

CRYSTAL PINES

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INT. DINER - MORNING

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS - EXTREME CLOSE ON - Labels of American food products: Heinz' Ketchup, French's Mustard, Sweet'n Low, Aunt Jemima --

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Eye contact. Hold it... Hold it...

CLOSE ON: A woman's EYES, staring...

CLOSE ON: A man's EYES staring back...

Pull back to reveal --

KEITH HERTZ, 36, normal, sits across from TESSA, pretty and plain in blue jeans. They stare deeply into each other's eyes --

KEITH
Do you feel the difference?

TESSA
Yes.

Tessa breaks her stare to find TWO MEN watching them from an adjacent booth. As Keith digs into his food one of the men looks away --

KEITH
Waffles are better than pancakes.
Remind me next time I order
pancakes.

TESSA
When we arrived you said you were
getting a fruit plate.

He flips through the twenty-page menu --

KEITH
It's called temptation.

Keith takes a sip of Coca-Cola through a straw and looks at the men who each drink a cup of coffee but eat nothing.

KEITH (CONT'D)
Is Coke healthier than coffee?

He pushes the rim of his glass with his finger forcing it to lean toward Tessa, testing its tipping point --

TESSA
(watching the glass)
I don't know.

Keith pushes the glass over -- his Coke spilling across the table and on to Tessa. She doesn't react immediately --

KEITH
(to anyone)
Can we get some more napkins over here!

One of the watching men in the adjacent booth hands Keith a napkin --

TESSA
Should I clean up in the bathroom or wait until we get home?

KEITH
What feels right?

Tessa closes her eyes. The waiter arrives with napkins.

TESSA
Home.

KEITH
Let's go.

Keith drops a twenty dollar bill on the table and helps Tessa up. They exit the restaurant as the men at the adjacent table ask for their check.

EXT. ROAD - MINUTES LATER

We follow Keith and Tessa in their Ford Taurus as they drive through PARAMUS, NEW JERSEY:

SERIES OF SHOTS

They drive past multiplexes and long low-slung strip malls. They leave the center of town and head into the suburbs. The skyline of Manhattan looms in the distance. It appears there are some unfamiliar skyscrapers added to the city-scape. They cross a short bridge which leads them to a more rural stretch of the landscape. Keith drives the Taurus through the gates of a small private subdivided community -- CRYSTAL PINES.

EXT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Keith parks the car in front of their garage. Small black birds swirl high above them. Keith watches one land on a nearby feeder bringing Keith's view to -- RON, 42, athletic and handsome sitting in the grass of his nearby home. He is dressed in a suit and tie and has a trowel in his hand that he appears to aimlessly dig holes with --

KEITH

Hi Ron. You lose something?

Ron looks up, perplexed...

KEITH (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

RON

I don't like these clothes.

KEITH

Why don't you change?

Ron looks away --

KEITH (CONT'D)

What's with the holes?

Ron looks down at the trowel in his hand --

RON

I don't know...

A woman, SHIRLEY, 30's steps out of the house with a homemade smoothie in her hand --

SHIRLEY

(to Ron)

There you are! I have your shake.

Ron responds like a dutiful husband and walks back to his house, taking the smoothie from Shirley as he enters. Keith and Shirley wave to one another --

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Tessa rubs stain remover into the blue jeans she was wearing. Her bare legs are smooth and long. She's much sexier than her wardrobe suggests.

Keith, sport-coat in hand, steps into the hallway and briefly stares at her without her realizing he's there...

KEITH

You were great at the restaurant.

She turns and smiles.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER

Keith and Tessa sit next to one another on a couch in an Adobe style shrink's office. A humidifier and a small collection of Cacti huddle between them and DR. SOKOLOW, 45, their female therapist --

DR. SOKOLOW

What do you think it means?

KEITH

I don't know.

DR. SOKOLOW

Do you have any thoughts about Keith's dream Tessa?

TESSA

(searching)

I've never been stung by a bee.

KEITH

I wasn't actually being stung. They were flying out of my feet.

DR. SOKOLOW

And when they got stuck halfway, Tessa helped pull them out.

KEITH

It was painful. I guess it was like being stung, only backwards.

DR. SOKOLOW

And after Tessa pulled it out, it stopped hurting?

KEITH

I don't know, I woke up.

Beat. Then...

DR. SOKOLOW

Keith, do you notice when you answer me you look at Tessa as if you are answering her.

He shakes his head --

DR. SOKOLOW (CONT'D)
You do it a lot now. You didn't
used to.

KEITH
I haven't noticed.

DR. SOKOLOW
It's a sign of trust.

Keith and Tessa smile at each other.

EXT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - LATER

Keith tries to light the outdoor grill. The auto-starter
click-click-clicks but no flame.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tessa awkwardly tenderizes a leg of lamb. She is clearly not
comfortable in the kitchen. As she starts to chop garlic she
cuts her finger. It bleeds red. As she grabs a paper towel --

Through the window she sees Keith hold up the empty propane
tank --

KEITH
(mouths)
Anything else?

Tessa shakes her head.

INT. SUPERMARKET DUSK - EVENING

SERIES OF SHOTS

Keith waits at the deli counter for turkey breast and cole
slaw. He picks up apples, canned soup and small glass bottles
of Coke. Keith rounds the corner and stops dead in his tracks
--

REVERSE

Keith sees a woman. She is pale, beautiful, with long hair,
short bangs and a makeup-less face. He narrows his eyes,
focusing... The woman takes a step forward and then stops --

KEITH

can't breathe.

THE WOMAN

takes another step forward --

KEITH

His eyes well with tears.

THE WOMAN

gets closer -- her eyes flushing as well.

Suddenly, they're face to face...

CLOSE ON: Her fingers gently brush his cheek --

WOMAN

You got rid of your mole.

He slowly shakes his head in disbelief.

KEITH

The pigment faded...

His tears fall. She reaches out to him tenderly.

WOMAN

Baby --

He breaks her touch, drops his basket to the ground, and walks quickly out of the market in shock. The woman takes two steps after him but stops.

EXT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Keith pulls into the garage and checks his face for signs of crying. He turns off the car and looks up through his windshield at a row of low-hung industrial ceiling tiles. He hits the steering wheel hard with a closed fist.

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tessa sits at the kitchen table with a stack of printed papers in front of her. She is reading and making notes as Keith enters. She gets up --

TESSA

I think I found a better way for
you to carry the end of chapter
four in to part one chapter five.

She meets him in the kitchen as he rubs his hand --

TESSA (CONT'D)
(off nothing in his hands)
Do you need help unloading the car?

KEITH
Was too crowded. I didn't get
anything. I can microwave something
frozen.

TESSA
Are you kidding? It's never crowded
at night.

KEITH
Well it was. Must be for the
weekend.

TESSA
It's Wednesday.

KEITH
Tessa.

TESSA
I don't mind. I just want you to
eat. We can roast the lamb in the
oven.

KEITH
(overly enthusiastic)
That's a good idea.

She watches him rub his hand --

TESSA
Is everything okay?

KEITH
Just have the book on my mind and
the checkers are so goddamn slow at
the A&P. What was that idea you
just had for chapter twelve? I'm
sorry. I'm fine.

TESSA
Chapter four. You don't seem fine.

KEITH
I just don't have much of an
appetite.

TESSA
Why? Did you have a coffee?

KEITH
I don't know. No.

TESSA
Should I be worried. What's wrong
with your hand?

KEITH
Nothing. I hit it.

TESSA
How?

KEITH
The door. The car door. It's fine.

TESSA
What can I do?

KEITH
Nothing right now.

TESSA
I'll get ice.

KEITH
No!

Keith stops his restless pattering and looks up, meeting her eyes --

KEITH (CONT'D)
I don't *need* anything.

Tessa just stands there, unsure how to proceed. She approaches him slowly lowering her self to meet his downcast gaze.

KEITH (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm no good at
explaining. Let me just have a
second.

He takes a deep breath --

TESS
Tell me...

KEITH
I'm sorry, it's just...

He closes his eyes and rests his head on her shoulder like a little boy. She pets his head with tender authority --

TESSA
I'll make some soup.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Keith and Tessa lie in bed. He finishes a bowl of soup. She continues editing his book while a documentary on India plays silently on the television. She makes a few last marks in red ink to a typed page and hands him thirty pages of the book.

TESSA
Here. Chapter four ended with Len's speech on genetic migration. I cut and pasted your opening of part two to the *end* of chapter four. It used to start with the genetic isolation, now it's much smoother.

The screen catches her eyes as she looks up --

TESSA (CONT'D)
I wonder what India is like.

KEITH
(thumbing through the pages)
It's chaos. Chaos within chaos. I don't think you'd like it.

TESSA
Sometimes I like chaos. Like when you took me to the baseball game. All that noise from the people.

KEITH
Cheering.

TESSA
Yes. Cheering. Or if there's an accident on the highway with traffic and police cars.

KEITH
Those are not really the same kinds of chaos. Did you tell Dr. Korning about that? He'd want to know that.

TESSA
I told him.

The TV broadcasts a cremation on the banks of the Ganges. Tessa stares at it --

TESSA (CONT'D)
They say people who pray live
longer. How can they know that?

KEITH
(has no clue)
It's healthy to believe in things?

TESSA
Do you want to pray?

KEITH
No.

Keith takes the remote control and changes the channel to a news magazine program broadcasting the heroic story of an Olympic sprinter and how after a childhood heart transplant she became the fastest woman in the world --

TESSA
Do you want eye contact now?

KEITH
Okay.

They turn over on their sides and stare at each other for a long, held moment...

KEITH (CONT'D)
Your left is still a little off.
Tell them tomorrow.

She touches her left eyelid --

TESSA
Okay. Do you want to finish the
Racecar movie?

KEITH
I don't think I want to watch
anything. I'm exhausted and I just
want to go to sleep.

TESSA
Okay. Now?

KEITH
Yes please.

TESSA
Don't take a pill.

KEITH
I won't.

They kiss.

Keith reaches behind her neck and spreads his fingers along the base of her skull. He squeezes until we hear A SOFT ELECTRONIC CRACK. HER BODY THEN SUDDENLY GOES LIMP.

He sits beside her for a moment watching her inert body. He then removes a bottle of pills from his bedside table and pops two.

CLOSE ON: Keith touches his cheek where the woman in the supermarket touched his faded mole. He then turns out his bedside light. Blackness...

HOLD IN BLACK:

BIRDS CHIRP...

FADE IN:

BEDROOM WINDOW

A bird feeder hangs outside of Keith and Tessa's bedroom window. The birds eat and sing. The camera travels toward it as the distressed sounds of a man screaming are heard through the birds. The camera reaches the glass, tilts down to find Ron trying to outrun two men in lab coats who try to subdue him. Keith steps into frame looking.

EXT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Keith bounds out of the house in blue jeans and a sweater. Two unusually dressed ORDERLIES in lab coats and two security guards are trying to calm Ron who is in an absolute frenzy. He has dug about forty holes in his front lawn. Ron is screaming at the top of his lungs --

KEITH
 (the voice of reason)
 Ron! Take a deep breath man.
 (to the Orderlies)
 What's going on!?

Ron looks at Keith in what seems like a moment of clarity and then moans loudly and unintelligibly and then speaks rapid fire nonsense --

RON
 Better in the ground left laid
 feather side skad skam skad skam
 skad skam!

His eyes start to roll back into his head and he drops to the ground going into a convulsive fit. The Orderlies rush him --

Shirley stands on her porch with a man who wears a uniform shirt with the words DYNAMIME SECURITY painted on the front and back.

Keith approaches Ron as the Orderlies hold him down. One of them reaches under Ron's hair and SHUTS HIM DOWN.

SECURITY GUARD

Careful Mr. Hertz. This is under control.

KEITH

What the hell is happening!?

ORDERLY

He's experiencing a language discharge. We've been monitoring it. It's nothing to worry about.

KEITH

Why is it happening?

ORDERLY

Everything is under control.

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON: Keith's fingers as they push through Tessa's silky hair. The same soft electronic crack sounds. Tessa opens her eyes and comes into herself. She sees his distressed face --

TESSA

What's wrong?

KEITH

Ron had a fit. Said he's been having them for while. They just took him away.

TESSA

What kind of fit?

KEITH

A language discharge? He was just spewing nonsense. I never saw him do that, did you

Tessa sits up shaking her head and puts her arms around him. Keith stares off, his face tight --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Have you ever just started saying
things when I'm not around?

TESSA
No.

KEITH
It was terrible. He was totally out
of control.

She kisses his shoulder --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Of all the other partners he always
seemed the most normal...

She looks down to see that his hands are shaking --

TESSA
I want you to take a deep breath.
Everything's okay.

He takes a deep breath... She whispers in his ear --

TESSA (CONT'D)
Step outside your anxiety. It's
happening inside your body and you
are in control of it. Keith, listen
to me...

He nods, trying to accept her guidance --

TESSA (CONT'D)
You're laying in the bottom of a
canoe on a glassy lake. The sky is
clear and the sun is low...
(she whisper-sings in his
ear)
*Lay lady lay, lay across my big
brass bed. Lay lady lay, lay across
my big brass bed. Whatever colors
you have in your mind...*

Keith closes his eyes. Her singing continues over:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

CLOSE ON: ADAM, 30's, a male CREATED BEING partner, "awakes"
in the same way as Tessa when she was turned on and looks
directly into camera --

CLOSE ON: BERNIE, 40'S, male, "awakes" --

CLOSE ON: AYANAMI REI, 20's, A female Japanese partner
"awakes" and looks directly into camera --

INT. STAN AND AYANAMI'S HOUSE - SAME

Ayanami bathes STAN NAUMANN, 55, a quadriplegic neuroscientist. She holds one hand in front of his eyes as she rinses his face with the hand-shower. She combs Stan's wet hair back with a comb as he sits wrapped in towels. She buttons the top button on his cardigan sweater and swings him around in his wheelchair.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON:

A portrait of the statue of liberty in soft colorful pastels. As the camera moves closer, we see the portrait is in fact rendered from meticulously placed pharmaceutical pills on a table-top. A hand then reaches into the "painting" and starts removing them one by one.

INT. AGNES AND ADAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Adam presents a small bowl of the various medications to AGNES DE KERGALE, 28, a bi-polar schizophrenic who looks and dresses like a young Patti Smith. She sits in a kitchen chair completely out of breath. As we pull back we see she has wrecked the house. Adam starts to clean it up piece by piece as she swallows her pills one by one.

INT. LORRAINE AND BERNIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Bernie sits up in bed to find a large hot breakfast waiting for him on a tray and the sounds of Gracie Allen and George Burns sparring from a classic radio broadcast.

Bernie, now in a bathrobe, carries the tray into the living room where he finds LORRAINE STRAIT, 41, a woman who has lived her entire life in the same house in the same town taking care of her sick mother before she died, only to recently discover that she herself now has cancer. She sprays the giant leaves of a collection of tropical plants that huddle in a solarium.

BERNIE
What's all this?

LORRAINE
Wanted to see if I still had the
touch.

BERNIE
I'm supposed to be taking care of
you.

She smiles -- taking care of him clearly brings her
happiness.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
(re: the radio show)
Lucille Ball?

LORRAINE
George and Gracie.

BERNIE
You're mom's favorite. You have a
project meeting with Len in twenty
minutes.

The audio from the radio show carries over into...

EXT. JUNIPER HOUSE - DAY

The PARTICIPANTS sit casually around a decorated living room
of a model-home like their's.

LENNART TUXEN, 45, thick hair, thick glasses, sits facing
them in a wooden dining chair. He is in casual business
attire and manages to appear both relaxed and intense. He
speaks with a slight Nordic accent --

LEN
I can't tell you what's going to
happen to Ron and Shirley because
we haven't decided what is best.
We'll take some time with Ron and
see what's right. Your feedback and
ultimately your wishes are
important. They will help form how
we approach these issues moving
forward.

Lorraine Strait raises her hand --

LEN (CONT'D)
Yes Lorraine.

LORRAINE
Is Ron going to die?

LEN

No. Why do you ask that?

LORRAINE

I just want to know what happens to him if he does. Or if one of us does?

Len just looks at her, unsure of how to proceed --

LORRAINE (CONT'D)

If the cancer gets me, I want to be buried with Bernie.

LEN

Your honesty is very helpful. Pardon me, is that a feeling or are you making an actual request?

LORRAINE

It's on my mind. If I die, I would want him deactivated and buried with me. That's me honest.

LEN

Is anyone else concerned with this?

AGNES

I wouldn't care if Adam is buried with me or not but if I die I definitely don't want him with someone else after me. Or if he is I don't want him to forget about me.

Len nods. He notices Keith is disengaged, staring out the window --

LEN

Keith, you and Tessa are friendly with Ron and Shirley, do you have any feelings?

KEITH

I'd prefer to discuss my thoughts privately.

LEN

None of this is easy. It's not easy in unregulated circumstances to metabolize traumatic events... Let's switch gears.

(MORE)

LEN (CONT'D)

Informally, today, who is thinking about extending? You can raise your hands.

Everyone raises their hands except Keith. We now notice that each of the Participants has an unusually shaped black bracelet around their wrists --

LEN (CONT'D)

When each of you agreed to participate you put a tremendous amount of trust in me. It's something I think about every day. That kind of trust is truly sacred. As we move into our fifth and possibly final year, that trust has shifted. I now put all of my trust in you. I can determine nothing on my own now.

Stan Naumann whispers something to Agnes...

AGNES

Stan wants to know when phase two starts?

LEN

It already has. The speed at which your partners are learning is increasing. Phase two is going to deepen the connection between you and your partners. The trust and reliance you have grown accustomed to will become second nature to them. Your partners are going to become more, how should I say it... human.

Len looks at Keith. Keith then raises his hand. No bracelet --

DR. SOKOLOW (O.S.)

Why didn't you raise your hand at first?

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Keith shrugs... He and Tessa sit across from DR. SOKOLOW --

DR. SOKOLOW

Tessa, have you noticed a change in Keith since we last met?

TESSA

Yes. He went to the supermarket
last night and came back depressed.
Or what I perceived as depressed.

DR. SOKOLOW

Keith, did something happen?

Keith starts to say something, but stops and shakes his head.

DR. SOKOLOW (CONT'D)

Have you noticed a change in
yourself?

KEITH

Like she said, I'm just a little
depressed. It's chemical.

DR. SOKOLOW

You didn't raise your hand but you
want to extend? Or are you not
sure?

Keith shrugs in his adolescent way --

DR. SOKOLOW (CONT'D)

What's that?

KEITH

I don't know... Sometimes it's like
living on the moon.

DR. SOKOLOW

Can you be more specific?

KEITH

(done with this subject)
It's just a vague, general feeling
of upset. It'll pass.

DR. SOKOLOW

Tessa how does it make you feel
when Keith is upset in a vague,
general way?

INT. ADJOINING MEDICAL OPERATIONAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Len and a few colleagues simultaneously watch the therapy
session through a two-way mirror and video monitors that
render Keith and Tessa as shifting colorforms. Keith is green
and yellow. Tessa is pure blue. Dozens of fluctuating vital
sign numbers rapidly change on the screen --

TESSA
(as colored silhouette)
I used to try and distract him but
it made it worse.

KEITH
(as silhouette)
Maybe I need more time off campus.
Or maybe just for a weekend. Or
maybe I should go back on
medication.

TESSA
(as silhouette)
A break without me?

KEITH
(as silhouette)
Without you.

INT. FORD TAURUS - EVENING

Keith and Tessa drive slowly away from a two story medical building on the grounds of a larger, mostly empty Industrial park --

TESS
Are you mad at me? Have I done
something?

KEITH
I'm not mad. I'm confused. It's
different. I know it looks the same
but it's not. There are times when
I don't know what I'm doing. We've
talked about that.

They come to the back exit of the Industrial Park. An abnormally tall electronic gate opens. It is directly adjacent to the back gates of Crystal Pines. They drive in.

KEITH (CONT'D)
What should we have for dinner?

TESSA
It's Sushi night.

KEITH
Then why did we drive home?

She puts a gentle hand on his shoulder.

TESSA
Because you're confused.

He smiles at her observation, breaking the tension --

EXT. NEW JERSEY STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Dry-cleaner, pizza joint, deli, Japanese restaurant.

INT. OSAKA RESTAURANT - SAME

Keith and Tessa sit on Tatami mats in a rundown sushi joint.
She pokes at the sushi but doesn't eat --

TESSA
When did people start cooking
things?

KEITH
Right after they invented fire.

TESSA
When was that?

KEITH
A few days after they invented the
wheel.

TESSA
You don't make sense when you're
drunk. That's the point, right? Not
making sense.

KEITH
Let me explain.

Keith downs another thimble of Sake --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Everything I was feeling earlier is
still here, nothing's changed, but
now I feel okay. Being drunk makes
things that aren't okay, okay. At
least temporarily. Do you want to
try?

TESSA
You know I'm not supposed to.

KEITH
Breaking the rules is an important
experience. We talked about that
with Sokolow.

TESSA
I remember.

KEITH
Take a sip.

TESSA
They're watching.

Keith looks at the same two male Monitors from breakfast at
the diner. They sit a few tables away --

KEITH
Who's more important, me or them?

She lifts the cup and takes a small sip.

KEITH (CONT'D)
What do you think?

TESSA
I don't like it. It tastes spoiled.

KEITH
That's what it is, spoiled rice.
The more you drink the better it
tastes.

TESSA
I don't want anymore. I don't
understand.

KEITH
The flavor reminds you how good
forgetting feels. It's why children
don't like the taste of alcohol.
You need things to forget to
appreciate it.

TESSA
Keith.

Tessa stares past Keith's shoulder --

KEITH
What is it?

TESSA
There's a woman looking at us.

KEITH
Is it the waitress? I need more
sake.

TESSA
It's not the waitress.

KEITH
Where?

Keith turns and sees the woman from the supermarket standing
by the sushi bar. He tenses --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Wait here.

TESSA
Do you know her?

Beat. Then...

KEITH
I used to.

He stands up and walks over to her. He looks at her --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Okay. Outside.

Keith walks out, Alex follows. Tessa watches.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Keith walks two doors down to be out of sight of the
restaurant. He stops under a dark concrete awning and spins
around facing her. He is very upset and anxious. The woman is
exceptionally calm --

KEITH
You can't be here Alex. You just
can't.

ALEX
But I am here.

KEITH
How did you find me?

ALEX
I gave your picture and social
security number to a detective.
Told him to look at all East Coast
papers even the free weeklies.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
Eight days ago an intern at the
Paramus Shopper recognized you.
Cost twenty-grand to find you.

KEITH
Why did you do that? I don't want
to be found. I just --

Keith's looks toward the Sushi restaurant. One of the
monitors stands inside the door and tilts his head to see
what's going on --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Please. I have a fiancée. I have a
life.

ALEX
That woman in the restaurant?

KEITH
Yes.

ALEX
Are you serious?

KEITH
Yes I'm serious.

ALEX
She looks like someone from a J.C.
Penny commercial.

KEITH
Yeah? What do you look like?

ALEX
You know what I'm talking about so
don't act like you don't. None of
this is right. Not your fiancée...
Not the Paramus Shopper... Not your
weird fake tudor house behind a
gate. What is she, rich?

Keith goes white. He grabs her elbow --

KEITH
DID YOU FOLLOW ME HOME?

ALEX
The detective did. He couldn't get
past the gates.

KEITH
Listen to me very carefully.

ALEX
I needed to find you --

KEITH
Listen to me very carefully --
He stares intensely into her eyes --

ALEX
Keith, I --

KEITH
UN-FIND ME!

Keith turns and heads back to the restaurant. Alex follows.

ALEX
There was something wrong with my
brain. Like a real problem. I
wasn't just crazy and irrational.

Keith keeps walking --

KEITH
Something your psychic told you?

ALEX
My surgeon.

Keith stops --

ALEX (CONT'D)
My frontal lobe was leaking.
Literally. It was broken. It's
called Aphasia. It's serious. I was
basically broken.

He turns, facing her again --

KEITH
Is this an explanation or an
excuse? Because that doesn't really
mean anything to me.

ALEX
It means people can break.

KEITH
So what.

ALEX
What I did...With us...It wasn't
me.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Physically, medically, actually, it
 wasn't. I'm not like that anymore.

Alex reaches for his hand --

ALEX (CONT'D)
 I --

Keith jerks his hand away --

KEITH
 Tessa! Shit. Oh shit!!

Keith sprints back to the sushi restaurant --

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Keith enters frantically. Tessa is gone --

KEITH
 (to waiter)
 Did the woman I was with leave!?

WAITER
 With the two men. They paid.

The waiter points to the back door. Keith runs through it. There is an alley with a few empty parking spots. He sees Tessa in the back seat of the Monitors' car right before it turns at the end of the alley.

Keith runs back through the restaurant, turning heads --

EXT. STRIP MALL - CONTINUOUS

Keith blasts out the door -- moving fast, past Alex to his car --

ALEX
 Keith --

KEITH
 If you follow me I'll call the
 police!

He gets in his car and drives off.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Keith inches the Ford into it's spot which is marked by a hanging tennis ball.

He shuts off the car and rests his head on the wheel. He looks up at the ceiling tiles above him through the windshield.

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Keith enters --

KEITH
Tessa, you here!?!... Tess?!

He walks through the rooms --

CUT TO:

CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON: VIDEO MONITOR -- KEITH WALKING THROUGH HIS HOUSE AS A MAINLY RED, BUT SOME BLUE COLORFORM.

KEITH
(as colorform)
I'm sorry. Tessa, you here? I can explain.

He climbs the stairs --

KEITH (CONT'D)
(colorform)
Hey! Tess!

PULL BACK

To reveal LEN WATCHING KEITH ON A MONITOR IN HIS HOUSE.

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Keith is on a wired intercom phone that is mounted to the wall --

KEITH
It's not too late. I want her to come home now!

VOICE
(on phone)
She's in session --

KEITH
 With who!? That's not scheduled.
 Who is she with? Put them on the
 phone.

VOICE
 (on phone)
 They are in session, the doctor
 won't come to the phone --

KEITH
 THIS ISN'T SCHEDULED!

VOICE
 (on phone)
 Mr. Hertz --

CLOSE ON: VIDEO MONITOR -- KEITH IS MULTI-COLORED ON A
 MONITOR AGAIN. The colors change as his emotions heighten and
 his heart rate numbers increase in the margins of the screen.

KEITH
 When will she be back?

VOICE
 (on phone)
 They told me to tell you that she
 is here and that she is safe--

KEITH
Who told you!?

VOICE
 (on phone)
 Mr. Hertz, I am respectfully
 hanging up now.

Keith turns and looks directly at a blank wall.

CLOSE ON: KEITH'S COLORFORM FACE stares directly into the
 "camera" that is really a sensor buried in the wall. His red
 and blue face rapidly changes shape and color-intensity. We
 can see his purple brain activity shifting rapidly in his
 skull --

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Keith sits on the bed and looks down at two sleeping pills in
 his hand. He takes them.

He closes his eyes but can't lie still. He rolls over onto Tessa's side of the bed smelling her pillow.

FADE TO BLACK.

HOLD IN BLACK. The sound of a key in a lock --

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Keith, fully clothed from the night before, opens his eyes to the sound of the front door opening --

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Tessa walks through the front door. Keith bounds into the upstairs hallway and halfway down the stairs. He watches her put her pocketbook down and hang up her coat --

KEITH

Hi.

She doesn't turn around --

TESSA

Hi Keith.

KEITH

Why are you only getting back now?

She doesn't respond.

KEITH (CONT'D)

That was a nightmare last night.
I'm sorry...

Silence.

KEITH (CONT'D)

That was... Alex --

TESSA

I know, they explained it to me.

KEITH

What have you been doing all this time?

TESSA

They wanted to talk to me.

KEITH

About what?

She walks into the kitchen. Keith follows --

KEITH (CONT'D)
What did you talk about? Is
everything okay?

TESSA
They were concerned about my well
being. They want you to go see Len.

IN THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tessa unscrews the caps of a dozen different bottles of
vitamins and supplements -- She begins taking them with sips
of water --

KEITH
That's what you talked about --
your well-being?

TESSA
Yes.

KEITH
Anything else? Are they angry at
me? Are they going to kick me out?
Please tell me what everyone said.

TESSA
No.

KEITH
Please.

TESSA
No.

KEITH
Tessa.

TESSA
(stern)
NO.

This is jarring for Keith --

KEITH
Now you can't me tell me things?

TESSA
We see Dr. Sokolow for you. Dr.
Korning is for me. What I discuss
with him is private.

Keith shakes his head, almost maniacally --

KEITH
No, no, no, no, no...

TESSA
It's private and it's not
right for you to pressure me -

KEITH
(calm but empahitic)
Tessa. You're making me very
unsettled and upset. Please just
tell me what was said!

TESSA
I told you it's private!

She collects herself and walks calmly out of the room --
Keith follows.

TESSA (CONT'D)
I want some time alone and I don't
want to fight. I'm upset and I
don't feel safe. Please Keith. Give
me space. I don't want to have to
call them.

CUT TO:

KEITH
Call them? Why would you call them?
Why would you even say that?

Tessa goes into a small unused guest room/sitting room and
closes the door behind her --

NOW ON A REMOTE MONITOR SOMEWHERE

we see her mostly blue color-form body, but now she shows a
little gold in her head --

TESSA
(from behind the door)
Len wants to see you.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Keith walks under the pines, in deep distress. He passes the
spread out faux-Tudors of Crystal Pines.

In the street in front of him, participant Agnes De Kergal
smokes a cigarette while she rides a two person bicycle with
her thin-framed rock 'n roll-ish partner, Adam. A Border
Terrier naps in a basket attached to their handlebars.

AGNES
Hi Keith.

KEITH
Hi Agnes.

KEITH (CONT'D)
What's up Adam?

They ride circles around him as he walks --

AGNES
I heard they took Shirley away.

KEITH
Where'd you hear that? Took her
where?

AGNES
Dunno, but like out of here, like
she's dunzo... If you're going to
talk to Len you should ask him. Is
that where you're going?

KEITH
It's all conspiracies with you
isn't it Agnes.

AGNES
Whatever. On your way to talk
privately about your thoughts?

KEITH
What?

AGNES
That's what you said the other day.
That you have all these private
thoughts.

KEITH
That's not exactly what I said.

AGNES
You must have private thoughts.

KEITH
You're making me uncomfortable, but
I guess that's what you do.

Agnes rings the bell on her bike, then she and Adam double
back as Keith approaches an --

ELECTRONIC GATE - CONTINUOUS

Keith is buzzed out one gate and into another.

He walks a narrow planted path that ends at the office building where they meet with Dr. Sokolow.

INT. DYNAMIME - DAY

Inside the low ceilinged office, Keith is greeted by a young female assistant who swipes a key card that opens a glass door. The security level is about the same as a bank.

ASSISTANT
Would you like something to drink?

KEITH
No thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE WAITING ROOM - LATER

Keith, on a couch, sits amongst hanging potted plants.

A glass of water is placed beside him by the assistant --

ASSISTANT
In case you change your mind.

Keith has a clipboard on his lap. He fills out a short thirty question bubble exam in front of him.

CLOSE ON THE QUESTIONS: *"What word rhymes with Orange", "What is the worst thing about shaving", "You have a lamp, a fireplace, and a candle, but only one match, which do you light first?"...*

A different middle aged employee opens the door.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Len is ready.

INT. LEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Keith walks into the office and sits down across from Len who is looking intently at a complicated graph chart and finishing a conversation with the air in Danish --

Keith regards the office walls that are covered with thousands of spoons: from prehistoric wooden ladles to Bronze antiquities to travel souvenirs. His eyes look them over -- Osaka, Kiev, Jackson Hole...

LEN
(looking at the graph)
Keith, how are you?

KEITH
All right. Not great.

Len gives him a reassuring smile and gently rests the graph on his desk and clasps his hands --

LEN
How was it to see Alex?

KEITH
(realizing Len knows everything)
Not good.

LEN
Scary? Sad? Out of control?

KEITH
I'm just thinking about how I don't want it to ruin things with Tessa.

LEN
That's good! It means you're getting better. It means Tessa has helped you and you recognize healthy love.

KEITH
Yes.

Len sits back into his seat, lifts the graph again, and takes a sip of steaming tea --

LEN
They just sent me the results of your latest Grubé test. I'm concerned. Are you concerned?

KEITH
(shrugging)
I don't know what it says.

LEN

Based on today's test results you are as emotionally unstable as you were the day you tried to kill yourself.

Keith winces at the matter-of-fact way Len says these words. Len notices and reapproaches --

LEN (CONT'D)

Or, at least as unstable as the day you agreed to participate in this program. The circumstances as they are now, with regard to your personal situation, are totally outside the study. You know that.

KEITH

I understand that.

LEN

The prudent thing to do would be to terminate your participation, don't you think?

KEITH

I don't know... No.

Len sniffs and sips his tea --

LEN

You've had tremendous freedom here. More than any other participant. You demonstrated that you could responsibly interact with the outside world with and without Tessa. You have been given access to everything here for the book and when you felt blocked you suggested getting back to your journalism career. I was very supportive, took you off the box and put total faith and trust into your wishes. The general feeling amongst my staff was that a major portion of your recovery was a reengagement with society. You are provided time with Tessa at restaurants and cinemas... I wonder if we got ahead of ourselves. What have we not done?

Keith shrugs --

LEN (CONT'D)

I feel compelled to tighten your restrictions if you are to stay. I think for the time being Tessa should not leave the gates of Crystal Pines for a while. Additionally, when you leave for professional purposes you should start travelling with a box again and your in times and out times will be regulated. If you can demonstrate your responsibilities again, things will ease. If you can't I will be forced to end your involvement and the book will become ours. I will assign Tessa to someone else and you will have to start over on your own. This will be hard for me personally and will cost me millions, but... But we absolutely won't compromise any part of the program to accommodate your instability. In your distressed state I think boundaries and parameters will be beneficial. If you can't comply with my wishes it will be clear that we are, philosophically, not on the same page anymore and we will prepare things for your departure from the trial -- all, of course, in good faith and on good terms. As much as I like you personally Keith, I will not allow your behavior to effect this community. At all. It's not fair to everyone else.

KEITH

I'm sorry Len.

LEN

This is bigger than me and it's bigger than you. It's not even about us anymore. We're not going to experience a hundred years of progress this century Keith, it'll be more like ten thousand. What we're doing could become a thousand years at any moment.

Len says something in Danish into his intercom --

LEN (CONT'D)

But let's talk the present and let's talk specifics so we're clear. One, do you want to stay?

KEITH

Very much so.

LEN

Good. Two, things are going to change. They already have. More really than we'd planned. Things may feel more, how should I put it... Turbulent. As I'm sure they already do. Initially you were given Tessa to expedite your emotional recovery from your painful experiences with Alex. After seeing her and feeling the way you do today, I'd say that need is complete, yes?

KEITH

I would agree.

LEN

The strictly emotional phase is over. Let's talk Phase two. Phase two is going to entail more of what you experienced this morning. Loss of control over your partner, slight mood alterations and some inconsistency. We want to produce emotional activity which should ultimately increase the mental connections between the two of you. How does that sound?

KEITH

Does that mean we're going to fight?

LEN

No. But you're not always going to agree.

The assistant at Dynamime enters behind Keith --

LEN (CONT'D)

Eric, Keith's going to need a box for when he goes off campus. And additionally, will you send me the rest of Keith's Grubé results from the last eighteen months.

ERIC
Right away.

LEN
Since the dawn of man human
progress has been moving toward the
moment when we merge with
technology. We're not riding the
edge anymore Keith, we're driving
it. Remember that.

KEITH
I will.

LEN
Good. It's a beautiful day out
there. Enjoy it!

KEITH
Thank you, Len.

Len nods graciously. Keith is led out of the office --

INT. DYNAMIME - MINUTES LATER

CLOSE ON: Keith's wrist -- As what appears to be a watch is
clasped. The black buckle clicks into place and then locks.
It's clear it can't be removed --

ERIC
It's probably just for a week.

KEITH
I don't mind.

EXT. CRYSTAL PINES - DUSK

Keith walks home along the quiet street rubbing his wrist,
getting used to the "box" bracelet. He looks up to see a
woman walking 50 feet in front of him on the sidewalk. On
closer inspection it's Tessa --

CLOSE ON TESSA IN PROFILE - MOVING, then, Keith steps into
frame beside her. They walk along in silence for a few
beats...

KEITH
What are you doing out?

TESSA
It was a beautiful day. I wanted to
be outside. I'm never outside
alone.

They walk in silence again for a moment. He points out a few
birds to her. Then --

TESSA (CONT'D)
Bats?

KEITH
Swallows.

She turns to him --

TESSA
Are you still confused?

KEITH
No.

TESSA
That's funny.

KEITH
Why is that funny?

TESSA
Because I think I am.

INT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Keith helps her take off her coat and then hangs it up. She
turns to go into the other room --

KEITH
I don't like myself very much you
know.

She stops and turns around --

TESSA
I know.

KEITH
But I like you in the way I wish I
liked myself, and that's good
enough I think.

She looks up for a beat and then walks to him quickly. He
hugs her and she hugs him back.

After a few moments she looks up at him and then kisses him on the mouth. He kisses her back deeply as they fold into one other...

KEITH (CONT'D)
Want to go upstairs?

TESSA
Together?

KEITH
Yes.

TESSA
Yes.

As they walk up the stairs...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Keith and Tessa lay in bed naked under the sheets.

TESSA
Are you tired?

KEITH
So tired.

TESSA
Are you hungry?

KEITH
Not enough to move.

TESSA
I could make some soup.

KEITH
I don't want you to move either. I just want to pass out with you and sleep for a week.

He reaches out for her, touching her neck -- she suddenly bristles at his touch --

TESSA
I don't want to be turned off.

KEITH
I wasn't, I was just...

She turns on her side, exposing a long stretch of her perfect nude body --

TESSA
I don't want to be turned off
anymore at night.

KEITH
Did you discuss that with Korning?

TESSA
Yes. He said it's up to me.

She holds her gaze, making eye contact --

KEITH
Then what are you going to do?

TESSA
I don't know.

KEITH
Are you sure? Won't it be strange
just lying there? I don't know if
I'll be able to sleep if you're
just lying there alert.

TESSA
You can sleep downstairs if you
like. Or I can.

KEITH
No, no. I want you here. I can try.

TESSA
Thank you. You can take a pill if
you want to.

KEITH
No, I'll just... try.

TESSA
Okay.

She switches off her light and turns over. Keith lays still for a few beats then turns off his light.

EXT. CRYSTAL PINES - MORNING

A windy crisp day. Keith pulls out of the driveway with Tessa in the passenger seat. He notices uniformed movers transferring boxes from Ron and Shirley's house to their moving truck.

EXT. DYNAMIME BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Keith stops the Taurus near the entrance of the building --

KEITH
Do you want me to pick you up?

TESSA
I can walk.

KEITH
Okay.

TESSA
Okay, have a good day.

KEITH
Since when do you say 'have a good day?'

TESSA
Lots of people say have a good day.
It's a nice thing to say.

KEITH
Yes, it is. It just sounded weird.
Like, not you.

TESSA
I was trying to be normal and it
sounded weird. That's weird.

She leans back in the car and pecks Keith on the lips. He watches her walk into Dynamime. The two male MONITORS wait for her.

WITH TESSA - MOVING

As she enters Dynamime. She walks through the 1970's style lobby to a glass elevator. The monitors get into the elevator with her. They push a button. Tessa looks up, the elevator goes DOWN...

INT. DYNAMIME LAB - MOMENTS LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Tessa removes all of her clothes in the presence of two female scientists. She hangs them up and then slips on a hospital gown. The last of a series of electrodes are attached to her body. Blood is drawn from her arm -- it is red like human blood.

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 (through phone)
*I'm sorry Sir there is no guest
 registered under that name.*

KEITH (V.O.)
 And you're sure she didn't check
 out?

Tessa's teeth are checked by a dentist who shows her where
 she has a cavity. He then drills it --

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
*And I'm sure she didn't check out.
 We've had no guest registered under
 that name --*

Tessa winces from a Papsmear --

*The sound of Keith hanging up and dialing another number -- a
 voice answers --*

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
*Paramus Courtyard Suites this is
 Kurt --*

The band-aid on Tessa's finger from when she cut herself in
 the kitchen is removed. A doctor looks at it and then places
 her hand under a meter-wide centrifuge that begins to rotate
 around her hand. The cut starts to heal --

KEITH (V.O.)
 Alex Andersson's room please.

The clicking of computer keys through the phone... Then --

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Andersson?

Tessa is now dressed in tight gym wear. She runs on a
 treadmill. It shows she has already run for 20 miles. She
 barely sweats and her heart rate hovers around 75 beats per
 minute. As she keeps running --

KEITH (V.O.)
 Yes. With two S's.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
*I'm sorry Sir we have no guest
 under that name staying with us.*

Tessa runs harder. Her speed going up to 18 MPH --

KEITH (V.O.)
Did she check out? Can you see
that?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Sorry Sir, no Alex Andersson has --

Tessa has dozens of small wires that run from the floor up into her head through the back of her neck. On a monitor next to her hundreds of images flash by -- they are being inserted into her brain --

KEITH (O.S.)
How about Gladys Glass. Sometimes
she stays under Gladys Glass.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
No sir.

EXT. KEITH AND TESSA'S HOUSE. BACKYARD - THAT MOMENT

Keith hangs up his cell phone and dials another number --

FEMALE VOICE
Palisades Hampton Inn.

KEITH
Do you have an Alex Andersson
staying there?

FEMALE VOICE
Can you hold please Sir --

Before Keith can respond he is put on hold -- Muzak keeps him company --

FEMALE VOICE (CONT'D)
*I'm sorry Sir, that line is
engaged, would you like voicemail?*

KEITH (O.S.)
What was that?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
*Ms. Andersson's line is engaged.
Would you like to leave a message?*

MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON: Keith's shoe-less feet arch on tip-toes as he stands on the hood of his Taurus. The tennis ball pendulums past his legs on its string --

WIDE: He has removed the ceiling tile and reaches his arm into the crawl space above, grabbing a MANILA ENVELOPE inside a Zip-loc bag. He puts the ceiling tile back --

EXT. CRYSTAL PINES. STREET - MINUTES LATER

Keith pulls up to the guard shack at the entrance to Crystal Pines. A loud beeping is suddenly heard inside the car and in the guard booth --

GUARD

Morning Mr. Hertz, may I swipe your box?

KEITH

Hi Curtis.

Keith holds out his left arm as it is wanded by the Guard. The wand chirps in the negative, as if it didn't register --

GUARD

Lemme try again --

The Guard swipes it again, it chirps to the affirmative --

GUARD (CONT'D)

You have ninety minutes boss but it'll start beeping ten minutes before you get back --

KEITH

I remember. Thanks.

Keith pulls out into traffic --

EXT. ROAD - MINUTES LATER

Keith drives fast. The box's small read-out screen counts down: 01:29:12, 01:29:11, 01:29:10...

EXT. CAR - DAY

Keith sits in the parked Taurus on a suburban side street.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Keith dumps the contents of the manila envelope on the passenger seat. It amounts to a small pile of ephemera that relates to Alex: a student ID of her's from college with her picture on it, a few postcards, a CD with a hand written label that reads "Alex Articles, 2006-2012", ticket stubs, a drawing on a cigarette pack and a two page typewritten letter on yellow legal paper...

CUT TO:

GPS MONITOR ON A SATELLITE MAP.

Keith's position is monitored and logged by a nameless technician at Dynamime.

INT. CAR - SAME

Keith unfolds the letter.

THE CAMERA TRAVELS ACROSS THE WORDS IN EXTREME CLOSE-UP. IT READS IN FRAGMENTS:

*Dear Keith....Psychological instability is contagious....
Terror and need....Unable to protect myself or resist the
world at large...I love the unknown more than I love you or
our baby that I have inside me....*

KEITH

Looks at his box: 1:20:54 and counting. He puts the car in gear --

INT. CAR - LATER

Keith sits in his car outside the low-slung Hampton Inn. He rubs his nervous palms on his thighs.

INT. HAMPTON INN - AFTERNOON

Keith sits in a chair in the lounge of the hotel. A uniformed MAID vacuums in the background --

ALEX (O.S.)
You said you burned it.

Alex sits across from him with the yellow letter in her hands.

KEITH

I tried. Many times. But I guess I felt if I burned it I would forget and that seemed worse for some reason. At least this way I know what happened.

She goes back to reading in silence... Then laughs --

KEITH (CONT'D)

What?

ALEX

I wrote, 'I don't believe in destiny, I believe in evolution.'

KEITH

Why is that funny?

ALEX

Because I was so pretentious. It makes me want to slap the girl that wrote it. If only she'd known how gray she'd be at 36... I wouldn't have tried to be so clever and mean. God, my stupid cut-up rock 'n roll t-shirts.

KEITH

And that potato sack poncho.

ALEX

And blue leather pants.

KEITH

And the taped together dance shoes. Still have those?

ALEX

I don't really have anything from the past. Unlike you, I'd rather forget... I kept the Pulitzer.

KEITH

I lost mine.

Alex smiles, finishes the letter and hands it back to Keith. He rubs it in his hands and folds it back up...

ALEX

Whatever that meant, I didn't believe in either destiny or evolution at the time. I didn't believe in anything.

KEITH

I had swallowed about 50 Tylenol PM's by the time I got to that part of the letter. At that point, for the first time, your opinions didn't seem so important to me.

Her eyes glass --

ALEX

I'm sorry.

KEITH

Sorry should be outlawed. It's supposed to make everything okay but if I don't accept it then all of a sudden I'm the problem.

ALEX

I'm not with him anymore. I'm clean. I'm writing again. On assignment. For fashion monthlies and... I do interviews with celebrities. They speak with such authority on everything... No more danger. No more conflicts.

KEITH

I write for the free weekly around here.

ALEX

I know. That's how I found you remember?

KEITH

Right. Sorry. I still enjoy --

ALEX

I love you.

She says it so fast he is short-circuited by it. He looks up at her -- eyes on eyes -- in the way Tessa cannot quite hold eye contact... It registers with Keith. He takes a deep breath...

KEITH

I love Tessa.

ALEX

No you don't. You just feel safe.

He shakes his head...

ALEX (CONT'D)

Then you love us both.

KEITH

I came here to tell you that I forgive you and that I don't think you're a bad person. I really don't. But even if I wanted you I could never do that to myself again.

Alex listens --

KEITH (CONT'D)

I'm going to go home tonight and I'm going to burn this letter. And then the past can officially be over for both of us. You can go back to whatever your life is and I can stay here --

The box suddenly beeps. Keith looks at it: 00:10:00 and counting...

KEITH (CONT'D)

I have to go.

ALEX

You just got here.

KEITH

I have an important appointment.

He stands up --

ALEX

That's it?

KEITH

I have to go. I'm really late.

She digs into her purse and holds something out her hand --

ALEX

I burned you a CD.

KEITH

I don't want it. I don't want you in my head.

ALEX

Well, it's yours. It's a mix you made for me... 'Girls can't make good mixes', you said that to me once.

He can't help but grin --

KEITH

(shrugging)
It's true...

She clears her throat...

ALEX

You're not you Keith. This might be who you want to be, which is fine... But it's not who you actually are.

He looks at her for a moment and then turns and exits through the motel's sliding doors --

CAR - MINUTES LATER

Keith drives fast as the box is now at 00:05:12 and counting. He puts the CD in the stereo. Bruce Springsteen's "Candy's Room" comes on --

Rush hour traffic backs up in front of him: 00:04:59... The box now starts beeping once every 5 seconds... It stresses Keith, his hands start shaking. He turns up the music --

KEITH

(re: the traffic)
Come on.

He pulls into the emergency lane, passing cars, accelerating.

CUT TO:

GPS MONITOR ON A SATELLITE MAP.

Keith's car is tracked as it pulls into the emergency lane.

INT. CAR - THAT MOMENT

Keith slows at the intersection, where an accident has occurred. Two cop cars officiate the detour. Keith looks at his box: 00:03:34 and counting...

He hits the steering wheel. The light turns green, but one of the cops directs him to stay put... 00:02:59... The box starts beeping once a second...

KEITH
Is this a joke!?

The cop waves the cars in Keith's lane through the intersection. Keith hits the accelerator passing cars: 00:00:59... A sustained beep that slowly gets louder he cranks the music to drown out the beep --

Keith cuts across the three lanes...

00:00:35

The sound is deafening as Keith blows through a final red light at the intersection before the gates of Crystal Pines. He fishtails into the driveway and slams on the brakes, stopping in front of the guard booth --

KEITH (CONT'D)
Swipe it Curtis. Swipe it!

Curtis swipes it, but it doesn't register --

00:00:07

KEITH (CONT'D)
Do it again!

He swipes it and it stops the clock. Keith falls back into his seat as the song winds down. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Keith enters to find the windows open and music playing through the whole house --

KEITH
Tess? You here?!

There's no reply... Through the breeze blown curtains he sees something --

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Keith walks out of the house into the backyard to find Tessa standing with an attractive COUPLE in their late twenties. They are having a good laugh. The young man stands up to greet Keith --

CHARLES

How do you do? I'm Charles. This is Bettina. We're moving in next door.

KEITH

What? What about Ron and Shirley?

Charles registers Keith's distress at the news --

CHARLES

They're keeping Ron at the Lab. His problems are treatable but he won't be working with participants anymore. Or at least for quite some time. Shirley is finished with the trial. You know the financial arrangement. She'll be well taken care of.

KEITH

So that's it. They're gone, you're here.

CHARLES

We are definitely *here*.

KEITH

Okay. Well, welcome. I can't even tell which one of you is the CB.

Charles smiles --

CHARLES

We both are.

Keith is taken aback. He looks them over --

KEITH

Both of you? I don't get it. Why?

CHARLES

Why? Because it's possible.

KEITH

Neither of you is human?

CHARLES

Define human.

KEITH

You know what I mean.

CHARLES
I completely know what you think
you mean. But, define it.

Keith rolls his eyes at Charles --

CHARLES (CONT'D)
You are made of DNA. I am made of
DNA.

KEITH
(as if stating the
obvious)
Mother, father, second grade, bad
memories, puberty... Human.

CHARLES
No Keith, by that criteria I am not
human -- I didn't experience the
humiliation of acne when I was
thirteen. Who's to say that's not
beneficial?

Keith smiles --

KEITH
Is this a Len thing? This is part
of Phase two?

CHARLES
Everything's a Len thing. But no we
are not here as part of your
program. We're here as part of our
own.

KEITH
It's really just you two. What's
the point? What do you guys talk
about?

CHARLES
Ourselves. The stars. The
temperature. What do you guys talk
about? All this CB versus HB. The
whole point is that we're people.
How we arrive at that actuality is
so uninteresting at this point. The
first wheel was probably made of
stone. Now it's made of rubber.
It's still a wheel. Just better...
Look at Tessa. Really look at her.

Keith does --

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Who do you have more in common with, Tessa? Or some guy who runs into a shopping mall and starts shooting people because the voices told him to? With all due respect Keith it isn't like *people* understand people very well, so why do they feel compelled to try to understand everything else? The is, IS, Keith. The isn't? Wasn't, didn't, or couldn't. We are.

Charles checks his watch --

CHARLES (CONT'D)

By the way, I understand your concerns. And totally appreciate them. I wish more people in this world were as rational with their concerns as you are Keith. I'm next door if you want to continue this discussion or even talk about something mindless. I may not have had a mother or a father, but I didn't need one to be conditioned to enjoy the occasional distraction. Bettina, shall we?

Bettina stands from her deck chair and holds out her hand --

BETTINA

It was a pleasure to meet you.

Keith shakes it --

KEITH

Yes... You too.

CHARLES

You two enjoy the night.

They head back toward their house. Keith looks at Tessa --

KEITH

That was weird wasn't it?

TESSA

It was interesting.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Keith looks at Charles and Bettina's house through the window.

KEITH

What were you guys talking about before I arrived?

TESSA

All sorts of things. The stars. Health issues. The temperature. Your book.

KEITH

You told them about my book?

TESSA

They asked me about it.

KEITH

Is that what you were laughing at?

TESSA

What?

KEITH

When I walked up it was like you were laughing. What was going on?

TESSA

We were talking about health.

KEITH

People don't laugh about health.

TESSA

You'll be annoyed.

KEITH

Why?

TESSA

Because you will.

KEITH

Tell me.

TESSA

I don't want you to be annoyed. It was funny. It was all in fun.

KEITH

Just tell me.

TESSA
We were talking about sex.

KEITH
What kind of sex?

TESSA
It was funny stuff.

KEITH
What do you mean funny? Dirty?

TESSA
No.

KEITH
Was it gross? Did he make a pass at you?

TESSA
Absolutely not. He was just making jokes.

KEITH
Like what?

TESSA
Nothing. He was just saying how...

KEITH
What?!

TESSA
How Bettina didn't have any hair on her --

She points below her waist --

TESSA (CONT'D)
And then he asked if I had hair there and I said I did and he said how you could feel more... during sex, without hair.

CLOSE ON: KEITH, frozen. His heart pounds with equal amounts of anger and titillation --

KEITH
And how did that make you feel?

TESSA
It made me want to have sex with
you.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: A wet razor blade with some shaving foam still on it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith and Tessa are in the middle of having sex.

CLOSE ON: TESSA

She lies on her back, her eyes closed tightly. The camera holds on her for a full minute until she reaches orgasm. It will be an unusual and emotional examination of her vulnerability and otherness. She finishes with something that almost resembles a sob. She covers her eyes with her hands, catching her breath and is then overcome by a shiver --

CLOSE ON: Keith lies beside her, eyes open. He turns off his already dimmed reading light.

EXT. CRYSTAL PINES - NIGHT

Curtis, the guard, hands over his post to a Night-Officer. He notices something as he steps out of the booth and crosses the rural road. He approaches camera --

CURTIS
Can I help you with something?

REVERSE. Alex sits in the driver's seat of a car.

ALEX
Is it right or left to get back to
the turnpike?

CURTIS
If you just turn back the way you
came, make a right, go about five
miles until you see signs for 121
East, get on that and it's another
ten or so miles to the Turnpike.

ALEX
That's what I thought. My phone
died, so... No GPS.

CURTIS

This is a private road. I'm going
to have to ask you to push on now.

ALEX

Okay. Thanks again.

Curtis tips his hat and heads back to the guard house. Alex takes a closer look at the surroundings: bright daylight balanced spotlights, dozens of security cameras, abnormally high gates... It registers as unusual with her. She looks back at the Night Officer who watches her closely from the booth. On closer inspection she notices he has a small sub-machine gun slung tightly across his chest... She starts the car...

OVER WHICH WE HEAR

Click-click-click... Click-click-click...

CUT TO:

Blackness. Then more click-click-clicking, then a blue flame comes to life under a grill top.

KEITH

stands above it, his face illuminated by the flames. He raises his arm and we see he is holding Alex's yellow typewritten letter in his hand. He looks at it for a moment. He dips the corner into the flames -- the thin paper begins to shrink and twist as it burns... Keith watches for a second and then

BLOWS IT OUT --

BLACK.

END OF EPISODE ONE.