

A SCANNER DARKLY

a screenplay by

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adapted from the novel *A Scanner Darkly* by

Philip K. Dick

First Draft
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SHOT OF NOTEBOOK PAGE DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

POV of someone skimming a hand-written entry. The corresponding voice-over is offhand, dispassionate. In the background, children can be heard laughing and playing.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Lately, Jerry Fabin stands all day shaking bugs from his hair. The doctor says there are no bugs in his hair.

The sound of fingers scratching scalp begins and grows louder through the following montage.

EXT. COCA-COLA BOTTLING PLANT - PRE-DAWN

SUBTITLE: ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, IN THE YEAR 1994

A massive, unlit Coca-Cola sign is eerily silhouetted against the early morning sky. Antiquated delivery trucks set out from loading docks, as red futuristic cargo planes, emblazoned with the Coca-Cola logo, take off from the roof.

EXT. FREEWAY - PRE-DAWN

Birds-eye view of Coca-Cola trucks spreading out through the city. Coke planes shoot by close to the camera.

EXT. 7-11 - DAWN

A Coke truck pulls into the parking lot.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAWN

A Coke plane lands gracefully on the roof of the supermarket.

EXT. MCDONALD'S - DAWN

Uniformed delivery men enter, hauling cases of Coke syrup.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAWN

A Coca-Cola truck rumbles slowly past a row of low-income, plastic pre-fab houses. We hold on one house whose front lawn is strewn with furniture and cleaning products.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN

The windows are spray-painted over with silver paint. A single pole lamp with bare, harsh spot-lights illuminates the room, which is emptied of furniture, covered in a sickly green shag carpet, and littered with fast-food wrappers. In

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the center of the room stands Jerry Fabin, thirty, with wild-eyes and a long, tangled mass of hair. He is naked, draped over a metal garbage can, and vigorously scratching his head. This process continues for an uncomfortably long time. A Golden Retriever sleeps in the corner.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S BATHROOM - LATER

Jerry Fabin stands under a hot shower. Steam fills the stall. He scrubs his hair violently with tensed fingers.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

We hear the shower. Steam pours out the open bathroom door.

EXT. JERRY FABIN'S HOUSE - MID-DAY

The sun is high; the day is bright and hazy. A few hippies stroll by or sit on front steps, discreetly smoking joints. We hear the distant sound of Jerry's shower.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S BATHROOM - LATER

Jerry is still in the shower, scrubbing away. He finally turns it off and steps out, a drowned rat. He dries himself, wipes the mirror and squints nervously at his reflection. Tiny bugs hop around on his head. He screams.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jerry lies on the cruddy shag carpet, open volumes of the Encyclopedia Brittanica spread around him. He scratches himself as he studies one of the volumes. Insects hop up and down all over his body, and on the rug. When he exhales, a cloud of bugs pours from his mouth; he shoos them away.

EXT. JERRY FABIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Jerry heads up the walkway carrying a shopping bag. Several cans of Raid and other bug sprays poke out of the bag. Bugs hop around on Jerry. He puts the bag down on the stoop to scratch himself. He notices tiny bugs chewing the shrubs.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Jerry consults with a man behind the cash register.

NURSERY CLERK

Eating the bushes? Could be aphids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY FABIN

Aphids! Of course. Y'know, I started with "A" in my cyclopedia, yet somehow I must've skipped right over aphids. It does start with "A", right? Aphids?

NURSERY CLERK

Yes. Yes, it does, sir.

JERRY FABIN

Boy, those fuckers can really bite.

NURSERY CLERK

Aphids don't bite people.

Fabin just stares at the clerk.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Scrawled charts depicting the aphid life-cycle now adorn the walls. As Jerry sprays a can of "Aphid-Off" around the room, he notices his sleeping dog is covered with the bugs.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S BATHROOM - DAY

Jerry stands in the shower with his dog. Jerry is lathered head-to-toe and in the process of lathering the dog.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Jerry and the long-suffering dog are still in the shower. Charles Freck, early thirties and stoned, enters.

CHARLES FRECK

Hey, Jerry, I was in the neighborhood looking to score, and I thought -- What the fuck are you doing in the shower with the goddamn dog?

JERRY FABIN

I got to get the aphids.

Jerry turns off the shower, steps out with the dog, and begins drying him. Freck watches silently, transfixed, as Jerry proceeds to rub oil, then talc into the dog's coat.

CHARLES FRECK

I don't see any aphids. What's an aphid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY FABIN

(busy)

It eventually kills you. That's what an aphid is.

Freck nods sympathetically.

JERRY FABIN

They're in my hair and my skin and my lungs. The goddamn pain is unbearable. I'm gonna have to go to the hospital.

CHARLES FRECK

(beat, squints)

How come I can't see them though?

Jerry stops talcing the dog, looks up at Freck.

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Jerry and Freck are on all fours on the carpet. Bugs hop all around. The powdered-white dog sleeps in the corner.

JERRY FABIN

I'll find an especially big one, cause they're hard for many people to see.

Jerry grabs a bug from the carpet, throws it in a jar, and clamps the lid down fast. He shows it triumphantly to Freck.

CHARLES FRECK

Wow! That is a big one!

JERRY FABIN

Help me find more for the doctor to see.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY FABIN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The two men are still on their hands and knees collecting bugs. Three jars are already full of hopping insects.

CHARLES FRECK

What do we get for these? I mean, does the doctor pay a bounty or something? A prize? Any bread?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JERRY FABIN

I get to help perfect a cure for them.

They continue to collect bugs in silence. Jerry starts scratching himself again, trying not to be too obvious.

JERRY FABIN

Hey, man, you continue while I take a leak and like that.

Jerry heads to the bathroom. The dog, who has been sleeping near the bathroom door, skulks to the other side of the room.

CHARLES FRECK

Jerry, these bugs sort of scare me. I don't like it here by myself.

Jerry stops, holds the door jam for support. He is in pain.

JERRY FABIN

You're a chickenshit bastard, Freck.

CHARLES FRECK

Couldn't you --

JERRY FABIN

I got to take a leak and like that!

Jerry enters the bathroom, slams the door shut, and locks it.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry turns on the shower, climbs in and begins to soap himself vigorously. Freck is barely audible throughout.

CHARLES FRECK (O.S.)

I'm afraid out here, man.

JERRY FABIN

Then go fuck yourself, man!

CHARLES FRECK (O.S.)

Do these fuckers bite?

JERRY FABIN

Yeah they bite! They're aphids!

CHARLES FRECK

Can I wash them off and wait for you?

Jerry ignores Freck. He scrubs himself intently, ritualistically, totally absorbed in his task.

INT. LION'S CLUB HALL - DAY

We hear pronounced, rhythmic breathing, as we scan the hall, which is filled with middle-aged businessmen wearing an array of brightly colored suits. They are well-fed and dull-looking. At the podium is another businessman, this one fat in a pink suit and yellow tie. He addresses the assemblage.

FAT BUSINESSMAN

Gentlemen, we have a wonderful opportunity this afternoon. The county of Orange has provided us with the chance to hear from -- and put questions to -- an undercover narcotics agent from the Sheriff's Office.

The fat businessman gestures with a sweep of his arm toward the camera.

The heavy breathing stops as we angle on what the fat businessman is gesturing toward: a generic blur of a human being sitting on stage. The blur is clearly human, but it's impossible to settle on its facial features. It's as if the features keep changing.

FAT BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

Now you will notice that you can barely see this individual because he is wearing what is called a "scramble suit", which he wears during most of his daily activities of law enforcement. Due to potential corruption within the Sheriff's Department, even this gallant officer's co-workers and superiors must not know his "street" identity.

Heavy breathing. Again we're inside the suit. Now we see, in shadowy profile, the face of the man in the suit. This is Bob Arctor, early thirties, homely, and looking like a druggie. He scans the audience disdainfully.

BOB ARCTOR

(under breath)

Nitwits. Pathetic, soulless morons.

We cut to the outside of the suit -- still expressionless.

FAT BUSINESSMAN

This man -- whom we will call Fred, because that is the code name under which he reports the information he

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT BUSINESSMAN (cont'd)
 gathers -- cannot be identified by
 voice or by appearance. He looks,
 does he not, like a vague blur. This
 is because his scramble suit projects
 thousands of different human faces
 onto your retinas, thus turning Fred
 into a veritable Everyman. All things
 to all people translates into nothing
 to anyone, does it not?

The fat businessman smiles a big, toothy smile. The audience
 of straights smiles back, almost in unison.

FAT BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)
 So let's hear it for our vague blur!

The audience erupts into enthusiastic applause. Fred rises
 and replaces the fat businessman behind the podium. When he
 speaks it is an emotionless computer voice.

FRED
 If you saw me on the street, you'd
 say, "There goes a weirdo freak
 dooper." And you'd feel aversion and
 walk away.

The audience is silent, blank, their blankness a reflection
 of the blankness of Fred's scramble suit.

FRED (CONT'D)
 I don't look like you. I can't afford
 to. My life depends on it.

Dramatic pause.

FRED (CONT'D)
 I am not going to tell you first what
 I'm attempting to do as an undercover
 officer. I'm going to tell you...
 (beat)
 ... what I am afraid of.

Now the audience is hooked, their eyes wide.

We move inside the suit and watch Bob Arctor watching the
 audience, timing the pause for best effect. We hear the
 breathing again, and when Arctor speaks, it is in his normal
 voice, bored, delivering a memorized speech.

BOB ARCTOR
 What I fear, is that our children,
 your children and my children...
 (pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR (cont'd)
... I have two. Little ones.

QUICK SHOT OF FAMILY PHOTO OF ARCTOR, HIS WIFE, AND TWO LITTLE GIRLS

The Arctor in the photo is different, conservative, in a colorful suit like the audience members. His wife and kids are smiling and suburban-looking. Their features indistinct, generic, impossible to recall.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But not too little to be addicted...

INT. LION'S CLUB HALL - CONTINUOUS

Arctor is speaking from inside the suit.

BOB ARCTOR
... calculatedly addicted, for profit, by those who would destroy this society. We do not yet know who these animals are who pray on our young, but one day we will.

VOICE FROM CROWD
Sock it to 'em!

The audience concurs. Bob Arctor sighs disdainfully.

Outside the suit, the sigh is heard as a computer-like exhalation, uninterpretable, lost on the audience.

FRED
We believe there is one source for Substance D and a diversified distribution system making it accessible in all major drug using areas. It my job as an undercover officer to attain the confidence of low level dealers and work my way up through the network to arrive at the drug's source. Now, the profits for...

Fred becomes silent, stands there. The audience waits.

Inside the suit, Arctor sweats, can't remember his line. He looks, panicked, out at the sea of eyes and finally wings it.

BOB ARCTOR
Well, it isn't the profits anyhow. It's something else... what you see ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arctor scans the hard audience. He tries a new tack.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)

If you were a diabetic, and you didn't have the money for insulin, would you steal to get the money? Or just die?

A tinny voice speaks to Arctor through his headphone.

HEADPHONE VOICE

I think you'd better go back to the prepared text, Fred.

BOB ARCTOR

(quietly into throat mike)

I forgot it.

HEADPHONE VOICE

Riiight. I'll read it to you. Repeat it after me, but try to make it sound casual. "Each day the profits flow. Where they go we will soon determine."

BOB ARCTOR

(quietly)

I got a block against this stuff.

HEADPHONE VOICE

"Then retribution will swiftly follow. And at that moment, for the life of me, I would not be in their shoes."

BOB ARCTOR

(quietly)

You know why I've got a block against this stuff? Because this bullshit is what gets people on dope.

The audience watches the vague blur mumbling in a computer voice. They look uneasy. Fred is silent for a moment, then starts to talk again in his drone.

FRED

"D" is for Substance D. Which is for Dumbness, Despair, and Desertion, the desertion of your friends from you, you from them, everyone from everyone, isolation and loneliness and hating and suspecting each other. D is finally death. Slow Death, we...

(beat)

... we the dopers call it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Inside the suit, Bob Arctor talks.

BOB ARCTOR
 (raspy, sad)
 ... Slow Death. From the head on down.
 (beat)
 Well, that's it.

Arctor goes back to his seat. The audience is angry.

HEADPHONE VOICE
 See me in my office when you get back.

The fat businessman is at the podium diffusing the situation.

FAT BUSINESSMAN
 I forgot to tell you that Fred asked
 me in advance to make this lecture
 primarily a Q and A forum with only a
 short introductory statement. So any
 questions?

Arctor stands.

FAT BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)
 Oh, wait, it appears Fred has
 something else to say. Good, then.
 (to Arctor)
 Please.

Arctor approaches the podium, upset.

BOB ARCTOR
 Just this. Don't kick their asses
 after they're on it. Half of them,
 especially the girls, didn't know they
 were getting on anything at all. See,
 the pushers dissolve some reds in a
 glass of wine, they give the booze to
 an underage little chick, she passes
 out, then they inject her with a mex
 hit -- half heroin, half Substance D.
 (beat)
 Thank you.

SECOND VOICE FROM CROWD
 How do we stop them, sir?

We're outside the suit now, looking at Fred the vague blur
 behind the podium. He talks in a neutral computer voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED
Kill the pushers.

EXT. PAYPHONE - DAY

Charles Freck is on the phone, speaking in hushed tones.

CHARLES FRECK
Can you lay about ten Deaths on me?

TELEPHONE VOICE
Christ, I'm looking to score myself.

CHARLES FRECK
Christ.
(beat)
Christ. Christ Christ Christ.

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S CAR - DAY

Freck drives slowly along a strip-malled Anaheim street. He passes a Thrifty pharmacy and notices the window display: bottles of slow death, slow death mixed with speed and junk and psychedelics. Dayglow signs in the window: "Your Credit is Good Here" and "Death to the Masses" He looks again. The window displays combs and shampoo. Freck checks his rearview mirror, sees a police car following him.

CHARLES FRECK
Fucking goddamn fuzzmobile. What was I doing? Was I weaving? I don't even know.

Freck drives very deliberately, his hands gripped, white-knuckled, on the steering wheel in an attempt to keep the car completely straight. He tries his best to plaster a non-stoned, regular guy look on his face. But he's sweating.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
What I'll do is pull over when I see a parking space. That's it: pull over like I was gonna pull over anyway. Like it's totally normal to pull over. Like I'm going to a store. That's perfect. Real people do that all the time.

Freck sees an angle space, pulls over suddenly. The cop car glides past, apparently having had no interest in Freck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
 Fuck. Fucking fuzz. Now I'll never
 be able to pull back into traffic.

Freck sighs, resigns himself to waiting in his parking spot
 and checking out the young, mini-skirted women walking by.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
 (keeping score)
 Fox... fox... not a fox... fo...hey, I
 know that fox!

Freck opens his car door and jumps out.

EXT. ANAHEIM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Freck hurries after a pretty young woman, nineteen, with
 black hair. This is Donna Hawthorne.

CHARLES FRECK
 Hey!

Donna realizes that Freck is following her and picks up her
 pace. The sidewalk is crowded with people. Donna weaves
 through, graceful and fast. Freck struggles to catch up.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
 Hey!

The light is against her at the corner and while the other
 pedestrians wait for the WALK sign, Donna juts out into
 traffic, causing a Coke truck to swerve and honk. She gives
 it the finger. Freck waits with the others till the light
 changes. Then he runs, catches up with Donna, and walks
 backwards ahead of her, sweating and panting.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
 Donna!

She ignores him, keeps walking.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
 Aren't you Bob Arctor's old lady?

DONNA HAWTHORNE
 No.
 (pulls out a little pocket
 knife, points it at Freck)
 Get lost.

He widens the distance between them to avoid getting stuck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

Sure you are. I met you at his place.

Donna turns and walks directly toward Freck, her little knife pointing at his stomach. He jumps out of the way.

CHARLES FRECK

Jeez. I just...

Donna keeps walking. Freck shrugs and slouches dejectedly away. He turns and gives one last glance over his shoulder. Donna has stopped amid the bustling foot traffic. She is squinting at him. Freck cautiously approaches her.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

One night me and Bob and another chick had some old Simon and Garfunkel tapes. You were filling caps with high-grade Death, then you laid one on each of us.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I thought you were going to knock me down and bang me.

CHARLES FRECK

No. I just wondered if you, like, wanted a ride or... Bang you on the sidewalk? In broad daylight?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I thought you might pull me into a doorway or something.

CHARLES FRECK

I know you. Besides Arctor would snuff me if I did that.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Well, I didn't recognize you. I'm sort of nearsighted.

Donna moves a few steps closer to Freck and squints at him.

CHARLES FRECK

You want a ride where you're going?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You'll bang me in the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

Nah. Besides I can't get it up these days. Must be something they're adulterating all the stuff with.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

That's a neat-o line, but I've heard it before. Everybody bangs me. At least they try to. That's what it's like to be a chick.

CHARLES FRECK

That really sucks.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I'm suing one guy right now for molestation and assault. We're asking punitive damages in excess of forty thousand.

CHARLES FRECK

How far he get?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

A hand around my boob.

CHARLES FRECK

That's not worth forty thousand.

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S CAR - DAY

Freck drives Donna home.

CHARLES FRECK

Listen, you got anything to sell? I'm really hurting.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I can get it.

CHARLES FRECK

Tabs, though. I don't shoot up. Needles are a bumner to me.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Sixty dollars a hundred.

CHARLES FRECK

Jeez, man, that's a burn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE
They're super good. Take my word.

CHARLES FRECK
All right. A hundred, then.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Cool. How do I get in touch?

CHARLES FRECK
Charles B. Freck --

Donna pulls a little pad and a pencil from her purse and writes down Freck's name.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
V. Freck?

CHARLES FRECK
Charles Freck.

She corrects the name. Freck notices that her writing is a slow and childish scrawl. It makes him sad. Then he steals a glance at her breasts as she writes.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
658-4412.

She writes down the phone number.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
I think I remember you now.

CHARLES FRECK
Hey, you want to go with me to see Jerry Fabin? I'm hauling some of his stuff over to the Number Three Federal Clinic where they took him last night.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
I better not. Jerry thinks I contaminated him originally with those bugs.

CHARLES FRECK
They're aphids.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Yeah, well, then he didn't know what they were.

EXT. ANAHEIM STREET - DAY

Bob Arctor, now out of his scramble suit and looking like a druggie, wanders depressed and aimless along a crowded street. He passes a McDonald's, a 7-11, a mirrored office building, pulls a pill box from his pocket, and surreptitiously swallows two capsules. He studies his reflection in the office building. Behind him on the street are the disapproving reflections of passing straights. He blends back into the flow of foot traffic. A grungy hippy smiles at him. Arctor nods, passes another McDonald's. He passes a third McDonald's almost immediately.

BOB ARCTOR

Fucking McDonaldburger's is taking over.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATER

Arctor dials the phone and takes a bite from a partially unwrapped McDonald's hamburger. He chews as the phone rings.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

Hello?

BOB ARCTOR

Donna. How you doin'? It's Bob.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

(pause)

Oh. Hi.

BOB ARCTOR

How's your head today, man?

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

Eh. I was bumtripped this a.m. by my boss. This gray hair bilked us out of ten bucks. So my boss says it's coming out of my paycheck!

BOB ARCTOR

Hey, can I get anything from you?

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

(resistant)

I don't know.

BOB ARCTOR

Ten. Just ten.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)
 Yeah, okay. I'll come over tonight.
 Hey, I have this book I want to show
 you. About wolves.

BOB ARCTOR
 Oh, wow.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
 You know what the male wolf does when
 he defeats a foe? He doesn't snuff
 him. He pees on him! Then he splits.

BOB ARCTOR
 I peed on some people today.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)
 No kidding? How come?

BOB ARCTOR
 Metaphorically peed, I mean.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)
 Not the usual way?

BOB ARCTOR
 What I mean is, I told this group of...

Arctor realizes he's saying too much. He tries to cover.
 He glances at a Foster's Freeze across the street with some
 Hell's Angels in the parking lot.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)
 ... biker-types, at the Foster's
 Freeze. I was cruising around and
 they said something raunchy, so I
 turned and said something like --

Arctor has no idea what to say. Suddenly he's exhausted.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)
 You can tell me, even if it's super
 gross. You have to be super gross with
 biker-types.

BOB ARCTOR
 I told 'em I'd rather ride a pig than
 a hog.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)
 (beat)
 I don't get it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Well, a pig is a chick that --

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

Oh. Okay, well I get it. Barf. Oh, I forgot to tell you, your roommates, Ernie What's-His-Name and Barris, came into the shop today looking for you.

BOB ARCTOR

They didn't try me at my job, did they?

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

I dunno. They said they wanted to use your cephalochromosome and it didn't work. So Barris took it apart --

BOB ARCTOR

The hell you say --

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

And apparently it's been sabotaged. The wires cut, and sort of weird stuff like that. Barris said he'd --

BOB ARCTOR

Fuck Barris! That cephscope cost me nine hundred dollars. I need to get home right now. But I gotta... Oh, fuck, man. Fuck fuck fuck Barris!

DONNA HAWTHORNE (O.S.)

You gotta what?

BOB ARCTOR

I gotta run an errand and like that.

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S CAR - DAY

Arctor parks across from the New-Path Drug Rehab Facility, a converted wood frame house. He checks the police photo of Erroll Weeks, a.k.a Spade Weeks, shoves it into his glove compartment, and heads, business-like, toward the building.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK PAGE DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Children play in the background. Someone skims the entry, as the offhand voice-over reads along.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

The S.O. believes Spade Weeks has lost himself inside New-Path by posing as a junky. New-Path strips junkies of all

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR (cont'd)
i.d. and gives them new names as part
of personality rebuilding process.
It's a perfect hiding place.

INT. NEW-PATH - CONTINUOUS

It's gloomy. There's a lounge area with a couple of guys
reading. An unused ping-pong table. Posters on the wall
such as THE ONLY REAL FAILURE IS TO FAIL OTHERS. Arctor
enters, now playing the junky: strung-out, disoriented. A
pretty girl in a New-Path tee-shirt appears.

NEW-PATH GIRL
Can I help you?

BOB ARCTOR
I'm in a bad place. I wanna turn
myself in for treatment.

INT. FIDDLER'S THREE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Charles Freck and Jim Barris sit in a booth. Freck plays
distractedly with his glazed doughnut. Barris, in shades,
pulls apart his patty melt, inspecting each ingredient.

CHARLES FRECK
Hey, Barris, I'm thinking of turning
myself in to New-Path.

Barris doesn't seem at all interested.

JIM BARRIS
No shit.

CHARLES FRECK
But it's tough, that cold turkey thing
they do. They watch you night and day
so you don't snuff. But they never
give you anything, like a doctor will,
like Valium or like that.

JIM BARRIS
Hey, what kind of bread is this on the
patty melt, anyway?

CHARLES FRECK
Look on the menu. It explains
everything.

Barris picks up a menu, studies it as he speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

If you go into New-Path, you'll experience symptoms that emanate up from the basic fluids of the body, specifically those located in the brain. By that I refer to the catecholamines, such as noradrenaline and serotonin. You see, Substance D functions this way: it interacts with the catecholamines in such a fashion that involvement is locked in at a subcellular level. Biological counteradaptation has occurred.

(looks up)

Nine-grain wheat.

INT. NEW-PATH - DAY

Arctor sits in a small room painted institutional green. He holds a styrofoam cup of coffee in his theatrically shaking hands. The New-Path girl stares at him, arms akimbo. Two large impassive guys stand near the door.

NEW-PATH GIRL

You look like hell, mister.

NEW-PATH GUY #1

Yeah. Like real shit. What you been doing, lying in your own crap?

NEW-PATH GUY #2

Crap lying in crap. How appropriate.

INT. FIDDLER'S THREE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A cute waitress comes up to Barris and Freck's table.

WAITRESS

So is everything good, fellas?

Freck becomes panicked, paranoid. He frantically chews some doughnut, tries to appear straight. Barris, in control, signals to Freck that everything is copacetic.

JIM BARRIS

Say, is your name Patty?

WAITRESS

No.

(indicates name tag over
right breast)

It's Beth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK
(under breath, snickering)
I wonder what the left one's called.

WAITRESS
I'm sorry, hon?

CHARLES FRECK
No. Nothing.

JIM BARRIS
The waitress we had last time was
named Patty. Same as the sandwich.

WAITRESS
That must have been a different Patty
from the sandwich. I think she spells
it with an *i*.

JIM BARRIS
Everything is super good.

Freck looks over leering Barris's head and sees a thought
balloon in which the waitress is stripping off her clothes.

WAITRESS (IN THOUGHT BALLOON)
(moaning)
Oh, oh, fuck me, Barris. Fuck me...

Freck, nervous the waitress will see the balloon, tries to
get her attention on him.

CHARLES FRECK
Everything is not good with me. I got
a lot of problems nobody else has.

The waitress looks down sympathetically at Freck.

WAITRESS
Oh, no. That's too bad.

JIM BARRIS
More people than you think have such
problems. This is a world of illness,
and getting progressively worse.

The waitress now looks with some confusion at Barris. Freck
glances nervously at the balloon above Barris's head. In it
the waitress is being fucked from behind by Barris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITRESS (IN THOUGHT BALLOON)
Oh, oh, ooh oh, Barris...

WAITRESS
(smiling)
So would you guys like to order
dessert? We have fresh peach pie.

Freck can't take his eyes from the thought balloon.

CHARLES FRECK
No! No, we don't want any dessert!

The waitress smiles, nods, and leaves the table. The thought balloon dissipates.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)
Fruit pies are for old ladies anyway.

INT. NEW-PATH - DAY

Arctor sits surrounded by the three standing New-Path people.

BOB ARCTOR
This place is the only hope I could
think of. I had a friend come in
here. A black dude, in his thirties --

NEW-PATH GIRL
You'll meet the family later. If you
qualify. You have to be bad off to be
let in here, mister.

BOB ARCTOR
I am bad off.

NEW-PATH GIRL
It's going to be super rough. You'll
gnaw your pillow. You'll foam at the
mouth. You'll dirty yourself the way
sick animals do.

BOB ARCTOR
Okay, but listen, this black guy, my
buddy, goes by the name of Spade, did
he make it here? I sure hope he
didn't get picked up by the pigs on
the way over.

NEW-PATH GIRL
There are no one-to-one relationships
at New-Path. You'll learn that.

INT. FIDDLER'S THREE COFFEE SHOP - DAY

JIM BARRIS

Tell me, why the debate regarding turning yourself in for residence therapy at a drug rehab facility?

CHARLES FRECK

My friend Jerry Fabin and his aphids.

JIM BARRIS

(dismissive wave)

Fabin was a special case.

CHARLES FRECK

There's another reason. I'm running low again, and I can't stand this always running low and not knowing if I'm ever going to score again. Actually, though, I may have a new source. That Donna chick.

JIM BARRIS

Oh, Bob's girl.

CHARLES FRECK

His old lady.

JIM BARRIS

No. He never got into her pants.

CHARLES FRECK

Really? Can't Bob get it on?

JIM BARRIS

(shrugs)

It's possible Donna's on junk. Her aversion to bodily contact -- junkies lose interest in sex, you see, due to their organs swelling up from vasoconstriction. And Donna shows inordinate failure of sexual arousal, not just to Bob, but to... other males as well.

CHARLES FRECK

I never shot smack. Needles are a bummer to me.

JIM BARRIS

(conspiratorially)

But... I can show you how to lay Donna for ninety-eight cents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

I don't want to lay her. I just want to buy from her.

JIM BARRIS

Donna does coke. Anybody who would give her a gram of coke she would undoubtedly spread her legs for.

CHARLES FRECK

I wish you wouldn't talk that way. Besides who has the money to procure a gram of coke?

JIM BARRIS

I, my friend, can derive a gram of coke for a total cost to me of under one dollar. From a product readily available at your neighborhood 7-11.

CHARLES FRECK

That's bullshit.

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S CAR - DAY

Freck and Barris drive along.

CHARLES FRECK

Which 7-11 store do you prefer to shop at? The one on Lincoln is nice.

JIM BARRIS

That's a fine 7-11.

CHARLES FRECK

Although what about the one on 8th? They have the wider aisles. A more spacious shopping experience.

JIM BARRIS

Let's not forget the one on Katella with the foxy cashier to hit on.

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a mess. Freck is on the couch smoking a joint. A cat sleeps in his lap. Another cat and a dog lie on either side of him. A disassembled cephscope is on the coffee table, wires exposed. Barris hovers over the dining room table where he has set up a makeshift chemistry lab.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

What's with Bob's cephscope, his prize possession of the entire world?

JIM BARRIS

Oh, it's been sabotaged by person or persons unknown.

Barris holds up an aerosol can of Solarcaine sunburn spray.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

Behold, what they've deliberately done is mix the cocaine with oil so it can't be extracted -- they cleverly call it benzocaine -- but my knowledge of chemistry is such that I know precisely how to separate the two.

Barris sprays the entire contents of the can into a baggie.

CHARLES FRECK

This is super unreal. I'm flipping.

Barris shakes salt into the gummy slime in the bag.

JIM BARRIS

Now I'll freeze it, which causes the cocaine crystals to rise to the top because they are lighter than air.

Barris pours the slime into a jar.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

Than oil, I mean.

Barris puts the jar in the freezer.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

The terminal step I keep to myself, but it involves an intricate methodological process of filtering.

CHARLES FRECK

Even if you do get a gram of coke out of thisl, I can't use it to get into Donna's pants. That's like buying her.

JIM BARRIS

You give her a gift she gives you one. The most precious gift a woman has.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

You're talking about Bob Arctor's girl, Barris. He's my friend and the guy you and Luckman live with.

JIM BARRIS

There's a great deal about Bob Arctor you're not aware of. Your view is simplistic and naive, and you believe about him what he wants you to.

CHARLES FRECK

(defensively)

I do not.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Frank, in a scramble suit, talks to Hank, also in a scramble suit and studying a clipboard.

HANK

That covers Barris and Freck. Let's see, I guess we can write Jerry Fabin off.

FRED

I read his EEG analysis. Fabin's over.

HANK

Good riddance. Any luck locating our missing pusher friend Spade Weeks?

FRED

New-Path wouldn't tell me shit. They're very protective of their own.

HANK

Junkies, ex-junkies. It's a club.
(flipping through notes)
What about Donna Hawthorne?

FRED

I keep pumping her for more and more Death. Pretty soon she'll have to refer me up to her source.

HANK

Fine. And what's Arctor up to?

We go inside Fred's suit and see the shadowy face of Arctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Bob Arctor? He's not doing anything much. Working at his nowhere Blue Chip Stamp job, dropping a few tabs of meth cut with Death during the day.

HANK

That's not what I hear.

Arctor studies the vague blankness of Hank.

BOB ARCTOR

What do you mean?

HANK

We have a tip that Arctor has funds above and beyond what he makes at the stamp redemption center.

We move outside the suit and see Fred.

FRED

No shit, Hank. Is that true?

HANK

And according to this information, Arctor comes and goes mysteriously. Have you observed any of this?

FRED

Most likely he's with his chick, Donna.

HANK

Most likely? You're supposed to know.

FRED

Yeah, it's Donna. He's over there banging her day and night. But I'll let you know. So, who's the informant?

HANK

Hell, we don't know. No voice print. He used one of those rinky-dink grids.

FRED

Christ, it's that burned-out acid head Barris doing a schizy grudge job on Arctor's head. I wouldn't give him the time of day as an informant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

We don't know it's Barris. Anyway, there may be more to Barris than meets the eye. We're looking into him. Nothing I feel would be of use to you, at least so far.

FRED

Well, it's one of Arctor's friends.

HANK

Yeah. Undoubtedly a vengeance burn trip. But we need to know why Arctor's making these kind of enemies.

FRED

Hank, I don't see this as an avenue of --

HANK

So I'm taking you off Spade and, for the time being, I'm assigning you primarily to observe Bob Arctor.

FRED

(strangled robot noise)

You're assigning me to watch Arctor?

We move inside Fred's suit and watch an uncomfortable, sweaty Arctor watching Hank.

HANK

Covertly funded, covertly engaged, Fred. It's worth checking into.

BOB ARCTOR

Fine. So I assume this means you'll be bugging Arctor's house and car?

HANK

With the new holographic scanner system. This way you can study Arctor's every move on the tapes, and report back to us in detail.

Hank, the vague blur, looks up at Fred. Fred, the vague blur, returns his look.

FRED

Sounds good, then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

Good. You'll need to get Arctor and the boys away from the house so we can install the equipment.

EXT. BOB ARCTOR'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

The yard, lit only by moonlight, is overgrown with weeds and littered with rubbish. Barris sits on a cracked cement patio fiddling with some sort of foam rubber and aluminum foil tube. Freck looks on anxiously. Ernie Luckman, a big stoner in a football jersey, sits on a decrepit swing set, looks up at the moon, and sips a beer.

CHARLES FRECK

Why do you need a silencer, anyway, Jim? I mean, they're illegal.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Law abidance has always been of the utmost concern to Jim Barris.

JIM BARRIS

In this day and age, with the kind of degenerate society we live in and the depravity of the individual, every person of worth needs a gun at all times. To protect himself.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Just shut up and fire off the great eleven cent silencer of our times.

Barris half shuts his eyes and fires the pistol into the air. It is the loudest report ever heard.

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arctor jerks awake and reflexively grabs his gun from under his pillow. Confused, heart pounding, he tries to take in his surroundings. Dogs bark outside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK (O.S.)

That's some silencer, man.

JIM BARRIS (O.S.)

What it did was augment the sound rather than dampen it. But I almost have it right. I have it in principal, anyhow.

Arctor sighs, replaces the gun, and gets out of bed.

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arctor trudges through the pig-sty living room, past the ratty couch, the broken cephscope, the crooked pictures on the wall. He disappears into the kitchen.

CHARLES FRECK (O.S.)

How much is a gun like that worth?

JIM BARRIS (O.S.)

Not much. Thirty bucks. I'll sell it to you.

Arctor reappears, leans against the kitchen door, beer in hand, and looks at the depressing living room.

JIM BARRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You really ought to have one to protect yourself, Freck, against those who would harm you.

ERNIE LUCKMAN (O.S.)

There's a lot of those. I saw in the L.A. Times yesterday, they're giving away a free transistor radio to those who would harm Freck most successfully.

Arctor studies the empty couch.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's the same room, but different. It's neat. The pictures on the wall are straight. A younger, cleaner, straighter Bob Arctor sits on the couch watching tv with his wife and children. Through shadow and obstruction, we never get a clear view of Arctor's family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TELEVISION JINGLE

It's real, it's Coke, it's really,
really real. Really really really...

WIFE

Popcorn and Cokes, guys?

DAUGHTERS

Yay, Popcorn and Cokes!

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S NEAT KITCHEN - EVENING

The catchy, reduntant Coke jingle continues in the background throughout. Bob Arctor squats down and reaches into a floor level cabinet to grab a popcorn popper. When he rises, he hits his head hard on a sharp corner. His countenance changes dramatically, violently.

BOB ARCTOR

AH, FUCK!!

WIFE (O.S.)

Honey?

Arctor drops to the floor, pressing his hand against his bleeding scalp.

BOB ARCTOR

FUCKING POPCORN POPPER! FUCK!

Arctor's wife and daughters appear in the doorway. We see them from behind, looking at Arctor.

WIFE

Oh my God!

Arctor's wife runs to him. His daughters hover in the doorway. Arctor looks up at his wife, at his daughters.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK PAGE DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Kids playing in background. A dispassionate Arctor reads the handwritten entry.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

That pain, so unexpected, so
undeserved, cleared away the cobwebs
in my head. I didn't hate the popcorn
popper, I hated my wife and kids.

INT. NEAT KITCHEN - EVENING

Arctor bleeds, his wife hovers, the jingle persists.

BOB ARCTOR

FUCK!

SHOT OF NEATLY GROOMED BACKYARD WITH NEW SWING SET

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I hated my backyard,...

SHOT OF NEATLY GROOMED FRONT YARD

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... my front yard,...

Arctor, in shorts, appears pushing a lawnmower.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... my power mower.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arctor sits on the floor bleeding. He looks at his wife and children, their faces somehow becoming more and more vague.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

All the elements that made up my life were right there. And nothing new would ever happen. Like a little plastic boat that would sail on forever, without incident, until it finally sank, which would be a secret relief to all.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Kids laughing. Camera skims across these handwritten words:

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So I ended that life and started this one. Now I dwell in a ugly world...

INT. ARCTOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Present-day druggie Arctor returns to bed with his beer.

JIM BARRIS (O.S.)

This one will be totally soundless.

There is another extremely loud gunshot.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Barris studies his silencer, perplexed. Dogs bark again.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Jesus, Barris. Y'know, you're supposed to be fixing the cephscope. Bob's lying in his bed right now thinking you're fixing his cephscope.

INT. ARCTOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arctor lies in bed and writes in his notebook. The voice-over is different here: It's halting, as if he's composing; and it's read with immediacy and anxiety.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Now I dwell in an ugly... disordered world. But this very disorder... permits... the... unpredictable to --

There's a knock on the door. Arctor slips the notebook under the mattress.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)

Yeah?

Mumbling outside door. Arctor fingers the gun under his pillow.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)

Come in, Barris.

The door opens. Barris enters, shuffling, smiling, sweating.

JIM BARRIS

Hey, Bob. I thought you'd be sleeping.

Barris sits, uninvited, on the edge of Arctor's bed.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

I am here to inform you, Bob, that I have formulated an initial theory as to who may have systematically damaged your cephscope with malice and may do it again.

Arctor waits. Barris smiles a shit-eating smile.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

(pointing)

You.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Why the fuck would I screw up my own
cephscope?

JIM BARRIS

No, no. *You...*

(points at Arctor)

... are *looking* at the person who did
it.

(points at himself)

That was my complete, intended
statement, which I was not allowed to
utter.

BOB ARCTOR

You did it?

JIM BARRIS

I mean it's my theory that I did it.
Under post-hypnotic suggestion. With
an amnesia block so I wouldn't remember

BOB ARCTOR

Oh, Jesus, Barris. Go fuck yourself.

Arctor turns away from Barris. Barris leans in close.

JIM BARRIS

Don't you see, Bob, I've got the
advanced, specialized, technical,
electronic skills. I have access,
because I live here. It all fits.

(beat)

What I can't figure out is my motive.

BOB ARCTOR

How about, you're a fucked-up lunatic?

JIM BARRIS

I might have been hired by secret
forces. It could be as big as that,
Bob. As huge as that.

Arctor reaches under his bed frame and pulls out two tabs of
Substance D. He washes them down with beer, closes his eyes.

BOB ARCTOR

Get lost.

EXT. BOB ARCTOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

Arctor, Barris, and Luckman emerge from the house,
bedraggled and bleary-eyed, and climb into Arctor's car.

INT. ARCTOR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Arctor starts the car, begins to pull out of the driveway.

JIM BARRIS

Oh, hold on, Bob. I forgot something.
I forgot my antihistamine capsules.

Arctor sighs, stops. Barris runs to the house. Luckman and Arctor wait in silence. Finally:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Jim Barris does not have allergies.

EXT. FREEWAY - MORNING

Arctor, Barris, and Luckman drive along.

INT. ARCTOR'S CAR - MORNING

The car pulls to a stop on a residential street. It's a a cruddy neighborhood. Apartment buildings. Graffiti.

BOB ARCTOR

You guys track down Andy and the hot scope. I'll pick you up in two hours.

JIM BARRIS

And where are you off to?

BOB ARCTOR

Dropping in on a friend.

JIM BARRIS

Mysterious Bob Arctor.

EXT. HOUSING PROJECT - MORNING

Arctor pulls into the parking lot, gets out of the car.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Kids voices in background. Offhand Arctor reads the entry.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

While in Long Beach today I checked in on Kim, an addict acquaintance who lives with dealer Dan Blake. My intention was to get the latest on Blake, but also to strand Barris and Luckman down here long enough for the scanners to be installed.

INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY - MORNING

Arctor knocks on an apartment door. Shuffling inside. The chained door opens slightly. An eye peeks out.

KIMBERLY

Yes?

BOB ARCTOR

It's me, Kimberly. Bob Arctor.

Kimberly unchains the door. She has a black eye and a split lip. Her manner is listless. Arctor enters the apartment and Kimberly closes the door behind him.

INT. KIMBERLY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Arctor looks around. The place is a shambles. There's been a fight. The windows are broken, there's glass on the floor.

BOB ARCTOR

Are you alone?

KIMBERLY

Dan and I had a fight and he split.

BOB ARCTOR

He beat you up?

KIMBERLY

Thank God he didn't have his knife.
His case-knife, which he now carries in
a sheath on his belt.

Kimberly drops back into a chair and stares blankly.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

Why are you here, Bob? I'm bummed, I
really am.

BOB ARCTOR

Do you want him back?

KIMBERLY

Well...
(listless shrug)
Who knows?

Arctor looks out the window at the street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

How long can you go without?

KIMBERLY

Another day. Maybe. *Maybe.*

BOB ARCTOR

Can't you get it anywhere else?
Y'know the name of Dan's supplier?
Maybe you could deal directly.

KIMBERLY

I dunno.

The sound of loud, irregular car pipes. Kimberly stiffens.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

Is that him? Fuck. Red '79 Torino?

Arctor looks out and spots a red Torino pulling into the lot.

BOB ARCTOR

Yeah.

A car door slams. Kimberly shuffles to the front door and triple locks it.

KIMBERLY

Probably has his case-knife with him.
Y'know, he keeps it in a sheath on his
belt now.

BOB ARCTOR

You should call the police.

KIMBERLY

No phone.

BOB ARCTOR

Kim, he'll kill you.

Kimberly shrugs and sits back down, staring blankly, hands clasped in her lap. Sound of running upstairs. A knock on the door turning to pounding.

DAN (O.S.)

Open the fucking door!

KIMBERLY

(small voice)

No. I'm with someone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN (O.S.)

Fine! I'll slash your tires!

Sound of running downstairs. Kimberly rises, and she and Arctor watch out the window as Dan, a skinny, short-haired effeminate-looking guy, appears in the parking lot, crazily waving a knife in the air.

DAN

(screaming up at Kimberly)

I'll slash your tires, your fucking tires! And then I'll kill you!

Dan begins slashing tires on Kimberly's old Dodge. This seems to wake Kimberly up. She shrieks, runs to the door and frantically begins unlocking it.

KIMBERLY

I got to stop him! I don't have insurance!

Arctor grabs her, tries to hold her back.

BOB ARCTOR

Tires aren't...

KIMBERLY

(struggling to get free)

My tires!

BOB ARCTOR

That's what he wants you to do.

KIMBERLY

Downstairs. They have a phone! Let me go!

Kimberly fights loose of Arctor with manic energy.

KIMBERLY (CONT'D)

(unlocking the door)

I'm calling the police. My tires!

(out the door)

One of them is new!

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kimberly is scrambling down the stairs. She arrives at an apartment door and pounds on it. Arctor is right behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KIMBERLY

Open, please? Please? I need to call
the police. Please let me call them.

The door opens. An old man in tie and sweater stands there.
Kimberly hurries past him, goes for the phone, and dials.

BOB ARCTOR

(to old man)

Thank you.

INT. OLD PEOPLE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Arctor enters, closes the door and watches out the peephole.

KIMBERLY

(on phone, crazily)

Hi, yeah, my boyfriend and me got into
a fight because of these cowboy boots
which were worth seven dollars. See,
I said, they're *mine*, and he says, no,
they're *mine* 'cause you gave them to
me as a present. And I say but I
bought them. Which makes them *mine*.
Right? So he grabs 'em and I grab
'em, and I rip the backs of them with
this can opener and... yes, I'll hold.

Arctor glances at the old man, who's been quietly studying
him. An old woman in a print dress stands in the dining
room doorway. Kimberly paces on hold, chews a fingernail.

ARCTOR

(to old man)

This must be bad on you.

OLD MAN

It goes on all the time, them fighting,
him saying he'll kill her.

OLD WOMAN

We should have gone back to Denver. I
told you that.

OLD MAN

These terrible fights. On and on.
Smashing things and screaming. And
what's worse, every time --

OLD WOMAN

Yes, tell him about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN

Every time we go out, shopping or to mail a letter, we step in... what dogs leave.

OLD WOMAN

(whispering)

Dog doo.

INT. ARCTOR'S CAR - DAY

Arctor drives on the freeway, deep in thought. Luckman's next to him. Barris is in back grinning in his dark shades.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Dog shit. All that misery and that's what *really* upset them.

Arctor chuckles. The car is behind a crawling Safeway truck.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

You ought to pass that truck, man. The humper's hardly moving.

Arctor comes back into focus, picks up speed, passes the truck on the left. As he eases up on the gas, the pedal falls to the floor. The car shoots forward at great speed.

LUCKMAN AND BARRIS

Slow down!

Arctor is panicked. The speedometer is registering eighty-five, ninety, one hundred. Arctor reaches down, tries to fiddle with the gas peddle. The car is rocketing right for a VW van chugging along. Barris and Luckman throw up their hands. Arctor swerves to the left of the van at the last minute. They pass it, but a fast moving Corvette had been about to pass in that lane. It honks, its brakes screech.

LUCKMAN AND BARRIS (CONT'D)

(top of their lungs)

What the fuck?! What are you doing?!

Luckman grabs at the ignition key, and turns it off. Arctor shifts into neutral, the car begins to slow, and he maneuvers it onto the shoulder. The Corvette shoots by, lays on it's horn, continues to do so until it's long gone down the freeway. The three guys just sit in the car, hearts pounding. The VW van passes and honks its VW horn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

What the hell happened, Bob?

They all look down at the still-depressed gas pedal. The Safeway truck passes and sounds its own basso horn.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Arctor, Barris, and Luckman are looking under the hood. White smoke drifts from the oil caps. Water fizzes from the overflow spout of the radiator.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

The linkage from the pedal to the carb fell apart.

BOB ARCTOR

Shouldn't this locking ring hold the nut in place?

JIM BARRIS

The idle screw has been turned all the way out. So when the linkage parted, the override went up instead of down.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Could it screw itself all the way out like that accidentally?

JIM BARRIS

No. A special tool would be needed. A couple, in fact. I have the tools to fix this, but back at the house.

Arctor looks over at Barris. Is Barris saying *he* did it?

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

So we'll have to get to gas station and borrow tools from them.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Hey, man, did this happen by accident or was it done deliberately? Like the cephscope.

JIM BARRIS

(still grinning)

It's hard to say.

(glances over at Arctor)

You should've cut the ignition as soon as you realized what happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

For a second I couldn't figure it out.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

(spinning and lashing out
with bost fists)

MOTHERFUCKER! Somebody did this
intentionally! They fucking almost
killed us!

Barris pulls out a snuffbox, removies a few tabs of Death,
and swallows them. He passes the snuffbox to Luckman, who
takes a few with a shaky hand, then passes the box to
Arctor. Arctor hands it back to Barris without taking any.

BOB ARCTOR

(irritably)

Maybe this is what's fucking us up,
messing up our brains.

JIM BARRIS

Dope can't screw up a carb-idle
adjustment, my friend.

(holds box out to Arctor)

You'd better take at least three of
these. They're primo, but mild.

BOB ARCTOR

Put the fucking snuffbox away!

Barris smiles, puts it away. Arctor tries to focus back on
the engine. He sways lightheadedly and supports himself
against the car. The hot sun beats down on the back of his
head. Cars whiz by, the traffic noises intensified. He
hears singing, quiet at first, but soon overwhelming. It's
awful, discordant. He looks at Luckman and Barris,
silhouetted against the sun. Luckman says something, but
Arctor can't make it out over the singing and the traffic
noise. An awful smell permeates the air. Arctor sniffs at
it. His face contorts. He feels nauseated, shuts his eyes.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

(barely audible above
singing)

Hey, do you smell something, man? A
clue? Some engine smell that --

BOB ARCTOR

(eyes suddenly wide)

Dog shit! Do you smell dog shit?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN
(eyeing Arctor)

No.

(to Barris)

Were there any psychedelics in that
dope?

Barris smiles and shakes his head. Arctor studies the engine, sniffs it.

BOB ARCTOR
It's an illusion, right? There's no
dog shit smell. How could there be
dog shit in the eng...

He spots ugly, dark brown stains around the motorblock.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)
(freaked)
Dog shit! Dog shit!
(trying to focus)
Oil. Spilled oil. Thrown oil.
That's all. Maybe a leaky head gasket.

Arctor reaches down to touch the dark stain. His hand jerks back in revulsion.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)
Dog shit! Fuck! It is dog shit!

Now he looks around the engine and sees it everywhere: all over the block, on the wires, on the fire wall. He looks up, sees it smeared on the soundproofing under the hood. The smell is overwhelming. He lurches away from the car, shuts his eyes, staggers. Luckman grabs Arctor's arm.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
Hey, man, you're getting a flashback.

JIM BARRIS
(chuckling)
Free theater tickets.

Luckman guides Arctor to the driver's seat, sits him down.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
Now just take it easy. Nobody got
killed and now we're warned. It's
okay. It's okay. Everything's okay.

Arctor closes his eyes.

EXT. KIMBERLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Kimberly walks, catatonic and terribly bruised. Dan pops up and stabs her repeatedly. She falls onto a big wet pile of dog shit. Barris appears in an apartment window, waving.

JIM BARRIS

Hey, Bob, want a lump of dog shit? To chew on?

EXT. ARCTOR'S CAR - DAY

Arctor opens his eyes fast. Barris, looking on compassionately, squats next to him outside the car.

BOB ARCTOR

What, Jim? What'd you say?

Barris begins to laugh and laugh.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

(punches Barris on the back)

Leave him alone, man. Fuck off.

BOB ARCTOR

(to Luckman)

What did Barris say just now? What the hell exactly did he just say?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I don't know, man. I can't figure out half the things he lays on people.

Arctor again looks at Barris. He is smiling sweetly.

BOB ARCTOR

You goddamn Barris! I know you did it, screwed over the cephscope and now my car! You kinky freak mother bastard!

The smell of dog shit is becoming overwhelming again. Arctor tries not to vomit. His head swims.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Take it easy, Bob.

BOB ARCTOR

I know it's him, man. I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

That doesn't make any sense. He'd
have snuffed himself too.

Barris nods in agreement. He smiles again. Now there's dog
shit coating Barris's teeth. Arctor throws up on the
dashboard, rests his head in his hands

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What was in those tabs you gave us?

JIM BARRIS

Hell, I took some too. And so did
you. Didn't give us a bad trip.
Besides it was so soon. Your stomach
can't even absorb --

Arctor's head jerks up to face Barris.

BOB ARCTOR

YOU FUCKING POISONED ME!

Barris and Luckman look at Arctor.

EXT. ARCTOR'S CAR - AFTERNOON

A tow truck is parked in front of the car. The three guys
are inside, Arctor at the wheel, Barris and Luckman in back.
A mechanic closes up the hood.

INT. ARCTOR'S CAR - AFTERNOON

The three drive along in silence. Arctor is pale, but seems
back in control.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I wonder what's been going on back at
the house.

Arctor glances at Luckman in the rearview mirror.

ERNIE LUCKMAN (CONT'D)

You know, this proves, Bob, that
somebody is out to burn you real bad.
I just hope the house is still there
when we get back.

BOB ARCTOR

Yeah, I hope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

Oh, I wouldn't worry too much about that, gents.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Christ, Barris, they may have ripped off everything we got, or stomped all our animals, or --

JIM BARRIS

But I left a little surprise for anyone entering the house. An electronic surprise, if you will.

Arctor shifts his glance in the rearview mirror to Barris.

BOB ARCTOR

What kind of surprise? It's my house, Jim, you can't start rigging up --

JIM BARRIS

Easy. Be cool.

BOB ARCTOR

Well, what is it?

JIM BARRIS

If the front door is opened, my tape recorder starts recording.

BOB ARCTOR

You should've told me.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What if they come in the window or through the back door?

JIM BARRIS

To increase the chance of them making their entry via the front door, I providentially left it unlocked.

They drive in silence.

BOB ARCTOR

Well, they're not going to expect it to be unlocked, so they'll go in the window.

JIM BARRIS

But I put a note on the front door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

You're jiving me.

JIM BARRIS

Yes.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Are you fucking jiving us or not? I can't tell with you, man. Is he jiving us or not, Bob?

BOB ARCTOR

We'll see when we get back. If there's a note on the door and it's unlocked, we'll know he's not jiving us.

More silence.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

But they'd probably take the note down and lock the door after vandalizing and robbing us. So we'll never know. It's that gray area again. Damn it!

JIM BARRIS

Of course I'm kidding, guys! Only a psychotic would leave the front door open with a note on it.

Silence.

BOB ARCTOR

So what did you write on the note, Jim?

JIM BARRIS

I wrote: "Donna, come on in, the door's unlocked. We..." The note's to Donna.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

He did do that. He really did it.

JIM BARRIS

This way, we'll know who's been messing with us, Bob. And that is of prime importance.

EXT. BOB ARCTOR'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The car pulls up to the house. The three guys get out. A piece of paper is tacked to the door. It reads: "Donna come on inside; door's unlocked. We've gone to Long Beach for the day to purchase a stolen cephscope."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Jesus, Barris.

Arctor turns the knob. It's unlocked. He looks at Barris and shakes his head. Barris grins, shrugs. They enter.

INT. BOB ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barris studies the room.

JIM BARRIS

Interesting. Everything is exactly as we left it. They're very clever.

Barris pulls his .22 from the top of the bookshelf. The animals appear, clamoring to be fed.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Well, Barris, I can see you're right. There was definitely someone here. You see, the scrupulous covering-over of all signs they otherwise would've left testifies to their --

(farts, heads into kitchen)

Barris, you're one paranoid fuck.

Barris continues to search the room, gun drawn. Arctor watches him intently, trying to appear uninterested.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Kids voices. We scan across the following entry.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Strange how, now and then, paranoia can link up with reality.

A hand turns the page.

INT. ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barris studies a full ashtray on the coffee table.

JIM BARRIS

Look at this!

Arctor and Luckman, who has emerged from the kitchen with a beer, approach the ashtray. Luckman holds his hand over it.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

A still-hot butt. It sure is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arctor massages the bridge of his nose. Then, trying his best to play dumb:

BOB ARCTOR
My God, who was here?

ERNIE LUCKMAN
Wait, this is what's hot.
(reaches into ashtray,
pulls out roach)
They lit a joint.
(looking around)
But what'd they do? What the fuck did
they do?

JIM BARRIS
That roach may not be a slip-up.
Maybe they were here specifically to
plant dope, then phone in a tip later.
Maybe there's dope planted all over
this house. We're going to have to go
through and get this place clean.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
I'll check the wall sockets. You take
apart the tv and stereo.

Luckman grabs a screwdriver. Barris raises his head sagely.

JIM BARRIS
Wait. If they see us scrambling around
before the raid --

BOB ARCTOR
What raid?

JIM BARRIS
-- then we can't allege, even though
it's true, that we didn't know the
dope was there. Maybe that, too, is
part of their ingenious plan.

Luckman throws down the screwdriver as if it's red hot.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
We're fucked! We can't do anything!

BOB ARCTOR
Did you forget about the recorder, Jim?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

Oh yes. The tape should be extremely informational at this point.

(pulls it from under couch)

Well, it probably wouldn't ultimately have proven that important.

BOB ARCTOR

Forget to turn it on, did you?

JIM BARRIS

No. The first thing they did upon entering was switch it to "off".

ERNIE LUCKMAN

It's off? Fuck! Those fuckers.

JIM BARRIS

They made their move swiftly, before so much as an inch of tape passed through the recording head.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Now what? Now what the fuck do we do?

JIM BARRIS

You know, Bob, there is one thing you could do, although it would take time.

BOB ARCTOR

Sell the house?

Barris nods gravely.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Does anybody know a good realtor?

JIM BARRIS

I've got an acquaintance in the field.

Barris and Luckman look at Arctor.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

We should probably act fast, man.

JIM BARRIS

We don't know how fast they're gonna swoop down on us.

Arctor studies Barris and Luckman, their anxious eyes bore into him. He sways, gets confused, begins to buy Barris's scenario.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

What reason should we give for selling?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Yeah, we can't tell the truth. We need a shuck. Barris, what's a good shuck?

BOB ARCTOR

We'll just flat out say there's narcotics planted all over the place and since we don't know where, we decided to move out and let the new owner get busted instead of us.

JIM BARRIS

No. I don't think we can afford to be that up front. Bob, you say you got a job transfer.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Where to, though? Where the fuck to?

JIM BARRIS

Cleveland.

BOB ARCTOR

I say we tell them the truth. In fact, we can put an ad in the Times: "Modern, three bedroom tract house, two bathrooms for easy flushing, with high grade dope stashed in all rooms." It's a selling point.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

But they'd be calling asking what kind of dope, and we don't know. Man!

JIM BARRIS

Or how much. Prospective buyers might inquire about the quantity.

BOB ARCTOR

(slumps back on the couch)
They appear to have us.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Christ, this is awful!

Donna appears from one of the bedrooms, rumped and sleepy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Hey, I came in, like the note said. I waited for you for awhile, then I crashed. Why are you guys yelling?

The three guys look at each other.

BOB ARCTOR

Did you smoke a joint? Before you crashed?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Of course. Otherwise I can't sleep. You shouldn't leave your place unlocked like that. You could get ripped off and it would be your own fault. That's the main reason I came in when I saw the note. Somebody ought to be here if the place is unlocked with a note on it.

BOB ARCTOR

How long have you been here?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Well, you could've taken down the note, locked the door, and left.

Donna looks at Luckman, trying to figure out what he just said, then back to Arctor.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Approximately thirty-eight minutes. Hey, Bob, I got that wolf book, if you want to see it. It's got a lot of heavy shit in it.

Barris falls back into a ratty easy chair.

JIM BARRIS

Life is only heavy and none else; heavy that leads to the grave. For everyone and everything.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Did you say you were selling the house? Or was that me dreaming?

BOB ARCTOR

Shit, I hope it was you dreaming.

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - MORNING

Scramble-suited Hank is unrolling a floor plan labeled "Arctor's House" in front of scramble-suited Fred.

HANK

Here are the locations of the eight scanners. We transmit to a safe house down the block from Arctor's.

FRED

That's where I do playback?

HANK

Yeah. And we use also use it for playback on five other houses. So you'll be bumping into other undercover people. Always wear your scramble suit.

FRED

Fine.

HANK

Make note of the scanner locations. If they need servicing, you can take care of it while you're at Arctor's. As long as nobody's around.

FRED

I'll have to edit myself out, so you won't see who's fixing the scanners.

HANK

Right. Although we assume you're Barris, or Luckman, or Freck, or Arctor or Donna Hawthorne --

FRED

(computerized chuckle)
Donna?

HANK

So don't edit yourself from all tapes, or we'll deduce who you are by process of elimination. Leave yourself in in places. Be creative. Have fun.

FRED

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

This will help greatly in determining what the hell Arctor's up to.

FRED

We don't know he's up to anything.

HANK

We've got more recent information. There is no doubt any longer: Arctor's a phony, a three dollar bill. So keep on him until we have enough to arrest him and make it stick.

FRED

You think he's high up in Death distribution?

HANK

What we think isn't of any importance to you. You report; we evaluate.

FRED

Well, Arctor is doomed if he's up to anything. And I have a hunch from what you say that he is.

HANK

We should have a case on him soon. Then we can seize his house. I think you'd like it. It's rundown and dirty, but it's big. Nice yard. The installation crew reported it has excellent possibilities.

FRED

For what?

HANK

Well, the living room gives a view of the intersection, so passing vehicles could be graphed and... but Burt What's-his-face, who headed the crew, felt that it'd been allowed to deteriorate so badly that --

FRED

Deteriorate in what way?

HANK

The roof.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED
The roof's perfect.

HANK
Interior and exterior paint. The
condition of the floors.

FRED
Bullshit. It's all fine.

HANK
Then you recommend we acquire it after
Arctor's arrested and loses title?

Fred just stares at Hank, who holds his pen at the ready.

FRED
I have no opinion.

Fred rises to leave.

HANK
You're not splitting yet. You have to
report to room 203.

FRED
Hank, if this is about the Lion's Club
speech, I've already explained --

HANK
This is something different.

INT. ROOM 203 - MORNING

The room is all white, with steel fixtures, steel chairs, and
a steel desk. Fred is being interviewed by two sheriff's
deputies in full uniform with medical stripes.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
You are Officer Fred?

FRED
Yes.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
And you take Substance D?

Fred is about to respond.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
The question is moot, because it is
taken for granted that in your work
you are required to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

So don't answer. Not that it's
incriminating, but it's simply moot.

FRED

Look, about the Lion's Club --

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

What this testing session is about
stems from a departmental survey
showing that several undercover agents
have been admitted to Neural Aphasia
clinics in the last month.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

You're aware that Substance D is
highly addictive, are you not?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Don't answer that.

FRED

You think I'm an addict?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Whether or whether not you are an
addict is not a prime issue, as a
blocking agent is expected from the
Army Chemical Warfare Division within
the next five years. What these tests
pertain to is --

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

Let's begin with the Set-Ground Test.
Shall we?

Medical Technician #1 holds up a card with a geometric
diagram printed on it.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Within these apparently meaningless
lines is a familiar object that we all
would recognize. You are to tell me
what the object is and...

Fred studies the diagram searching for some recognizable
shape. There is nothing discernible in the diagram.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1 (CONT'D)

... point to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

In many of those taking Substance D, a split between the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere occurs. There is a loss of proper gestalting, which is a defect within both the percept and the cognitive systems.

Fred continues to study the diagram.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Can you see the form here, Fred? We need an answer. There is a time limit.

FRED

(hesitantly)

I see a Coke bottle, I guess.

The two technicians exchange glances.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

A soda pop bottle is correct.

Medical Technician #1 puts down the card and makes a note on his clipboard. He holds up another card.

FRED

Is this about the Lion's Club speech?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

Are you getting cross-chatter, Fred?

FRED

Getting what?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Between the hemispheres. Cross-chatter.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

If there's damage to the left hemisphere, where the linguistic skills are normally located, then sometimes the right hemisphere will fill in.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

To the best of its limited abilities.

FRED

I don't think I'm getting that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
Thoughts not your own, perhaps?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
As if another person were thinking?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
Foreign words you don't understand?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
You'll keep your eyes open for
anything like this, won't you?

FRED
Okay.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
Good. Now what do you see here?

FRED
A sheep.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
Show us the sheep, Fred.

Fred points.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
An impairment in set-background
discrimination gets you into a heap of
trouble -- instead of no forms, you
actually perceive faulty forms.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
Forms that aren't there.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
Like dog shit, for example.

FRED
I'm sorry, what did you say?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
I'm sorry, Fred, what?

FRED
Nothing. I'm guessing it's not a
sheep. But was I close at least?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
This isn't a Rorschach, Fred. There is
only one right answer. In this case
it's a dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED

It's what? What did you say it is?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

It's a dog.

FRED

Oh. How can you tell?

The technician turns over the card, showing the isolated outline of a greyhound on the other side.

FRED (CONT'D)

Okay. I see it now. What does it mean that I saw a sheep? Does it mean that I'm crazy?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

Crazy isn't a psychiatric diagnosis, Fred.

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S CAR - DAY

Freck drives along in great spirits. He giggles and plots.

CHARLES FRECK

Okay okay okay. So I go to Barris, "Hey, Barris, I bought a methedrine plant today," and he goes...

(childish Barris
impersonation)

"Methedrine is a benny, like speed, la la la. It's made synthetically in a lab la la la. It isn't organic like pot. There's no such thing as a methedrine plant, like there is a pot plant." Then I go...

(big punchline)

"I meant I inherited forty thousand dollars from an uncle and purchased a plant in this guy's garage where he makes meth. It's a *factory*. Plant in *that* sense... ' Okay okay, I don't have the phrasing exactly yet, but when I lay this on Barris, man, I'm going to get him *so* good.

EXT. BOB ARCTOR'S HOUSE - DAY

Arctor and Barris, in greasy clothes, are in the driveway working on Arctor's car. Freck pulls up, gets out of his car and approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

Hey, Jim, I bought a meth plant today.

JIM BARRIS

How big?

CHARLES FRECK

What do you mean?

JIM BARRIS

How big a plant?

CHARLES FRECK

(confused as to how to
proceed)

Um, well... like, what do you mean?

BOB ARCTOR

How much you pay, Freck?

CHARLES FRECK

Uh, about ten bucks.

BOB ARCTOR

Jim could've gotten it for you cheaper.

JIM BARRIS

They're practically giving meth plants
away.

CHARLES FRECK

This is a whole fucking garage! A
factory! It turns out a million pills
a day!

JIM BARRIS

(grinning)

All that for ten bucks?

BOB ARCTOR

Where's it located, Freck?

CHARLES FRECK

Not around here. Hey, fuck it, you
guys.

Freck leans against the house and pulls out a cigarette.

BOB ARCTOR

(to Barris)

What about the carb?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

Bent choke shaft. The whole carb needs to be rebuilt.

BOB ARCTOR

Why is it bent?

Barris shrugs. Luckman emerges from the house.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I phoned and they're checking to see what a rebuilt carb will set you back. Hey, Freck.

CHARLES FRECK

(pissy)

Hey.

BOB ARCTOR

(to Luckman)

Freck bought a meth plant today.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Cool. How big?

CHARLES FRECK

Fuck off.

JIM BARRIS

(to Arctor)

You could put a four barrel on instead of a two, while you're at it.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

It would idle too high. And it wouldn't upshift.

JIM BARRIS

The idling jets could be replaced with smaller jets. And he could watch his rpms with a tach. Usually just backing off the gas pedal causes it to upshift if the automatic linkage doesn't do it.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

If he tromped down heavy on the step-down passing gear to get a lot of torque suddenly on the freeway, it'd downshift and rev up so high it'd blow the whole engine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

The tach needle would jump and he'd back off.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

While passing a big semi? He'd have to blow the engine up or he'd never get around what he was trying to pass.

JIM BARRIS

Momentum would carry him past.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What about uphill?

JIM BARRIS

What does this car weigh, Bob?

BOB ARCTOR

About a thousand pounds.

Freck, who has been watching this exchange, catches Arctor wink at Luckman.

JIM BARRIS

Well, you're right then. It wouldn't have much inertia mass.

(calculating on a pad)

A thousand pounds traveling eighty miles an hour --

BOB ARCTOR

That's a thousand pounds with passengers, a full tank of gas, and a carton of bricks in the trunk.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

How many passengers, Bob?

BOB ARCTOR

Twelve.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

That's six in the back and six --

BOB ARCTOR

No. Eleven in the back and the driver alone up front. The extra weight is in the back so it doesn't fishtail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

This car fishtails?

BOB ARCTOR

Unless you get eleven people in back.

JIM BARRIS

Be better, then, to have two three hundred pound bags of sand in the trunk. Then the passengers could be distributed more comfortably.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What about one six hundred pound bag of gold, Jim?

JIM BARRIS

If you bastards wouldn't rappity-rap on like a bunch of speed freaks, I could complete my computations and tell you how this car with its weight would handle a four barrel carb. So shut the fuck up, you assholes!

Luckman stares at Barris, pulls a book from his back pocket.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I'm going to read to you now, Barris.
(reading)

"He to whom it is given to see Christ *more real* than any other reality..."

JIM BARRIS

What?

As Luckman reads, he walks menacingly toward Barris, who backs away.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

"...than any other reality in the World, Christ everywhere present and everywhere growing more great, Christ the final determination and plasmatic Principle of the Universe --"

BOB ARCTOR

What is that, Luckman?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Teilhard de Chardin. "... that man indeed lives in a zone where no multiplicity can distress him and which is nevertheless the most active workshop of universal fulfillment."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Luckman closes the book. He has backed Barris against the wall of the house. Freck tries to get in between them.

CHARLES FRECK

Cool it, you guys.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Out of the way, Freck. I'm going to coldcock Barris into tomorrow for talking to his betters like that.

Luckman brings back his arm to punch Barris. Barris bleats in terror and runs crazily for the house.

JIM BARRIS

I hear the phone ringing about the carb. I'll get it.

They watch him go.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I was just kidding.

CHARLES FRECK

What if he comes back with his gun and silencer?

Arctor and Luckman look dismissively at Freck, and go back under the hood of the car. Freck stands nervously by his car, shifting from foot to foot, ready for a quick getaway.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

Look, I'm splitting.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Naw, stay, man, you're a brother.

CHARLES FRECK

Naw, I'm cutting out.

Barris emerges tentatively from the house, carrying a hammer.

JIM BARRIS

It was a wrong number, man.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Hey, what's the hammer for, Jimmy-Boy?

BOB ARCTOR

To fix the engine. What else?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

Thought I would bring it with me, since
I was indoors and noticed it.

Freck watches this exchange. He anxiously climbs in his car.

CHARLES FRECK

I'm gonna split. I'll see you guys.

BOB ARCTOR

The most dangerous kind of person is
one who's afraid of his own shadow.

Freck's eyes widen at this statement. He drives off.

INT. FRECK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Freck drives along, sweating.

CHARLES FRECK

Did Bob mean me afraid of my own
shadow? But that was turning into a
super-bummer. Where's the chicken into
not wanting to be around that?
Everything's changing, man. Used to be
cool to hang out. Now its totally
dark.

Frank slips in his 8-track of Janis Joplin singing "All is
Loneliness." He cries as he drives.

EXT. JERRY FABIN'S HOUSE - DAY

The furniture has been removed from the lawn. Freck pulls
into the driveway and heads to the house. He knocks on the
door, waits, sniffing. He knocks again.

CHARLES FRECK

Jerry! Jerry! Let me in, man, I'm
truly bummed! I wanna talk!

A couple of hippies on the stoop next door watch Freck.

HEAD #1

Hey, Jerry's gone.

Freck looks over blankly at the hippy. Then it registers.

CHARLES FRECK

Fuck! I can't believe I forgot
Jerry's dead. What is wrong with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEAD #1

He's not dead, man. He's in the Number
Three Federal Clinic.

Freck lets this register. He starts to cry again.

CHARLES FRECK

Fuck, I can't believe I forgot Jerry's
not dead. What is wrong with me?

Freck hurries to his car, speeds down the street.

INT. ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Arctor, Luckman, and Barris lounge around, stoned. Arctor
seems relaxed, reclining on the couch and glancing
discreetly at the hidden holo-scanner.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

You seem mellow, Bob. Having to spend
a hundred bucks on a new carb wouldn't
make me mellow.

BOB ARCTOR

I'll cruise the streets until I come
across an Olds, then unbolt the carb.
Like everyone else I know.

JIM BARRIS

Especially Donna. That chick steals
everything she can carry.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I'll tell you a Donna story. One day
she put a quarter in a stamp machine
and it kept spitting out stamps, till
she had like eighteen thousand stamps.

JIM BARRIS

At what individual price per stamp?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Fifteen cents per individual stamp.

JIM BARRIS

That's twenty-seven hundred dollars, if
my arithmetic is correct.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

And so what's Donna gonna do with so
many stamps? She can barely write...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arctor smiles as he watches Luckman and Barris. Their chatter continues, but goes under as we hear Arctor's V.O.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

The scanners will have miles of this tripped-out garbage. But it's not the stuff that happens while I'm here that matters. It's what goes on while I'm gone. So I'll split. Then I'll see what these three clowns are up to.

We again focus on Luckman and Barris's conversation.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

So she ripped off the whole stamp machine and remounted it, like, somewhere where the postal authorities wouldn't spot it and...

Back to Arctor, as his expression shifts to anxious.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

What if I see some awful truth about the people I care about on these tapes? What if I see Donna climbing in the window and ripping me off, or destroying my stuff? Or some weird, nightmarish world beyond the mirror...

INT. ARCTOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room has a monochromatic, dream-like quality to it. Suddenly Donna crawls in on all fours. There is an non-human blankness to her face. She sticks her head into the dog's bowl and eats greedily, making slurping noises.

INT. ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Arctor lurches out of his fantasy, freaked out. Luckman and Barris don't notice. They're still jabbering away.

JIM BARRIS

You realize our taxes were raised by her stealing those stamps? It's one thing to steal auto parts, but when you steal from Uncle Sam --

BOB ARCTOR

I'm going out to score some beans. Luckman, is your Falcon running?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

(beat, lying)

No. I don't think so.

BOB ARCTOR

Barris?

JIM BARRIS

I wonder, Bob, if you can handle my car? By that mean there are --

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Fuck, Barris. It's an ordinary six cylinder. The parking lot jockeys park it all the time, for God's sake.

JIM BARRIS

There are certain secret devices which have been incorporated --

BOB ARCTOR

I'll walk.

JIM BARRIS

It's just that it has certain secret --

BOB ARCTOR

Forget it. If I tried to drive your car, I'd press the wrong button and float up over the greater L.A. area.

JIM BARRIS

I'm glad you appreciate my position.

Arctor exits.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

You're fucked, Barris. You know that?

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Fred sits in a cubicle and stares at a holo-monitor. On it Barris winds a string around the bowl of a hash pipe while Luckman watches tv and stuffs his face from a tv dinner. We hear other tapes being played in other cubicles: stoned conversations; screaming; high-pitched fast-forward squeals. Another scramble suit walks by Fred's cubicle and glances at the monitor.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

You're allowed to fast forward through the dull stuff, y'know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED

Would if I could, but this is live.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

(after a moment, chuckling)

You call that living?

Fred chuckles perfunctorily. Scramble Suit #1 leaves. Fred continues to watch.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

(mouth full of food)

Fucking McDonaldburger commercials.

Suddenly Luckman gags, jumps to his feet, turns to Barris, signaling wildly. He staggers around, choking. Barris watches him blankly. Luckman lurches to the kitchen.

FRED

Jesus fuck! Barris!

We see Luckman on the kitchen holo-scanner knocking things over, grabbing a glass from the counter and trying to fill it with water. On the living room monitor, Barris calmly continues to wrap string around his hash pipe.

FRED (CONT'D)

(leaping to his feet)

Barris?! Barris!!

Luckman gives up on the water and begins hurling pots and plates at the kitchen walls trying to attract Barris's attention. Barris, in the living room, does not respond. All at once, Luckman falls to the kitchen floor unconscious. In the living room, Barris smiles a little smile. Fred watches, paralyzed. Barris casually rises and strolls into the kitchen. He studies Luckman spread out on the floor. He looks at the dishes and pots scattered about. Then, suddenly, he rips off his sunglasses in a faux panic, working himself up for the frantic 911 phone call. His eyes widen in horror, he flaps his arms helplessly, runs back and forth until he starts to pant, then dials the phone.

JIM BARRIS

Operator, I need, I'm not sure, is it called the inhalator squad or the resuscitation squad?

OPERATOR

Is someone unable to breathe, sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS

It is, I believe, cardiac arrest.
Either that or involuntary aspiration
of a bolus within the --

OPERATOR

What is the address, sir?

JIM BARRIS

The address, the address. let's see...

FRED

Christ! Just --

Luckman heaves violently on the floor. He thrashes around,
throws up the material in his throat, and opens his eyes.

JIM BARRIS

Uh, thank you. No assistance is needed
after all. Good morrow.

Barris hangs up.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

You okay, Ernst?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

I must've gagged. Did I pass out?

JIM BARRIS

Not exactly. You did go into an
altered state of consciousness for a
few seconds. Probably an alpha state.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Fuck. I shit myself.

Luckman stands, unsteadily. Fred relaxes, sits back down at
his console. Luckman splashes himself with tap water.

ERNIE LUCKMAN (CONT'D)

What were you doing while I was lying
there, jacking off?

JIM BARRIS

You saw me on the phone, summoning the
paramedics. I moved into action
immedi --

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Balls.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Arctor walks home, deep in thought. A MG speeds by, makes a screeching u-turn, pulls up beside Arctor, honks it's horn. Arctor squints inside. It's Donna. He opens the passenger door, gets in.

INT. DONNA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Did I scare you? Heh heh.

BOB ARCTOR

I just did a freaky number, not like a fantasy trip, but... So I'm kinda --

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I have your stuff.

BOB ARCTOR

My stuff?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Your Death.

Donna screeches off too fast, weaves, tailgates a Coke truck.

BOB ARCTOR

Fucking Barris. You know how he kills you? He doesn't. He waits until a situation arises where you die, and he just sits there. In fact he sets you up to die. I don't know how exactl --

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Do you have the money?

BOB ARCTOR

What?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I need the money right now.

BOB ARCTOR

Sure. Yeah.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I don't like Barris, and I don't trust him. He's crazy. And you're crazy when you're around him. You're crazy right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

I am?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Yeah.

BOB ARCTOR

Donna, I know I can count on you to tell me if I'm getting weird or crazy or like that. Okay?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Hey, you wanna take me to a concert at Anaheim Stadium next weekend?

BOB ARCTOR

Right on. Yeah. That sounds --

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I'm gonna bring some really oily hash and get really loaded. But you have to wear something neat, not those funky clothes you sometimes wear.

BOB ARCTOR

I'll wear whatever you say.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I'm taking us to my place. And you do have the money and you'll give it to me. Then we'll drop a few of the tabs and kick back. Maybe you could buy a fifth of Southern Comfort and we could get bombed as well.

BOB ARCTOR

Oh, wow. That sounds good.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You know what would be cool tonight, is to go to the Torrance Drive-in. They're showing all eleven Planet of the Apes movies. From 7:30 to 8:00 tomorrow morning.

BOB ARCTOR

Can a drive-in show movies in the morning?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I haven't seen all the Ape movies in years. And the last one for longer than that, the one where they reveal

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE (cont'd)
all the famous guys in history, like
Nero and Lincoln, were secretly apes...

INT. DONNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's dark. The door unlocks, light from the hall spills in. Donna enters, flips on the light. There's a trail of newspapers on the floor.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Stay on the newspaper. I just had the
rug shampooed.

Arctor enters and stands on a square of newspaper. He looks around. The place is cluttered with piles of stuff

BOB ARCTOR
Do you ever throw anything away?

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Someday I'm gonna get married and I'm
going to need all this stuff. When
you get married, you need everything
there is.

Donna slips out of her leather jacket, tosses it on a pile of jackets, and pads into the kitchen. Arctor follows her, tiptoeing along the paper.

BOB ARCTOR
How much of what you've got did you
buy and how much did you steal?

INT. DONNA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Buy? What do you mean "buy"?

Donna opens a cabinet, reaches in back, pulls out several plastic bags of pills. She lays them on the counter, opens a drawer, pulls out a pipe and some hash, sits at the table and fills the pipe. Arctor lays money on the table.

BOB ARCTOR
Like when you buy dope. Like a dope
deal. When I mean by "buy" is an
extension into the greater world of
business transactions of what we have
present now, with us, as dope deals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I think I see what you're saying.

BOB ARCTOR

Like when you rip off those Coca-Cola truck you tailgate. That's stealing.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

No. It's a form of barter.

BOB ARCTOR

Donna, look, you're gonna get caught, and if you got drugs in your car when they catch you, there's nothing I can do to protect you then.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You protect me? What are you talking about?

BOB ARCTOR

Nothing. I just... Please take care.

Donna lights the pipe.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

The Coca-Cola company is a capitalist monopoly. No one else can make it but them. That's fucking wrong.

(beat)

C'mere, I'll supercharge you.

Arctor sits down at the table.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay, cool.

Donna walks over to him, puffing the hash pipe to keep it alive. She bends over him and Arctor opens his mouth. She exhales long and forcefully into his mouth. This is as close as these two get to sex. Arctor's eyes go soft as he looks up at Donna.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)

I love you, Donna.

Donna looks down at him.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Yeah, I can dig it, you being in love with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Donna grins, sits down and takes a hit from the pipe.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DONNA'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Donna and Arctor are stoned on the couch in the dim room.

BOB ARCTOR

Hey, Donna, man, do you like cats?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Dripping little things. Moving along about a foot above the ground.

BOB ARCTOR

No. On the ground.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Drippy. Behind furniture.

BOB ARCTOR

Little spring flowers, then?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Yes. Little spring flowers. With yellow in them. That first come up.

BOB ARCTOR

Before. Before anyone.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Yes. Before anyone stomps on them and they're gone.

Arctor's eyes get wet.

BOB ARCTOR

Yeah. You know me exactly, Donna. You can read me. No one knows me but you.

Donna draws on the pipe, but it's out.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

No more.

Her smile disappears.

BOB ARCTOR

What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Nothing.

BOB ARCTOR

Donna, can I put my arm around you. I want to hold you, okay?

Donna's stoned eyes suddenly widen.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

No, you're too ugly.

BOB ARCTOR

What?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

No! Look, I snort a lot of coke; I have to be super careful because I snort a lot of coke.

BOB ARCTOR

Ugly? Fuck you, Donna.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Just leave my body alone.

BOB ARCTOR

(putting on his shoes)

Sure. Yeah. You better believe it.

Arctor rises, disappears into the kitchen.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(calling after)

I don't like people to grope my body!

(talking to herself)

I have to watch out for that because I do so much coke. Someday I'm gonna go over the Canadian border with four pounds of coke in my snatch. I'll say I'm a Catholic and a virgin.

Arctor passes through the room with his bags of Death.

BOB ARCTOR

I'm taking off.

He heads for the door. Donna tries to rise, confused and half asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You don't have your car. I'll drive you, man.

(looks for her shoes)

But you can see why I have to protect my snatch --

BOB ARCTOR

You're too stoned to drive and you never let anyone else drive that little roller skate of yours.

She jerks upright and glares wildly at him.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(yelling)

That's because no one else can fucking drive my car! Nobody else ever gets it right, no man especially! Driving or anything else! Listen, you had your hands down into my --

Arctor is out the door.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Arctor hurries through the darkness. Donna pants behind him, trying to catch up. She does. Arctor keeps walking.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

I'm dreadfully sorry I hurt your feelings. Okay? I was out of it.

BOB ARCTOR

(muttering)

Too ugly.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Sometimes I get really spaced. You wanna come back? Or what? You wanna go to the drive-in? What about the Southern Comfort? C'mon, I'm sorry.

Arctor stops, stares off for a while. Donna watches, waits.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

They turn and head back to the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

That sure is good hash though, huh?

They walk in silence.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You know what I'm going to do someday, Bob? I'm going to move north to Oregon and live in the snow. Have a little house and a vegetable garden.

BOB ARCTOR

You'll have to save up for that.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(glancing up shyly)

He'll get me that. What's-his-name.

BOB ARCTOR

Who?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(sharing a secret)

Mr. Right. He'll drive an Aston-Martin and take me north in it. And that's where the little old fashioned house will be in the snow.

BOB ARCTOR

You sure this'll happen?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

It's in the cards.

A heaviness descends upon Arctor. He stops. Donna stops.

BOB ARCTOR

Hey, man, can I go with you? To Oregon? When you do take off finally?

Donna smiles up at Arctor. She gently shakes her head "no." He studies her. Her answer will never change. He shivers. Donna takes Arctor's hand, squeezes it, holds it. Her touch fills him. After a moment, Donna lets her hand drop.

INT. ARCTOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arctor enters the dimly lit bedroom followed by Connie, a skinny girl with hollow eyes and a flat affect. He sifts through his dresser drawer as she hovers behind him. Finally he pulls out a baggie with some pills in it. Throughout, we hear stoned conversation coming from another room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Here you go.

CONNIE

Thanks, man.

Connie stuffs the baggie into her purse. She sits on the bed and begins to unceremoniously undress. When her blouse comes off, we see needle tracks and bruises on her arms. She pulls a comb from her purse and listlessly combs her lank hair. She drops the hand holding the comb and begins to nod. Arctor looks at the tracks, at the pimple on her cheek. Connie wakes up, sort of, and starts combing again.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

Do you have a toothbrush I can use.
Aw screw it -- teeth are teeth. I'll
brush 'em. You gotta ...

Connie drones on, but her voice has become so quiet it can't be heard. Arctor watches her lips work soundlessly. Finally her voice becomes audible again.

CONNIE (CONT'D)

Who are those guys rattling on and on
out there? Jabber-jaws. They live
here with you, I guess.

BOB ARCTOR

Two of them do.

Connie fixes her dead eyes on Arctor.

CONNIE

You're queer?

BOB ARCTOR

I try not to be. That's why I've
arranged this transaction with you.

CONNIE

Yes, I suppose I'm about to find out.

Connie removes her bra and her skirt.

INT. ARCTOR'S BEDROOM - LATER

The lights are off. The off-screen conversation has stopped. Instead we hear static from a signed-off tv station. Arctor is in bed with Connie. Both are naked and partially under covers. Connie lies rigidly on her back, arms straight down by her sides. She snores. Arctor moves in and out of

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

consciousness. He opens his eyes, groggily orients himself, glances over at the woman next to him. It's Donna. He bolts upright, studies her face. It's still Donna. He fumbles for the switch on the night table lamp and knocks it to the floor. The woman next to him sleeps on. He watches her face. Gradually it begins to turn back into Connie. Arctor drops onto his back and looks at the ceiling.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Fred sits in his cubicle monitoring the scanners. On one scanner Barris sits in the living room reading a book about mushrooms. After a moment, he lays the book face down on the coffee table and leaves the house. Fred watches the empty living room. He presses the fast forward button. The sunlight coming in through the living room window shifts as the day speeds by. The living room door opens. Fred slows the tape to normal speed. Barris is back at the couch with a brown bag. He dumps several mushrooms onto the table, compares them with illustrations in the book. Finally, he puts one aside, throws the rest in the bag, crumbles the mushroom, and fills capsules. He dials the phone. An LED on Fred's console indicates the phone number dialed.

TELEPHONE VOICE

Yeah?

JIM BARRIS

This is Jim.

TELEPHONE VOICE

Who?

JIM BARRIS

With the beard. Green shades.
Leather pants. I met you at that
happening at --

TELEPHONE VOICE

Oh, right. Yeah. That guy. Jim.

JIM BARRIS

Say, have I scored. *Psilocybe
Mexicana*. A rare hallucinogenic
mushroom used in South American
mystery cults thousands of years ago.
You fly, become invisible, understand
the speech of animals --

TELEPHONE VOICE

Truly? How much?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two other Scramble Suits walk by Fred's console.

JIM BARRIS

Five dollars a cap.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

What's he peddling?

FRED

Mushrooms he seems to have picked locally.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #2

Certain Amanita mushrooms contain toxins that act as red blood cell cracking agents. It takes two weeks to die, it's incalculably painful, and there's no antidote.

FRED

What's the statute violation?

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

Misrepresentation in advertising.

Both Scramble Suits laugh their computer laughs and disappear. Fred goes back to the monitors. The front door opens and Bob Arctor enters dejectedly.

FRED

Hi, Bob.

BOB ARCTOR

(to Barris)

Hi.

JIM BARRIS

How'd you make out with little Miss Big Tits?

Barris chuckles.

FRED

Fuck off, Barris.

BOB ARCTOR

Fuck off, Barris.

Arctor passes out of range of the scanner. After a moment, he reappears on the scanner inside his bedroom. He shuts the door, removes the bags of tabs he scored from Donna, looks around the room, then settles on stuffing the bags in the back of his dresser drawer. He heads out of the bedroom

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

and reappears on the living room monitor. He walks past Barris. Barris trails him casually

JIM BARRIS

Bob, I'm sorry if I offended you.

Both disappear from the living room monitor and reappear on the kitchen monitor. Arctor fills the coffee pot with water.

BOB ARCTOR

Where's Luckman?

JIM BARRIS

He left with your jack, so I assume he's off to knock over pay phones.

BOB ARCTOR

My axle jack?

JIM BARRIS

Y'know, I have a sure fire way you could get into the pants of Little Miss Big Tits. For under one dollar.

Fred fast forwards the tape. He stops. Barris and Arctor are now on the living room monitor. Arctor is fuming.

BOB ARCTOR

Either you pay up your back rent or get to work fixing my godamn cephscope!

JIM BARRIS

Yes. About that, Bob. I've already ordered resistors --

Fred fast-forwards again. Now Barris is on the living room monitor reading about mushrooms and Arctor is on the monitor in his bedroom, writing in his notebook. The phone rings on the living room monitor. Barris picks up.

JIM BARRIS (CONT'D)

Yeah?

TELEPHONE VOICE #3

Mr. Arctor?

JIM BARRIS

Yes, this is Robert Arctor.

Inside the Fred scramble suit we see Arctor's eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TELEPHONE VOICE #3

I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Arctor,
but your check did not clear.

JIM BARRIS

Oh, yes, I've been meaning to call
you, but I've had a severe bout of
intestinal flu, with loss of body
heat, pyloric spasms, cramps...

In the monitor in his bedroom, Arctor continues to write in
his notebook, unaware. In his scramble suit at the console,
Bob Arctor, is freaked out, and writes in the same notebook.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Barris portraying Arctor as coming
off heroin.

JIM BARRIS

I just haven't been able to get it
together to make that little twenty
dollar check good, and frankly I don't
intend to make it good.

BOB ARCTOR (IN SCRAMBLE SUIT)

What?

TELEPHONE VOICE #3

What?

JIM BARRIS

You heard me correctly.

TELEPHONE VOICE #3

Mr. Arctor, those flu symptoms you
describe... I think you're a --

JIM BARRIS

Think what you want. Turn out, tune
out, and good-bye.

Barris hangs up. Fred checks the LED, picks up his phone.

FRED

Get me a name and address on this.

OPERATOR

Englesohn Locksmith, 1343 Harbor in
Anaheim, Loverboy.

Fred hangs up. We move inside the suit to Arctor's troubled
face. He writes in his notebook. The V.O. is disturbed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

Barris up to something: pretending to be me... writing rubber checks on my account... representing me as a heroin addict. BUT WHAT IS HE UP TO?

INT. SAFE HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Fred paces. He passes a wall mirror, glances at his vague face. He moves closer to the mirror, studies himself.

FRED

Arctor must've burned Barris pretty bad to deserve this display of malice.

Scramble Suit #1 approaches Fred.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

I was thinking, do you actually know these losers? Are you in among them?

FRED

Yeah. I'm there.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

You might want to warn them about the mushrooms. Can you pass it on to them without faulting your cover?

FRED

I suppose I can lay it on that one.

(indicates Arctor)

Without him flashing on me. He's docile.

SCRAMBLE SUIT #1

Ugly-looking, too.

Scramble Suit #1 laughs. Fred joins in wholeheartedly.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - LATER

Fred watches the monitors. Arctor's house is quiet. Barris and Luckman doze in the living room, the television tuned to static. On another monitor, Arctor is sleeping in his bed with a woman. After a beat Fred notices the woman is Donna. We move in close to Fred's ever-changing eyes.

FRED

That can't be right. Arctor has never done it with Donna. Has he?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Fred fast-rewinds the tape, switches it to play. Arctor is in bed having sex with Connie. Fred sighs a computerized sigh of relief and fast-forwards the tape. Arctor is now sleeping next to Connie. Fred watches for a moment. As he does the face of the sleeping woman transforms into Donna's. Fred freezes the frame. Then he enlarges the holographic image so it fills up the space previously occupied by all eight monitors. The image is now almost actual size. Fred rises and walks around the console into the projection area. It's as if he's entering Arctor's bedroom, or a slightly scaled down, frozen version of it. He approaches the sleeping couple, bends down and examines the face of the woman. It is clearly Donna. He stands in Arctor's bedroom for a while, confused and disoriented, tries to look at himself in Arctor's bureau mirror. Fred does not appear in the holographic reflection of the room. He shudders, returns to the console, brings up all eight monitors, and turns off the freeze-frame. On the bedroom monitor, Arctor awakens, and glances over at the woman sleeping next to him. His eyes widen. He fumbles for the switch on the bedside lamp, knocks it over. He turns back and stares at the sleeping woman. As does Fred at the console.

EXT. ENGLESOHN LOCK COMPANY - MORNING

A yellow cab pulls up. Arctor emerges.

INT. ENGLESOHN LOCK COMPANY - CONTINUOUS

A plump old lady stands behind the counter. Arctor enters.

OLD LADY

Yes sir? Good morning.

BOB ARCTOR

Hi, I'm here...

The scene shifts to very slow motion. Everything grows quiet. Colors become saturated, as in a Raphael painting.

FAR-AWAY VOICE

*Ihr Instrumente freilich spottet
mein/Mit Rad und Kammen, Walz' und
Bugel:/Ich stand am Tor, ihr...*

The scene shifts back. Maybe a hiccup's worth of time has passed.

BOB ARCTOR

... to pay for a check of mine the
bank returned. It's twenty dollars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD LADY
Oh. All-rightey.

The old lady opens a metal file box and, after a moment's search, pulls out a check with a note clipped to it.

OLD LADY
Mr. Arctor, is it?

BOB ARCTOR
Yes, I am Mr. Arctor. Nobody else is.

OLD LADY
Okay, sir. That'll be twenty dollars.

Arctor hands her a twenty dollar bill.

BOB ARCTOR
I'm sorry about this, but by mistake I wrote the check on a closed account.

The lady nods amiably as she writes something on the note.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)
Also, I'd appreciate if you'd tell your husband --

OLD LADY
My brother Carl.

BOB ARCTOR
I'd appreciate if you'd tell your brother that I was distraught when he called and I apologize for that, too.

OLD LADY
I believe he said something about that, yes.

She hands the bad check back to Arctor.

BOB ARCTOR
Any extra charge?

OLD LADY
No extra charge.

BOB ARCTOR
I was distraught because a friend of mine had just passed-on suddenly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD LADY

Oh dear.

His business done, Arctor stands at the counter awkwardly.

BOB ARCTOR

He choked to death alone, in his room,
on a piece of meat. No one heard him.

OLD LADY

You know, Mr. Arctor, more deaths
happen from that than people realize.
I read that if you're dining with a
friend and he doesn't talk for a long
time, you should ask him if he can,
because he may be strangling.

BOB ARCTOR

Yes. That's true. Thanks. And
thanks about the check.

OLD LADY

Well, I'm sorry about your friend.

BOB ARCTOR

Yes. He was the best friend I had.

OLD LADY

How dreadful. I'll tell Carl. And
thank you for coming all the way down.

BOB ARCTOR

Thank you. And thank Mr. Englesohn
for me. Thank you both so much.

Arctor stands there. The two just look at each other.

BOB ARCTOR (CONT'D)

Okay then, thank you.

Arctor backs out of the tiny shop.

INT. CAB - MORNING

Arctor rides in the back with his open notebook and studies
the returned check. He writes in his notebook.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK

We see Arctor writing the following words in the same
handwriting as is on the check. The V.O. is tense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

A perfect forgery. Barris has my handwriting down. How many checks has he written on my account? Evil genius bastard.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Arctor looks up, stares out the window, tries to focus. Something's bothering him. The stores speed by in a blur of color.

BOB ARCTOR

What if I, Bob Arctor, wrote this check myself and just don't remember?

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - MORNING

Arctor is on the pay phone outside the Shell station.

BOB ARCTOR

I'm sorry to bother you again, ma'am, but I was just wondering what address do you have for that service call?

OLD LADY (V.O.)

Just a minute, Mr. Arctor, I'll check.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Is that Arctor?

OLD LADY (V.O.)

Yes, but Carl, don't say anything. He came in just now --

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Let me talk to him.

OLD LADY (V.O.)

Mr. Arctor? It says here it was in Santa Ana. On Main Street.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Arctor is stoned and on the phone in the crowded, smokey, noisy room. A blonde woman nibbles his ear.

BOB ARCTOR

Yeah, I lost my ignition key.

(pause)

34881 Main Street, Santa Ana...

EXT. SHELL STATION - MORNING

Arctor hangs up the pay phone. He paces, trying to think.

BOB ARCTOR

So, *Arctor's* the forger, not Barris!
Not deliberately, but because his
brain is slushed on dope. All their
brains are...

The busy intersection slows almost to a standstill. Colors become saturated. Details seem momentous: A man gesturing in mid-conversation, a newspaper blowing down the street.

FAR-AWAY VOICE

*Der wurme gleich' ich, der den Staub
Durchwuhlt,/Den, wie er sich im Staube
nahrend lebt,/Des Wandrers Tritt...*

Back to normal as a car passes with a faulty muffler.

BOB ARCTOR

... slushed and mutually interacting
in a slushed way.

INT. CAB - MORNING

Arctor rides in the back. He stares out the window at the endless loop of McDonald's, Thriftys, 7-11's.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)

But what is Arctor up to? Clearly the
Sheriff's Office has some good reasons
to focus their investigation on him.
No doubt reasons I know nothing about.
My job is to report, theirs to
evaluate.

Arctor lets his head fall back against the seat.

EXT. ARCTOR'S HOUSE - MORNING

The cab drops Arctor off. He heads up the newspaper-strewn walk to the front door. He eyes the house and the grounds: The house needs paint, a rain gutter is halfway dislodged. The yard is overgrown.

BOB ARCTOR

Fucking waste of a perfectly good
house. A family could live here, for
Christ's sake.

(picks up newspapers)

Oughta take it away from this fuck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arctor arrives at the front door, tries to pull his house keys from his pocket without spilling the armful of newspapers. He succeeds, opens the door, enters the house.

INT. ARCTOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The place is a mess. Arctor drops the papers on the floor.

BOB ARCTOR
(for benefit of scanners)
Nobody home, I guess.

Arctor moves through the room in an almost studied way. There is something stilted about the way he intentionally avoids looking in the direction of the scanner.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

Kids playing in background. The camera glides across the following words as the dispassionate V.O. reads along.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What does a scanner see? Does it see into the head? Into the heart? Does it see into me clearly or darkly? I hope clearly, because I can't any longer. I see only murk inside and out.

INT. ARCTOR'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arctor rises and pulls a book from the shelf. It is *The Picture Book of Sexual Love*. He opens the book, revealing a photo of a man nibbling a woman's breast. He positions himself so as to be best picked up by the living room scanner, then appears to read aloud from the book. We can see that what he is reciting is not on the page.

BOB ARCTOR
Any given man sees only a tiny portion of the total truth, and...

Shift to slow motion. Saturated colors. Very quiet.

FAR-AWAY VOICE
Weh! steck' ich in dem Kerker...

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Freck lays fresh sheets on his bed in his neat apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLES FRECK

It is no problem how to kill yourself in the circles in which I hang. When life becomes more and more depressing as you watch those you know falling apart from drug use, just take a large quantity of reds.

Freck places a bag of reds on the night table.

CHARLES FRECK

Wash 'em down with a bottle of cheap wine.

Freck pulls a bottle of Thunderbird from the counter of his kitchenette and places it next to the pills.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

The hard part is choosing the correct artifacts to be found on you by later archaeologists. So they know from which stratum you came and where your head was at when you did it.

Freck pulls a copy of "The Fountainhead" from his book shelf, and places it face down and open on his bed.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

I will be found with Ayn Rand's "The Fountainhead" open by my side to prove I have been a misunderstood superman rejected by the masses and so, in a sense, murdered by their scorn.

Freck places a typewritten letter next to the book.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

Also, an unfinished letter to Exxon protesting the cancellation of my gas credit card. That way I will indict the system and achieve something by my death. Over and above what the death itself achieves.

Freck lies on the bed and readies himself for the suicide. He unscrews the cap on the wine, tastes it, reconsiders.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

Perhaps a connoisseur wine is in order on such an auspicious occasion.

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S CAR - DAY

Freck drives, an expensive-looking bottle of wine on the seat next to him. He anxiously eyes the gas gauge on empty.

CHARLES FRECK

You'll soon be sorry, Exxon, you ever tangled with Charles B. Freck! Junior!

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Fred sits in his scramble suit watching a holo-tape. In it Arctor is pulling a book from the shelf in his living room and opening it. Fred zooms in to the title of the book. It is *The Picture Book of Sexual Love*. Fred zooms back out to take in the entire scene. Arctor recites, ostensibly from the book, in a creaky, stagy way.

BOB ARCTOR

Any given man sees only a tiny portion of *Weh! steck' ich in dem Kerker noch? Verfluchtes* the total truth, and very often, in fact almost perpetually *dumpfes Mauerloch...*

FRED

What the fuck is he talking about?

Fred glances at the other monitors. The only other activity is in Luckman's room, where Luckman lies snoring, sprawled on his floor, a bag of reds by his side.

BOB ARCTOR

Wo selbst das liebe Himmelslicht he deliberately deceives *trub durch gemalte Scheiben bricht!*

FRED

He's playing head games with us. He's shucking us. The fucker!

Fred rises and paces in front of the console, keeping an eye on the monitors, trying to figure what Arctor is up to. On the other monitor, we see that Arctor's recitation has roused Luckman, who sits up groggily and listens to the odd German-English rant. Luckman picks up an axe, heads to the bedroom door, and listens there intently. In the living room, Arctor has put down his book and is sifting through the pile of mail on the coffee table. He tosses a large piece of junk mail at the trash can. It misses and crashes against the wall. In his bedroom, Luckman hears the crash. He stiffens suspiciously, sniffs the air, raises the axe, ready to tear into the other room and attack. In the living room, Arctor reads a piece of mail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR
(regular voice)
I'll be dipped.

Luckman recognizes Arctor's voice, relaxes, puts down his axe, opens the bedroom door, and exits his bedroom. He appears on the living room monitor with Arctor.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
Hi, what's happening, Bob?

BOB ARCTOR
I drove by the Maylar Microdot
Corporation building.

Luckman casually drops into a chair across from Arctor.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
You're shitting me.

BOB ARCTOR
One of the employees had evidently
tracked the inventory out on the heel
of his shoe. So they were all in the
parking lot with many little
magnifying glasses.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
(yawning)
Any reward?

BOB ARCTOR
They had a reward, but they lost that,
too. It was a little tiny penny.

ERNIE LUCKMAN
How large is the Maylar Microdot
Corporation building?

FRED
Pathetic, soulless nitwits.

Fred sighs, fast-forwards the tape. He watches on the meter until an hour's worth of tape has passed. He switches back to play. Arctor is across the room now, sprinkling food into a fish tank. Luckman is stretched out on the couch.

BOB ARCTOR
About an inch high.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Well, then how can you tell when you drive past it, if its only an inch?

BOB ARCTOR

They have a really big sign.

FRED

Jesus.

Fred fast forwards again for a long while, then puts the machine back on play. Now Luckman is on the floor, cleaning some grass. Arctor sits on the couch strumming a guitar.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What's the sign look like?

Fred fast forwards until five hours have past, then goes back to play. The living room is cloudy with smoke, as Luckman and Arctor pass a joint back and forth.

ERNIE LUCKMAN (CONT'D)

Y'know how can you smuggle microdots into the U.S.? Barris told me. I'm not supposed to say, cause he's putting it in his book, "Simple Ways to Smuggle Objects into the U.S. and Out, Depending on Which Way You're Going."

BOB ARCTOR

Oh, just tell me.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

You smuggle it with a shipment of dope. Like heroin. The microdots are so small no one would notice.

BOB ARCTOR

That's a decent idea.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Barris had this other idea for smuggling dope. You know how the custom guys, they ask you to declare what you have?

BOB ARCTOR

Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Well, you take a huge block of hash and you carve it in the shape of a man. Then you hollow out a little section and put a wind-up motor in. And a cassette tape. And just before it goes through customs, you wind it up and it walks up to the man, who says, "Do you have anything to declare?" and it says, "No, I don't," and keeps on walking.

BOB ARCTOR

You put a solar battery in it, it could keep walking for years. Forever.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

What's the use of that?

BOB ARCTOR

Imagine an Eskimo village. And this six foot block of hash worth... What would it be worth?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

A billion dollars?

BOB ARCTOR

More. Two billion. So these Eskimos are chewing hides when this six foot block of hash comes walking through the snow saying, "No, I don't" over and over again.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

They'd wonder what it meant by that.

BOB ARCTOR

Legends would spring up.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Can you imagine telling your grandkids, "I saw with my own eyes a six foot block of hash appear and walk past, worth two billion dollars, saying, "No, I don't." His grandchildren would have him committed.

BOB ARCTOR

But, see, legends build. So in a few centuries it would be, "In my forefathers' time, a ninety foot high block of extremely good quality

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Afghanistan hash worth eight trillion dollars came at us dripping fire and screaming, "Die, Eskimo dogs!" And we fought and fought with it and finally killed it with our spears.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

The kids wouldn't believe that either.

BOB ARCTOR

Kids never believe anything anymore.

Fred's phone rings. It jerks him out of his focus on the monitor. He pauses the tape and picks up the phone.

FRED

Yeah?

TELEPHONE VOICE

Fred, we've processed your tests. We need you to come back for the full battery. Tomorrow at three. Do you remember the room number?

FRED

Um... okay.

TELEPHONE VOICE

It's 203. Are you all right, Fred? Any confusion? Difficulty identifying persons or objects? Does anything you see appear inverted or reversed? Any space-time or language disorientation?

FRED

Um, what? I just... what exactly have you processed... that is, is this in regard to the Lion's Club speech?

TELEPHONE VOICE

We'll take all that up tomorrow, Fred.

Dial tone. Fred hangs up and fast-forwards the tape. He watches as the tape whirs through the machine. He presses stop, the tape jerks to a halt. Fred breathes hard, although it comes through the grid sounding oddly mechanical. He pushes play. Luckman is cleaning grass on the floor. Barris is in the corner winding string. Arctor rubs his finger on the lip of a wine glass, making it hum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE LUCKMAN

... this guy appeared on tv, claiming to be a world-famous imposter. He said he'd posed at one time or another as a great surgeon, a theoretical submolecular high-velocity particle research physicist, a Finnish novelist, a deposed president of Argentina...

BOB ARCTOR

He got away with it? Never got caught?

ERNIE LUCKMAN

See, the guy never *really* posed as any of it. He only posed as a world-famous imposter. Turns out he just pushed a broom at Disneyland, until he read about this actual world-famous imposter, and he thought, I can pose as all those things, then he thought, hell, I'll just pose as an imposter. Save a lot of time, a lot easier. Made almost as much money as the real imposter with books and movie rights.

JIM BARRIS

We see imposters in our lives, now and then. But not posing as physicists.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Narks, you mean. Yeah, I wonder what a nark looks like?

BOB ARCTOR

It's like asking what an imposter looks like. I asked a hash dealer who'd been busted once what the nark who busted him looked like --

JIM BARRIS

Looked just like us.

BOB ARCTOR

More so. The dealer dude told me the nark had *longer* hair than we do. I guess the moral is, stay away from guys who look like us.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

Narks give me the creeps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

How could a guy do that is what I want to know, pose as a nark?

LUCKMAN AND BARRIS

What?

BOB ARCTOR

Shit, I'm spaced. Pose as a nark.

ERNIE LUCKMAN

POSE AS A NARK? POSE AS A NARK?

BOB ARCTOR

My brains are scrambled today. I better go crash.

Fred freezes the tape. He scribbles in notebook.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK

Fred writes in a different handwriting now: choppy, backward-slanted, crabbed.

FRED (V.O.)

Posing as a nark. What does Arctor mean?

INT. CHARLES FRECK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Freck sits up in bed in his now electric yellow room, sipping magenta wine. The walls are dripping.

CHARLES FRECK

I've been burned. These are not reds, but rather some freaky psychedelic, the likes of which I have never seen.

The wall across from Freck's bed parts with a sloshing sound, and an eight foot high creature with many eyes and ultra-hip clothing appears at his bedside, holding a scroll.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

Fuck. You're going to read me my sins, aren't you?

The creature nods solemnly and unrolls the scroll.

CHARLES FRECK (CONT'D)

And it's going to take a hundred thousand million hours, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CREATURE

We are no longer in the mundane universe. Your sins will be read to you ceaselessly throughout eternity.

CHARLES FRECK

Know your fucking dealer, man.

CREATURE

(reading from scroll)

November 14, 1962, 3:08:23 pm: you did knowingly and with malice aforethought punch your baby sister Evelyn on the left side of the head when your mother was not looking. November 14, 1962, 3:08:27 pm: you did knowingly and with malice aforethought punch your baby sister on the left arm when your mother was not looking. November 14, 1962, 3:08:32 pm: you did...

EXT. BOB ARCTOR'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Arctor is finishing up mowing the lawn. He is intently focused on the task, but has done an erratic job: the left side of the yard has been left almost completely unmowed. Arctor turns to enter the house. We see that the left side of his face is completely unshaved.

INT. ROOM 203 - DAY

Fred is in the midst of a battery of tests being administered by two uniformed medical technicians who resemble the technicians who administered the previous tests, but are not the same. Fred's head rests in a contraption that divides his face in half, so his right eye and left eye can be exposed to different projected images.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #3

Okay, Fred, in rapid succession you will see a number of objects pass before first your left eye, then your right eye. At the same time, on the panel before you, outlines of these objects will appear. You are to match, by means of the punch pencil you hold in your hand, the outline with the object. These images will flash very quickly so don't hesitate too long. You will be scored for time as well as accuracy. Okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED

Okay.

Technician #4 flips a lever, the panel in front of Fred lights up, and we see a wide array of outline drawings: a hammer, a shoe, a seagull, a camel, etc. Then in rapid succession, photographic images of these objects and others flash before Fred's left eye. He tries to keep up.

INT. ROOM 203 - A BIT LATER

Fred, now with an eye patch over his left eye, faces a screen. On the table in front of him is a wide array of small objects: A toy boat, a die, a key, a marble, etc.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #4

Now, an image of a familiar object will be projected, you are to reach into the group of objects on the table in front of you, with your left hand -- and pick up the corresponding object.

INT. ROOM 203 - A BIT LATER

Fred is blindfolded, a box with hand-holes in front of him.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #3

Next, you will reach into this box and touch the object inside with your left hand. After that you will be shown three objects visually. They will somewhat resemble each other and you will tell us which one most resembles the item you felt in the box.

INT. ROOM 203 - A BIT LATER

Fred sits with a pile of oddly shaped blocks, which he is attempting to fit into their corresponding holes.

INT. ROOM 203 - LATER

Fred sits before a table on which are scattered a bunch of identical plastic birds and one plastic lion. Fred studies the table, finally picking up one of the plastic birds.

FRED

This is the different one.

Medical Technician #4 makes a note on his clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #3

Okay, Fred, good. Let us process --

Fred looks up from the table at Medical Technician #3, who is now Medical Technician #2 from the previous scene.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

-- these test results. And we'll get back to you within a couple of hours.

Medical Technician #4 is now Medical Technician #1.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Thanks for your cooperation, Fred.

FRED

Thank you. Thank you all very much.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT HALL - DAY

Fred walks hurriedly through the hall, past other Scramble Suits and uniformed police personnel. He enters an office.

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hank looks up from his desk.

HANK

Fred, is that you?

FRED

Yes.

HANK

Fred, this is the informant who phoned in about Bob Arctor.

Hank indicates Jim Barris, sitting against the wall, grinning crazily and fiddling with a paper clip.

HANK (CONT'D)

We challenged him to appear in person and he did. Do you know him?

FRED

Sure I do.

(to Barris)

You're James Barris, aren't you?

Barris continues to grin, says nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

His i.d. shows him to be, yes.

FRED

What does he want?

JIM BARRIS

I have evidence that Mr. Arctor is part of a large, secret covert organization, well-funded, with arsenals of weapons at their disposal, probably dedicated to the overthrow --

HANK

That part is speculation. We want to know what your firsthand evidence is.

FRED

Have you ever been in a mental hospital, Mr. Barris?

JIM BARRIS

No, I have not, sir, ever been in a --

FRED

Will you sign a sworn notarized statement regarding your evidence?

HANK

He already has, Fred.

JIM BARRIS

My evidence, gentlemen, which I mostly don't have with me today, consists of tape recordings I have made of Robert Arctor's phone conversations.

FRED

What is this covert organization?

JIM BARRIS

I believe it to be political in nature, and against this country.

FRED

And what is Arctor's relationship to Substance D?

JIM BARRIS

When you examine my evidence, you will undoubtedly conclude that Substance D is produced by a foreign nation determined to overthrow the U.S., and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM BARRIS (cont'd)
that Robert Arctor has his hands deep
in the machinery of --

HANK
Can you tells us the name of anyone
else inside this organization?

JIM BARRIS
A Miss Donna Hawthorne. On various
pretexts he goes over to her place and
colludes with her regularly.

Fred laughs his computerized laugh. Barris laughs also.

FRED
Colludes? What do you mean?

JIM BARRIS
I've followed him in my car, sir.

FRED
She's his girl!

HANK
(to Fred)
You think there's nothing to this?

FRED
(shrugging)
Let's look at his evidence.

HANK
(to Barris)
Bring us your evidence.
(to Fred)
Maybe we should send an officer with
him to retrieve it.

JIM BARRIS
There's one more thing. Mr. Arctor is
addicted to Substance D. His mind is
deranged now. He's become dangerous.

FRED
Dangerous.

JIM BARRIS
He's already having episodes such as
occur with brain damage from Substance
D. Deterioration in the corpus
callosum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANK

This kind of unsupported speculation is worthless. We'll send an officer with you to collect your evidence.

JIM BARRIS

But, sirs --

HANK

We'll arrange for an officer out of uniform, so it won't be conspicuous.

JIM BARRIS

I might be murdered. Mr. Arctor is, as I say --

HANK

We appreciate your extreme risk, Mr. Barris. If your information is of significant value in obtaining a conviction, then naturally --

JIM BARRIS

That's not why I'm doing this. The man is sick. Brain damaged from Substance D. The reason I am here --

HANK

We don't care why you're here. We only care if your evidence amounts to anything. The rest is your problem.

JIM BARRIS

Thank you, sirs. Thank you very much.

Barris grins and nods and sweats.

INT. ROOM 203 - DAY

Fred enters. Medical Technician #1 and Medical Technician #2 look up from their desks.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Fred, is that you?

FRED

Yes.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1

Have a seat, then.

Fred sits in a chair against the wall. The technicians go back to their paper work. Fred waits stiffly. Finally, Medical Technician #2 looks back up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
Fred, we've processed your results.

FRED
Uh-huh.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
You demonstrate something we call a
competition phenomenon.

FRED
(getting up to leave)
Okay. Thank you.

Medical Technician #2 gestures for Fred to sit. He does.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
It's a competition between your left
and right hemispheres. Kind of like
you have two gas gauges on your car,
one says your tank is full, the other
says it's empty.

FRED
Why do I have two gas gauges?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
Substance D. Damage has taken place
in the normally dominant left
hemisphere. The right hemisphere is
attempting to compensate for the
impairment. But the twin functions do
not fuse. Now, we could perform a
right hemispherectomy --

FRED
Will these go away? These gas gauges?

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
It's probably a functional impairment.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2
It may be organic. Maybe permanent.

FRED
Wait. I'm confused. Are you saying
it is organic, or --

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #1
Even if it's brain damage, there are
experiments now in the removal of
small sections of both hemispheres
which seem to abort compete gestalt-
processing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN #2

But the problem then is the individual only receives partial incoming sense data. Instead of having two signals, he gets half a signal.

FRED

Half a gas gauge? What would that be like?

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - DAY

Hank and a sweating Jim Barris sit at a table, the centerpiece of which is a reel-to-reel tape recorder. A uniformed cop stands at the door.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (FEMALE)

Look, I can't talk. I'll call you back.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (MALE)

This can't wait.

The door to Hank's office opens. Hank switches off the tape recorder. A scramble suit enters, out of breath in a computerized-sounding way.

HANK

Fred?

FRED

Yeah. Sorry I'm late. I just...

Hank waves him off, turns on the tape recorder. Fred sits.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (FEMALE)

Well, what is it then?

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (MALE)

We intend to...

Hank switches off the tape, looks at Barris.

HANK

Would you identify the voices for us?

JIM BARRIS

The female's voice is a Miss Donna Hawthorne. The male is Bob Arctor.

Hank nods, switches back on the tape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (MALE)
 ... half of Southern California
 tomorrow night. The Air Force Arsenal
 at Vandenberg AFB will be hit for
 automatic and semi-automatic weapons.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (FEMALE)
 What about that disorientation drug
 the bikers ripped off for us? When do
 we carry that crud up to the watershed
 area to --

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (MALE)
 The organization needs the weapons
 first. The drugged water supply is
 step B.

Hank turns off the tape.

JIM BARRIS
 I can identify the biker gang also.

HANK
 You have more material of this sort?

JIM BARRIS
 Much more. Much much more. Much much
 much much much --

HANK
 Okay, great. What I'm going to do,
 Mr. Barris, is impound this material
 here for further study. You will be
 held in custody, charged with giving
 false information. This is, of
 course, only a pretext for your own
 safety, but the formal charge will be
 lodged anyhow. Is that satisfactory?

Hank does not wait for a response, but signals for the
 uniformed cop to lead Barris from the room. Barris
 continues to grin as he is led away.

HANK
 What's your response, Fred, to
 Barris's evidence so far?

FRED
 Is that my medical report, Hank?

Hank nods, but offers nothing else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED (CONT'D)

Well, I think the little Barris played sounded genuined to me.

HANK

Oh, it's a fake, Fred, for Christ sake.

FRED

You might be right. But I don't agree. Um, so what does my medical report --

HANK

It says you're completely cuckoo.

FRED

Completely?

FAR-AWAY VOICE

Wie kalt ist es in diesem unterirdischen Gewolbe!

HANK

Maybe two brain cells still light up.

FRED

Out of how many, would you say?

HANK

I don't know. I understand brains have a lot of cells.

Fred looks down.

HANK (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what I'd do, Fred. I wouldn't go into a federal clinic. I'd get about six bottles of good bourbun, go up into the hills, and just stay there till it's over.

FRED

They tell me it may never be over.

HANK

Then never come back. Can you drive?

FRED

My...

Fred's sense of the room begins to shift. The walls move toward infinity. Everything slows down. He watches Hank drum his fingers on the table. It takes forever for the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

fingers to drop. When they hit, it is with a resounding "plop." Hank speaks, and it breaks the spell.

HANK

We can get somebody to drive you.

FAR-AWAY VOICE

*Ein Engel, der Gattin, so gleich, der
fuhr, mich zur Freiheit ins...*

FRED

Sure. Thanks.

(beat)

Tell me, Hank, what do you think of me now, now that I've burned out?

HANK

I think you're a very good person.

FRED

Thank you very much.

HANK

You want a cigarette?

FRED

No. I'm quitting them, too. I'm quitting everything.

HANK

Good for you. It's like I tell my children --

FRED

I have kids, too. Two little girls.

HANK

I don't believe you do. You're not supposed to.

SHOT OF ARCTOR FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH

Now all the faces, including Arctor's, are gone.

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FRED

Maybe not.

HANK

I don't think you're going to make it in the mountains, even if we get someone to drive you. Where else would you like to go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED

I don't know. I don't know.

HANK

What about over to Donna Hawthorne's?
I know you're close.

SHOT OF DONNA HAWTHORNE TOUCHING ARCTOR'S HAND

INT. HANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

FRED

How do you know that?

HANK

By a process of elimination we were
able to determine you're Bob Arctor.

FRED

(horrified, confused)

Arctor? I'm Bob Arctor? But he's
ugly!

HANK

Nevermind. It's not important.
(into phone)
Get me a Donna Hawthorne at...
(to Fred)
Where does she work?

FRED

Uh, Thompson Jewelers. I'm Arctor?

HANK

(into phone)
... at Thompson Jewelers.
(to Fred)
We should probably get you to a
hospital. Barris poisoned you. It
was really Barris, we were interested
in. That's why we set up the
scanners. He's into something heavy
and sick, and it has to do with guns.

FRED

(massaging temples)

So, wait, you used me to get to Barris?

HANK

We had to get to him, Bob. He's bad
news. We couldn't tell you. We were
afraid you'd spill the beans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRED
 (beat, weakly)
 You fuckers. You fuckers.

The intercom buzzes. Hank flips off his voice grid, picks up the phone. It's the first time we hear his real voice.

HANK (CONT'D)
 Hey, Donna? This is a buddy of Bob's.
 He's in a bad way. I'm not jiving
 you. So could you pick him up, ...

Fred watches Hank, sounding like a head, looking like a blur.

INT. DONNA'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

Donna drives a sick Bob Arctor along a tree-lined road.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
 Before we go to New-Path, Bob, I
 thought maybe we'd drive into the
 hills, y'know, look at the city lights.

Donna waits for a response, there is none. She glances over at Arctor. He rests his forehead against the window. She sighs. Suddenly he begins to heave and vomit. Donna pulls onto the shoulder, gets out of the car, hurries to the passenger side to help Arctor.

EXT. TREE-LINED ROAD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Arctor is on his hands and knees vomiting. Donna kneels beside him, holding his forehead. He finishes.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
 Let's sit a few minutes.

BOB ARCTOR
 (so weakly)
 Do you have any hash?

Donna looks at him for a second, gets up, fusses around under the passenger seat, and pulls out a piece of foil and a pipe. She takes Arctor by the hand.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
 C'mon, let's get off the road a little
 bit. In case of cops.

Donna and Arctor walk through the trees in silence, arrive at a clearing, from which the city lights can be seen. She sits Arctor down, fills the pipe, lights it, and draws. She passes the pipe to Arctor, but he is shivering and glassy-eyed. A big, dark stain is forming on his pants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

Here.

She inhales, leans forward to super-charge Arctor. But he doubles over, clutching his stomach. He vomits and moans a crazy song-like moan, attempting to comfort himself. Donna touches his hand. But he is unaware of it. She sits on a rock and stares at the city lights below.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

I guess we never know what's in store for us.

Arctor continues to clutch himself and moan.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

Did you know this dude Tony Amsterdam?

No response from Arctor. Donna relights the pipe, inhales.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

After he saw God, he felt really good, for around a year. Then he felt worse than he had ever felt before in his life. Because one day it came to him, he was never going to see God again. He was going to live out the rest of his life, fifty years maybe, and see nothing but what he had always seen. He realized he was going to have to live on and on with no purpose. Just a lump of flesh grinding along, eating, drinking, working, sleeping, crapping --

BOB ARCTOR

Just... like... the... rest... of us.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

That's what I told him. We're all in the same boat, and it doesn't freak us out. But he said, "You don't know what I saw."

A spasm passes through Arctor, convulsing him. Then:

BOB ARCTOR

Did... he say what it was like?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Spars. Showers of colored sparks. In the air. Going up the wall. Wherever he looked. The whole world

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE (cont'd)
was a living creature. And there were no accidents. Everything fitted together to achieve something, some goal in the future. And there was a doorway. For a week he saw it wherever he looked. Always the same proportions, very narrow. Very pleasing. That's the word he used. He never entered it though. Just looked at it, surrounded by red and gold light, like the sparks had collected into lines. Then he never saw it again his whole, entire life.

BOB ARCTOR
What was on the other side?

DONNA HAWTHORNE
He said it was always nighttime. Moonlight and water. Nothing ever changed. Water like blank ink and a beach. He was sure it was ancient Greece, that the door was a weak link in time. Later when he couldn't see it anymore, he became so frustrated with the noise and lights and motion in this world. He'd tell everyone he met that he lost everything.

BOB ARCTOR
I've lost everything.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
There was a woman on the island. More like a statue. Of the Cyrenaican Aphrodite. In the moonlight. Pale and cold.

BOB ARCTOR
He should've gone through while he had the chance. You only get one chance.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
He didn't have the chance, Bob. It was a promise. Something to come. Something better a long time in the future. They show us trailers now.
(puts arm around Arctor)
So we'll hold out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

That's what you're trying to do. With me now. Show me a trailer. So I'll hold out.

Donna is quiet, sniffs in some snot.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

You're a good man. You've been dealt a bad blow. But life isn't over for you. I care for you a lot. I wish...

Donna's voice cracks. She looks down at Arctor, who seems only semi-conscious now. She continues to hold him in silence, rocking him slightly, looking out at the city.

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

You're a good and kind person. And this is unfair, but it has to be this way. Try to wait for the end. Sometime, a long time from now, you'll see the way you saw before.

A light shines into Donna's eyes. She squints at it, at the silhouette of a uniformed cop behind the light.

COP

Would you stand, you first, miss, and show me your identification, please?

Donna lays Arctor gently on the ground. She approaches the cop, signals him away from the unconscious Arctor, and hands him her wallet. He studies it in his flashlight beam.

COP (CONT'D)

You're a fed?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Keep your voice down.

COP

I'm sorry.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Just fucking take off.

The cop shines his flashlight into Donna's face, studies her, hands her her wallet, then takes off. Donna approaches the unconscious Arctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

Bob? We've got to get started.

No answer. She tugs at him, trying to rouse him.

BOB ARCTOR

I can't make love. My thing's disappeared. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

C'mon, they're expecting us. I have to sign you in.

BOB ARCTOR

But what'll I do if my thing's disappeared? Will they still take me?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(gently)

They'll take you.

Donna helps Arctor up and walks him back to her car.

INT. NEW-PATH RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Arctor lies on the floor, curled up and shivering. Dried vomit flecks his face. The stain on his pants is bigger now. Two New-Path staff members stand surveying the trembling Arctor. Donna kneels at his side.

NEW-PATH #1

What is it?

DONNA HAWTHORNE

It's a person.

NEW-PATH #1

Substance D?

Donna nods.

NEW-PATH #2

It ate his head. Another loser.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

It's easy to win. Anybody can win.

Donna bends down close to Arctor's face and silently mouths "good-bye." She rises and heads to the door. A staff member drapes Arctor with a blanket as Donna exits. She does not look back.

INT. DONNA'S CAR - NIGHT

Donna drives her tiny MG on the freeway in heavy traffic behind a huge Coca Cola truck. She picks a tape from the show box in the back. It's Carole King's *Tapestry*. She plugs it in and cranks it up loud, then pulls a pistol out from under the dashboard. She unrolls the window, sticks the pistol out, and begins firing at the Coke truck. She hits it several times before the clip is emptied. Broken Coke bottle glasses and brown liquid splatter her windshield. This soothes her for a moment, but misery builds up in her again almost instantly. To relieve it, she floors it and smashes into the truck with all her might. The impact spins the MG around. Tires shriek against fender as her car comes to rest on the shoulder facing against traffic. Water pours from her radiator. Her headlights dim. Donna gets out of the car and looks at the Coke truck. It is still grinding along, seemingly untouched. Motorists gape at Donna as they crawl by. One guy unrolls his window.

MOTORIST

You want a ride, miss?

She ignores him and heads back on foot to the exit ramp, squinting into the headlights of the oncoming traffic.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. NEW-PATH - DAY

George, a staff member, addresses the camera as he leads it down a dormitory hallway.

GEORGE

All right, Bruce, what you'll be doing here first is the bathrooms.

George stops at a closet door, opens it, and pulls out a mop, pail, and some powdered soap. He closes the door, and continues down the hall.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The floors, the basins, and especially the toilets. There are three bathrooms, one on each floor. Okay, Bruce?

Angle on Bruce. We see that Bruce is Bob Arctor. It is, however, a different Arctor: hair cut short and unstylish, nondescript Goodwill clothing, and a mousy demeanor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

George pushes open another door and enters. Arctor follows.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arctor and George stand in a dorm-style bathroom, with several toilets. George hands the mop and pail to Arctor.

GEORGE

You feel you know how to clean a bathroom? Start, and I'll give you some pointers.

Arctor nods obediently, takes the pail to the sink, sprinkles in some soap flakes, and begins to fill it with water. He becomes transfixed with the foam forming in the pail and the roar of the running water. After a while, George speaks, sounding very far away.

GEORGE (O.C.)

Don't fill it all the way, Bruce, or you won't be able to lift it.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Arctor sits with a paper cup of coffee. There are others in the lounge, but they pay him no attention. He stares down at his coffee, focused on the rising and swirling steam. Jabbering is heard in the background.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #1

If you could see from inside a dead person, you could still see, but you couldn't operate the eye muscles so you couldn't focus.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #2

Exactly. Just blurry.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #1

Plus, you couldn't turn your head or your eyeballs. All you could do is wait and wait until some object passed by. It'd be a terrible scene.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #2

I think that's what it means to be dead. To not be able to stop looking at whatever's in front of you.

INT. MEETING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Arctor sits on a folding chair in a semi-circle of residents and a staff member. He stares down at his hands. A portable blackboard is covered with scribbled words, such as "Goals", "Responsibility", and "Community." A large coffee urn percolates in the corner, making a "whoop-whoop" sound. Arctor focuses on this sound, which frightens him.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #3

Living and unliving things are exchanging properties.

All murmur agreement except Arctor, who just looks down.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #4

That's because the drive of the unliving is stronger than the drive of the living.

Whoop-Whoop. The coffee urn gets progressively louder.

NEW-PATH STAFFER

So we are incorporating too much unliving drive within us. Now, *activity* does not necessarily mean life. Quasars are active, but not alive. A meditating monk is not dead.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

The room is filled with sad-looking people at collapsible tables eating dinner off trays. Arctor sits at a table by himself, and stares down at his steaming soup.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A bunch of residents excitedly rifle through a cardboard box of donated clothing. Arctor stands back from the box and look at his feet. Mike, a short, stocky man with a pug face slips into a shirt that looks like an American flag.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #1

Hey, Mike, you're one sharp dude!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Thanks, man.

Mike fiddles with a belt with two metal rings for a buckle. He can't cinch it.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(cheerily)

Oh, c'mon, you guys left me the belt
nobody else could work!

(to Arctor)

You know how to do this, man?

Arctor reaches down and cinches the belt.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks, buddy!

Mike touches Arctor's shoulder. Arctor glances at the hand.

INT. MEETING ROOM - MORNING

Arctor sits in the center of the room. A circle of residents yell at him. A Chinese girl is more shrill than the others

CHINESE GIRL RESIDENT

You know what he is? A kissy-face!
You're a kissy-face!

NEW-PATH RESIDENTS

(chanting)

Can you fuck yourself? Can you fuck
yourself?

The Executive Director smiles from the circle.

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #1

Let's see you fuck yourself!

CHINESE GIRL RESIDENT

The kissy-facy!

Another female resident flaps her arms and bulges her cheeks in Arctor's face. The Chinese girls swivels around and sticks her ass in Arctor's face.

CHINESE GIRL RESIDENT (CONT'D)

Kiss my ass, kissy-facy! He wants to
kiss people, kiss this, kissy-facy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEW-PATH RESIDENTS

Let's see you fuck yourself, kissy-facy!

Arctor shuts his eyes, but still hears the screaming. The Executive Director clears his throat; the screaming subsides.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You pimp. You fuck. You dong. You shit. You turd. You snot. You asshole. You vomit. You wart.

We shift to Arctor's POV, looking out at the group and hearing the Executive Director's chant.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

You bile. You worm. You maggot. You pus. You running sore.

The chanting continues, but the actual words become indecipherable. Mike's voice breaks the chant.

MIKE

(gently)

Bruce?

Arctor looks at Mike's compassionate face.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Bruce, what's the matter? What brought you here? Can you tells us anything about yourself? Your past?

NEW-PATH RESIDENT #2

Pimp! What are you, pimp?

CHINESE GIRL RESIDENT

Tell us, you cock-sucking fairy whore pimp! You ass-kisser, you fuck!

BOB ARCTOR

I am an eye. I am dead. I can only look at what is front of me.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You turd prick. You weakling. You puke. You suck-off. You snatch.

The Executive Director continues, but Arctor can't make out the words as he surveys the cold, hard faces of the group. Spade Weeks is among them.

INT. NEW-PATH HALLWAY - DAY

Arctor walks down the hall, carrying his pail and mop. He passes an open door. Inside is a brightly lit room in which several children play. Arctor watches, transfixed.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

The children sit at a table in an alcove off the main dining area. Some of the smaller children sit in high chairs and are being fed by old men. Arctor watches from outside the alcove. Mike walks by. He smiles.

MIKE

You like kids, Bruce?

BOB ARCTOR

Yes.

MIKE

You can eat with them if you like.

Arctor nods and sits at the end of the table.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You can feed them in a month or two.
After we're sure you won't hit them.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

INT. DINING AREA - A BIT LATER

The table is mostly empty now. Only a couple of straggling children and Arctor remain. The two old men are beginning clean-up. One of the children goes, leaving only Arctor and a wide-eyed little girl.

LITTLE GIRL

What's your name?

Arctor doesn't respond.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

I said, what's your name? My name is
Thelma. Did you forget your name? If
you forget your name, you can write it
on your hand. Want me to show you how?

BOB ARCTOR

Won't it wash off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LITTLE GIRL

Oh, I see.

(thinking)

Well, you could write on the ceiling above your bed. Then when you want to know your name better, you can --

BOB ARCTOR

Thelma.

LITTLE GIRL

No, that's my name. And that's a girl's name anyway. If I see you again, I'll give you a name. I'll make one up for you. 'kay?

BOB ARCTOR

Don't you live here?

LITTLE GIRL

Yes, but my mommy may be leaving. She's thinking about taking us, me and my brother, and leaving. 'kay, Bye!

She runs off. Arctor watches after the girl.

BOB ARCTOR

Bruce.

INT. NEW-PATH RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Arctor sits on a folding chair against the wall, staring at his cup of coffee. Mike walks in his bright new shirt.

MIKE

Hey, Bruce!

Arctor looks up.

BOB ARCTOR

Are you leaving here?

MIKE

(chuckling)

No, man, I can never leave here. Too many temptations out there for the likes of us. No, I'm just going into town to pick up a donation of semi-rotten vegetables.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR
Semi-rotten vegetables.

SHOT OF NOTEBOOK DAPPLED WITH SUNLIGHT

kids laughing in background. We scan the following words,
read offhandedly by Arctor.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.)
For now we see through a glass,
darkly; but then face to face: now I
know in part...

The camera pulls back to reveal that it's Donna reading the
journal. She's sitting at a picnic table outside a
McDonald's. Her eyes move back and forth across the page.
Near her, a group of children laugh and play on a
McDonaldland jungle gym.

BOB ARCTOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...but then shall I know even as also
I am known.

That's the last entry. She closes the notebook, takes a sip
of Coke, and watches the children play. A pick-up truck
pulls into the parking lot. Mike gets out, approaches
Donna's table, sits across from her. There's a silence,
then:

DONNA HAWTHORNE
So are they paranoid about him?

MIKE
No. He just sits there all day.
There's really nothing to suspect.
They can't get anything out of him
during the game sessions.

Donna looks off for a moment, sadly.

DONNA HAWTHORNE
Well, then, will he be able to act,
when the time comes? Is anything left?

MIKE
You never really know. A memory. A
few charred brain cells flicker on.
People like him are clacking insects.
All reflex. We can only hope he's got
the right reflex.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA HAWTHORNE

It was very well drilled into him.

(forlorn)

Such a price to pay. The government asks an awful lot.

MIKE

Life asks an awful lot.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

(angry)

In this case, the fucking government. Bob didn't volunteer. He was sacrificed. He was my friend, y'know.

(beat)

I don't want to be on this assignment much longer. I just want it over. Shit. Sometimes I think we're colder than they are.

MIKE

I see a warm person when I look at you, Donna.

DONNA HAWTHORNE

Oh, I'm warm on the outside. Warm face, warm eyes, warm fucking fake smile. But inside I'm cold all the time. I am full of lies. I am awful.

Donna gets up and walks away. Mike watches after her.

INT. NEW-PATH HALLWAY - DAY

Arctor opens the door to the room where he first saw the children. In there now is an old woman trying to juggle. She smiles at Arctor and he sees that she has almost no teeth.

OLD WOMAN

Can you do this?

She throws the balls in the air to juggle and they fall back onto her then bounce onto the floor. She stoops over, spitting and laughing. Arctor is dismayed.

BOB ARCTOR

I can't do that.

OLD WOMAN

I can.

She tries again, fails, laughs. A staffer appears next to the Arctor in the doorway, sniffs the air

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEW-PATH STAFFER

Donna, you need to clean yourself.
You stink.

BOB ARCTOR

(horrified)

Donna?!

The old woman shuffles past Arctor and the staffer.

BOB ARCTOR

How long has Donna been here?

NEW-PATH STAFFER

I don't know. Six months.

BOB ARCTOR

(relieved)

Oh, then it's not Donna. I've been here a week. And Donna drove me here. And she was fine: sad-eyed, quiet and composed. So beautiful. Leather jacket. That purse with the rabbit's foot dangling. Just like always.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Arctor and Mike sit across from each other over coffee.

MIKE

I think I'm going to try to get you a job on one of our farms, Bruce. When you're ready.

BOB ARCTOR

Can I work with animals. I like animals. Can I work with them?

MIKE

No, I want to try you with crops. I think that'd be good for you.

BOB ARCTOR

I want to work with something living.

MIKE

The ground is living. Do you have any agricultural background?

BOB ARCTOR

(searching memory)

I used to work in an office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Well, you'll be outside from now on, sowing, tilling, killing insects. We do a lot of that with pesticides. But we're very careful, because those sprays can poison the crop as well as the person using them. Eat his head. The way yours has been eaten, Bruce.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

INT. NEW-PATH KITCHEN - DAY

Arctor is pulling some cleaning supplies from the cabinet under the sink. He notices something, picks it up, studies it. It's a bone fragment. He gets frightened, turns to someone cutting vegetables, and holds up the bone.

BOB ARCTOR

Is this Jerry Fabin?! Is this Jerry Fabin?!

The person takes the bone fragment, looks at it, and shrugs.

EXT. NAPA VALLEY FARM - DAY

It's a hot, bright day. A car drives in through the gate of the razor-wire fenced farm, and raises dust as it heads toward a cluster of wooden houses. It stops and Arctor steps out, pulling a suitcase after him. He is met at the car by the farm manager, a middle-aged man with a sun-creased face. The car drives off.

FARM MANAGER

Your name is Bruce.

BOB ARCTOR

My name is Bruce.

FARM MANAGER

Mike Westaway recommended we give you a try on the farm. You're going to work here for a while.

BOB ARCTOR

Okay.

FARM MANAGER

I think you'll like it better here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

I think I'll like it better here.

FARM MANAGER

You like mountains?

BOB ARCTOR

I like mountains.

FARM MANAGER

Beautiful mountains all around.

The manager points, but Arctor does not look.

FARM MANAGER (CONT'D)

And the air is good.

BOB ARCTOR

I like air.

FARM MANAGER

Yeah, Bruce, we all like air. We really all do. C'mon, I'll show you your bunk and get you a hat to protect your head from the sun.

The manager leads Bruce to the bunkhouses.

INT. BUNKHOUSE - DAY

It's crude with six cots. The manager points to one of them.

FARM MANAGER

This is where you sleep.

BOB ARCTOR

Will I be seeing my friends?

FARM MANAGER

You mean back at the rehab?

BOB ARCTOR

Mike and Thelma and Donna and Jerry Fabin and Luckman and Barris and --

FARM MANAGER

The farms are closed facilities, so they can't come visit. Besides you're not supposed to make any one-to-one relationships at New-Path. Didn't they teach you that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

They had us memorize that as part of
the New-Path creed.

The farm manager studies Arctor's sad, blank face.

FARM MANAGER

But we usually send you back to your
residence-of-origin for holidays. So
you'll be visiting at Thanksgiving if
you do good work.

BOB ARCTOR

Thanksgiving.

FARM MANAGER

All right then. What else?
(looks around, points)
Bathroom there. And you can turn on
and off the light with this cord.

Arctor is no longer paying attention. He's caught a glimpse
of the mountains out the window, and stands transfixed.

FARM MANAGER (CONT'D)

Mountains, Bruce, mountains.

BOB ARCTOR

Mountains, Bruce, mountains.

FARM MANAGER

Echolalalia, Bruce, echolalalia.

BOB ARCTOR

Echolalalia, Bruce, echolalalia.

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Arctor, in a cap and carrying a pesticide sprayer, wades
through the stalks, checking for insect infestation. His
entire focus, his entire consciousness is directed at this
task. His hat blows off, and he bends to pick it up. As he
nears the ground, he notices a second crop growing
underneath, hidden by the corn. It's a small, bright blue
flower, and now that he's close to the ground, he can see it
planted everywhere. He squats there, transfixed. Someone
comes up behind him. It's the Executive Director of New-
Path. Arctor doesn't look up; he just stares at the flowers.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You're seeing the flower of the
future, Bruce. But not for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB ARCTOR

Why not for me?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You've had too much of a good thing.
So get up and stop worshipping. This
isn't your god anymore.

Arctor keeps staring. The Executive Director reaches down and holds his open hand in Arctor's field of vision. Arctor doesn't move his head; he just continues to stare, now at the Executive Director's hand.

BOB ARCTOR

Gone. The flowers of spring are gone.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

No. You simply can't see them.
That's a philosophical problem you
wouldn't comprehend. Epistemology --
the theory of knowledge.

Arctor stares forever at the palm of the Executive Director's rich, uncalloused hand, sees every crease. Finally:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

C'mon, back to work, Bruce.

BOB ARCTOR

I saw.

The Executive Director chuckles, rises, and heads off.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Back to work, Bruce.

Now that the hand is gone, Arctor stares once again at the blue flowers. The colors shift, grow more saturated.

FAR-AWAY VOICE

I saw Substance D. I saw death rising
from the earth itself, in one blue
field.

In very slow motion, Arctor picks a blue flower, and puts it inside his shoe. Shift back to normal speed and color.

BOB ARCTOR

A present for my friends.
(fond smile)

My friends who I'll see soon. At
Thanksgiving.

(CONTINUED)