

[RECORD] [TRANSFER] [ERASE]

by Jeremiah Miller

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To Kath for not letting me believe there is a such thing as "good enough." You are a brilliant point of light in the void of mere existence.

In my experience, any creative work requires the efforts and talents of many. That sentiment rang no less true when writing [RECORD][TRANSFER][ERASE]. I have endless people to thank for the completion of this work, but I want to highlight a few specifically: Stephen King wrote, "To write is human, to edit is divine." I've never found a truer statement than through working with my editor, Ana. To those who labor in the mire of the lime of the Thousand Walls. And to my friends, Daniel, Stephen, and Judy whose criticisms of the first draft helped shape it all the way through to production.

Notes on Production

On dialogue: A "/" indicates a space where dialogue overlaps.

A "-" indicates where someone is being cut off.

On stage directions:

Bolded stage directions indicate that the action happens simultaneously almost superimposed on the on the other action. As far as simultaneous action goes double casting, silhouettes, or equally creative means could solve the problem.

Projections: While projections may seem like a good and obvious solution to many of the staging elements, I ask that you refrain from using them. They're rarely done well and the solutions devised through fine stagecraft, movement, trial and error, and sheer necessity are often much more rewarding and interesting than a projection could ever be.

Technology: I wrote the stage directions as though this was retro-futuristic and involved tapes. Feel free to change this to any appropriate medium that works for your production. There's something that sits well with me about a pile full of tapes on stage, but if you're producing this, it's your decision to make.

Movement: The gentle hand of a choreographer is going to always be better than my attempts to write out movement.

References: The visual, kinesthetic, and aural references exist only to help create a working vocabulary. If you have a better more interesting vision or a vision that you are better interested in, by all means, pursue it--I didn't write a screenplay on purpose.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

A scrim hangs across the stage.

*As many actors as the stage allows
or as is reasonable sit in chairs
with apparatuses affixed to each of
their heads.*

*They remain backlit against the
scrim while the audience is seated
and throughout the curtain speech.*

End of curtain speech.

*At once: choreographed but
syncopated movement. A cacophony of
industrial sounds.*

Blackout.

The scrim is gone.

Lights shift.

A low rhythmic pad.

A device whirs in the background. Memories are being deleted. Onstage a group of factory workers. The workers go through choreographed motions of intense labor. JEFFREY labors among them.

PIERCE should be the center of the choreography.

DAVIS, BRYSON, and MARTHA (nor the actors portraying them) should not appear in this sequence.

Everyone peels away and JEFFREY is left next to a storage bin. He affixes an apparatus to his head with a wire leading to a VCR. He inserts a VHS into the VCR. He presses a button. A beat. And then another button. After a few beats he presses a third button and ejects it. He discards the tape into a bin. He repeats this process over and over and over.

Fade to black.

SCENE 2

An office. REBECCA is seated at her desk, her face buried in work.

PIERCE enters, disguised as a man. She should be all but unrecognizable from the first scene.

PIERCE sets a large package on the desk.

REBECCA

(Without looking up) Could you put it on that cart instead?

PIERCE moves it to the cart.
REBECCA stays buried in her
paperwork.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

REBECCA continues working.

PIERCE stands there, waiting.

*Finally, PIERCE thrusts the
signature verification at REBECCA.*

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Right.

*REBECCA signs for the package and
returns to work.*

*PIERCE turns to leave. The actress
speaks in her natural register.*

PIERCE

Have a good day.

REBECCA

You too.

End Scene.

*Shift to Jack Davis's office.
Classical music along the lines of
Claude Debussy's Violin Sonata in G
minor plays in the background.*

*Rebecca enters pushing the cart
with the package. Davis turns down
the sonata.*

DAVIS

Hell of a job today, Rebecca.

REBECCA

Thanks.

DAVIS

Nice catch on that paperwork. Can you believe I had three partners look at that document, and they all okayed it? And you caught it on the way to the scanner. Your insights are going to make this an immediate success

REBECCA

Just paying attention.

DAVIS

And I'm not?

REBECCA

I didn't mean to imply-

DAVIS

Calm down. I'm yanking your chain. What can I do for you?

REBECCA

This arrived for you today.

DAVIS

Who's it from?

REBECCA

I don't know. There's no return address.

DAVIS

Probably just another "genius" who's built something that would "revolutionize" Virtua Inc. Just leave it on the table, I'll get to it before I'm out of here. You sticking around?

REBECCA

I have some projections to finish

DAVIS

Do it tomorrow. Get outta here.

REBECCA

Thanks. I'll see you in the morning.

Rebecca exits. Davis turns the sonata back up. He packs his things away for the day and then turns his attention to the package on the cart.

After examining the box, he opens it. It explodes; phalanges, blood, and bones splatter across the stage.

Davis is thrown upstage and the audience is left to stare at the carnage for a brief moment.

Blackout.

Lights up.

Emergency personnel collect evidence and clean away the carnage as the DETECTIVE interviews Rebecca. She is strapped into an apparatus. The detective administers the surface verification. The memory plays out alongside REBECCA's interview and while the emergency crew is working.

DETECTIVE

Please state your name for the record.

REBECCA

Rebecca Lagner.

DETECTIVE

Where do you work?

REBECCA

Here, at the Virtua headquarters.

DETECTIVE

Okay, Ms. Lagner, can you tell me what happened?

Memory Sound Effect

REBECCA

I heard an explosion. I ran back into the room and there Mr. Davis was -- unconscious, on the floor -- and there was just blood...

Lights Shift

DETECTIVE

Ms. Lagner, what can you tell me about the person who delivered the box?

Rebecca is seated at her desk, her face buried in work.

Pierce enters, disguised as a man. Rebecca looks up earlier and PIERCE has more masculine features than she did in the earlier scene.

REBECCA

Slight with fair features. Penetrating eyes. Almost hungry-looking. They just burned with that intensity, you know?

Pierce sets a large package on the desk.

DETECTIVE

How long did you look at him?

REBECCA

Long enough to exchange the signature pad. I was steeped in work and probably came off as rude.

DETECTIVE

Anything else?

REBECCA

Just that he was kind of gruff. Quiet. He wasn't unkempt, but he may have had a five o'clock shadow.

DETECTIVE

Did he say anything to you?

Pierce speaks. Her voice several octaves lower or spoken by a male actor.

PIERCE

Have a good day.

REBECCA

Just told me to have a good day and left.

DETECTIVE

Surface verification seems to line up with what you're saying. Given the gravity of the crime, we will need to fully verify you.

REBECCA

I'm happy to comply.

DETECTIVE

Don't worry, we'll do that at the station where it's more comfortable.

SCENE 3

*A family home, in the living room.
A newscast plays on the television.
JEFFREY, MARTHA, and AMELIA around
the dining room table.*

Nellie Bulmers is delivering the television newscast.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Virtua Inc.'s CEO, Jack Davis, was the target of a mail bombing this evening at the Virtua headquarters. He survived the attack, but his assistant reports that he's in critical condition. She has declined further comment as to the potential reason behind the bombing, but those close to the CEO speculate that he was targeted for his recent praise of a bill that would allow courts to more easily try suspected anarchists. Opponents of the bill suggest it is another attempt to disenfranchise organized labor. More on this as it develops.

MARTHA

See this? This is why we have the National Guard. Should have set them loose on those criminals. You can't control them. They're animals.

JEFFREY

I don't think the protesters and the anarchist radicals are one and the same.

MARTHA

If they're not, someone has to be inciting them.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Update on the Davis bombing. We now have photos of the crime scene. Viewers be warned that these are graphic images. (Pauses) You can see across his desk there is blood and bone. It's been reported that Mr. Davis lost his hands in the explosion.

JEFFREY

Oh my.

Jeffrey exits.

AMELIA

Does Dad ever make it through the news?

MARTHA

He's always been a gentler spirit. Can't take some of the world's harsher realities.

AMELIA

I don't blame him. Those photos...

MARTHA

I'm not too worried. They'll be hanged when they're caught.

Martha and Amelia get drawn into the TV.

Underscoring. The workers are in the factory. The movement of the factory workers should mostly contradict Davis's statements.

DAVIS (V.O.)

Thank you for having me, Ms. Bulmers.

NELLIE (V.O.)

It's my pleasure. How is your recovery going?

DAVIS (V.O.)

There are good days and bad days, but that's not why I'm here. I'm here to show people that terrorism won't cow us.

NELLIE (V.O.)

In that case, let's get started.

DAVIS

Please.

NELLIE (V.O.)

How do you respond to the criticisms of Virtua using surface verification as a means of measuring productivity?

DAVIS (V.O.)

The press surrounding that is based off of one factory where we were experimenting with verification as a means of performance measurement. It was an isolated factory and not standard practice.

NELLIE (V.O.)

Workers, especially sympathizers with the bomber, have stated that they're required to consent to verification as part of their contract.

DAVIS (V.O.)

In the factory where we were experimenting with it, yes, it was in the contract.

NELLIE (V.O.)

The worker complaints don't bother you?

DAVIS (V.O.)

Why should it? If they didn't like the deal, walk away. No one forced them to sign it.

NELLIE (V.O.)

What do you make of the arguments that as the largest employer in the region, turning down the work is often not an option?

DAVIS (V.O.)

Listen, like anyone, I'm worried about the bottom line. I'm not here for handouts. If the municipalities in which I have my factories wish to pass regulations regarding how I run my factory, I will comply with the law. If they do not, I am doing nothing wrong. I certainly didn't deserve an attempt on my life.

NELLIE (V.O.)

Well, of course not. After the break we discuss Jack's road to recovery.

SCENE 4

Living room. Dinner time.

JEFFREY

Finish your plate.

AMELIA

Dad, I've always hated carrots.

JEFFREY

They're good for your eyes.

AMELIA

My vision's fine.

MARTHA

Now, Amelia, don't sass your father.

AMELIA

Sorry, Dad. (pauses) Still not hungry.

MARTHA

The plate will still be there when you are.

JEFFREY

(Pauses) I know you're nervous, but it's a normal part of growing up. It happens to everyone.

AMELIA

I really don't want to talk about this right now.

MARTHA

You're going to have to face it sooner or later. May as well get on with it.

AMELIA

Or we could just forget it entirely.

MARTHA

That's not how the world works.

JEFFREY

Maybe we can give her a few days just to mull it over.

Martha thinks on it.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

She'll come around. I wasn't too thrilled by the idea, but I got used to it.

MARTHA

(Fond laughter) Just like my Jeffrey. Every Thanksgiving, your mother tells the story about how you climbed into your tree fort and pulled up the ladder and wouldn't come down. That didn't last past sunset.

JEFFREY

I was ill-prepared for winter conditions. Besides, does it hurt to wait?

MARTHA

We've waited. We're on the final extension.

JEFFREY

They rarely follow up on those things.

MARTHA

Well, no, but they may. And if they do, we'll have child services all over our house questioning whether or not we're fit parents. "How many square meals?"

Amelia, annoyed, audibly exhales.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

"What's your daily family routine? Are you actively involved in your child's school life?" And on and on. Do you want that, Jeff?

JEFFREY

Of course not.

MARTHA

In life, you can't just put things off.

JEFFREY

Forever.

MARTHA

What?

JEFFREY

You can't put things off forever, but you can put them off.

Martha gives Jeffrey a "doghouse" look.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

(Turning to AMELIA) Can we schedule the appointment for next week?

AMELIA

I don't want to.

MARTHA

Was that the question?

AMELIA

Why are you even asking?

Silence. Martha isn't having it. Jeffrey understands Amelia's point, but not to the point where he's willing to further disagree with Martha.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

If I don't have a choice, then yes, schedule me a damn appointment.

Amelia exits.

MARTHA

Great! I'll call the doctor.

SCENE 5

Time passes. The dining room. Martha watches the television. Jeffrey prepares a meal.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Tune in tonight for another exclusive interview with the anarchist bombing victim, Jack Davis. Now, we continue our coverage of the Trinity Mall protest.

MARTHA

Can you believe it, Jeff? They're at it again.

JEFFREY

Who's at it again?

MARTHA

The protesters.

JEFFREY

Which ones?

MARTHA

The ones protesting the mall.

JEFFREY

Don't they all protest the mall?

MARTHA

No, these people protest the mall, the others protest the military base, and the other ones protest the bakery.

JEFFREY

Why do they protest?

MARTHA

Why do who protest?

JEFFREY

The ones protesting the mall?

MARTHA

Heaven knows. Something about sacred land. It seems really trivial.

Jeffrey pours juice for everyone.

JEFFREY

I've never been able to keep up with all these protests.

MARTHA

You should try.

JEFFREY

Why even bother? The world happens whether I'm aware of it or not.

MARTHA

It's helpful to know.

JEFFREY

I know what I need to know. Does the news give me anything? Can I add a dash of news to my latest recipe? Will the news make my job any easier or get me paid more? "Hey, boss, watched the news this morning. How about that raise?" Will it make me a happier person? The news exists for one purpose: to make me fear for the world.

Amelia enters.

MARTHA

(Dismissive) Oh, never mind, Jeff. Good morning, dear. Feeling better today?

AMELIA

Not better, but fine. Things considered.

MARTHA

Things considered?

AMELIA

I had been thinking abou--

JEFFREY

Amelia, dear, I made you an omelet with spinach and cream cheese. Just how you like.

Amelia picks at her food, sizing up the portions.

AMELIA

This is a lot for a Wednesday breakfast.

JEFFREY

But it's not too much for the day of your appointment.

AMELIA

Mom (*pauses*) that's what I was considering.

MARTHA

Don't tell me you've had a change of heart.

AMELIA

No.

JEFFREY

It'll be fine. After this, you'll finally be all grown up" you'll have your eyes.

AMELIA

Why does that make me grown up?

JEFFREY

It's one of the first marks of adulthood, sweetie. Everyone gets their new eyes. And I'll bet the boys will be absolutely clamoring for you. They love the eyes.

AMELIA

Couldn't care less what the boys want.

MARTHA

Oh, come now, I've seen how the neighbor boy, Ian, looks at you.

AMELIA

If that'll make him stop, sign me up.

MARTHA

Be nice. He's a sweet boy. And eat the meal your father cooked—he worked hard on it.

AMELIA

Does being a try-hard goes for being sweet these days?

Amelia resumes eating.

JEFFREY

And your orange juice.

MARTHA

And your pamphlets.

Martha lays pamphlets about the surgery on the table. There's a knock at the door.

JEFFREY

I'll get that.

Jeffrey opens the door. Doctor Bryson enters.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Doctor Bryson! So good to see you! Come on in.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Thank you! Now where's my patient? (*Seeing Amelia*) Oh. Amelia. Good to see you.

Jeffrey and Martha quietly exit.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

It's been a while. Not since we fixed that broken arm of yours. How are you? How've you been?

AMELIA

Fine. Things considered.

DOCTOR BRYSON

What's there to consider? You should be excited. You're about to get a beautiful new set of eyes to match the lovely young girl you are.

AMELIA

Less than thrilled.

Of course, not yet I'm just here to take some initial measurements and get you fixed up.

Doctor Bryson pulls out an assortment of tools. Throughout the dialog, Doctor Bryson measures Amelia: between the eyes, from the top of the head to the chin, from the brow bone to the bottom of the socket, etc. This should continue throughout the remainder of the scene as he sets up an apparatus to perform a preliminary procedure.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I'm not broken.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Ahhh, but you're far from perfect. Tilt your head back.

AMELIA continues talking and doesn't tilt her head back.

AMELIA

Haven't had a problem yet.

DOCTOR BRYSON tilts AMELIA's head back for her.

DOCTOR BRYSON

"Yet" is the proverb of those lacking in misfortune.

AMELIA

Huh?

DOCTOR BRYSON

You have the attitude of youth. You haven't had bad experiences.

AMELIA

I've had bad experiences.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Oh have you?

AMELIA

Just last week I poured spoiled milk all over my cereal. I took the first bite, gagged, and spat it back into the bowl. Do you know how upsetting it is to start your day looking at the last bits of sugar-coated goodness bathed in curdled milk? It makes getting to the bus that much harder.

DOCTOR BRYSON

You know what would have avoided that?

AMELIA

Reading the label?

DOCTOR BRYSON

(pauses) Well, yes, but monitoring labels could be something you never have to think about. Have you considered what color?

AMELIA

I read that it was an easy procedure. A simple swap of the iris lens. If I really wanted it, I could always do it at a later date, right?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Well... I—

AMELIA

I've been focused on the surgery part. (Pauses) Can you tell me more about that?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Didn't you read the brochure?

AMELIA

Yeah. It's light on surgical details.

DOCTOR BRYSON

You don't ask the post office clerk about registering for the draft. We all pretty much know what it entails.

AMELIA

(having no experience with the draft, she grows perplexed.)
You're removing my eyes. Questions seem—

DOCTOR BRYSON

Replacing.

*Doctor Bryson places a medical
apparatus on her head*

AMELIA

What?

DOCTOR BRYSON

We're replacing your eyes. We're not removing them.

AMELIA

Are you cutting them out?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Well, yes.

AMELIA

And they're leaving my head?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Mmmhmmm.

AMELIA

Isn't that removing them?

DOCTOR BRYSON

We're not leaving you blind, my dear.

AMELIA

Well, yeah, but are the new ones that great? So great that I need surgery?

DOCTOR BRYSON

I should say so! *(Excited, the entire explanation filled with enthusiasm)* I have videos and more reading materials for you when I leave, but I'll run through the short list. After you've healed from the surgery, your vision will never deteriorate. You'll be able to read impossibly small details from great distances, and your eyes will be automatically attuned to important details " like expiration dates or traffic signals " in order to keep you safe. And, as an added benefit, every moment of your day will be recorded and stored. The perks are endless, really. Plus, you'll get to choose the color, onions won't make you-

AMELIA

I don't like onions.

DOCTOR BRYSON

It wards against other irritants as well. Your eyes will be protected from toxins, pollutants, pollens. Unfortunately, we don't have a medical way to do that with your lungs just yet. Wouldn't they work great together? The point is, Amelia, irritants won't bother your eyes. Your pesky pollen allergies? Gone. You wouldn't tear up or rub your eyes all the time on those warm, beautiful spring days.

AMELIA

That might be nice. But what about the recording thing? What if I don't want all my memories recorded?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Are you kidding? That's one of the best features. Imagine, never forgetting your mom's birthday or having to write down that homework deadline. Reliving all your greatest moments! Remember your record-breaking 8k as a freshman? You could have memories like that forever. And because your memory will be stronger, you can pick up new skills even faster.

AMELIA

I vomited in the middle of that race. I don't want to relive that. And there are some things that I don't want to remember. Like when my favorite dress snagged in the locker and I turned so fast that it the whole back tore open! Everyone just stared! It was embarrassing.

(MORE)

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Or when I told Mom I forgot to take out the trash, but really didn't forget so much as ignored it so that I could go to the park, and then she grounded me for two weeks for lying. Or when... Skippy died.

DOCTOR BRYSON

That's where the beauty lies! You can choose to forget those things! For legal reasons, it'll be on tape, but for all intents and purposes, it may as well be gone. For you it will be truly forgotten. Not forgetting like you've buried it deep and repressed it. I'm talking about entirely removing that kind of long-forgotten memory where...

The world glitches.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

One day you're in the grocery store, looking for greens, and instantly you're racked with guilt because you've suddenly remembered how, when you were sixteen, you didn't check the ingredients on the sauce Mom sent you out for, and it turns out it had peanuts in it, and you put it in the meal for dinner, and then your baby sister ate it and went into anaphylactic shock, and your family didn't have an EpiPen because it had been used a week earlier at school because some asshole thought they'd share frosted peanut butter cookies and not mention the peanut butter. And your dad had recently been laid off from the factory, so your parents had been putting off restocking the pen because it was a way to pinch pennies. Which is perfectly reasonable because, I mean, what were the chances someone would FUCK UP and introduce peanuts into a strictly no-peanut household? By now you've found yourself fondling the head of lettuce at the grocer, and suddenly you're back 20 years, sitting at the dinner table. After your sister just ate your peanut-poisoned sauce and her eyes are swelling shut, her choking becoming incessant, and there isn't an EpiPen in the goddamn house! So you just sit there, paralyzed, and watch as your sister turns blue and eventually stops choking. The hum of fluorescent lights and mist from the sprayers brings you back to the present, and your eyes are red and the lettuce has been doused by your tears.

(MORE)

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

By this point, several other shoppers are staring you down, wondering why you're having a mental breakdown over a perfectly adequate head of lettuce in the Piggly Wiggly. (exhales) Or... something like that. You see, that's what happens when a bad memory isn't erased. It becomes one that can haunt you... on occasion.

(regaining composure)

With your new eyes, you'd have to go searching for the specific memory to even remember its exact details, and you would never be subject to midday mental breakdowns.

AMELIA

(Horrified.)

That seems like a big memory to just... wipe away.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Purge those memories—it's worth it. I'll admit it's a mild inconvenience, but it's like brushing your teeth. You do it every day to avoid disease. And memory management is even less exhausting because it's only when you absolutely want it gone. All your other memories will still be there, and they'll bubble to the surface from time to time, but instead of a hazy image, everything will be crystal clear.

AMELIA

It sounds like a lot.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Sometimes the best things are a lot. You'll come around. Have you considered a color?

AMELIA

Brown.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Come now, you don't want brown, you already have that! Most people who get this procedure choose a different color. I'll leave you with these color swatches and another brochure, just in case you have further questions.

*Doctor Bryson attempts to hand
Amelia the color swatches and the
brochure.*

AMELIA

Refusing the brochure and the swatches. I only need one swatch, and I have a brochure.

*Doctor Bryson politely forces
Amelia to take the brochure and the
swatches.*

DOCTOR BRYSON

Just in case.

*Doctor Bryson packs up his things
as he talks. You're all set. We'll
schedule your surgery three weeks
from now. Doctor Bryson exits.
Amelia flips through the swatch
book and the brochure.*

End scene.

SCENE 6

*Amelia is in the living room with
Caroline while rifling through a
box: her father's bin of deleted
memories.*

CAROLINE

There were those baby eagles. Never would have seen them without the surgery.

AMELIA

What you showed me was neat. I forget, did you see them when the mom arrived?

CAROLINE

We had moved up the trail by then.

AMELIA

Bummer. But maybe you're right. Maybe I just. I don't know. Imagine the sound of my eye being plucked from the socket.

CAROLINE

Anaesthesia does wonders for anxiety.

AMELIA

Maybe it's not that. I just wonder why my dad deletes so much, you know?

CAROLINE

I mean, if that's how he copes, that's how he copes.

AMELIA

But sometimes I feel like he's deleting the good moments between us, too. Or just when I'm telling him the boring stuff. I know it's not exciting, but it's important to me.

CAROLINE

If it makes you feel better, I never delete our conversations.

Amelia grabs Caroline's hand.

AMELIA

You're great, you know.

A tape catches her attention.

CAROLINE

You too.

AMELIA

Uh huh. *(Not listening)*

*She turns it over in her hand. It's different than the others. Maybe it's just a different brand of tape, but perhaps it's significant. She plays it. **It's morbid, her father in a war-zone. A fire roaring can be heard, screams, gunshots.***

Caroline and Amelia sit in silence momentarily.

CAROLINE

Wow. That's...

AMELIA

I can see why this is in the bin. How do adults even talk to each other?

CAROLINE

Every time my dad has friends over, they only want bitch about work, talk about the death toll overseas, or their IRAs?

AMELIA

Right?

Amelia continues playing tapes.

Amelia plays a video this time. J. Robert Oppenheimer quoting the Bhagavad Gita's line "I am become death, destroyer of worlds."

At this point, Amelia has pulled an impressive pile of memories out of the bin.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Dad may have a problem. But he seems happy.

CAROLINE

(*noticing the time*) Oh shit! It's late, I really need to get going. See you tomorrow, yeah?

AMELIA

Of course!

They kiss.

Caroline exits. Amelia pulls out a video even more unique than the broadcast. She plays it.

Jeffrey is conversing on the phone.

JEFFREY

If it weren't for the allure of high thread count, I'd never get anyone into bed with me.

(Pause) JEFFREY laughs.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

No. No, please come over.

(Pause) You haven't even given the bed a chance!

(Pause) If you don't want to be enveloped by soft sheets as I work my way around your body, then forget it. I'll come over. We're going into the tool shed where I'll bend you over the bench, hike up your skirt, and then take you like you deserve.

(Pause) I'm not a man of compromise. One or the other.

JEFFREY hears a commotion on the other end of the phone.

Kate? *(Pause)* Kate?

Jeffrey hears a dial tone. Martha enters.

MARTHA

Jeffrey? Who was that?

JEFFREY

(hanging up quickly) No one. Business.

MARTHA

I can't believe this...

JEFFREY

Can't believe what?

MARTHA

You just lied to me. You were talking to Kate.

JEFFREY

(pause) How did—

MARTHA

How did I what? I'm not stupid, Jeff. What do you think you just heard on the phone? They arrive quickly don't they?

JEFFREY

No.

MARTHA

I had to.

JEFFREY

Martha, I'm sorry.

MARTHA

Were you sorry before I walked in?

JEFFREY

I'm sorry. I would have never—

MARTHA

Get out of my house.

Jeffrey stays in place.

JEFFREY

Martha... Hear me out. Please don't verify it. My memories. Don't order them to rifle through my memories.

MARTHA

What am I supposed to do?

JEFFREY

We can go to marriage counseling. I—please.

MARTHA

Did it mean anything?

JEFFREY

It didn't mean more than this-

MARTHA

Let me verify the memories then.

JEFFREY

But-

MARTHA

What?

JEFFREY

Well, it had to mean something.

MARTHA

How can you say that?

JEFFREY

I'm trying to be honest with you.

MARTHA

You weren't being honest before I walked in. You weren't being honest when I asked a question.

JEFFREY

I'm being honest now. It meant something. It had to mean somethi-

MARTHA

You are vile.

JEFFREY

But... it didn't mean more than this.

MARTHA

Bullshit!

JEFFREY

It can't have!

(Long pause)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

I love her.

MARTHA

(*Mocking*) "It meant something. But it didn't mean more than this." Now you say you love her? What kind of bullshit are you feeding me here, Jeff?

JEFFREY

It's not bullshit. I love you, too.

MARTHA

It doesn't work like that, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Who says it can't?

MARTHA

I say it can't. The world says it can't. Our fucking wedding vows say it can't.

JEFFREY

What if you're wrong? What if we were wrong?

MARTHA

To get married?

JEFFREY

No. Not to get married, but to chain ourselves down to one possibility for the rest of our lives.

MARTHA

Oh, so I'm a chain?

JEFFREY

I didn't mean it like that. I'm trying to say that with all that exists in the world, how can we say there is only one of anything for us?

MARTHA

I have to request it.

JEFFREY

Please don't.

MARTHA

What choice do I have?

JEFFREY

You know what they'll do to her. You know the penalty for adultery is partial reconfiguration. You know they're going to sentence the unwed party. Most cases go that way. That phone call will kill part of her.

MARTHA

And you don't think parts of me died when I found out? You didn't think about that. You didn't think about what you're doing to me. You didn't think about her. This is only justice, Jeff.

JEFFREY

Please. No!

MARTHA

How else will you learn to think about more than yourself?

JEFFREY

How can I convince you?

MARTHA

I'm calling them.

Martha exits.

JEFFREY

Kate.

Amelia sits silently.

SCENE 7

*The living room. The TV casts a
dull glow across the room.*

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Thank you, Peter, for that heartwarming story. And now an update to our ongoing coverage of the Davis bombing.

Jeffrey exits.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Commissioner Finch released a statement saying that a suspect known as E. Pierce is in custody, awaiting trial. Police have been dispatched to the courthouse, where protesters have come out in defense of the suspect.

MARTHA

These people are defending a damned criminal. Amelia, if I ever see you there picketing, I'll come down to the scene and drag you from the masses.

AMELIA

Mmhm.

MARTHA

Do you understand me, Amelia?

AMELIA

Yes, mother. I understand.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Following this new development, I am honored to welcome back Virtua CEO, Jack Davis.

*Lights up on Davis and Bullmers ad
Davis enters. He now wears a pair
of prosthetic hands.*

NELLIE BULLMERS

Mr. Davis, thank you for joining us again so soon after your tragedy. I hope you've been taking some time to recover.

JACK DAVIS

If I sat in the hospital feeling sorry for myself, they'd win. I survived what those terrorists threw at me.

(MORE)

JACK DAVIS (CONT'D)

As a survivor, it's my duty to every victim of these crimes to speak out.

NELLIE BULLMERS

In light of that, perhaps we should start there. Is there anything you'd like to say to the Pierce supporters?

JACK DAVIS

Yes. I want them to know exactly what they took from me. I may have escaped with my life, but the life I escaped with is not one that I can live fully. Before this accident, I could climb mountains. Before this accident, I was a nationally respected fencer. Before this accident, I could take my wife in my arms... I could take my daughter's hand and show her that she's not alone when facing the horrors of the world. Pierce took that from me! I will not rest until justice for my family is served. I will not rest until justice is served for all those who weren't as lucky as I was, for those who didn't survive these bombings. So go ahead. Continue waving your signs out there. The justice system, and surely the American people, will not stand for these actions.

Blackout.

SCENE 8

GLITCH

The living room, night. AMELIA reads the brochures. Lights fade in and out to different stages of AMELIA's insomnia. The scene moves from mundanity to nightmarescape and back again through her insomnia. Then, Jeffrey and Martha hold Amelia down on the dining room table. Doctor Bryson stands above her, wielding macabre surgical tools.

End of glitch.

Lights up. A memory.

Amelia and Caroline sit on Amelia's bed. They're close. Smiling. They gaze into each other's eyes. Amelia places her hand on Caroline's thigh. Caroline accepts the touch, they continue to kiss deeply, passionately. With caution and nervous glee, they begin to feel around each other. It builds. Slowly. They are both scared; they have never done this. They stand balanced between terror and wonder. Amelia begins to unbutton Caroline's blouse.

Martha enters, unseen to either Amelia or Caroline

MARTHA

What the hell is going on in here?!

Amelia and Caroline separate.

AMELIA

We-

MARTHA

What do you have to say for yourselves?

Caroline sits in mortified, stunned silence.

AMELIA

Caroline kissed me!

MARTHA

What?

AMELIA

She kissed me! I told her she shouldn't, but she didn't listen.

MARTHA

This. This is unacceptable.

Caroline stands up, rips a locket from around her neck, throws it at Amelia, and dashes out of the room.

Martha goes to exit.

AMELIA

Mom ... don't. (weakly) Please!

MARTHA

I have to, honey.

A glitch the memory replays, but corrupted.

AMELIA

She kissed me!

MARTHA

Unacceptable. You know what I have to do.

AMELIA

Don't.

MARTHA

Have to, honey—

AMELIA

She kissed—

MARTHA

What I have to—

AMELIA

Me—

MARTHA

Unacceptable—

AMELIA

Please!

MARTHA

I have to, honey.

The glitch ends. Lights up on a snap with Amelia's waking. After a beat Martha and Jeffrey Enter.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Are you okay? Why aren't you in bed?

JEFFREY

We heard you screaming.

AMELIA

I fell asleep reading the brochure. It was a dream. It was nothing.

Her parents look at her skeptically.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I had a nightmare.

MARTHA

About?

JEFFREY

Talk to us. We're here for you.

AMELIA

I had a dream that—

I had a dream that after the surgery, instead of being able to perfectly remember all of the happy moments in my life, my eyes were broken, and I could see only one terrible memory. One awful moment on loop. Forever.

Silence.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

What if they don't work right?! Mom, remember that time you bought me a remote control car and one of the wheels didn't work, so it would just turn in circles? What if it's broken like that?

MARTHA

Honey, the eyes are manufactured with strict controls. They're not made like toys. They don't malfunction" natural eyes malfunction. That's why we get them replaced.

JEFFREY is struck with an idea.

JEFFREY

Do you want to see one of our memories?

AMELIA

Not really.

MARTHA

Jeff, that's a great idea. I think she'd feel more comfortable if she saw one of ours. Go get the video.

JEFFREY

Which video?

MARTHA

Our favorite video.

JEFFREY

Are you sure you want to show her that video?

MARTHA

Jeffrey! Have some decency. Not that video. The other video.

JEFFREY

You know, I watched that recently and I'm going to have to say it's a little adu-

MARTHA

No, Jeff, not that one either. I mean the one of our first date.

JEFFREY smiles fondly and nods.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

The video of our date, Jeff.

JEFFREY

Right. Right.

JEFF exits. MARTHA softens.

MARTHA

Amelia, there really isn't anything to worry about.

AMELIA

Weren't you worried?

MARTHA

I had coke bottle glasses; it was a godsend.

AMELIA

But what about like when I'm showering? Does that need to be saved? Or, and not that I would do this, Mom, but what if I lie about being late to class? I don't want people to see that. Can anyone get the memories?

MARTHA

Only if you copy them to other places.

AMELIA

What if I don't copy them?

MARTHA

Then they'll just be in your head, ready for your recollection.

AMELIA

No one can get to them?

MARTHA

Only in special circumstances.

AMELIA

What circumstances?

MARTHA

Like an emergency or if you've committed a serious crime.

AMELIA

That's all?

MARTHA

That's all.

AMELIA

But never without my permission?

MARTHA

That Depends.

AMELIA

On what?

MARTHA

You're beginning to sound like one of them.

AMELIA

One of who?

MARTHA

The anarchists who stand outside of Dr. Bryson's practice and intimidate people who would just rather obey the law. Dr. Bryson helps people, you know.

Jeffrey enters with a VHS.

AMELIA

Oh, good. Put it on.

Jeffrey inserts the video into the tape player. A scene of Jeffrey and Martha on a date plays out. It shouldn't play out like a replaying of a memory. Instead it should evoke the sentiment of a first date. For movement reference, Mary Wigman's Pastorale has the right essence.

JEFFREY

Wasn't that nice?

AMELIA

It's beautiful. That's how it happened?

MARTHA

It's how we remembered it. Mine doesn't differ.

AMELIA

It's nice, but what about bad memories?

JEFFREY

You don't have to replay them.

AMELIA

Do you ever?

JEFFREY

Never. Anything that's truly terrible, I just delete.

AMELIA

Aren't you afraid something like that will happen again? How will you know to avoid it if you can't remember it?

JEFFREY

(shrugs) It hasn't come up yet. Besides, I can always go digging in the bin.

AMELIA

Do you keep everything in the bin?

JEFFREY

It's just where you're required to store deleted memories.

MARTHA

You wouldn't want a bunch of crooks not remembering their crimes in court, too many cases of plausible deniability; the lawyers wouldn't be able to make sense of anything. Without continuity, truth doesn't exist.

AMELIA

So you just have like a crate full of awful memories?

JEFFREY

Better than a head full of them.

AMELIA

When my homework sits in the corner of my backpack unfinished, it just looms over me and makes me fidgety.

JEFFREY

You kind of forget it exists. You never have to touch your bin.

MARTHA

And besides, it doesn't matter if you don't like it. It's the law, dear.

AMELIA

Everyone has gone through with it?

*Amelia now grasps that this really
isn't an option it's mandatory.*

AMELIA

You mean I really don't have a choice in all of this?

JEFFREY

We had hoped you'd come around to the idea yourself. But... no, you don't. If you live here you have to.

AMELIA

I'll leave.

MARTHA

Don't be ridiculous.

JEFFREY

Amelia, you have to do this. It's for your own good.

MARTHA

Doesn't your friend Caroline have her eyes?

AMELIA

(Lying) Not yet.

JEFFREY

Well I'm sure you have friends at school who have them?

AMELIA

Well, yeah. But other kids have gotten in trouble.

JEFFREY

Which kids?

MARTHA

Do you mean Harry Danes and Wallace Mitchell?

JEFFREY

The boys in the cul-de-sac?

AMELIA

Yes, Dad.

MARTHA

Jeff, don't you remember? They were expelled.

JEFFREY

Must have missed that.

MARTHA

"Missed it."

AMELIA

They had been peeping in the girls locker room.

Jeffrey shakes his head in disgust.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I don't want to get expelled for looking around.

MARTHA

They weren't just looking around. They were intentionally snooping and being creeps. Don't be a creep and you'll be fine.

JEFFREY

And if you accidentally see something, and it bothers you to remember, then delete it. Like they say: "When in doubt, throw it out."

MARTHA

Nobody says that, and it's not a good policy.

JEFFREY

My therapist told me that. Remember after the incident?

MARTHA

I'm aware.

JEFFREY

Well, my therapist told me that whenever I'm troubled by something, I should follow the strategy R-T-E. Record, Transfer, Erase. It's only three buttons!

MARTHA

You've taken a liberal approach.

AMELIA

(Changing the subject) It seems like more responsibility. Like instead of things happening and just disappearing into the haze of days or weeks gone by, it's all there. I have to sort through that. When will I have time to actually live?

JEFFREY

You'll make time. It's really not that bad. When I look back on my life, it's a wash of blissful memories.

MARTHA

There are some mild downsides but overall it's a welcome addition to the world.

AMELIA

Whatever you say.

MARTHA

It'll be okay.

*Martha touches Amelia's shoulder
reassuringly and Jeffrey hugs her.*

SCENE 9

*A detective, MARTHA, and the
apparatus are silhouetted.*

DETECTIVE

Describe what you saw to me.

MARTHA

I entered my daughter's room. The lights come back up on the room, AMELIA and CAROLINE sit on AMELIA's bed.

***The lights come back up on the
room, Amelia and Caroline sit on
Amelia's bed.***

DETECTIVE

Then what happened?

MARTHA

They didn't see me at first. They were closer than any friends should be, that's for sure.

They're close. Smiling. They gaze into each other's eyes. Caroline places her hand on Amelia's thigh.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

And then I—

Amelia and Caroline stand balanced between terror and wonder.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

She—

CAROLINE kisses AMELIA

MARTHA (CONT'D)

...was kissing my daughter.

DETECTIVE

As you said. And then what.

MARTHA

She began undressing her.

Caroline begins to unbutton Amelia's blouse.

DETECTIVE

And that's when you announced your presence.

Martha enters.

MARTHA

Yes. I wish I had yelled sooner. But I was so stunned.

DETECTIVE

It's not your fault. You have no control over these things.

MARTHA

You never think it's going to be your kid that you can't protect.

DETECTIVE

We're looking into it, miss, don't worry yourself.

Martha exits. Lights shift to the Detective with Caroline. He affixes an apparatus to her head.

A silhouette upstage being reconfigured.

Downstage Caroline and Amelia walk through a darkened moor. They're happy, but Caroline is tense. Amelia reassures her.

Lights and music shift.

Their first kiss.

lights and music shift.

Martha enters.

A thin high pad. Terror. Snap to Black.

Underscoring. Lights up. Caroline sits center stage illuminated by a singular fixture. There's something uncomfortable about her movements. For visual reference see Mary Wigman's Hexantanz.

*Lights shift to Amelia her parents
stand over her, yelling, their
sentences running into one another.*

MARTHA

You shouldn't have done that./

JEFFREY

What were you thinking?/

MARTHA

She wasn't./

JEFFREY

Does she ever think?/

MARTHA

To delete this would make you a coward./

JEFFREY

Even I have to agree./

MARTHA

I forbid you from deleting it./

JEFFREY

This stays with you forever./

MARTHA

Every day, you will watch this to learn from your mistakes.

*The glitch ends. Lights shift to
living room daytime. There's a
knock at the door. Amelia answers.
Caroline enters. They haven't seen
each other since they were caught
kissing. Amelia is thrilled to see
her.*

AMELIA

Hi! Glad you came by it's good to see you.

CAROLINE

Your mother told me to stop by.

AMELIA

Really?

CAROLINE

Yeah.

AMELIA

Let me get you something.

CAROLINE

Water is fine.

Amelia grabs a drink.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(Looking at the news) Ugh. They're at it again. Like don't they have jobs or something?

AMELIA

Huh?

CAROLINE

The protesters. At it again with cries for *(she takes a mocking tone)* non-interventionist foreign policy.

AMELIA

Yeah... I guess they are *(Pause)* Caroline.

CAROLINE

Yes?

AMELIA

I'm glad you're okay.

CAROLINE

Why wouldn't I be?

AMELIA

You know. With everything that happened...

CAROLINE

Everything that happened? It was just a move. We do it every few years for my parents' work.

AMELIA

What? You've lived there since you were seven.

CAROLINE

Umm. No, I haven't.

AMELIA

You mean... you don't remember?

CAROLINE

Remember what?

AMELIA

We're friends, Caroline. Close, good friends.

CAROLINE

Your mother invited me here so I could get to know the neighborhood.

AMELIA

No, we were.

CAROLINE

Amelia, we just met a few days ago.

AMELIA

No. We were close. We kissed.

CAROLINE

Are you insane?

AMELIA

Kiss me. Maybe you'll remember.

CAROLINE

No! You weirdo.

AMELIA

It's just... don't you remember anything?

CAROLINE

I have no idea what you're going on about. I have to get going. It was very nice to see you, but I'm... I have to go.

AMELIA

We... we were close...

Caroline exits. Amelia sits. The stress builds then the lights shift to a glitch.

MARTHA

What in the hell?/

AMELIA

She kissed me!/

CAROLINE

No, you weirdo!/

MARTHA

Unacceptable. You know what I have to do./

AMELIA

Don't./

MARTHA

Have to, honey/

AMELIA

She kissed/

CAROLINE

I have no idea what you're going/

AMELIA

Don't you remember?/

CAROLINE

I have to get goi/

MARTHA

Unacceptable/

AMELIA

Please!

MARTHA

I have to, honey. I have to, honey. I have to, honey.

CAROLINE

I don't think we can be friends. Don't think we can be friends. Don't think we can be friends.

Fade to black.

Offstage, Amelia startles herself awake a loud crash.

Lights up. Amelia, with bags under her eyes and pallid flesh, enters the dining room.

MARTHA

Another nightmare?

AMELIA

No, I was jus—

MARTHA

Don't lie, now.

AMELIA

I just was... It was a little different this time, but I still had to watch.

JEFFREY

It's just anxiety, it happens. Your appointment is coming closer, but I thought you were coming around. Besides, I can guarantee you won't have to do that. I never watch mine.

AMELIA

That's it, though. People put bad memories on tape and preserve them there forever. Dad's bin is just filled with death, destruction, and you and him fighting.

Jeffrey and Martha are taken aback.

MARTHA

Were you rifling through our stuff?

JEFFREY

A person's memories are their own. If they want you to see them, they'll show you.

AMELIA

I know. The first extension was ending and... It's just I wanted to... (pause) to be reassured, reassured that you're better off without those memories, but they were—

JEFFREY

(Feeling violated) You crossed a line, Amelia.

AMELIA

They were just there. Out in the open. I wanted to make sure that I was just being crazy. But I'm not. The deeper I go, the more afraid of it I become.

MARTHA

You shouldn't fear it. Some memories should be put aside so that life can go on. Happily.

MARTHA glances at JEFFREY.

AMELIA

I'm not afraid. I just, yeah, there's health benefits and you can relive happy memories, but I don't want to become a prisoner to the bad ones

MARTHA

It's not a prison Amelia, it's a freedom. You become free to preserve only the good.

JEFFREY

I only have good memories.

AMELIA

But it's not because your life is perfect — it's because you've forced everything that hurts, all the things that shaped you, away.

MARTHA

It's not what happened to us that shapes us, but what we choose to take away from it. For the first time in history we can choose to take nothing.

AMELIA

I want to be allowed to forget my mistakes.

JEFFREY

You are allowed to forget.

AMELIA

No, I'm not. I remove them from my daily existence, but they then become a real object. That's worse. Besides, I don't want the world to become so much to handle that I end up numbing myself through forced forgetting.

MARTHA

You don't have a choice.

AMELIA

Get away from me.

JEFFREY

Excuse me?

MARTHA

That's no way to talk to us.

AMELIA

Get the hell away from me.

MARTHA

Language!

AMELIA

Who cares? You won't consider my feelings. Most everyone I know hasn't gone through with it.

Martha moves closer.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Get out. Get the fuck out!

Jeffrey is stunned. Martha assaults Amelia. Jeffrey retreats to the edge of the room.

MARTHA

You hush your goddamn mouth! You will go through this surgery. You will not be an embarrassment to our family. And you will be a better person for it. You hear me?

Martha shoves Amelia she knocks her head on the table. Amelia is on the ground, silent.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Get some sleep, the date is set.

Jeffrey sheepishly exits. Martha slams the door behind her. Amelia slowly slumps down.

SCENE 11

Martha and Jeffrey are in the living room. The television is on.

MARTHA

Can you believe it? They're still at it.

JEFFREY

Who, the mall protesters?

MARTHA

Jeff, they gave up a week ago. It can't be them. These are the Pierce supporters.

JEFFREY

Why did they give up?

MARTHA

The mall protesters? Who knows. But this is more important than that. Pay attention for a change.

*On television, NELLIE BULLMERS
speaks.*

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Following the verdict of the Pierce trial, where she was found guilty, there have been mounting criticisms of the use of personally recorded footage as evidence. Critics worry that evidence pulled from a Virtua-manufactured recording device could be biased in Davis' favor. While there is no evidence of tampering, the complaint still persists.

*Haggard, AMELIA quietly enters,
lingering in the doorway and
watching the broadcast.*

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

However, there is a complaint from the technology community that has gained traction, which, if deemed valid, may cause evidence to be discarded. Some experts in the field say that while the recordings are fine for personal usage, they have no place in a court of law. These technologists argue that while the world is recorded as it would be on a camera, it is encoded with how a viewer perceives the world.

AMELIA

It's not reliable?

MARTHA

(Turning sharply) Oh, you're up. Never mind what they're saying. It's been reliable; this is just a bunch of sympathizers trying to make the evidence less credible. Hogwash.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Some have even argued that even if a memory were encoded correctly, there is the possibility that multiple re-rememberings could alter the perception of the event. Some analysts also believe that, should a subject want to believe that events occurred differently than in reality, the memory could be further corrupted.

AMELIA

Is any of this true? Have your memories changed over time?

JEFFREY

All of those worth remembering are exactly as when they happened.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Should the court find these arguments compelling on appeal the evidence against Pierce could be thrown out, resulting in a possible overturning of Pierce's guilty verdict.

JEFFREY

(changing the subject) Doctor Bryson should be in today. I hope you slept well, Amelia. I picked up some pastries.

AMELIA

Didn't sleep well. Not hungry.

JEFFREY

Pancakes, sausage, and an egg; a perfect way to start the day.

Martha places some pastries on a plate and pushes it to Amelia.

MARTHA

Eat up. Your father worked hard, and the doctor will be in soon.

Amelia doesn't eat. The family sits in silence maybe for a whole 2 minutes before Doctor Bryson knocks at the door. Jeffrey desperate to break the tension jumps to answer it.

JEFFREY

Welcome!

DOCTOR BRYSON

Good to see you. Hello, Amelia.

Amelia nods.

MARTHA

Where are you manners, Amelia? Say hello.

AMELIA

Morning.

Jeffrey motions to Martha that they should leave. Jeffrey and Martha exit. Doctor Bryson begins setting up for a second preliminary procedure.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Did you consider a color yet?

JEFFREY and MARTHA quietly exit.

AMELIA

Brown.

DOCTOR BRYSON

You already have brown.

AMELIA

And I'd like to keep it that way.

DOCTOR BRYSON

As I've said before, no one keeps it that way.

AMELIA

I keep it that way.

DOCTOR BRYSON

You can choose any color in the world!

AMELIA

And I did.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Don't you want something new?

AMELIA

No.

DOCTOR BRYSON

A new color could be a hit with the boys. Eh?

AMELIA

I'm not looking for any boys?

DOCTOR BRYSON

You'll come around. At any rate, what color would you like?

AMELIA

As I've said before, I want brown.

DOCTOR BRYSON

You already have brown. What color would you *like*?

AMELIA

Are you fucking deaf? I said I want brown.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Are you fucking dense? You already have brown. Darling, you have access to every color in the spectrum and you're going to piss away the opportunity to have something new?

AMELIA

And I can decide to change that if I want to. Besides, it wouldn't feel right... something new.

DOCTOR BRYSON

What do you mean "feel" right?

AMELIA

What I was born with that's what feels right.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I removed a vestigial finger when you were born. Would you like me to reattach it?

AMELIA

Would it feel right?

DOCTOR BRYSON

I highly doubt it. It would probably garner looks from people at school. Then, when you're not around, they would talk about it.

AMELIA

If it's what I was born with, reattach it.

*Amelia offers out her hand to
Doctor Bryson.*

DOCTOR BRYSON

A nice attempt at distraction. This isn't about your long-lost extra useless finger. This is about your eyes.

AMELIA

Yep. And since I have what I asked for, we don't need to do the surgery.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Why are you so hesitant? This surgery is a miracle of modern science. It isn't a matter of wants. This is a matter of laws, public health, and public good. We're doing the surgery. You may not comply today, but you'll comply. Maybe not of your own accord. Maybe we'll have to hold you down. But you'll comply.

(MORE)

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

The surgery will benefit both you and the public. Ultimately, that's what matters. You will have healthier eyes and my job will be complete.

AMELIA

Oh fuck your job!

DOCTOR BRYSON

(Threatening) That's no way to talk to the doctor who is soon to remove your eyes.

AMELIA

Replace my eyes.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Are they coming out of your skull?

AMELIA

Well, Yes.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Isn't that removing them?

AMELIA

You aren't leaving me blind.

DOCTOR BRYSON

But they are coming out. So then, that's no way to talk to the person soon to be removing your eyes. *(Pauses)* So brown?

Blackout.

SCENE 12

Martha is watching the news.
Jeffrey is at the table, doing his
best to ignore it, as usual.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Some say this bombing was motivated by unfair practices and the closing of domestic factories. A

(MORE)

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

representative for Davis said the claims are exaggerated and that they have surface verifications of unprecedented employee happiness. When pressed to ask if this includes all of Virtua's holdings. The representative claimed that it did; however, our own investigations have found evidence to the contrary. The employees claim that the technology is used as an exacting and stressful means of performance measurement across facilities. Viewers may recall that on this very show Jack Davis said they only used surface verification at a single facility.

MARTHA

That's liberal media for you.

JEFFREY stands and picks up his apparatus. He exits to another part of the stage and affixes the apparatus to his head.

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

Jack Davis could not be reached for comment on our continuing investigation.

Jeffrey presses the buttons on the apparatus and begins to transfer the memories away.

MARTHA

It's the principle of it, Jeff/

NELLIE BULLMERS

More on this as it develops./

MARTHA

Do you mean Harry Danes and Wallace Mitchell/

JEFFREY

The boys in the cul-de-sac/

AMELIA

Yes, Dad/

MARTHA

Jeff, don't you remember? They were expelled/

JEFFREY

I must have missed that/

MARTHA

All of those worth remembering are exactly as when they happened/

NELLIE BULLMERS (V.O.)

We'll be back after the commercial break.

SCENE 13

An operating room, complete with tables, surgical tools, charts, and brochures. Doctor Bryson enters to prepare the room for surgery. Amelia enters. Doctor Bryson motions for Amelia to lie upon the operating table. Amelia makes her way around the operating room, examining things as if to stall the surgery. After an uncomfortable period of time, she eventually gets on the operating table. Once on the table, Doctor Bryson places tubes, IVs, and a mask on Amelia.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Just relax.

*Doctor Bryson releases the valve.
Gasses hiss.*

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

Take a deep breath and count back from ten with me

	DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)	AMELIA
Ten.		Ten.
	DOCTOR BRYSON	AMELIA (CONT'D)
Nine.		Nine.
	DOCTOR BRYSON	AMELIA (CONT'D)
Eight.		Eight.
	DOCTOR BRYSON	AMELIA (CONT'D)
Seven.		Sev...en...

DOCTOR BRYSON

Six.

*Amelia slips from consciousness.
Underscoring. The lights shift.
We're in her nightmare and the
operating room becomes a hellscape
of surgical horrors, Jeffrey and
Martha menace Amelia with macabre
instruments.*

Blackout.

Jeffrey and Doctor Bryson exit.

Amelia's memory glitches.

MARTHA

The hell?/

AMELIA

Mom. Please!/
/

MARTHA

Have to, honey./

AMELIA

She kissed me!/
/

MARTHA

Unacceptable. You know what I/ have to do.

AMELIA

Don't./

MARTHA

Have to, honey/

AMELIA

She kissed/

MARTHA

What I have to/

AMELIA

Me /

MARTHA

Unacceptable/

AMELIA

Please! /

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Don't./

MARTHA

Have to, honey/

AMELIA

She kissed/

CAROLINE

I have no idea what you're going- /

AMELIA

Don't you remember?/

CAROLINE

I have to get goi/

MARTHA

Unacceptable/

AMELIA

Please!/

MARTHA

I have to, honey. I have to,
honey. I have to, honey.

CAROLINE

I don't think we can be
friends. Don't think we can
be friends. Don't think we
can be friends.

*Glitch ends. Blackout. Doctor
Bryson sits reading in a chair
until the lights are up.*

*Lights up on a snap with Amelia.
Amelia bolts upright, gasping for
breath. She rips bandages off her
eyes. The operating room is back to
normal. The lights are brighter
now, uncomfortably so. AMELIA
squints and blinks as she adjusts.
Doctor Bryson casually glances up
at a panicked Amelia.*

DOCTOR BRYSON

Welcome back.

AMELIA

My eyes?

DOCTOR BRYSON

How do you like them?

AMELIA

It's bright. My eyes...

DOCTOR BRYSON

I shelved them per procedure.

Doctor Bryson gestures to the shelves lined with an uncountable number of jars all with eyes floating in them. They had always been there, but before the surgery they weren't illuminated.

Amelia pulls the tubes off of her body and slides herself off the operating table. She collapses on the floor.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

The anesthetic hasn't worn off yet. You'll want to be careful now.

AMELIA

Oh, go to hell.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I thought the tubes were a good warning.

Doctor Bryson sets the newspaper down and picks up a pair of sturdy, post-dilation sunglasses. Doctor Bryson offers Amelia his hand. Amelia rejects it.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

Suit yourself.

Doctor Bryson turns to walk away and then tosses the sunglasses to Amelia, who isn't quite quick enough to catch them.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

You'll want those. Your eyes aren't quite ready for the light, but they'll adjust in a few days. Your items are in the crate. You have some things to be careful of: no more than an hour a day in direct sunlight for the first week.

(MORE)

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

Medicated drops three times per day for the first five days, antibiotics so your body doesn't reject the eyes, at least eight hours of solid rest per night in the initial two weeks, and no mascara or eyeliner. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. House call in a month.

Doctor Bryson exits. Amelia sits slumped against the operating table, defeated. After a period of time, she musters the strength to get up and look around the operating room for her eyes. Initially, she is calm, slow, and methodical in her approach. However, with all the jars and an unfamiliar coded labeling system, she grows increasingly more frustrated, as every jar is so incredibly similar it's impossible to tell. As Amelia searches, she grows frantic, eventually succumbing to an emotional breakdown, destroying much of the room in her search. Out of breath and with tears rolling down her face, she cradles several jars with sets of eyes in her arms. She collapses against the operating table and rocks back and forth with the jars.

SCENE 15

Jeffrey and Martha look upon a sleeping Amelia. She's passed out in the living room. It's been three weeks since the surgery and Amelia hasn't slept much. She's haggard, her skin sallow and her face gaunt. Jeffrey grabs the bin.

MARTHA

Don't look at me like that.

Jeffrey is silent.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

It was partial.

Silence. Jeffrey moves towards the door.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I did what was best!

Jeffrey stops.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Best for her, best for you, best for this family!

Jeffrey exits.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

(Almost understanding the pain she's inflicted) I'm sorry, dear.

Martha exits.

AMELIA stirs herself awake. She goes offstage to get her apparatus and bin. She affixes the apparatus to her head and deletes a memory.

Lights fade.

Glitch

Again Wigman for movement reference. Her waking routine happens over and over. Waking, deleting, sleeping. All the while the glitch continues. This repeats a few times.

*Every time she deletes the memory
it returns when she goes back to
sleep. The memories won't delete.
The choreographed phrases should
mimic those found in Caroline's
piece at the end of scene 5.*

SCENE 16

*Noon. Amelia is cutting vegetables.
A stack of papers is piled up at
Martha's spot. There's a knock at
the door.*

AMELIA

Who is it?

DOCTOR BRYSON

It's just me.

*Amelia gets the door. The greeting
is forced.*

AMELIA

Good morning.

DOCTOR BRYSON

How are the eyes?

AMELIA

They work. More or less. Not what I wanted, but what can you do?

DOCTOR BRYSON

Ah yes. Good to see you're coming around to them.

AMELIA

Mother always said it was coming whether I wanted it or not.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Mind if I take a look, make sure everything's all right?

AMELIA

Of course.

Doctor Bryson motions for Amelia to sit up on the table and gives her a once-over.

DOCTOR BRYSON

Things are looking good, but I should double check.

Doctor Bryson takes some notes and returns to his bag for eye drops. As Doctor Bryson is searching through the bag, Amelia picks up the cutting knife. She slides off the table and stands fully upright. Doctor Bryson turns back around.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

(*Surprised*) Oh my.

Amelia gestures menacingly with the knife in her hand.

DOCTOR BRYSON (CONT'D)

Please put that down.

AMELIA

If I had asked, you wouldn't have.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I had to do it.

AMELIA

Did you? Why?

DOCTOR BRYSON

It was my job. I was doing my job.

Amelia begins waving the knife in Doctor Bryson's face.

AMELIA

Isn't that how it always happens? "Just doing my job."

DOCTOR BRYSON

I'm helping people.

*Amelia's gestures grow more violent
and exaggerated.*

AMELIA

Sometimes people don't want help. Sometimes they're fine just the way they are!

DOCTOR BRYSON

Please.

AMELIA

Did you know this would happen?

DOCTOR BRYSON

What?

*The world begins to glitch. AMELIA
talks it away. How this following
sequence is accomplished is up to
the production team. Voice over is
merely a suggestion.*

AMELIA

That my memory. My worst
memory. That it wouldn't go
away after deleting it?

MARTHA (VO)

Have to, honey/

AMELIA (VO)

She kissed/

DOCTOR BRYSON

(Horrificed) It happened to
you, too?

CAROLINE (VO)

I have no idea what you're
going-/

AMELIA (VO)

Don't you remember? /

AMELIA (CONT'D)

(Getting closer with the knife) You knew?

The glitch lessens.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I was the prototype. I was the first human test subject. I invented the technology and taught a surgeon the procedure. It worked. Everything worked except that—that one damned memory. I swear it was only me. Since then it has only been me. Amelia, I'm so sorry.

AMELIA

Can we get rid of it?

DOCTOR BRYSON

It's the only thing I haven't been able to fix.

AMELIA

I want it gone. It's hell. It's always there, haunting me. Every time I think it's gone, it bubbles back up. Any time I delete it, it resurfaces with a vengeance as soon as I shut my eyes.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I know. (long pause) I'm sorry.

AMELIA

There's nothing you can do?

DOCTOR BRYSON

I'm afraid not.

Upon hearing Doctor Bryson's words, she begins shaking. The world glitches. Worse than it's ever been. After several moments she gains a second of composure. The glitch subsides. She raises the knife high and attempts to plunge it into her own eye. Glitch resumes.

Doctor Bryson attempts to stop her. They struggle. Amelia eventually wins out, gouging her eye. Doctor Bryson rushes to help.

AMELIA

Get away from me!

She plunges the knife into her other eye and falls to the ground.

Amelia lets out a final pained cry and drops the knife. Doctor Bryson is paralyzed by the event.

Glitch subsides.

Blackout.

Lights shift for the passage of time as Doctor Bryson works to patch her up. He bandages her eyes, but it's a rush job. The dressing is improvised and unlike what we saw after the surgery. Eventually, Jeffrey and Martha enter.

DOCTOR BRYSON

I'm afraid she's damaged her optical nerves. Even if we wanted to again, it wouldn't take.

Martha and Jeffrey stand in stunned silence. The three look upon Amelia, crestfallen.

SCENE 17

Doctor Bryson sits in a pool of light, obviously troubled. He sits in a chair, his doctor's bag on the floor and a stethoscope on a stand next to him. He has a pill bottle in hand. He empties a few pills into his hand. Looking at them, he decides it's not enough and empties a healthy portion of the bottle into his hand. After a few moments, he consumes the pills.

Jeffrey sits stage left in a pool of light, the apparatus attached to his head. He is deleting memories. He throws tape after tape into the bin.

Martha sits in the kitchen, reading the paper.

Fade lights on Jeffrey and Doctor Bryson upon Amelia's entrance.

Amelia enters wearing tinted glasses and using a white cane to navigate her home.

MARTHA

They're at it again.

Amelia says nothing. She makes her way to the table, facing the audience.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

The bakery protesters are going on about bleached flour.

*Amelia faces the audience,
catatonic.*

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Nothing to say today?

Amelia remains catatonic.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

You never do.

Amelia remains catatonic.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

No. You don't get to do this. You don't get to sit in my house and make me suffer. I did everything by the book. I deserve happiness. But you bring shame to my house, just like your father. Your incident with Caroline. Everyone knew! Don't pretend you've forgotten. I know you remember. You've not been the same to me since. Your father couldn't keep secrets, either. I'm glad she got sent to reconfiguration. I should have sent your father. And goddammit, I wish it would have worked on you. Then I'd have a real family. I wouldn't have to bear your shame.

Amelia remains catatonic.

Martha begins to break down.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Are you mute now? You cut out your voice box too?

Amelia continues staring.

Martha moves around to face Amelia.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

At least have the decency to face me!

*Martha violently turns Amelia and
snatches glasses from her face.*

Amelia continues staring.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

You selfish little bitch!

Martha slaps Amelia.

Amelia remains catatonic.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

SPEAK!

Amelia continues staring.

Martha storms off.

Amelia turns around.

GLITCH

The knife plunging loops. The following dialog underscores the memory.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

What in the hell?

AMELIA

She kissed me!

CAROLINE

No, you weirdo!

MARTHA

Unacceptable. You know what I have to do.

AMELIA

Don't.

MARTHA

Have to, honey

AMELIA

She kissed—

CAROLINE

I have no idea what you're going—

AMELIA

Don't you remember?

CAROLINE

I have to get goi—

MARTHA

Unacceptable—

AMELIA

Please!

CAROLINE

I just moved here.

AMELIA

We were close.

CAROLINE

I don't think we can be friends.

MARTHA

I have to, honey.

*Amelia remains catatonic, facing
the audience.*

End of Play