

Offloading for Mrs. Schwartz  
by

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Adapted from the Short Story  
by  
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INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A run-down apartment, packed with the detritus of a pair of lives rent asunder, littered with unwashed dishes, other symptoms of grief. A tube TV sits in the corner, playing static. THE MAN (40's, unkempt, balding, doughy, the kind of person you wouldn't look at twice if they sat next to you on a bus and whose presence would immediately be wiped from memory the moment they were gone) sits and stares at it, the static reflecting off his glasses. Next to him is a framed picture of a woman, radiant, smiling. She is everything he isn't.

The man switches the TV off. He gets up and crosses over to the window. After a moment, he comes back and picks up an old telephone with an audio recorder. He plays a message.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me-

He stops the message and closes his eyes. The message starts over.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me, I just wanted -

He stops it again

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me, I just wanted to say -

He stops it again and hits a button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message saved for 24 hours.

He sighs and picks up the phone and dials. It rings. After a moment, the receiver picks up and we hear the voice of JEAN FLEEN, a thick midwestern timbre, very tired, as if woken from sleep.

JEAN FLEEN

Hello?

Beat. This is not what he was expecting.

THE MAN

Is this Guiltmasters?

Jean wakes up, slipping back into a peppy, saccharine show voice.

JEAN FLEEN

Of course it is! Thank you for calling, is this your first time?

THE MAN

Uh-well...I've called before, but I've never actually done a session.

JEAN FLEEN

All righty then, well what seems to be the problem?

Beat.

THE MAN

Look, listen - It's just...I've done a bad thing, you know? I don't know how much longer...I can't live with it anymore.

JEAN FLEEN

Well, you've called the right place. There's nothing so shameful or sordid it can't be addressed by Guiltmasters.

THE MAN

I can't sleep, you know? I can barely eat, it's-it's just, all my life, I look back at it and-

JEAN FLEEN

Sorry hon, before we get into it, I gotta ask how you're paying today.

THE MAN

Right. Um.

He searches for his wallet. He opens it, pulling out his credit card. As he pulls it out, a picture of ELIZABETH (early 30's, smiling radiant) falls to the ground.

THE MAN

The number is 4556, 9379-

He sees the picture and bends down and picks it up slowly, staring at it.

JEAN FLEEN

Hello? Sir? Are you still there?

THE MAN  
Uh, sorry. 2230 6793.

JEAN FLEEN  
Expiration?

THE MAN  
Uh, October '92. It's a visa.

JEAN FLEEN  
Okie dokie then. Now that that's  
all taken care of, what seems to  
be the problem today?

Montage of him spilling his guts over the phone? Something.

THE MAN  
And, uh...that's um...that's it.

Beat.

JEAN FLEEN  
(Strained, as if shaken)  
Would you...would you mind holding  
for a moment?

THE MAN  
Oh, uh...of course.

There's a click over the receiver, and a disgustingly chipper bossa nova comes on. After a moment the Man sits down, still listening. [I think it would be good to cut the initial commercial and have it playing in the background at various points; instead, we should dive right in to the phone call.] A voice comes on the phone and he almost starts to speak, but it's just a pre-recorded message.

VOICE  
Thank you for calling  
Guiltmasters. Your call is  
important to us. Please stay on  
the line until we can get back to  
you. Thank you for your patience.

The music continues, ineffably chipper. Too long passes, and the message comes on again. He gets up and paces the room, holding the phone, the receiver pinned between ear and shoulder. Longer passes. Finally, the music cuts out and BOB FLEEN comes on the line in the middle of a sentence, as if he wasn't ready to be put on. He too sports a thick midwestern accent.

BOB FLEEN  
-I mean, Jesus christ Jean, what  
the fuck am I supposed to do  
about-

THE MAN  
Hello?

Beat.

JEAN FLEEN  
(In the background)  
You're live! You're live!

BOB FLEEN  
Hi there, pal. Bob Fleen here. How  
ya doin' this evening?

THE MAN  
I'm-I'm fine.

BOB FLEEN  
Oh, that's super. Glad to hear it.

THE MAN  
I mean, well, actually I'm not-

BOB FLEEN  
Listen, I'm really sorry about  
this, but would it be all right  
with you if we called you right  
back?

THE MAN  
I mean...yeah. Sure.

BOB FLEEN  
Great, great pal. Won't take too  
long, I promise.

THE MAN  
Yeah of course, but is there a-

The line goes dead.

THE MAN  
Hello?

He sets down the phone.

## INT. APARTMENT WAITING MONTAGE - DAY

Montage of him waiting with the phone framed in the center. The hours pass, there is no ring.

## INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

The man lies on the couch, staring up at the ceiling. His alarm goes off and he mechanically slaps it to make it stop. He sighs and gets up and walks out of the apartment.

## EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - MORNING

The courtyard of a big apartment complex. At its center it contains a fake little river fountain. A couple benches line the way. The man comes down and sits on one, staring at the motionless fountain. BRAD (20's/30's), a caretaker in a brown jumper with his name embroidered on the front and COMPLEX GROUNDS emblazoned across the back, comes out and begins sweeping the walkway near the Man. The man looks up at him.

BRAD

Morning.

THE MAN

Uhn.

Brad goes over and turns turns a nearby spigot. The water in the courtyard river coughs and burbles before flowing out. The man stares at the water, becoming lost in it, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

## EXT. PARKING LOT - MORNING

The man walks up to a shop in a run-down stripmall. The sign across the shop's marquee reads "\_\_\_\_\_." On the door is a sign that says "Sorry, we're closed. We'll be back at -" with a clock below it, with both hands of the clock missing.

On one side of the shop is a pawn shop with a bunch of old CRT TVs playing the same video across. On the other side is a shop called "Oh My God!" which sells religious iconography. The Man walks up to the pawn shop and stops to watch the TVs, which are showing a clip of a young, sobbing woman flanked by two dark, robed figures. The robed figures unveil themselves to be Bob and Jeen Fleen (40s), a pair of horrifically happy plastic people with unstoppable smiles.

The next shot shows the woman running through a field of flowers, ecstatic and free. The word "GUILTMASTERS" comes across the screen, below a 1-800 number. The Man shakes his head and unlocks the door to the holography shop and goes in and switches on the lights. He turns the sign from "we'll be back" to "open."

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - MORNING

He sweeps. He dusts with an air compressor. He dusts with a rag. The shop stays empty. He rests his head in his hands. He thinks.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NOON

He walks around the corner of the building to a vending machine that reads FreightFurter® in bold red and yellow bubble font. There's a little old-fashioned cartoon engineer holding up a hotdog with a sunburst around it. The man pulls out a pair of crumpled dollar bills and struggles to feed them into the machine. It accepts the bills and he hits a button; the machine dispenses a sad-looking hotdog in a paper bag with the Freightfurter® logo emblazoned across it.

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

He walks back into the shop and takes a bite of the hotdog. He pulls a face and his chewing slows to a stop. He tosses the hotdog into the trash and walks into the back of the shop.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

The man walks up to a 1950's style bowling alley. There's a man out front in a white suit jacket and perfect, slicked-back hair who smiles as he approaches.

BOWLER

Hey there friend! Looking to do some bowling?

THE MAN

No.

BOWLER

Ha ha, me too! Gotta love it! Best pastime there is!

THE MAN

What if I told you I hate bowling?

BOWLER

Ah, I get it friend. You're as tired as I am of perennially overhooking the ball when what you really need to do is consistently throw strikes.

THE MAN

No. I *hate* bowling. And I hate you. What would you do if I told you to go fuck yourself?

BOWLER

You look like a fella who likes to bowl, let's talk about that!

THE MAN

What would you do if I told you you're a simulation? And not even a good one. A cheap one.

The man freezes for a second, confused. He holds out his hand for a handshake.

BOWLER

Hey there friend! Isn't bowling a lovely recreation?

The man slaps his hand away.

THE MAN

You're not real. You know that, right? And you're crappy.

BOWLER

The hours spent in a bowling alley with friends certainly make for some fantastic memories years down the line!

THE MAN

My life is a mess, my shop is a mess, *I'm* a mess...and you're just gonna talk to me about bowling?

BOWLER

Come on, man! Let's bowl!

The man slaps him hard. The bowler is unfazed.



BOWLER  
Let's go in and bowl!

He grabs the Bowler and begins shaking him. The bowler continues, still unfazed.

BOWLER  
Let's go in and bowl a few frames  
-- with the Pros!

The man wrestles him awkwardly to the ground and begins choking him.

BOWLER  
Hey friend! You ready to go  
bowling with the Pros?

The Man squeezes harder, harder; he's sweating, his eyes bugging, the bowler is smiling, and then the bowler begins glitching out, the scenery glitches, everything but the Man glitches out around him. The rising sound of a fire alarm can be heard through the glitching.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

The Man stands in one of his VR machines, breathing heavily. Smoke hisses and billows from the machine. He pulls off the goggles and looks around. He sees the module and coughs and tries to clear the smoke, grabs a thick manilla folder and waves it at the beeping smoke detector, but papers and receipts and bills cascade all over him. He grabs the module and runs outside, coughing.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

He carries the module out and sets it on the ground, still smoking. He pulls the Bowling With The Pros® cartridge out of it and drops it immediately in pain. He uses his shirt to pick it up; the plastic has melted and blackened; the cover of the cartridge has a picture of The Bowler on it, his face melted by heat and fire. He runs inside.

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

The Man rummages below the counter and along the back wall, knocking mail and files everywhere. He finds a screwdriver. He runs back out.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

He cracks open the module. Inside is a mess of melted chips, plastic and wires. He sighs. Beat. He begins to stab the module with the screwdriver violently.

THE MAN

God dammit! God fucking dammit!

He picks up the module and angrily throws it across the parking lot. He screams in frustration and anger. He turns around and sees two nuns peering out from the door of Oh My God. He freezes, then gives a little wave.

THE MAN

Morning.

He turns around and walks toward the module.

THE MAN

(To no one in  
particular)

Sorry.

He picks up all the pieces of the broken module and carries them inside. The nuns watch him.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

He sits, framed between the massive, chaotic pile of bills and receipts and the wreckage of the module. The door opens with the jingle of a bell and he looks up. Mr. Bomphil, an older man, birdlike and timid, who looks around the shop as if being followed.

THE MAN

Hey Mr. Bomphil.

MR. BOMPHIL

Hi, hi.

He stops and sniffs.

MR. BOMPHIL

What smells like burnt plastic?

THE MAN

Burnt plastic.

MR. BOMPHIL

Oh, oh right.

Beat.

MR. BOMPHIL  
Uh-is, is uh- is treadmill three  
available?

The Man looks around the empty shop. Beat.

THE MAN  
Yeah.

MR. BOMPHIL  
(Perking up)  
Great, great. I'll um, have --

The Man cuts him off.

THE MAN  
Yeah.

Mr. Bomphil nods. The Man rummages through the cartridge selection and pulls out one that reads "Violated Prom Queen" in garish, 70's style lettering with a pulp-art style image of a blond southern belle in a torn pink dress, surrounded by sexually menacing football players. The Man looks up at Mr. Bomphil and smiles unhappily, and walks to the back of the shop with him. Mr. Bomphil heads back; we see a pair of glittery high heels poking out of his bag.

The Man sets up the machine and places the visor on Mr. Bomphil's temple, adjusting some straps and the visor securely on his head. He does a quick system check, opening a panel and making sure the switch is set to view. He flips a final switch and the machine boots,

CUT TO:

INT. PROM BACK ROOM - NIGHT

POV shot of a young BELLE (20's) in a frilly pink dress. She looks around at the surroundings, at the open door where light and rock music pounds. She looks down at her two hands and smooths out her dress, then looks back up as TREVOR (27) an older-looking man posing as a highschooler comes in.

TREVOR  
Hey Charlene.

The voice for the name Charlene is slightly garbled as if comprised of phonetic sounds; the rest runs smoothly.

TREVOR  
I just wanted to congratulate you.

BELLE  
Oh, well thank you Trevor. I'm quite flattered.

Trevor takes a step forward.

TREVOR  
You look lovely in that dress, you know.

BELLE  
You think so? My mother said she thought it was too revealing.

TREVOR  
Oh did she? Well, why don't we reveal a little more?

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

Mr. Bomphil, beads of sweat running down his forehead, gasps in sexual joy.

MR. BOMPIL  
Oh, Trevor! Trevor, whatever are you doing? Oh! Ohohohohohohhhh!

The Man sits at the front of shop, trying to ignore the continued moans and yells coming from the back room. There's banging and bumping. He scribbles on a form with a pencil. He looks out the window where the two nuns are standing, staring in. He gives them a non-committal frown-smile and sighs. The sound stops, and soon after Mr. Bomphil exits past him hastily.

MR. BOMPIL  
Thanks again! See you next week!

Mr. Bomphil hurries out of the shop, walking past the nuns with a deferential, shame-faced nod.

MR. BOMPIL  
Excuse me.

He passes by Theo Kiley, a balding, portly man in a shabby suit with cowboy boots and hat, who watches him pass shrewdly and then opens the door, holding it open for the nuns.

THEO KILEY  
Afternoon, ladies. Going in?

The nuns purse their lips and walk away.

THEO KILEY  
No? All-righty then.

He walks up to the counter and smiles toothily.

THEO KILEY  
Don't say much, do they.

THE MAN  
I think they've taken vows of  
silence.

THEO KILEY  
Hah! That explains it. Never catch  
me doin' something like that. Love  
me some conversation.

THE MAN  
Mm.

THEO KILEY  
Speakin' of which! You got the  
latest?

THE MAN  
Yeah, I think it came in. Lemme  
check.

He rummages through his files and pulls out a freshly  
sealed cartridge that reads, "Legendary American Killers  
Stalk You!" with a pulp drawing of Clyde Barrow, smiling  
handsomly, a browning automatic rifle slung over his  
shoulder. He shows Theo Kiley who smiles excitedly.

THEO KILEY  
Beautiful! Clyde Barrow. Robber,  
Killer, Lover. Not so different,  
him and I!

He laughs. The Man rolls his eyes behind his back.

THEO KILEY  
All right! Let's crack this one  
open. Treadmill three?

THE MAN  
Yeah..no!

Theo Kiley looks at him, confused.

THE MAN

It- um...It needs uh. Um.  
Cleaning-servicing!

THEO KILEY

Righty then. Number two will have  
to do.

He winks at the Man and walks off. A quick smash-cut montage of the Man hooking up to the machine and booting it. The man flips the switch. We stay with him; he watches Theo Kiley as the simulation takes over. He walks back to his desk and Theo murmurs conversationally, indistinctly. He clears away stuff on his desk and comes across a photograph of a younger him next to the woman from his wallet photograph. He stares at it, remembering her in flashes, the spray of salt water, the softness of lips. He's pulled suddenly back to reality by Theo Kiley.

THEO KILEY

Whoo! Talk about going out with a  
bang. Guess I shoulda known  
better'n to talk about his mother,  
eh?

He laughs. The Man puts away the photograph, smiling faintly, nodding.

THEO KILEY

Speakin'a which, you got the Ed  
Gein one in yet?

THE MAN

You know we have to special order  
these.

Theo puts on his coat.

THEO KILEY

Ah, shame. Well, guess I'll be on  
my way then.

The Man comes around the counter.

THE MAN

Also, uh, your account is  
outstanding right now, um...by a  
pretty significant margin.

Theo turns and claps him on the shoulders.

THEO KILEY

Yeah, lemme tell ya, it's the only  
outstanding thing about me!

He laughs gummily and leaves. The man gives a polite, half-hearted chuckle which drops the moment Theo leaves. He sighs and sits back at his desk and hangs his head. He bonks his head on the countertop a few times.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

He switches off the open sign and locks the front door. He passes by the nuns.

THE MAN

Night.

They don't respond.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The man sits and watches the stream. Brad comes out and turns a nozzle on the wall; the stream dies. The Man doesn't move. Brad walks behind him, sweeping. He flips a switch on the wall and the courtyard lights come on. The man doesn't move. Brad looks at The Man, almost says something, stops, turns back and keeps sweeping.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A slow rack reveals Elizabeth, laughing and smiling and holding out her hand. There's a quick intercut moment of anger, yelling, a fight, but it's soon lost to the surf, the seagulls call.

ELIZABETH

Hey, hon, it's me. I just wanted  
to say I'm -

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

The man pulls up in his car to see LORELAI GAITHER (mid 30's) in a black Pantsuit with clipboard standing out in front, taking notes. He gets out of the car and walks up to the shop. She turns and smiles curtly.

THE MAN  
Hi, can I...help you?

MRS. GAITHER  
Lorelai Gaither.

She puts out her hand. He looks at it, confused.

MRS. GAITHER  
From corporate?

THE MAN  
(Shaking her hand)  
Oh. Uh, come in.

CONTINUE TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

They enter the shop and she begins looking around, dismayed.

THE MAN  
So, um...what can I do-

MRS. GAITHER  
I'm here for your annual  
performance and significant  
accomplishments assessment. Did  
you not get the letter?

The Man glances at the massive, overflowing pile of  
unopened letters.

THE MAN  
Uh...Yeah, yeah. Um...I'm not sure  
that now is a good...time?

MRS. GAITHER  
(Cutting him off)  
So, you've been in business for  
five years now, is that correct?

THE MAN  
Mmm-hm.

MRS. GAITHER  
(Looking through her  
binder)  
And, according to your quarterly  
revenue reports...there seem to be  
several missing from here,  
actually.



THE MAN  
It's-I've been...

MRS. GAITHER  
No matter. The general trends  
don't lie. This shop's revenue has  
been on a steady decline for two  
years straight.

THE MAN  
It's a hard market.

She looks around, examining the machines.

MRS. GAITHER  
No it's not. It's a hard world.  
We're in the market of escape.  
When markets are bad, we do  
better.

MRS. GAITHER  
(Writing on a sheet)  
Equipment exchange program: out of  
date, subscription services: out  
of date, promotional materials -

THE MAN  
Yes well-

MRS. GAITHER  
And what the hell happened to this  
module?

The Man looks at it, his face unmoving. Beat.

THE MAN  
Grief management.

Mrs. Gaither snaps her folder closed, frustrated.

MRS. GAITHER  
Okay. I'm going to go next door  
for a half an hour. In that time,  
please pull all the necessary  
documents for the review. I'll be  
back at 10:30 sharp.

She leaves. The Man sits, unmoving. After a moment, he  
snaps and grabs a sheaf of papers and begins slamming them  
on the countertop. There's a knocking as he does it. He  
looks over to see MR. FELTRIGGI (30s') a slender, armless  
man with a tote bag full of books. The Man goes over and  
opens the door for him.

MR. FELTRIGGI  
Morning.

THE MAN  
Morning John.

MR. FELTRIGGI  
Everything all right?

THE MAN  
Yeah, yeah. I just, um...yeah. How  
are you?

Mr. Feltriggi shrugs.

MR. FELTRIGGI  
Oh, can't complain. Collected up  
some books for the pawn shop,  
thought I'd stop by and say hi  
first. Check in.

The man smiles genuinely.

THE MAN  
You don't have to do that.

Mr. Feltriggi shrugs again.

MR. FELTRIGGI  
Yeah well. Glad you're holding in  
there.

He starts to go. The Man stops him.

THE MAN  
Hey, uh...wait a second. Lemme,  
just...hold on.

He grabs a module from the back and sets it up.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEPIA AMERICANA FARM - DAY

POV of a young boy playing with some toys in the dirt on a  
farm. A woman's voice calls out.

MA  
John? John!

The camera looks up and racks focus to a nearby farmhouse  
where a young, pretty woman in a gingham dress waves and  
beckons.

The young boy's arms wave and he gets up and runs to her.  
She crouches down and smiles.

MA  
Go get your father, all right?  
Tell him lunch is ready.

She leans in conspiratorially.

MA  
Tell him there's a surprise for  
dessert.

BOY  
Is it pie?

She smiles coyly.

MA  
You'll have to wait and find out,  
won't you? Now go get him before  
anything gets cold.

The boy gets up and starts running.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

The Man watches Mr. Feltriggi, smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM - DAY

The boy runs up to a handsome, rugged man.

BOY  
Hey pa!

PA  
Hey sport!

BOY  
Ma says it's time for lunch.

PA  
Well darn if you aren't right!  
Whadda ya say you'n I race back,  
eh? Betcha I win!

BOY  
Betcha won't!

Pa tousels his hair.

PA

Ohho! Right, them's fightin'  
words! Here we go, little man!  
Three, two, one, go!

The camera takes off running, the boy's arms flailing, the boy and Pa laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

Mr. Feltriggi laughs genuinely, brightly, purely. Tear tracks shine on his cheeks as he laughs. The Man watches him, smiling. The door opens and Mrs. Gaither re-enters, holding a St. Sebastian cookie jar. The Man sees her and his face falls. He switches off the machine and takes the headset off Mr. Feltriggi. Mr. Feltriggi is beaming, eyes shining with tears. He's breathless.

THE MAN

Sorry to yank you out John. I'd  
let you stay longer but, um...

Mr. Feltriggi looks to Mrs. Gaither. He gets off the machine and goes over.

MR. FELTRIGGI

Sure. Of course. How much, um...?

THE MAN

Don't worry about it.

MR. FELTRIGGI

Come on.

THE MAN

Forget it. That's what friends are  
for, right?

Mr. Feltriggi smiles and bumps his head into The Man's chest affectionately.

MR. FELTRIGGI

See you soon.

The Man helps him put the tote bag back on and opens the door for him. Mrs. Gaither watches as he leaves, still clutching her cookie jar, her face showing obvious disapproval.

MRS. GAITHER

That type of a presence surely  
acts to deflate revenues.

THE MAN

Oh, sure, yeah, no lie. That's why  
I nearly beat him up every time he  
comes in here.

MRS. GAITHER

I'm not sure that's an appropriate  
response.

THE MAN

No, no. Me neither. That's why I  
usually don't really...um...do it.  
Ever.

Beat.

MRS. GAITHER

Are you aware that your equipment  
is dangerously out of date?

THE MAN

What? No, what?

MRS. GAITHER

These are the HM model Delta,  
correct? The ones with offload  
capabilities. They were recalled a  
year ago due to a few instances of  
- how shall I put this -  
accidental and irreversible memory  
discharge.

THE MAN

Oh?

MRS. GAITHER

All shop owners were informed by  
mail, and by telep\e.

THE MAN

I don't...seem to recall. Perhaps  
it got lost in transit?

MRS. GAITHER

Perhaps.

THE MAN

Anyway, I've never had a problem  
with it.

MRS. GAITHER

I consider that a borderline miracle, given...

(She gestures around)

and I assure you that corporate will take an even dimmer view.

THE MAN

Well, but, I mean-

MRS. GAITHER

Dangerously outdated equipment, irregular hours, and a permissive attitude toward riffraff and freeloaders... I'm not fully convinced that you have your priorities right.

THE MAN

And I'm not convinced you have a heart.

Mrs. Gaither rounds on him, but does not emote.

MRS. GAITHER

Of course I have a heart. You think I like doing this? Traveling for days in a rental car that smells like pine-sol and old coffee just so I can tear apart some...person's business? I feel for you. But I, like you, have a job to do. And unlike you, I do my job. Well.

THE MAN

And that's what matters to you.

Beat. She sighs, softens slightly.

MRS. GAITHER

Okay. Let's talk about personal tragedy, shall we? No one's immune. But at what point must mourning cease? In your case, apparently never.

Beat. The man freezes. His face hardens.

THE MAN

I like your cookie jar.

MRS. GAITHER

(Businesslike)

MRS. GAITHER (CONT'D)  
Very well. Seal your own doom.

She turns and scribbles a phone number on a piece of paper.

MRS. GAITHER  
This is my room number at the  
Quality Inn. Call me if you can  
think of anything --anything--  
that I can tell the higher-ups to  
stay a franchise agreement  
cancellation. Otherwise...

She lets the word hang in the air. She turns and walks out the door. The Man watches as she gets into her car and drives off. He sighs

He goes back inside, switching the "We're Open" sign back to "we'll return..." The woman shakes her head and sighs. She leaves. The Man checks his watch and switches the sign to "We'll be back" and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKETTOWN - DAY

The Man drives through a barren, desolate urban wasteland (Rockettown) full of boarded-up houses and weed-filled yards. The population is mostly geriatrics. A massive, crumbling set of aerospace silos stand in the background, a large, once-garish logo of a rocket emblazoned across one of them. The car (A Dodge Omni) passes under a rusting metal arch with ROCKETTOWN emblazoned across it.

INT. CAR - DAY

The man parks the car and sighs. He gets out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - DAY

The Man gets out and pulls out a cumbersome bag with a shoulder strap. It's overflowing with cartridges, nodes and wires. He walks past the stump of a once-huge oak tree and up the front steps of a crumbling two-story building and lets himself in.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

He goes up to the second floor and unlocks the door.

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is messy and crowded with dirty dishes, old newspapers and magazines, and a glut of memories of a long, long marriage. The wallpaper is floral and faded, the furniture is plush and dusty.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Ken? Is that you?

The Man sighs and shuts the door. He turns and walks, calling out.

THE MAN

It's just-

He bumps into a side table with a vase and a picture frame on it. The picture is black and white, showing a young couple with their arms around each other, both smiling. He grabs the vase but the picture falls to the floor. He grabs it and sets it upright again and carefully slides through the narrow space. He heads over to the bedroom.

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - DAY

He steps in through the door. In bed we see MRS. SCHWARTZ, an elderly woman in a flowery, shapeless nightgown and thick, eye-magnifying glasses. A box set television is on playing re-runs of old television shows. On her lap is a leather-bound photograph book, open to a bunch of black and white photographs.

THE MAN

It's just me, Mrs. Schwartz.

Mrs. Schwartz looks at him, confused.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Hm. If you're looking for Ken, he's not here. Probably out bowling, or drinking. Fat louse.

THE MAN

No, no. It's me. I work with Eldercare, remember? I'm here for our appointment. It's Wednesday.

Mrs. Schwartz stares at him, confused and belligerent, but something clicks and she recognizes him. She softens.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Oh! Of course it's you. I was...remembering.



THE MAN

I know.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

I'm sorry my dear, I get so confused, sometimes.

THE MAN

It's okay. Don't worry about it.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

And here I was thinking you were one those lumps Mr. Schwartz used to associate with. Good lord, the years go by.

She laughs.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

So how are you, dear.

THE MAN

I'm fine. How are you?

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Ohhhhh. I'm okay. I was looking over some old pictures of Ken and I.

She laughs and reaches down around the side of the bed with a groan. She pulls out an old photograph book and opens it up to a page of pictures. She pulls one out and hands it to him. The picture is of a young Mrs. Schwartz in classic 30's fashion, beaming at the camera. In the background, out of focus, is a dance hall, full of people dancing.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

(Tapping the picture)

You know who this is?

THE MAN

That you?

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Mm-hm.

THE MAN

Wow.

Beat.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

I was a real looker back then, wasn't I?

THE MAN  
Nothing's changed.

She chuckles and swats at him lightly, sweetly.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
You flirt.

THE MAN  
You look so happy here.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
Everyone was! That was the day  
they announced the war was over.  
There was hope again.

She takes the picture back and looks at it.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
I met Mr. Schwartz a couple months  
after. He'd served, you know. Not  
front lines or anything, but...

She stares at the picture and laughs.

The Man smiles. She looks at the picture again.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
I still hear him, sometimes.  
Laughing, or, whistling in the  
other room. Sometimes at night I  
can hear him snoring.

She laughs and puts the picture away lovingly, snaps the  
book shut.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
So! What have we got today?

CUT TO:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

POV shot of Double doors open onto an extravagant ball.  
Shostakovich's Second Waltz plays in the background; people  
are dancing. The camera looks down, revealing a lovely  
dress and two delicate arms with white gloves. At the other  
end of the room is a man dressed in Russian royal garb. The  
focus dolly zooms in on him as he stands, begins to walk  
over. The camera tracks out, transitioning from the footage  
to a screen showing the footage.

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - DAY

The camera continues to track back, revealing Mrs. Schwartz hooked up to the portable module, with sensors and nodes all over her body. The music continues faintly, tinnily, as if from a small speaker. The Man sits in a chair nearby, reading a magazine. On the sensor, we see the prince come over and bow, holding out his hand.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Ooh!

She raises her hand and a hand is raised on the module's screen. The prince takes her hand on the screen and Mrs. Schwartz' hand closes slightly; on screen, they begin to dance; the lens focused now purely on the smiling prince. Mrs. Schwartz laughs giddily. The Man half-closes his magazine and adjusts a dial on the module, then goes back to reading.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

The screen shows the prince on a boat at evening; the sky is full of paper sky lanterns. The prince holds one out to the camera and the gloved arm takes it and releases; the camera pans up as the lantern floats away into oblivion. The camera looks back down at the prince, he smiles and takes the gloved hand in his and kisses it. He turns and the camera turns as well, toward the shore where all the people from the ballroom are standing. They bow to the prince and the camera, and begin applauding. The screen slowly fades to black and then there's a white blip as an eject noise is heard.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Man pulls out the cartridge from the module and removes the visor from Mrs. Schwartz' eyes. She's teary and smiling.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Oh, goodness. That was wonderful.  
Thank you.

She wipes her eyes with a sensor-laden arm. The Man gently starts removing the nodes.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
I miss dancing. Mr. Schwartz and I  
used to cut up such a rug.

She laughs.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
We'd be out until midnight most  
nights, you know? Dancing, and  
carousing with our friends...we  
were troublemakers, back in the  
day. It's so good to dance again.

She trails off.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
My gosh! It's so late! You were  
only supposed to be here an hour!

THE MAN  
I know. It's okay.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
You are too good to me, you know  
that?

THE MAN  
No one could be too good to you.

THE MAN  
Oh, you. You're a saint.

The man gently pulls the nodes off her and helps her get  
comfortable.

CUT TO:

EXT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - NIGHT

The Man exits, locking the door carefully behind him. He  
walks down the sidewalk past a HOMELESS MAN (40-50) talking  
animatedly to a cat; The Man glances back at him and picks  
up his pace a little. The Homeless Man stops and looks at  
him.

HOMELESS MAN  
Hey! Hey mister!

The Man looks back as the Homeless Man begins walking  
towards him. The Man picks up his pace more, hurrying to  
his car and unlocking it. He tosses his stuff in the back  
and gets in.

INT. CAR - EVENING

The man hurriedly gets in, closing and locking his door as the Homeless Man quickly approaches. The Homeless Man walks up to the door and crouches down, looking at The Man. He raises a knuckle and raps it against the glass gently. The Man looks over and the Homeless Man raises a piece of equipment that he'd dropped.

Beat.

THE MAN

Oh.

He rolls down the window half-way and the homeless man reaches in with the cable. He takes it sheepishly.

THE MAN

Thanks. Sorry.

The Homeless man withdraws his hand as the man starts his car.

EXT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - DAY

The car pulls off and the camera lingers for a moment on the homeless man, who goes back to talking to no one.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The Man drives, lost in thought. Time passes. It gets later. He passes by a park where a FANCY MAN is jogging with a walkman and a tuxedo; The Man stares at him and runs a red; a car screeches past him, horn blaring. He swerves and comes to a screeching halt; he parks the car and gets out.

EXT. PARK STREET - DAY

The Man steps out of the car, panicked. The other car drives off as the driver yells.

DRIVER

Asshole!

The Man, still in shock, looks around, breathing heavily. Something catches his gaze and he freezes. He stares at it as the camera tracks in. We see a small white cross, a little faded now, with a bunch of wilted flowers.

He walks over to it and stares at it; across the middle section we see the name "Elizabeth." There's a flash of the woman from his photographs, smiling and laughing on a beach with sun and waves in the background. The man sinks down next to the cross and sits crosslegged on the grass. We see Elizabeth again, smiling, laughing; this is interrupted by Elizabeth in the apartment, angry and yelling. We see The Man in a mirror on the wall, also yelling. He says something and she storms off; this cuts back to her smiling on the beach, this cuts to them at a picnic, this cuts to them fighting, this cuts to a shot of him at a funeral. This cuts to her on the beach, laughing, reaching her hand out, leading the camera into the waves; this cuts to the man at night, staring, beginning to cry; this cuts to her slamming the door, walking through the courtyard, this cuts to an overhead shot of him sitting next to the cross, her picture beside him.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Man walks in the door and looks at his apartment. He's drained and tired, totally spent. He stares around his life of boxes. He plops down on the couch and looks at the answering machine, the new message light blinking. He plays through the messages.

MRS. BRIFF

Hi, this is Mrs. Briff-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message deleted.

LORELAI GAITHER

Hello, this is Lorelai Gaither with-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message deleted.

MRS. BRIFF

Hi, this is Mrs. Briff calling again-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message deleted.

MRS. BRIFF

Hi, Mrs. Briff here-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message deleted.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me, I just wanted to say I'm-

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me, I just wanted to-

ELIZABETH

Hey hon -

ELIZABETH

Hey hon -

ELIZABETH

Hey hon -

He hits the stop button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message saved for 24 hours.

He hangs his head and then walks over to the kitchen and grabs a gasoline canister (motivate somehow earlier). He douses himself in gasoline and then hunts for a lighter. He flicks the lighter several times, struggling to get it to light. Finally, it does: he takes a moment and shuts his eyes; the phone rings. He pauses there for a moment, a long moment. He lets the lighter go out and walks over to the telephone.

THE MAN

You know, if this is Guiltmasters I would just like to say I am *thoroughly* disappointed in your services and I *will* be contesting those charges.

MRS. BRIFF

What? Hello? Hello, no, this is Mrs. Briff from the LBJ school for Precocious Youth?

THE MAN

Oh. Um.....hi.

MRS. BRIFF

I've been trying to get a hold of you for a few days now; have you checked your answering machine?

THE MAN  
No, sorry I've been super busy.  
Um...is there any way I could call  
you b-

MRS. BRIFF  
(Not listening)  
I just wanted to confirm that  
you're coming in tomorrow for the  
educational tech demonstration.

Beat.

THE MAN  
Yeah. Of course I am.

MRS. BRIFF  
Good, good. I wouldn't want to  
disappoint the kids.

THE MAN  
Of course. Um...Of course I'm  
coming.

MRS. BRIFF  
Great. Good to hear. Had me  
worried there for a second.

She laughs. He laughs half-heartedly.

MRS. BRIFF  
(Back to business)  
So. I wanted to quickly go over  
what you were planning on showing  
them?

The man rummages through his bag, pulling out a series of  
modules with brightly colored pictures of a rabbit in a bow  
tie. One is labeled HOP-HOP LEARNS FRACTIONS, another reads  
HOP-HOP LEARNS TO SPELL.

THE MAN  
Um...well I have several  
educational models-

MRS. BRIFF  
They're not something moronic like  
Hop-Hop, are they?

Beat.

THE MAN  
Um...



MRS. BRIFF

I was hoping for something a little edgier, you know? Something that will *engage* their young minds. These are incredibly gifted children, you know. They need...more.

THE MAN

Right. Um...I'll see what I can do.

MRS. BRIFF

Fantastic. Look, gotta run, but I'll see you tomorrow at 10.

THE MAN

Right, right. By the way I don't really use guiltmas-

The phone hangs up. He stares at the receiver, then looks at himself in the mirror. He looks at the lighter and picks it up, then looks back to the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Man stands in the shower, fully clothed (minus shoes).

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

The man walks across the parking lot, still wet. He walks up to the front of the shop and sees the door is open. He looks around, confused, and opens the door.

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - EARLY MORNING

He continues inside, revealing the shop in absolute shambles. There are papers strewn everywhere; one of the treadmills is on its side, modules are scattered anywhere. The Man steps in, aghast at the state of everything. Suddenly, from the shadows behind him comes a knife -- it presses up against his throat and we hear the gravelly voice of HANK (60-77).

HANK

Where's your cash?

THE MAN  
I don't have any.

Hank pulls back and spins The Man around. We get a good look at Hank. He looks like the grandpa we wish we didn't have; a man ravaged by alcohol, cigarettes and time. His skin hangs loose, his eyes are sunken. He stands firmly and grips the knife expertly, but there's a lack of sureness to him, as if he's going through new motions.

HANK  
What d'you mean you don't have any?

THE MAN  
I'm sorry I don't...have...

Hank looks around. This wasn't what he planned for.

HANK  
Alright then. All this fancy stuff. You tell me what the most expensive thing is here. And how you use it.

THE MAN  
It's...it's hard to explain.

HANK  
Get. Explaining.

THE MAN  
Okay, okay, look. I'll show you.

He picks up one of the modules with a pulp art image of three nurses and the title SEXY NURSES SCRUB YOU DOWN on it. He pops it in and puts the visor on the man.

HANK  
What're you doing?

THE MAN  
You want me to show you, right?

Beat. Hank nods and The Man puts it on.

HANK  
You try anything, and I swear to god I'll stick you like a- ooh!

The Man flips the switch and the machine engages, Hank's mouth hangs open, he begins to moan in pleasure.

The Man, keeping his eyes on Hank, reaches behind him and fumbles around until his hand connects with something -- the industrial tape gun. He swings it full force and clocks Hank on the head with it, who goes down. He hits him a couple more times and grabs the knife, backing up and brandishing it. Hank is totally unconscious. The Man looks at the tape gun, realizing what it is.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The Man feverishly tapes up Hank into a chair, binding his hands and legs. He puts the visor back on Hank, who has some blood running down his forehead, and pulls over a small CRT-like monitor.

THE MAN

Alright, friend. Let's see who you are.

He flips a switch on the machine and Hank twitches; The Man pulls a rolling cart with a monitor on it, along with a pair of big, old-style headphones. He dials in a frequency on the base of the monitor and Hank lets out a small moan as a picture appears on the screen, fuzzy, out of focus. The man lifts up his headphones and through them we can hear an echoey voice (HANK'S FATHER) calling his name.

HANK'S FATHER

Hank? Hank!

The camera tracks into the darkness of the cup of the headphones, and the sound transitions.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The darkness and fuzziness recedes and we see clouds, blue sky, wheat. The sound of distant cicadas hums warm and sharp. Suddenly, an angry face (HANK'S FATHER) slams into view.

HANK'S FATHER

There you are, you little lazy piece of shit.

He grabs the boy, yanking him roughly to his feet, revealing a dilapidated farmhouse in the distance. Hank's father hauls off and hits Hank.

HANK'S FATHER  
What'd I tell you, huh? You lazy,  
good for nothing-

He hauls back his hand and swings.

CUT TO:

INT. SWING HALL - NIGHT

A rockin' swing party is in full blast. The camera stands in the corner, surveying everyone nervously. The crowd clears and we see a young girl standing across the way. She waves shyly. People sweep past.

CUT TO:

INT. SWING HALL - LATER

We're now dancing with the young girl. She's pretty, and laughing as they spin and twirl on the floor. She sweeps past, laughing, holding eye contact.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

The girl walks up the hill, breathless and excited.

GIRL  
C'mon, it's just a little further.

The camera looks down and cuts seamlessly.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

They sit at the top of the hill. The girl smokes a cigarette and offers a drag. Hank accepts, blowing smoke out toward the moon.

GIRL  
I love this place. I come here all  
the time just to...sit. Think.  
Dream. Pretty romantic, don't you  
think? This place? The moon?

She rests her hand down. The camera looks down to see it resting on Hank's hand. He looks back up at her. She leans in for a kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

She leans out, smiling, now in a white dress and veil. They turn toward the crowd of cheering people and wave. A man comes up to them with an old camera and takes their picture.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMY TRUCK - DAY

He stares down at the photo, then up at his platoon mates. One of them, RICHIE (a short New York Italian kid no older than 16) smokes a cigarette loosely between his lips. The other, MIKEY (tall, gangly, freckle-faced), waves the smoke away.

MIKEY

Jesus fuck, Richie, you gotta do that right now? Shit's bad enough without you blowing smoke in my fucking eyes.

RICHIE turns and blows the smoke right into Mikey's face as he talks.

RICHIE

Oh, I'm sorry, you got a problem with me enjoying a nice cigarette before the slaughter?

SARGE

Chipperow you two. Makin' a helluva ruckus.

Beat. The truck stops moving, the engine cuts out.

SARGE

We're here. Company, dismount.

They stand up, grabbing their belongings.

RICHIE

Hey, hey. So a grasshopper walks into a bar, right?

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

They disembark, holding their gear. Richie continues.

RICHIE (CONT.)

And he goes up to the bartender.  
And the bartender tells him hey,  
we got a drink named after you.  
And the grasshopper looks up at  
the bartender with this big  
confused look on his face, right?

VIOLENCE MONTAGE - DAY

A smash cut of violent imagery, only a few frames long. It  
should be disturbing, jarring.

JUNGLE ARMY CAMP - LATER

They huddle around an embankment, a fire lit. They're  
dirty, muddy, bloodied. They've seen things. Mikey sits,  
staring off into the distance. Richie sits shaking, smoking  
a cigarette. The wood is full of noises.

RICHIE

And he says to the bartender,  
what, you got a drink named  
Murray?

MIKEY

You told that one already.

RICHIE

(Defensive)

Yeah well, I don't hear anyone  
else offerin' up anything.

Beat. Richie settles in, sulkily.

RICHIE

I miss Sarge.

Beat.

MIKEY

I'm gonna start a farm.

RICHIE

What?

MIKEY

Start a farm, meet a girl, raise  
some kids.

RICHIE

Jesus fuck, don't start with that  
shit.

MIKEY

I'm gonna grow corn, have some  
cows. Sheep. Maybe some goats.  
Nah. No goats.

RICHIE

Will ya can it, please?

MIKEY

What?

RICHIE

"Oh, I'm gonna marry a farm, raise  
some sheep!" Shit gives me agita.

MIKEY

Well, forgive me for thinkin'  
about the future.

RICHIE

You wanna know what's in my  
future?

MIKEY

?

RICHIE

A good fuckin' piss.

He stands up and stretches. He takes a couple steps and  
turns.

RICHIE

Oh hey, stop me if I told you this  
one-

A shot rings out in the distance, and Richie collapses, a  
bullet through his brain, dead. The camera scrambles over.

MIKEY

Richie!

Mikey scrambles over to him. We hear shots ringing out,  
shadowy figures move through the jungle.

SOLDIER (OFFSCREEN)  
We're under fire!

MIKEY  
Richie!

A muzzle flash illuminates a shadowy figure and Mikey slumps on top of Richie. Hank grabs his gun and fires, the shadowy figure falls. Hank scrambles to his feet and runs low through the trees. Another muzzle flash, a bang, and he falls to the ground. His hand is covered in blood, his breathing ragged. We see a shadowy figure walk toward him slowly. His heartbeat and breath and a high ringing are all we can hear; a high violin comes in, his wife's voice too. The shadowy figure rolls him over. The trees are silhouetted, the figure is too. Hank holds up his hand, and the figure raises a gun.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

The man pulls off the gear with a gasp. He's sweating and shaking. He takes a seat for a moment, then stares at Hank.

THE MAN  
God. I'm so sorry.

He freezes, noticing Hank as he twitches and writhes in the chair.

THE MAN  
Oh jeez.

He goes over to the machine, where the screen is blinking the word "OFFLOADING" over images of Hank in a hospital, being granted a purple heart.

THE MAN  
Oh god.

He looks to the switch, seeing it set to Offload.

THE MAN  
Oh jeez.

He freezes, unsure of what to do.

THE MAN  
Oh god, oh jeez. Oh god.

He flips the switch; the machine powers down.



THE MAN  
Oh jeez. Oh god.

He looks around the shop, and sees the two nuns staring at him through the window. He waves pleasantly. They shake their heads and begin to walk away.

THE MAN  
Oh god. Oh jeez. Oh god.

He looks through the papers on the desk frantically, finally finding a support line number. He dials.

THE MAN  
Oh jeez.

ANSWERING VOICE  
Hello.

THE MAN  
Hello, I, um-

ANSWERING VOICE  
Thank you for calling the  
corporate assistance line for  
\_\_\_\_\_. Your call is important  
to us. Please stay on the line.

Tinny jazz music plays through the speaker.

THE MAN  
(Almost crying)  
Oh, god.

He looks back at Hank, still unconscious, and then back to the nuns at the front who are staring at them both. He waves again and then notices the prominently visible knife. He hides it and gives them a thumbs-up. The jazz music cuts out and a woman with a southern drawl comes on the line.

PATRICIA  
Thank you for calling the \_\_\_\_\_  
holography help line, this is  
Patricia speaking how may I help  
you today?

THE MAN  
(At first panicked, then  
gaining forced  
composure)  
Hello! Hi. Hi there, how are you  
doing today?

PATRICIA

I'm fine, how can I help you?

THE MAN

Uuuuuuh- um. I was just wondering if, um...hypothetically speaking, if one were to accidentally, completely accidentally, um, and, also hypothetically, um...offload a person's memories while viewing them?

PATRICIA

Uh-huh?

THE MAN

Well, um, would there be a way to...um...put them back? Or...

PATRICIA

Well there's no harm in making a backup of the-

THE MAN

Not a backup. An offload.

PATRICIA

Well, that would only be an issue if you had one of the Delta models or earlier, sir, but those were-

THE MAN

Recalled. Right.

PATRICIA

Has something happened, sir? Can I get your name and the franchise you're associated with?

THE MAN

(Panicking,  
Simultaneous)

Oh! Sorry nope! Nothing's happened, just asking out of curiosity. I think there's a customer coming in and I should go take care of them I'll call you back later, thank you bye!

PATRICIA

(Simultaneous)

Sir? Sir! Sir, no, don't hang up sir I haven't-

The Man slams the phone down and Hank stirs with a moan.  
The Man stares at Hank, unsure of what to do.

The phone rings again and he picks it up off the hook and puts it back down. Hank wakes up. The Man scrabbles around for the knife, finally finding it as Hank wakes up.

HANK

Ooh, where am I?

Hank looks at the tape on his wrists and stands up, tearing it off like it was nothing. He sees The Man.

HANK

Hey there sport, you look down.  
Can I help you with something?

The Man looks at him, mouth agape.

HANK

No? Well, I'll be on my way then.  
D'you know where the bus stop is?

The Man points in a direction, and Hank takes off, whistling a jaunty tune. The phone rings again and The Man picks it up and sets it down, still perplexed. He sinks to the floor next to the tape dispenser. He picks it up and stares at it.

THE MAN

Piece a junk.

He tosses it toward the trash can and stares at Hank as he rounds the corner. He stares at the taped chair.

THE MAN

What have I done.

He checks his watch and realizes the time.

THE MAN

Oh jeez.

He jumps up, grabbing the mobile viewing device and pulling out the hop-hop modules. He resigns himself to them and puts them in his bag.

THE MAN

Sorry I don't have anything  
better, kids.

As he stands up there's a ding from the holoviewer. He turns and sees the screen flashing a message across a red bar: INSERT BLANK MODULE TO COMPLETE WRITE. A look comes across the man's face and he grabs a blank module and pops it into the slot. The bar across the screen switches to yellow and blinks: WRITING.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Inside the school, we hear kids running along a corridor, laughing and shouting. The bulletin board is covered in complex equations, and at the top it says "Mathematics: what will you add to it?"

The man stares at the equation closely, following along with his finger. The bell rings loud; he jumps and loses his place and starts over as uniformed children flood the halls and then the door opens behind him and Mrs. Briff (40), a neatly put together woman in a hideous pantsuit comes out with her hand outstretched.

MRS. BRIFF

That was amazing, simply amazing!

She shakes his hand vigorously, gesturing out to the sea of kids.

MRS. BRIFF

I don't claim to understand any of this holoviewer nonsense, but I can tell you that was one of the best guest programs we've ever had! Those kids ate it up!

They stare as a group of kids swarm MR. PANCHUKO, an old janitor with a mop.

KID 1

Mr. Panchuko! Did you fight in the war?

MR. PACHUKO

I was at the Bulge.

KID 3

Did you kill any brownshirts?

KID 1

Didja? Didja?

He stares around, bewildered. Mrs. Briff beams.

MRS. BRIFF

They positively ate it up. I can see why! Such nuance, such dynamic, it was like it was somebody's life! Where'd you come across this, anyway?

THE MAN

I made it. Well, I edited it at least.

MRS. BRIFF

Amazing. Just. Amazing. Never seen anything like it in my life. If that's what you can bring to the table, consider yourself hired!

THE MAN

Well, I don't-

MRS. BRIFF

They ate it up, you know. Think of what it gives to their gifted little minds. Why, I heard one kid come out saying he was jonesing for a Chesterfield, whatever that is!

THE MAN

I think it's an old brand of cigarette.

MRS. BRIFF

Well, no matter. It's a phenomenal success. Here's the check for today, and I'd like to commission at least a dozen more of these.

THE MAN

Well I don't know about that-

MRS. BRIFF

Having you onboard is going to be a massive aid to my re-election campaign, let me tell you! I can see our pitch now -- XYZ.

THE MAN

Well what exactly did you have in mind?

MRS. BRIFF

How about the rest of the century?

THE MAN

I'll see what I can do.

Mrs. Briff nods, enthusiastically, and takes a step back before turning around again.

MRS. BRIFF

By the way, do you smell gasoline?

The man looks at her for a moment.

THE MAN

No.

MRS. BRIFF

Hm. Well, I'll have the janitor  
look at it. Toodle-oo! I'll be in  
touch! Keep the good stuff coming!

She walks over and joins the throng of children surrounding him, listening intently as he acts out the horrors of war with janitorial equipment.

MR. PACHUKO

-So there I was, knee deep in  
bodies, wading through the mud as  
the rain poured down, mixing with  
the blood and the, well, all the  
other stuff-

The man stands in the hallway, alone; he stares down at the check in his hand.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - DAY

The door opens over the man's shoulder to reveal WEI, a college-aged girl in casual clothing.

WEI

I'm here about the housekeeper  
position?

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - DAY

Wei brushes Mrs. Schwartz' hair and hums a song quietly.  
The man frets.

THE MAN

So you'll be here-

WEI

Every day.

THE MAN  
And you'll take care of  
everything. Everything she  
needs...?

WEI  
Yeah, that's the job, right?

THE MAN  
Right, right.

WEI  
I'll uh...probably do some  
cleaning in here too. It's a  
little...

We see the room, the apartment, in all its squalor.

THE MAN  
I'll pay extra.

WEI  
Deal.

THE MAN  
This should be enough for a couple  
weeks. Both your pay and, um,  
groceries and everything.

He hands her an envelope with a lot cash inside. She  
glances in it.

WEI  
Thanks. I'll take it from here.  
I'm sure you've got stuff to do.

Beat. Mrs. Schwartz looks at The Man.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
Ken's not home, if you're looking  
for him.

THE MAN  
No, no, I'm not...

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
He's probably out bowling.

THE MAN  
I know.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT -  
NIGHT

The man enters into his apartment, the door hitting against the side of the gasoline canister. He sighs and walks through.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

The man sits in the glow of the TV. The Guiltmasters commercial plays in the background. He switches the tv off and grabs a jacket.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - NIGHT

The man sits, staring at the fountain. Brad enters with a push broom and begin sweeping.

BRAD  
Evening.

THE MAN  
Hey.

Brad sweeps a little, then stops.

BRAD  
Nice night, huh.

THE MAN  
Yeah.

Beat.

THE MAN  
You ever just wanna, leave it all?  
Start over, you know. Go somewhere  
far away. Work on a...oil rig or a  
shrimp trawler.

BRAD  
Brother-in-law worked on one'a  
those.

THE MAN  
Oil rig?



BRAD  
Shrimp trawler.

THE MAN  
Oh. Does he enjoy it?

BRAD  
I think he got something out of  
it, until the accident.

THE MAN  
Accident?

BRAD  
Mm.

THE MAN  
Was it...trawler...related?

BRAD  
(Shaking his head)  
Hit by a bus.

THE MAN  
Oh. Did he...?

BRAD  
Mmhm. They say it took him clean  
out of his shoes.

Beat.

THE MAN  
I'm sorry for your loss.

Brad shakes his head again.

BRAD  
Nah, he was a dick.

The Man sits in silence, Brad goes back to sweeping.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The man wakes up suddenly on the couch. He sees his  
voicemail light is blinking. He replays it.

MRS. BRIFF

Hey there, Mrs. Briff here - just wondering how the holos are coming along. I'd ideally like to do another session next week, mmkay? The kids are *dying* to get more. And lemme tell ya, the parents? They love it! I've been thinking of re-election slogans all week. I'm thinking of going with this: XYZ. Call me back!

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message erased.

MRS. BRIFF

Hey there! So I had a talk with the board and they want to do another round in two days, so I gave it the go-ahead. That won't be a problem, will it? Anyway, be in touch! Oh, I've updated my slogan. What d'you think of: XYZ. Let me know when you can come in!

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message erased.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message saved for 24 hours.

He sighs, frustrated.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - DAY

The man enters and looks around. The place is transformed; the mess has been replaced with tidiness, the dust replaced by polish.

THE MAN

Wow.

WEI

Hey, I was wondering if you'd stop by.

THE MAN

It looks incredible in here.

WEI

It was a couple days' work, but nothing too strenuous. Mostly it was just throwing things out. With her permission, of course.

THE MAN

Wow. Promise me you'll stay here forever.

WEI

Long as you pay me.

Beat. The Man shrugs "fair enough."

THE MAN

How is she today?

WEI

Lucid, actually.

THE MAN

Really.

WEI

Yeah, she was telling me all sorts of stuff from her life. She's...remarkable, really. Saw MLK speak. Apparently she attended the Watergate hearings, too.

THE MAN

Really.

He thinks.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - DAY

The Man sits in a chair next to the bed; the TV is on in the background, playing old black-and-white shows on silent. Mrs. Schwartz sits in bed, ruminating and staring at him shrewdly.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

So.

THE MAN

So that's it.

She nods; she thinks.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

And there's no way I could keep them.

THE MAN

Not with what I have, no.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

But I could still...watch them, like the ones you show me.

THE MAN

Absolutely.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

And it'll help us pay for her, *and* it'll lighten *your* load significantly, won't it.

THE MAN

Well, I don't care about that-

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Okay, then.

THE MAN

What?

MRS. SCHWARTZ.

They're not doing me much good, anyhow. If they can benefit someone else, then...okay.

THE MAN

Okay. Anything in particular?

MRS. SCHWARTZ

(Shrugging)

I can live without the sixties.

The Man gently attaches the nodes to her head.

THE MAN

Okay.

She holds his hand and he flips the switch to Offload. The camera quickly zooms in toward her face, disappearing into the vizor.

CUT TO:

## 60'S MONTAGE

We see a sped-up montage of the sixties and early seventies - tumult, Vietnam, Nixon, resignation. The camera whips through, faster and faster, reaching hyperspeed until it pulls out.

CUT TO:

## INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

The camera pulls out through the monitor screen. We see a kid on a stool, wired up to the machine, open-mouthed. The Man sits next to them on a too-small plastic chair; nearby, a stray-haired teacher takes the hand of another kid. Mrs. Briff looks on, aglow, with a few professional-looking people with nametags and clipboards.

MRS. BRIFF

I think it's safe to say the results speak for themselves.

AUDITOR 2

And what of the side effects?

Mrs. Briff opens her mouth and realizes that she knows nothing on this; she smiles and turns toward The Man.

MRS. BRIFF

I'm sure our resident expert here would be delighted to talk more on that. He's the fellow that designs all our modules, you know.

They all turn and stare at The Man, who is staring into the external monitor, watching the memories, deep in thought.

AUDITOR 3

Well?

The man looks around, snapping back to reality.

THE MAN

I'm sorry?

MRS. BRIFF

These folks are from the education commission. They were wondering about side effects.

THE MAN

For whom?

MRS. BRIFF  
For the kids.

THE MAN  
Oh, right. Um...apart from a  
little disorientation upon re-  
entry, there's no lasting negative  
side effect.

MRS. BRIFF  
It's like they always say, no  
people were harmed in the making  
of these memories.

She laughs. The Auditors give a severe half-laugh. The Man  
gives a forced smile. The machine dings and the screen  
flashes "MODULE COMPLETE." The man removes the visor and  
nodes and the kid looks around, first in confusion, then in  
wonder.

KID 1  
Wow!

He hops down off the stool and runs over to his other  
friends.

KID 1  
That was amazing!

MRS. BRIFF  
Their American history marks are  
through the roof, parents are  
reporting an all-time high of  
emotional connection to elders up  
to two generations removed-

AUDIOR 1  
Two generations?

MRS. BRIFF  
Correct! It's all there in the  
packet.

They scribble more notes and leaf through the pamphlet.

AUDITOR 3  
It says here you've been able to  
shorten the length of time it  
takes for viewing?

THE MAN  
It's been condensed a bit, yeah.

AUDITOR 1

What, are you fast-forwarding?

THE MAN

Well, to some extent. You can speed things up somewhat, but *too* fast and you don't retain as much. But in reviewing the content, I realized that the construction of a memory is actually not just the initial event memory, but also secondary memories where you analyze, um...

Another Kid runs over, followed by the first.

KID 2

Teacher! Teacher! Jessica put gum in Tracy's hair!

KID 1

You said you wouldn't tell! You Nixon!

KID 2

I'm not Nixon, *you're Nixon!*

The teacher ushers them away. The auditors scribble notes, impressed.

AUDITOR 2

You were saying?

THE MAN

Right. Well, um...Basically, you have memories, right, and then you have memories of remembering the memories.

AUDITOR 3

Uh-huh.

THE MAN

So by collapsing all of those memories down into one superpositioned memory, I was able to shorten the time each segment takes, and it also provides some...perspective, I guess. Makes it easier to understand not just the what, you know, but the why and how.

AUDITOR 1  
(Not understanding)  
Uhhhhhhhh-huh.

MRS. BRIFF  
It's all very complicated stuff  
and it's all there in the packet.  
Now, would any of you like to try  
it?

They all hesitate.

AUDITOR 1  
I think we'll pass.

MRS. BRIFF  
Can't blame you. Personally, I  
don't touch all this techno-  
voodoo. But, it's great for the  
kids, and that means it's good for  
the school, which means it's good  
for funding, and who are we to  
argue with that?

The Auditors nod, convinced. The schoolbell rings.

MRS. BRIFF  
Lunchtime! Why don't you all come  
back to my office and we can  
discuss things further? We have a  
whole *host* of new "modules" coming  
out in the near future, isn't that  
right?

AUDITOR 2  
Ooh, could you do one on Pearl  
Harbor?

MRS. BRIFF  
Of course he can! Right?

THE MAN  
I'll see what I can do.

MRS. BRIFF  
Sounds like a yes to me!

She shepherds the others away.

CUT TO:



EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The man away from the school, holding a large envelope with cash in it. He stares down at it.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

The Man sits by her bedside. Her memories play on the monitor; they watch it together.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
And these are *my* memories?

THE MAN  
That's right.

Mrs. Schwartz frowns and looks on. She nods.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
So they liked it?

The Man nods.

THE MAN  
Loved it. It seems your memories  
are creating an educational  
revolution.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
That's good. Ken and I always  
wanted kids, you know. But...

She trails off and sighs, then gathers herself into a business-like manner.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
You need more.

THE MAN  
I-

Beat.

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
(Gently)  
Take 'em.

THE MAN  
I-

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
Take them.

THE MAN  
Pearl Harbor?

MRS. SCHWARTZ  
Whatever you need, dear.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The Man exits with his portable module kit. He leaves some money in an envelope marked "Wei" and heads out.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - NIGHT

The Man sits in the dark, lit by the glow of the monitor. He hits a button. The monitor flashes "WRITING" across the yellow bar. He rubs his eyes wearily and leans back.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

The man sits and stares out at the lake as the moon rises. He has a moment of determination and pulls his wallet out, dropping its contents onto the ground except for his ID (which should have no identifying name on it) and the picture of Elizabeth. He stares at the picture.

MEMORY MONTAGE

We see a flash of a grave, of him standing over it dressed in black, a hospital room, The Man talking to a police officer, The Man and Elizabeth fighting, of them holding hands and wading out into the water.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

He wades out into the water, but turns around quickly because of how cold it is. He steels his resolve and wades in up to his waist, holding the picture of Elizabeth. The beam of a flashlight rips across the darkness and spotlights him. A man's voice calls out from the darkness.

HANK  
Everything okay out there?

The Man freezes and turns around, blinded by the light. We see a figure behind the light, but can make little out.

THE MAN  
Oh, uhm, yeah. Yes. All good here.  
Just um...going for a...swim.

HANK  
At night?

THE MAN  
Mm-hm.

HANK  
In your clothes?

Beat.

THE MAN  
Yeap. I, uhm....

He's at a loss.

THE MAN  
Well, I...

HANK  
Are all these yours?

The Man begins to wade back in, hurriedly.

THE MAN  
Oh, yeah, yes, I just didn't want  
it to get wet --

He stumbles and falls, splashing down face first into the water.

THE MAN  
Fuck, that's cold!

The man comes over to him, shining the light on him and helping him up. The light bounces off the water, revealing it to be Hank. The Man freezes.

THE MAN  
You--

HANK  
Up we go. There we are.

They stare at each other and Hank smiles.

HANK  
Do I know you?

The Man shakes his head, nervous.

THE MAN  
N-no, I don't think so.

Hank shrugs and pats The Man on the back.

HANK  
I love the water at night. Always have, you know? Did my fair share of night swimming when I was younger. 'Course I usually did it without clothes but hey, to each their own, eh?

THE MAN  
Haha. Yeah.

HANK  
I always used to come out here. Something about water always helps me reflect, you know. Not always good, though. I went through some dark times out here. Remembering. There were some days I just thought, what if I could make it all go away, you know? The water's so dark, so inviting. Like sleep.

Beat.

HANK'S FATHER  
Damndest thing, I couldn't tell ya what I was so upset about. Anyway, I know listening to an old man natter on about the past ain't exactly a picnic so I won't ruin the rest of your evening. You keep having your fun.

Hank wanders off. The Man sits down and looks up at the moon.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

The man wakes up, disoriented and confused. He sits up, shaking the sand from his hair.

He looks around and sees the man in a tuxedo, jogging along. He watches him run. He sees his stuff scattered about him, then looks at the now-waterlogged picture of Elizabeth. He frowns. He has a thought and checks his watch. He gets up, hurriedly.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The Man opens the door to his apartment and walks over to the answering machine. He presses the button.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon-

The man hits another button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message saved for 24 hours.

He walks out again and closes the door, the answering machine large in the frame.

CUT TO:

MRS. BRIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is decorated with potted plants and pictures of Mrs. Briff. She sits directly under one, which is a portrait of her at the desk, leaning forward, hands clasped.

THE MAN

I can't do this any more.

Mrs. Briff leans forward and clasps her hands, matching the pose of the portrait exactly.

MRS. BRIFF

Okay. Let's take a step back. I know I've been pushing this initiative a little hard and I'm sure that it's a significant amount of work for you to prepare everything. But this? What we have here? Gold. Solid. Gold. Did you know I was put up for Superintendent of the year? Because of this? Because of you?

THE MAN

I understand that, but I just-

MRS. BRIFF  
And the kids get so much out of  
it.

THE MAN  
Yes, but-

Mrs. Briff sighs.

MRS. BRIFF  
Is it a matter of money?

THE MAN  
No, it's-

MRS. BRIFF  
Because I'll quadruple it.

The Man stops.

MRS. BRIFF  
Two thousand for an individual  
event, and ten per complete  
decade.

THE MAN  
Ten thousand?

Mrs. Briff nods.

MRS. BRIFF  
So think it over.

She hands him some money in cash.

MRS. BRIFF  
Here's some in advance. Consider  
it a good-faith payment, mm?

The man considers the money and then takes it. Mrs. Briff  
smiles.

MRS. BRIFF  
That's the spirit. Now, go out  
there and make some memories! See  
what you can do with the '20s.  
I've always been interested in  
them myself. Flapper girls and  
gangsters and whatnot.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Schwartz and The Man sit and watch her memories on the monitor. The module ends.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

That was very nice. A bit...sad  
for my taste. But...very well  
done.

THE MAN

I tried not to...you know, take  
too much out, you know? Beyond the  
stuff that wasn't, um...age  
appropriate for the kids.

Mrs. Schwartz nods, sagely.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

I love the dancing. Always have.

THE MAN

You were quite the dancer.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Ken and I used to cut up such a  
rug, you know?

She pulls out her scrapbook and begins leafing through it.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Look at us there. That was right  
after the war ended. He came home,  
and we got married right away. We  
were so happy to see each other  
again.

The turns a page and stares at a picture from the 60's. She  
frowns and looks at it.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

You know, it's funny. This is one  
of my favorite pictures of us.  
But...you know, I can't remember  
when it was taken.

The Man processes this, unsure of what to say. Wei enters.

WEI

Hey, I was wondering if you were  
going to be here.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

If you're looking for Ken, dear,  
he's not in at the moment. Should  
be back soon.

WEI

No, it's okay, Mrs. Schwartz. I'm  
actually here to talk to him.

THE MAN

Do you want to watch the memories  
again?

Mrs Schwartz smiles and nods; The Man presses a button and  
the memories rewind; he presses another button and the  
module starts over again. The Man gets up and follows Wei  
out.

CONTINUE TO:

EXT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' HOUSE - DAY

THE MAN

Is something wrong?

WEI

Um...no, everything is -- well,  
I'm moving.

THE MAN

Oh. Is it a matter of money? I can  
get more if you need it. I mean,  
we can- we can make this work.

Wei shakes her head.

WEI

It's not that. I just...I got a  
job that's something I want to be  
doing with my life.

THE MAN

Oh.

WEI

I'm sorry this came up so  
suddenly, you know. I was talking  
to a friend who knows someone in  
this firm, and...

THE MAN

What's the job?



WEI

They design interior parts and  
tools for astronauts on the space  
shuttles.

THE MAN

Oh, wow, that's...specific.

Beat.

WEI

I'm leaving at the end of the  
week. So I gotta get packing.

THE MAN

Oh.

WEI

-But! I found someone to replace  
me. She was in my class, she's  
super nice, and her grandmother  
actually had dementia so she's  
really well...equipped.

She hands him the card. The Man takes it and looks at it.

WEI

So...

THE MAN

Okay. Well, thanks.  
For...everything.

Wei gets into her car and drives off. The Man stares down  
at the number and goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. SCHWARTZ' BEDROOM - DAY

The man stands over her, watching her as she watches the  
memories. The module finishes. The Man removes the visor.

THE MAN

Did you enjoy that?

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Oh that was lovely. Just like  
being there.

She thinks for a moment.

MRS. SCHWARTZ

Tell me, where do you get these modules? They're so different from the others.

The man processes this.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park is full of wrought-iron sculptures that are replicas of other famous sculptures. The Man sits on a bench next a replica of Melancolie by Albert György. A person who looks like Elizabeth sits at another bench in the background, framed through the hole in the statue's chest. She gets up and walks away, and the man pulls out his wallet and pulls out the picture of Elizabeth, her face now eroded away by the damage. He realizes what he has to do.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The man pulls up in his car and sees a man wearing a jumpsuit with the same logo as his shop putting up a "FOR RENT" sign, along with a "WE'RE CLOSING" sign. The Man stands there, smiling. Theo Kiley gets out of the car and stands next to him.

THEO KILEY

Closing???

The Man nods.

THEO KILEY

You're closing?

THE MAN

Seems that way.

THEO KILEY

But I -

The Man walks away from him, into the shop.

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

He nods at the man in the jumpsuit who looks at him strangely, then drives away. The Man goes inside and sets up a camera and records something against the white wall (we can see this through Theo Kiley's perspective?).

Then, he gathers up every blank module he can find, grabs some post-it notes and a pen, and some other things. On his way out, he turns around again and grabs one extra module. He goes next door into "Oh My God!"

CONTINUE TO:

INT. OH MY GOD SHOP - DAY

He walks in, looking around at the votive statues, the urns, the vases. Mahler's *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* plays over the speaker-system. He walk between the rows and up to an altar-like checkout station, complete with a lit christ on the cross. The two nuns stand there, staring at him silently.

THE MAN

You know, all the time I've been in this little strip mall I've never come in here. It's a beautiful shop. Um...so. I was wondering if you could do me a favor. If you see a fellow come by here with no arms, would you mind giving him this?

He holds out a module that reads "Young Farmboy with dad in Indiana, Vol.1." After a moment, one of the nuns takes it and nods.

THE MAN

And, um...give him these, too.

The Man hands them a large duffel bag. The nun opens it up, revealing thousands of business cards labeled "one free hour," along with the company's logo.

THE MAN

The company made a mistake when I opened the shop. I was supposed to get 60 of them. Whoever filled the order put a couple extra zeros.

The nun nods.

THE MAN

Thanks. For everything.

He turns and walks out. His hand grabs the door when a raspy voice calls out from the back.

NUN

Have a good day.

He smiles and turns around.

THE MAN

You too.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETSIDE - DAY

The man visits the spot where Elizabeth was killed. He brings roses and lays them there.

THE MAN

I know you hate roses,  
but...that's what they had.

He lays the flowers down, along with her picture.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The Man comes in and sets up his equipment. He grabs a module and puts it into a viewer set up at his TV with a note that says "HIT PLAY." He puts another note on his shirt that says "GO TO THE TV." He writes down an address on a post-it note and puts it in his wallet; he pulls out everything except for his ID. After a moment, he turns to the voicemail and presses the button.

JEAN FLEEN

Hey there, this is Jean Fleen from  
Guiltmasters, calling you about-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message erased.

MRS. BRIFF

Hey there, Mrs. Briff calling-

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message erased.

ELIZABETH

Hey hon, it's me, I just wanted to  
say I'm sorry I'm running late.  
I'll be home soon, okay? I was  
thinking, do you wanna go to the  
beach this weekend? It could be  
nice. Anyway, um. Yeah. I'll be  
home soon. I love you.

The Man sits for a moment and smiles. He presses a button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Message erased. No new messages.

He dials a number.

THE MAN

Hey Wei? Hi. Sorry to call you at home, I'm sure you're packing. I need your help for one last thing. It won't take long, I promise.

He puts the visor up over his forehead and puts a blank module in. He flips the switch to Offload, and presses go. We see memories fly past the screen, too fast to comprehend. A life's worth of info blazes past as we track forward toward the screen; the screen envelopes the image until all we can see is the word "Offloading," and then the screen fades to white.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOGRAPHY SHOP - DAY

After a moment, we hear the sound of a cassette being pushed into a player, and then the white fades out, revealing The Man setting up the stool. He sits down on it and clears his throat.

THE MAN

Hi. Um...So. You were alone in the world. And you...you did a kindness for someone in need. Good for you. Now, take the module out the machine and put in the envelope. Someone's coming, who will help you. Tell her to take you to the home of a Mrs. Ken Schwartz, and then ask her to mail out that envelope. And then stay with Mrs. Schwartz. Care for her with some big money that will come in the mail. And...I don't know. Find someone to love.

Beat.

## THE MAN

Your heart has never been broken.  
You've never done anything  
unforgivable or hurt anyone beyond  
reparation. Everyone...everyone  
you've ever loved? You treated  
like gold.

He sits there a moment, then gets up and walks off screen.  
The credits play over the empty stool. The end.