjoy things. That's why people who film concerts with their phones are morons.

Peter takes the ear buds and puts them in his ears. Simone looks at him and smiles.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Just try to relax. So far everything has been like... perfectly choreographed or something. Like it's all happening for a reason so I would assume we were supposed to meet. Please just... don't fuck this up for me.

She smiles and pushes play.

MUSIC UP: CRUCIFY YOUR MIND by SIXTO RODRIGUEZ

Simone begins walking out of the store. Her phone is in her pocket so Peter is tethered to her by the earbuds. He follows as the music envelops us.

Simon exits the store pulling Peter behind - but as soon as the door shuts **the music abruptly stops** and gives way to silence and blackness:

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - NOW

Peter looks directly at us against a solid backdrop - just as Octavio did in our opening - only Peter's background is light blue. He is Elsewhere. He speaks directly to us.

PETER (V.O.)

I felt like how I've felt a few times after I went to the movie theater and watched a beautiful movie.

CUT TO:

INT. MEMORY TO MEDIA CENTER - CONTINUOUS

WE ZOOM IN ON ONE OF THE TELEVISED MEMORIES AS PETER SPEAKS.

- Simone holds up a photo of a historic church, when she lowers it she reveals they are standing directly in front of the church - exactly where the photo was taken. They look down - baked into the ground is an arrow:

Under it is inscribed: **P** (note: this is the second clue)

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Back to Peter.

PETER (V.O.)

How when it ended I went outside and colors seemed brighter. The world seemed like a better place.

CUT TO:

INT. MEMORY TO MEDIA CENTER - CONTINUOUS

We zoom into another memory on a different screen:

-Peter and Simone walk through the streets of San Francisco, tethered by music. Peter is smiling and his head is up. He takes in his city, looking for clues. Simone points to a No Parking sign which has been altered:

"NO PARKING: except non-chalants" with an arrow pointing the way. Under the arrow is the letter: **W** (note: clue number 3)

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Back to Peter.

PETER (V.O.)

I wanted to keep feeling that way. Somehow for the first time in my life I was walking around looking at the world through a new pair of glasses.

INT. MEMORY TO MEDIA CENTER - CONTINUOUS

On another TV:

Peter watches as Simone looks the wrong way through a peephole - INTO an apartment door. After a moment, she pulls away and motions for him to look through. He does.

We see what Peter sees: Someone has created some mix of Kaleidoscope and diorama. It is stunning and elaborate. Light refracts creating a spinning swirl of color. Then, unexpectedly, the colors give way to a photo of a young woman, pixie cut, dark eye shadow, 80's clothes. She is framed like a missing persons flyer with the words:

EVA LUCIEN. KEEPER OF THE ALGORITHM. MISSING 12-20-93

CUT TO:

INT. ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

Back to Peter.

PETER (V.O.)

Up until then life had been a series of unfulfilled promises. Work hard and you will be happy. Do the right thing and good things will come your way.

CUT TO:

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Peter wakes before his alarm sounds. He looks at his phone: 6:59. He cancels the alarm and smiles.

PETER (V.O.)
 So naturally we kept expecting
 someone to arrive and take it away
 from us. But Hershey's never came.

CUT TO:

INT. PETE'S COFFEE - LATER

Peter takes his coffee from the barista. He notices his name "Pete" handwritten above the logo "Peet's" for the first time. He smiles to himself.

PETER (V.O.)
 For the first time since I was very
 young I felt like - I don't know if
 it sounds stupid - actually I do
 know it sounds stupid - but I felt
 like there was magic. Real magic.
 And maybe I could be a part of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET

Peter walks down the street alone, holding a coffee and trying to make eye contact with his fellows. Most exchange smiles with him. Some reject his eye contact and it makes Peter uncomfortable - but he breaths and continues to try to smile.

PETER
 The memory of my solitude was
 always right behind me and I didn't
 ever want to turn back again.

Peter passes a man dressed very much like him, holding a coffee, head down, not making eye contact. He looks lonely. Peter recognizes himself in this.

PETER (V.O.)
 Suddenly all of the signs around me
 which I had allowed to dictate my
 life lost their power.

Peter walks past the signs of adult life:

NO PARKING.

DON'T WALK.

NO TRESPASSING.

As he passes each one they animate and come to life:

The "do not walk" man breaks free of his X and walks with a bounce in his step.

The videocamera drawing on the "no trespassing" sign short-circuits and burns up the sign.

A zipper unzips the middle of the No Parking sign giving way to the words: **No Regretting**

Peter walks down the street, happy. Then, a familiar voice:

PSYCHIATRIST (V.O.)
And what happened?

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRISTS OFFICE - LATER

Peter sits in his chair talking to the psychiatrist.

PETER
It lasted for a week or so. Then slowly, and much more easily than I would have hoped, that feeling drifted away.

She nods.

PSYCHIATRIST
How long has it been?

PETER
More than six weeks now. And I don't really remember the feeling anymore. Life is... life again. People's mouths move and I nod.

She smiles a sad smile.

PSYCHIATRIST
Is there anything you took from the experience that has stayed with you?

PETER
(considering)
I think about her sometimes.

PSYCHIATRIST
Simone?

PETER
Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST

What about her?

PETER

How different life must feel to her. I was so scared. And she was having so much fun. I understood people feel differently about things like rollercoasters, but I never understood how differently two people could experience life.

PSYCHIATRIST

And what does that make you feel?

PETER

That I wish I was like her.

INT. PETER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter sits on his couch eating hot pockets and watching TV. He has reverted back to the Peter we met at the beginning of the story. Rain pounds his windows.

His phone rings. He looks down. Unknown Caller.

He considers. He doesn't often receive calls. Finally, he picks up:

PETER

Hello?

BRITISH WOMAN

Peter?

Peter perks up -

PETER

Yes?

BRITISH WOMAN

I'm calling on behalf of PillFriends.Org to make you aware that all of your generic and non generic prescriptions are available online safely and legally for a substantial discount.

PETER

Oh. I don't take any pills.

BRITISH WOMAN

We also offer Viagra, Cialis and Levitra in both name brand and generic form.

PETER

I'm fine thank you.

The phone hangs up on Peter. He sets his phone down and continues watching Netflix. His phone rings again. Unknown caller. He does not answer.

Peter's LANDLINE rings. He never gets calls at home. Confused, Peter walks to the kitchen counter where his landline resides- he answers.

COMMANDER 14

(old timey and urgent)

PETER!!! This is Commander 14!! You are needed NOW!!

Peter jumps to his feet.

PETER

What? I'm in the middle of dinner.

COMMANDER 14

Dinner can wait Peter! I need to know now - are you in or are you out!?

PETER

I...

COMMANDER 14

NOW PETER!

PETER

In.

COMMANDER 14

Your location will be transmitted via end to end encrypted multimedia message. Your help is required POST HASTE!

He hangs up. Ding. Peter runs to his cell phone. A new text reads:

PETER

(reading)

Northwest Corner of Market and Church Street - NOW!

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)
 When I say "Hornefocter" you say
 "Jumpsuit" - Commander 14.

EXT. STREET CORNER - LATER

Peter stands on the street corner huddled under a hooded sweatshirt in the pouring rain. He looks down at another bronze arrow embedded in the pavement. It points towards the nearby payphone.

Below the arrow is inscribed the letter: **A** (this is clue number 4)

THE payphone rings. Peter answers.

COMMANDER 14
 (old timey)
 Hornefocter.

Peter hesitates.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
 HORNEFOCTER!!!!

PETER
 (wet and cold)
 Jumpsuit.

COMMANDER 14
 (yelling)
 HORNEFOCTER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PETER
 (yelling back)
 JUMPSUIT!!!

COMMANDER 14
 Excellent! Now we can get this
 transaction rolling. The time is
 nigh. Listen very carefully...
 dance.

Peter stands in the pouring rain, unsure.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
 DANCE! The only way to proceed is
 through rigorous physical jamming.
 So DANCE!! DANCE PETER, DANCE!!!!

And he does. Despite himself Peter starts awkwardly dancing in the rain at the intersection of Market and Church.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
 Excellent. Keep dancing. Hang up
 this phone and dance! DANCE
 MOTHERFUCKER, DANCE!!!

Commander 14 hangs up. Peter sets down the receiver and continues dancing. It is a strange sight but Peter dances in the rain. Then something even stranger happens:

1980's HIP HOP music begins to fill the air. Peter turns to find a group of men approaching in matching red 1980's jumpsuits carrying a giant boom box dancing towards him...

And they are accompanied by a man in a GIANT BIGFOOT COSTUME who is also dancing. The hip-hop group form a circle around Peter and Bigfoot as they both dance. Bigfoot's enthusiasm encourages Peter to let loose even further.

It is truly one of the most bizarre sights you can imagine seeing, but Peter feels free. After a minute of dancing...

BIGFOOT HANDS PETER A LARGE ENVELOPE, then he and the dancers disappear into the night. Peter is left standing alone in the rain holding the envelope. He begins laughing hysterically to himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELORES PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Peter makes his way in the rain to Delores Park. He checks his paper: "**Delores Park 10:00PM -- 104.5 FM**"

In his other hand is a cheap and tiny FM radio receiver and earbuds.

Hoodie up to shield him from the blankets of rain, he smiles as big as we have seen. He looks down at his watch, 9:59 PM.

He jogs towards the entrance of the park just as another figure arrives ahead of him. It is Simone, hair wet, laughing, and as beautiful as ever.

PETER
 (calling out)
 Simone!

SIMONE
 Peter! What the fuck dude!

She hugs him.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

I don't know if that was Yeti or Bigfoot or Sasquatch but that motherfucker can dance man.

PETER

It was Bigfoot.

SIMONE

Oh! Thought so. You having fun this time?

Peter thinks, trying to find the truth of his experience.

PETER

I have a lot of anxiety but in a good way.

SIMONE

(laughing)

That's called excitement.

He smiles. He checks his watch 9:59:45. He turns on his radio and tunes to 104.5 FM. She goes to remove hers from the envelope but instead Peter hands her one of his earbuds. They each put one in.

Peter's watch hits 10 PM and a broadcast crackles to life.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO)

Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to Radio Nonchalance - Dispatches from Elsewhere. I am sure by now you might care for an answer or two as to your current circumstance. Those answers will presently be provided. But first take a moment to look around you at the faces of the other intrepid souls you can now call family. You have all been selected as agents of Nonchalance...

Peter looks down and sees an arrow embedded in the concrete pointing towards the park. Below the arrow is inscribed **".LIFE"** (note: clue number 5). Peter and Simone look into the park before them.

The camera widens and rises to reveal close to seventy people standing in the rain listening to the broadcast, all in total wonder. People wave and smile at each other. All members of a very bizarre shared experience.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

As we begin our live broadcast there remains a task at hand to be completed whilst simultaneously absorbing the message and meaning of our transmission. Within your envelopes resides a colored paddle. These will serve as identifiers for your IMMEDIATE family. Please remove your paddles now and find those with whom you shall proceed on this journey.

Peter and Simone reach into their envelopes and remove paddles:

Both of their paddles are BLUE.

They smile. Then they look out to the rest of the gathered participants:

EVERYONE IS HOLDING A BLUE PADDLE. A sea of people all holding up blue paddles.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

And now cryptic radio brings you the secret of Nonchalance. What is the secret? What is nonchalance and who are it's hidden followers? Are they friendly, or are they a menace? What does their existence portend to today's world of political, economic and spiritual bedlam? Listen carefully and we will tell you.

As Commander 14 continues, a young man in a suit approaches and extends his paddle. Confused, Peter and Simone extend theirs. To their surprise they realize that his is a very slightly **DIFFERENT SHADE OF BLUE.**

He smiles at them and walks away for further comparisons. Peter and Simone look back out at the crowd and realize that:

While everyone does indeed have a blue paddle - There are in fact MANY DIFFERENT SHADES OF BLUE. From cobalt to sky and several in between.

Peter and Simone re-compare their paddles and confirm they are in fact the same. They then proceed into the crowd. They join their fellow participants who come together and separate like ants, comparing blue paddles as the broadcast continues:

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

This is your announcer, Commander 14 broadcasting for a limited time on this special frequency. Follow along as we disclose a world who's secret presence may mean the difference between enlightenment and total incomprehension.

Peter and Simone, connected by their earbuds, make their way through the crowd. We should notice the diversity of this gathering. Not just ethnically, but socioeconomically and aesthetically as well.

Every paddle interaction is friendly and includes a handshake or wave as they all listen on to the broadcast.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)

Pay close attention. We today welcome you to a shadowy group who follow the ideal of Divine Nonchalance. But first a word from our sponsor...

A soothing woman's voice takes over the broadcast:

EPWA SPOKESWOMAN (ON RADIO)

You are listening to Radio Nonchalance. Dispatches from Elsewhere. Support for this program has been provided to you by the Elsewhere Public Works Agency. The EPWA provides for the management and maintenance of the pervasive yet effervescent extradimensionally located... Elsewhere. The EPWA supports: infradestrukture, commotion and confusion, street life, roofs, alleys, secret stairways, tunnels, UFO's, drive-ins, cloud busting, obfuscation, clarification, deep-sea monkey business, rustic dynamism, trap doors, warp zones, aerosol heritage, flea markets, the hollow earth, smoke shops, and candy stores.

The entire crowd is laughing as they continue to search for their same-shaded teammates.

EPWA SPOKESWOMAN (CONT'D)

Now, back to our program...

Peter and Simone approach a heavy set man in his mid-forties standing holding up a paddle. As opposed to walking from person to person comparing paddles, this man has chosen a different strategy. He stands in place simply waiting for people to come to him. This is **ORGANELLE**.

Simone holds her paddle up to his and they in fact are a match. Organelle gives her a thumbs up and removes one of his earbuds. He speaks quickly, and way too loudly.

ORGANELLE

You find the others, I'll wait here.

SIMONE

You sure you don't want to join us?

ORGANELLE

I don't want to get distracted. It's hidden underneath.

He replaces his earbud and continues listening to Commander 14.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO)

Can you tell, listener, that the world of Nonchalance is all about you just beyond ordinary, plain sight? Harken to this broadcast. While the channels are open the nonchalant world may become apparent for a limited time. Be ready. To help you in your quests you **WILL REQUIRE** the full content of this program.

Simone and Peter move from person to person looking for matches.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

But first, a warning... beware of false nonchalance. Unscrupulous individuals who have stumbled across The Secret may claim to be able to transmit the law of the non-chalant--- but always for a price. Give no credit to these hucksters, these mountebanks, these flim flam men. By their fruit so shall ye know them!

A young woman in her early thirties approaches Peter and Simone and extends her paddle. **It is a match.**

She smiles a warm smile and extends her hand to shake. Peter obliges. Simone then pulls her in for a hug. This is **JANICE**.

She is dressed very plainly and is one of the few in the crowd who carries an umbrella. She holds it out over the three of them. They survey the crowd and see that most people have now found their "immediate families". All groups of four or five.

Simone takes Janice by the hand and guides the three of them back towards Organelle. When they arrive he has his eyes closed and is listening with great intensity to the broadcast. He barely notices them.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)

The false profits are even now consolidating their forces as they draw up their plans against us. Beware especially the one the world calls Octavio Coleman Esquire for he is, in the present era, the main opponent of Nonchalance and a cynical and fiendishly inspired deviser of false Nonchalance. Founder of the Jejune Institute, chief funder of The Algorithm, CIA operative and informant, saboteur and provocateur, Octavio Coleman Esquire is the man who is behind all of the monitoring, subversion, and suppression of Nonchalance.

Organelle opens his eyes and finds his three new companions before him. He offers his hand to Janice, who shakes it. She raises her umbrella higher and the four huddle together under it.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Today, due in no small part to their unmatched wealth and power, The Jejune Institute commands an unprecedented freedom from government regulation, or, for that matter, any superior authority, This might have dire consequences for all operating Nonchalants in this area.

Our camera begins to rise into the sky again. Now from above we see that, what was a group of random individuals, are now all standing in clusters, families. They listen on mesmerized, being showered by the rain.

COMMANDER 14 (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Angry and separated souls crave power, and there is one great power Octavio has yet to possess. My friends there is a world behind this world which has been hidden from you. But no longer.

(with growing charisma and intensity)

The power is within you! It always has been!! Like Saint Peter in prison, the keys to your cell rest at your feet!! Reach down and unlock the door. Emerge as free men and women. Find her --- AND WE WILL CHANGE THIS WORLD!!!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER

SIMONE

That was batshit crazy!!

Our four heroes sit at a table in an empty diner. They are the only patrons. It feels vaguely like Edward Hopper's Nighthawks. A waitress reads a magazine behind the counter.

JANICE

It really is quite an elaborate hoax.

ORGANELLE

I'm sorry what do you mean hoax? You think this is some sort of prank?

JANICE

No, I don't mean a prank I just think someone is having a laugh. We're in San Francisco, it's some tech billionaire. Being eccentric?

ORGANELLE

There is certainly money behind this - but it isn't some tech billionaire. This is a government operation... what was your name again-

JANICE

Janice-

ORGANELLE

-Janice. There is code in that broadcast and more importantly, more infuriatingly if you ask me, they are collecting our personal data, cell phones, emails, etcetera - and engaging us in what is clearly some kind of mind control experiment.

There is a long beat from the group.

SIMONE

(half joking)

I don't mean to be rude, and I mean this as a sincere question, but are you a crazy person? They say people who are actually crazy don't KNOW that they're crazy but my experience is that that isn't true.

Organelle shakes his head.

ORGANELLE

I scored a 1573 on the SAT. The reason my score wasn't perfect was not due to an incorrect answer but rather a deduction on the essay portion for what "they" deemed was an "unnecessary tangent." So no, I'm not crazy, I'm acutely aware of patterns and I feel one operating here. This is all funneling towards something.

JANICE

Well... you never know. It is a pretty "out there" idea. I'm still trying to wrap my head around their story. The missing girl? Divine Nonchalance?

SIMONE

So the radio guy was saying that The Jejune Institute is actually bad?

ORGANELLE

What he's saying-

SIMONE

I'm sorry, what was your name again?

ORGANELLE

Organelle.

SIMONE

Excuse me?

ORGANELLE

Organelle.

SIMONE

Organ L?

ORGANELLE

That's the correct pronunciation but I feel like if you wrote it down you'd be spelling it wrong. It's one word. Organelle.

SIMONE

Oh. Ok. Well Organelle, it's gonna help me to talk this out with everyone equally, not just hear your theory over and over, ok?

Organelle almost looks hurt and takes a bite of his sandwich.

ORGANELLE

I understand.

SIMONE

Great.

She turns to Peter.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

What about you Peter? You've been awfully quiet.

PETER

Oh, I'm just listening.

SIMONE

Well, c'mon. Why don't you say what you think?

PETER

Oh. I guess... anything I might say is something I already know, so I wouldn't be learning anything new by talking. I thought I would just listen and gather information to process.

They all just stare at him.

ORGANELLE

That sounds enlightened, but it's selfish. You're like a selfish Buddha. I'm going to call you SB. Selfish Buddha.

PETER

I'd prefer you didn't.

ORGANELLE

Then why don't you share your thoughts with the group, instead of hoarding all the information for yourself? Be the assertive skinny Thai Buddha, not the lazy fat Chinese Buddha.

Peter takes a deep breath then proceeds.

PETER

What do I think? I guess I'm not sure yet. But there's a question that keeps nagging me.

SIMONE

What is it?

PETER

Well... I don't want to sound stupid or naive. And that's probably why I haven't spoken up I just realized.

ORGANELLE

Out with it SB.

PETER

Sorry. The question is... what if it's real?

JANICE

What do you mean, real?

PETER

I just mean, and I know it's not likely, but what if it's not a prank or a stunt or a game. But what if it's something real?

Organelle laughs. Peter is embarrassed. Simone turns to Organelle sternly.

SIMONE

Don't you fucking laugh at that!
That's not funny, it's beautiful.
And he didn't want to say it, I
made him, so shut up.

ORGANELLE

(to Simone)

I feel like you and I are going to
butt heads a lot. Which I don't
mind, but can you please watch the
language?

(to Peter)

Sorry for laughing.

PETER

(embarrassed)

It was a question not a theory.
Just to clarify.

There is a long pause as the group considers how to respond
to Peter. Janice speaks up.

JANICE

I think that's a really fun
question to ponder, but
unfortunately--

(trying to be kind)

There isn't real magic in
grownupville. Believe me I wish
there was, but we're all adults
here -

PETER

(interrupting, quickly)

-No, of course. Like I said I
didn't want to be stupid-

SIMONE

-it wasn't stupid-

PETER

-but everyone was asking me and
looking at me so I just-

SIMONE

-I liked your question-

PETER

-We should see if they have pie. I
haven't had pie in a while and
diners often...

(calling out)

Is there pie!?!

It is clear Peter is beginning to freak out a tiny bit. Simone puts her hand on his. He quiets.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
Strawberry or Coconut Cream?

We widen and are reminded of the waitress, the only other person in the diner.

PETER
Umm. I'm not sure. Which is-

ORGANELLE
(aggravated)
OH MY GOD, JUST BRING BOTH!!!

A long sober beat. The waitress comes over with two slices of each pie, four total.

WAITRESS
Here, you go. Two of each. On the house.

JANICE
Oh that's very kind of you.

WAITRESS
No, not kind. I think it'll be amazing to watch you all decide who gets what.

She heads off. Organelle takes a coconut cream and passes out the rest without asking who wants what. Peter is given Strawberry. He contemplates it.

ORGANELLE
Please don't say it.

Simone slides her coconut cream over to Peter, an act of mercy.

SIMONE
Here take mine.

PETER
No it's okay.

SIMONE
I gotta get going. I don't wanna walk home too late.

PETER
I could walk you.

SIMONE

I'm good. Enjoy your pie.

(to the group)

Well gang, I don't know when, but I have a hunch I'll be seeing you again. Until then, follow your Divine Nonchalance... whatever that means.

She heads for the door.

We stay on Peter as he looks after her. Once she is gone he looks back down at his pies and deliberates.

CAMERA'S POV - We watch Peter for a moment. Then we take a glance over at Organelle and Janice, each taking a bite of their pie.

Then without warning, THE CAMERA SEEMS TO MAKE A DECISION AND HEADS FOR THE DOOR AND EXITS.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - CONTINUOUS

THE CAMERA'S POV: It looks both ways down the street, and finds Simone about twenty feet ahead. It hustles to catch up to her.

WHEN THE CAMERA REACHES HER: it quickly finds it's proper tracking position, and settles back into a standard shot.

And with this decision by the camera - SIMONE HAS BECOME OUR NEW "LEAD."

Simone walks down the street, now mostly empty. She smiles to herself at the bizarritude of the night. She is enjoying the quiet of the empty city.

UNTIL that peace is broken. She passes two men standing across the street. They are drinking beer and smoking what may or may not be cigarettes. They have an energy you would cross the street to avoid.

THUG 1

(cat calling)

Yo! Why you walking home alone? You need an escort? I do.

THUG 2

What's the matter, you don't like to get fucked?

Both men laugh. Simone does not respond but instead puts in her earbuds.

THE STREET SOUNDS DISAPPEAR AND WE ARE IN TOTAL SILENCE as she continues walking. She is back in her own world.

Then however - we see that the men are now following her. They call out to her but we cannot hear what they are saying. We are in silence. Their faces and mouths should disgust us as they scream unheard obscenities.

A familiar voice narrates for us:

COMMANDER 14 (V.O.)

And just what do we mean by "Divine Nonchalance" anyway? A casual way of sauntering down the street? A kind of cool perhaps? An attitude? Or something more?

Simone can sense she is being followed. She tries to keep a steady pace and not look back to engage them.

COMMANDER 14 (V.O.)

You like cartoons don't you? Of course you do. Everyone likes... cartoons.

WE ENTER HORIZONTAL SPLIT SCREEN:

BELOW: we see an old-timey 1930's cartoon.

ABOVE: we watch Simone being followed.

COMMANDER 14 (V.O.)

Now picture in your mind a cartoon character - any cartoon character - sleepwalking. You've seen this cartoon before haven't you?

BELOW: A sleepwalking cartoon man walks down the street, eyes closed, avoiding lamp posts and mailboxes as he slumbers.

ABOVE: Simone walks, eyes forward as the men are gaining ground on her. She turns back and looks. She picks up her pace and heads for an empty intersection.

COMMANDER 14

Observe as our protagonist stumbles down the street. He easily but narrowly dodges impending danger. Seemingly without effort or awareness.

BELOW: The sleepwalking cartoon steps into the street, but then stops to yawn, JUST BARELY saving him from a passing fire truck.

ABOVE: Simone walks too fast into the intersection and is nearly hit by a passing motorcycle. She begins running. The men run after her.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
Bricks from a construction site
ALMOST but DO NOT fall on him.

BELOW: Some old timey construction workers' hoist snaps, and falling bricks NARROWLY miss our sleepwalking cartoon.

ABOVE: One of the men HURLS HIS BEER BOTTLE at Simone, narrowly missing her and shattering on the pavement. The men are laughing.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
At the last minute as he is about
to step into an open manhole in the
street - he is miraculously spared
the fall.

BELOW: Our cartoon sleepwalker is walking towards an open manhole when at the very last second a man pops up from the sewer and replaces the cover.

ABOVE: SIMONE'S HEEL BREAKS. She takes a nasty fall onto the sidewalk and bashes her knee. She is down.

COMMANDER 14 (CONT'D)
And after numerous similar close
calls, his unconscious path is
turned around in a revolving door,
and by fortunate coincidence, he is
somehow returned to bed, unharmed
by the end of the cartoon.

BELOW: Our cartoon is flung through a fast moving revolving door which sends him flying miraculously through a neighboring building's window right into his bed.

ABOVE: The men have reached Simone who is helpless on the ground. They yank her to her feet and shove her into a doorway.

NOW SIMONE'S SCENE TAKES OVER THE FULL SCREEN

One of the thugs pins Simone's arms against the wall. The other reaches down and grabs her crotch.

His face turns to confusion and anger. He rips the earbuds from her ears and THE SOUNDS OF THE SCENE RETURN.

THUG 2
What the fuck are you? You fucking-

ZAAAAAAAAAAP. THUG 2 falls to the ground in pain.

BOOM. A punch lands squarely to the face of THUG 1. He goes down, out like a light.

Simone looks up terrified and confused to find... **ORGANELLE.**

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - LATER

Organelle and Simone walk down the street. Time has passed now and both are quiet. Finally:

SIMONE

We should have called the police.

ORGANELLE

I'm sorry, I don't like involving the authorities.

She nods.

SIMONE

Thank you. For being there.

ORGANELLE

Mmm-Hmm.

SIMONE

And you carry a stun gun?

ORGANELLE

It's very specifically NOT a stun gun. Legally it's a personal zapping device.

A beat, then something occurs to her.

SIMONE

So were you - following me?

ORGANELLE

I was making sure you got home safely.

SIMONE

So... yes?

ORGANELLE

I know you all think what we're involved in is fun, but if what I heard on that broadcast is correct - If the EPWA's information is accurate, then The Jejune Institute is a very bad place. I didn't like you walking home alone. Not without us knowing what's going on.

SIMONE

Organelle, they're all one thing. The EPWA and The Institute, Commander 14 and Octavio Coleman. It's all one game.

ORGANELLE

Then how do you explain what just happened?

She laughs.

SIMONE

How do I explain what happened? We're on Earth.

ORGANELLE

What does that mean?

SIMONE

It means some people are terrible. You don't need a secret organization to find assholes.

ORGANELLE

You think two men were randomly hanging out on a street, randomly saw a woman walking alone, then decided to follow her and harass her for no reason, then forcibly tried to-

SIMONE

Yes!

She stops and looks at him. She starts laughing. But it is a sad laugh. She puts her hand on his.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Take my word for it. Be thankful that that seems less likely to you than that we stumbled into a clandestine international battle between good and evil.

(MORE)

SIMONE (CONT'D)
We have very different experiences
of this world.

She continues walking. A long beat.

ORGANELLE
I understand.

SIMONE
You don't, but it's okay.

They arrive at a rather lovely townhouse.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
This is me. Thank you again for
being there.

She hugs him and gives him a peck on the cheek. Organelle
can't help but be impressed by the house.

ORGANELLE
This place is... is this yours?

SIMONE
No, I just live here. Goodnight.

ORGANELLE
Goodnight.

She enters, leaving Organelle outside.

INT. SIMONE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Simone shuts the door quietly and heads upstairs. We hear an
older woman's voice call out:

WOMAN (O.C.)
Simone is that you?

SIMONE
Yes I'm home mom, go back to sleep.

WOMAN (O.C.)
Did you have a good night?

SIMONE
Overall yes. Goodnight.

WOMAN (O.C.)
Night sweetie.

Simone makes her way to her bedroom and enters.

INT. SIMONE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Simone stands in front of her mirror. She pulls up her dress to reveal her knees, which are scraped and bloody. She takes a deep breath as she looks in the mirror.

CLOSE ON SIMONE'S FACE IN THE MIRROR:

She stares at herself, her face a mix of every emotion of the night. Tonight was a lot.

QUICK MEMORY FLASH OF SEEING PETER AT DELORES PARK

Simone smiles.

MEMORY FLASH OF THE MASS OF PEOPLE ALL HOLDING UP DIFFERENT SHADES OF BLUE PADDLE

Simone's eyes widen in astonished memory of the beauty.

MEMORY FLASH OF THE WHOLE GANG ARGUING AT THE DINER

Simone can't help but laugh.

MEMORY FLASH OF THE THUGS BEGINNING TO FOLLOW HER

Her face darkens.

MEMORY FLASH OF THE MEN CHASING HER

Her breathing is growing heavy as she stares into her own eyes.

MEMORY FLASH OF BEING PINNED VIOLENTLY AGAINST THE WALL

A tear slides down her face in the mirror, she wipes it away. She feels her breathing is getting away from her and she uses every ounce of herself to steady it. She takes a deep breath. Another. Another. She stares into her eyes, then closes them.

SIMONE

You're okay. You're okay.

Simone opens her eyes to find she is:

INT. ELSEWHERE - NOW

Simone against the same pale blue background that Peter once was. She speaks directly to us:

SIMONE

I have been in this world for
twenty seven years. And I have
spent twenty of them uncomfortable.

(MORE)

SIMONE (CONT'D)

The first seven were really nice. I have wonderful parents. They love me. I love them. That matters to me. If I am honest it is the most important thing in the entire world to me. And so I do not know, I have never known, how to properly and honestly explain a feeling I have. The most powerful feeling in my life. A feeling I can only express as "anywhere but here." How do I explain that I want nothing more in this world than to not be HERE - in this house, in this city, in this body, in this reality - without the fear of breaking their hearts.

She lowers her head a bit under the weight of this. Then comes back to us.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

Please understand I have wonderful days. I have days when I look in the mirror, or look at art, or look at my friends, or my family and I think that I am the luckiest person in the world. I think that. With my brain. And I have other days where I look in the mirror and I want to destroy this thing I see looking back at me so that whatever there is inside of it can get the fuck out, and see the sun, and BREATHE. And breathe. And breathe. And say "you're okay." "you're okay." I don't *think* that. I *feel* that. I *am* that. At those moments I *am* that.

She smiles at us.

SIMONE (CONT'D)

It's so stupid. It's so stupid I know, but I am standing in that park, surrounded by strangers all holding up these paddles. Different barely distinguishable shades of blue. Like we were different shades of the same whole. And then they kept saying the word - "Elsewhere. Elsewhere. Elsewhere." I didn't know exactly why at the time but I do now. They were telling me two things.

(MORE)

SIMONE (CONT'D)

The first was that I could finally go to the one place I've never been able to find. The second was something I had never even considered to be a possibility - that I didn't have to go there alone.

Simone smiles. She closes her eyes for a long beat. When she opens them she is back:

INT. SIMONE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She is looking at herself in the mirror, back where she left us, but she is calm now. Serene. She gives herself a small nod. She is okay.

We pull back from the mirror, further and further until we exit her bedroom window. We continue outside pulling further and further through the sky and away from the building.

For a brief moment we take in the glittering San Francisco skyline.

Then, a second too soon, we CUT TO:

INT. SOMEWHERE - NOW

Octavio Coleman Esq. against his maroon background staring at us once again. But this time, he is not smiling. He looks angry. Very calm. But angry. Beneath him is the counter:

7...

6...

5...

4...

Blink...

3...

2...

1...

Black.

THE END.

Note to reader: Our clues form the address **EPWA.LIFE**
This is where the puzzle beneath the show will begin.