



# SYSTEMS

Written By  
Jesse Blaskovits

7th December 2018

10-225 12th St E.  
North Vancouver, BC  
V7L 2J8

778 868 3468  
[jesse@systemsmovie.com](mailto:jesse@systemsmovie.com)



**NOTE:** This film adheres to a mathematical framework called the Fractal-8 System. This system governs the occurrence of objects, locations, characters, shots, scenes, and more into a set of patterns, which our protagonist, Danny, eventually comes to recognize.

For this reason, the description of many objects and subtle actions are included in the screenplay as they directly affect the story. Respectively, the one-page/minute convention does not apply.

For the sake of brevity, many fractal elements have been excluded from the screenplay. For a complete outline, see the *Fractal-8 System Outline*.

**Some Fractal Rules to consider:**

1. Every element in the film appears a specific number of times: 1,2,4,8,16,32,64, or 128.
2. There are 64 scenes in the film.
3. Every scene is exactly 128 seconds in length.
4. In the Systems world, there are 64 seconds in a minute, thus, the total runtime of the film is 128 "systems-minutes".
5. There are 2048 shots in the film.
6. The length of a shot is only ever: 1,2,4,8,16,32,64, or 128 seconds long.
7. There are 32 primary locations.
8. Everything revolves around the Number 8.

## OPENING TEXT

"This film will be an exploration of your mind"

1

**INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

1

*Ex nihilo*

We open on an 80's television set displaying an image of the same television set displaying an image of same television set, ad infinitum (we are watching a feedback loop).

At the very centre, the layers dissolve into a bright white point. To the sides, we see details of the room: hundreds of blue sticky notes, multiple writing desks, towering stacks of books and loose paper.

A hand waves in front of the screen. The movement ripples down each layer to the centre of the tunnel.

DANNY (O.S.)

This should be the opening image of  
Systems. A feedback loop.

We cut to DANNY (40) sitting next to a tripod and video camera aimed at the TV.

He stands and speaks passionately into his voice recorder as he moves through the room.

DANNY

Session 1.

He glances at a small whiteboard that reads: [Session 1].

DANNY

We open on a feedback loop, and as we watch the feedback loop, staring at what is our central image to the film, we hear a voice say: this should be the opening image of Systems. A feedback loop.

He crouches down and looks at his fishbowl. We see one green and one purple fish.

DANNY

And then we cut to Danny, our hero. He stands up and speaks into his voice recorder, saying everything that I'm saying right now, and of course he's saying all of this to his fish.

He stands and continues, reading sticky notes as he speaks.  
The shots cut and move energetically.

DANNY

And how perfect. Now the audience  
is getting a feel for what our film  
is about. We know the title-

He reads [Systems].

DANNY

We know the central image of the  
film-

He reads [Feedback Loop].

DANNY

We know the main character of the  
film-

He reads [Danny].

DANNY

We even know that Danny has written  
himself into his own film.

He reads [Danny has written himself into his own film].

DANNY

That's the basic premise of the  
film, and we know that too now...  
and we know that because, as Danny  
says all of this, he says  
everything I'm saying right now  
into his voice recorder.

Danny looks at his voice recorder.

DANNY

And as he says this, we actually  
cut to the things he speaks about.

He reads [We're watching the same film].

DANNY

Because we're watching the exact  
same film that Danny is making.

He reads [The Red Telephone].

DANNY

So for example, he might say the  
Red Telephone or the Red Semi.

He reads [Red Semi].

DANNY  
And we'd cut to those notes as he  
mentions them.

He reads [The notes are clues].

DANNY  
And as Danny does this, he  
essentially directs the audience to  
elements he wants them to see.

He reads [Diner].

DANNY  
And that's exactly what we're doing  
too.

He reads [Self-Reference].

DANNY  
Anytime I want my audience to know  
anything about *my* film, I just have  
Danny talk about *his* film.

He reads [Infinite Regress].

DANNY  
So if I wanted to use the opening  
scene of the film to explain what  
the film's about, I'd just have  
Danny explain what the film's  
about.

He reads [Danny explains what the film is about].

He finishes his mug of coffee. He catches himself in the  
mirror. He smiles.

DANNY  
And...

He writes [8] on a sticky note. He sticks it next to an index  
card that reads [Coffee Count:].

DANNY  
If I was Danny, and I wanted to  
explain what the film's about...

He fills his mug with a pot of coffee (oddly in his living  
room).

DANNY

I'd say everything I just said, and  
then I'd turn around and say-

Danny holds his mug and proudly turns around.

DANNY

Systems is about a screenwriter  
named Danny who's writing a  
screenplay called Systems about a  
screenwriter named Danny who's  
writing a screenplay called Systems  
about a screenwriter named Danny  
who's writing a screenplay called  
Systems about a screenwriter named  
Danny who's writing a screenplay  
called Systems-

2

**INT. DINER - DAY**

*Ad infinitum*

2

Danny stares into his empty coffee mug.

JESSE (O.S.)

(disinterestedly)

-about a screenwriter named Danny  
who's writing a screenplay called  
Systems-

He looks up and sees JESSE reading his screenplay. They're  
sitting in a booth of an all-red retro diner. A painting of a  
motel is mounted on the wall between them.

JESSE

-about a screenwriter named Danny  
who's writing a screenplay called  
Systems about a screenwriter named  
Danny-

Danny writes in a blue notebook with a blue mechanical  
pencil: [Jesse reads the newest draft].

JESSE

-who's writing a screenplay called  
Systems about a screenwriter named  
Danny who's writing a screenplay  
called Systems.

Jesse puts the page down. There's a long pause.

DANNY

So?

JESSE

I don't see a story here. It's just Danny writing himself over and over again. It's YOU writing yourself over and over again, obsessively.

Danny smiles. He taps his pencil in excitement.

JESSE

I don't see a story.

DANNY

*That* is brilliant. And I'll tell you why. Because maybe there isn't a story... Maybe we use this scene-

JESSE

And that's the problem Danny. This isn't a scene!

DANNY

And *that's* exactly what Jesse would say!

Jesse nervously bites his thumbnail.

JESSE

... I still don't know how I feel about you including me in your film.

DANNY

Jesse, *this* should be the second scene in the film. This needs to follow the apartment scene, and I'll tell you why-

JESSE

You've completely written yourself into your screenplay.

DANNY

That's why!

Danny writes another note: [Complete Character Reflection].

JESSE

Everything, every place you go, every person you know, like me, you've added it all in.

DANNY

You're right!

JESSE

It all seems so unhealthy. It seems dangerous.

Danny's inspired. He stands, excitedly snapping his fingers, pacing a small distance. Across the room, he sees PATRON 1, and then PATRON 2. He quickly sits down, excited to share.

DANNY

Everything you're saying right now is perfect, because it's exactly what Jesse would say. At this point in the film he's concerned for Danny's well-being. He thinks he's obsessed. He points to the dangers of self-reference. This is almost an early warning for Danny, or a foreshadowing to the audience.

JESSE

I'll tell you why I see no story.

Danny leans in closer. Jesse leans back.

JESSE

As writers we're supposed to add a piece of who we are into our characters-

The WAITRESS comes by. We don't see her face, only her hand holding the coffee pot. She has long red fingernails. Danny watches the coffee pour into Jesse's mug.

JESSE

-and then after that, any inspiration that somehow contributes to our fictional character, gets added into the story-

Now he watches her pour coffee into his own mug.

JESSE

-but in your case, because your character is EXACTLY who you are-

DANNY

Everything get's added in!

JESSE

Everything get's added in.

DANNY

Exactly! Hold on.



Danny writes: [Everything gets added in].

DANNY

This is what Danny's going through!  
His character is exactly who he is.  
So anytime Danny performs any  
action, like for instance, if he  
takes a drink of coffee-

Danny takes a drink of coffee for demonstration.

DANNY

-or if he's sitting in a diner with  
his friend Jesse, he'll think that  
it's a PERFECT addition to his  
screenplay, *because* it's exactly  
what his character would do,  
*because* his character is exactly  
who he is! So he adds this into his  
film and then, he adds that he adds  
this into his film, and so on and  
so forth. It's as if he's trapped  
himself in a feedback loop.

Danny proudly takes another drink of coffee.

JESSE

Sure... but the consequence is that  
you have no story.

He almost spits it out.

DANNY

Say that again!

JESSE

You have no story.

Danny writes in big letters [NO STORY] and circles it.

DANNY

Yes!!

Danny slams the table.

DANNY

Well, not quite. *Danny* has no  
story. And that should be the  
purpose of this scene, to setup the  
conflict, the forward motion of the  
story, which, paradoxically is  
Danny's search for the story.

The music builds, the moment grows tense.

DANNY

Danny should say all of this,  
everything I'm saying right now.

JESSE

Danny, just stop.

DANNY

And Jesse should say what you're  
saying because it's exactly what  
your character would say.

JESSE

Stop.

DANNY

Your character is frustrated, he's-

JESSE

My character isn't frustrated, I'm  
frustrated.

DANNY

Yes that's perfect!

JESSE

Danny your character isn't even  
believable! No one even talks like  
this!

DANNY

I talk like this!

JESSE

That's because you're confusing  
yourself with your character.

3      **INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - DAY**  
         *Mimesis*

3

Danny types on his computer: [You're confusing yourself with  
your character]. He stops. He's on to something. He takes a  
sip of coffee.

Next, he types: [INT. APARTMENT - DAY / Danny types on his  
computer: [You're confusing yourself with your character]. He  
stops. He's on to something. He takes a sip of coffee.].

He hesitates. He knows he's entering a rabbit hole. He  
continues, writing layer after layer. We eventually see:

[He types: [ He types: [ He types: [ He types: [ He types:]

The scene intensifies. He falls into an infinite writing regress, until finally: He stands, proudly wearing a multi-coloured sticky-note dispenser belt.

He rips a red note off and writes [Danny confuses himself with his character]. He sticks it to the wall.

He finishes his coffee, refills it, places a CD labeled [Systems] into a boombox, and hits play.

On a large whiteboard he writes [Character Confusion]. Underneath, he adds two columns: [Reality] written in blue, and [Fiction] written in red. He speaks into the recorder.

DANNY  
Brilliant. So then. Whatever  
happens to Danny in reality gets  
added in to his story.

He draws an arrowed line from [Reality] to [Fiction].

DANNY  
But, eventually, as the film  
progresses, what gets added in to  
his story becomes his reality.

He draws an arrowed line going the opposite direction, from [Fiction] to [Reality].

-

Danny types the above sequence into his screenplay. He takes a drink of coffee.

-

Back at the whiteboard. He's speaking aloud - not using his voice recorder.

DANNY  
And the first instance of Character  
Confusion is when Danny adds  
Character Confusion into his story.

Danny writes [Character Confusion] and draws an arrow to [Fiction].

DANNY  
And because what gets added in as  
story becomes reality...

Danny draws a bolded line from [Fiction] to [Reality] again.

DANNY

Danny begins to actually confuse himself with his character!

-

Danny types the previous sequence into his screenplay. He finishes his cup of coffee.

-

Back at the whiteboard. He spins around and speaks into the recorder as he moves.

DANNY

Of course this all becomes very confusing when Danny reflects upon the nature of his reality.

Danny stops. He looks around the room. There's a brief existential moment. It's quiet.

DANNY

He asks himself: what fictions have I begun to accept as reality?

He looks down at his cup of coffee. It's full and steaming. He looks at his fish. The tank bubbles. He looks at the TV. It's playing an old-fashioned advertisement for a movie theatre.

He walks to his window and opens it. He sees a red semi idling on the street below.

The phone rings. He looks at it. It's a 1950's red rotary telephone. It rings four times.

He writes [The Red Telephone Rings] and sticks it to the wall. He immediately writes [Danny fears Character Confusion] and sticks it to the wall.

-

The intensity builds. He's in his element, methodically visiting each desk and wall.

He writes: [Too Much Coffee], [The Same Things Repeat], [Voice Recorder], [TV].

He reads: [The Problem of No Story], [Fish], [Electric Ball], [Danny stops using his Voice Recorder].

## DANNY

Danny finds himself in a self destructive feedback loop. He now fears that he's confusing himself with his character. Funny enough, when he sees that he's written his character to confuse himself with his character, it becomes evident that he indeed is confusing himself with his character.

-

Danny repeatedly types the previous segment until he eventually types [CUT:].

4

**INT. DINER - DAY**

4

*Hamartia*

Jesse and Danny sit across from one another in their regular booth. Jesse reads the screenplay. Danny stares at his full cup of steaming coffee.

## JESSE

(reading)

Cut. Interior, diner, day. Jesse and Danny sit across from one another in their regular booth. Jesse reads the screenplay. Danny stares at his full cup of coffee... and then Jesse says...

Danny writes in his notebook [Patterns?].

## JESSE

Cut. Interior, diner, day. Jesse and Danny sit across from one another in their regular booth...

Danny looks across the diner and sees a fish tank with eight fish.

Jesse aggressively flips through the pages. He throws the screenplay down.

## JESSE

You're losing your mind... And don't say that's a good idea. Don't make this into a scene either.

Danny glances out the window and sees a black van drive by.

JESSE

You haven't even addressed your character's believability.

DANNY

What do you mean?

The waitress pours coffee into Danny's mug. We never see her face, just her hand holding the coffee pot.

JESSE

Your character isn't believable. No writer stands in his room and talks like that. It's just a very poor method of exposition.

The waitress pours coffee into Jesse's mug.

DANNY

I did address it. With Character Confusion. You see, Danny has written his character to talk like this, and since he's confused himself with his character, then Danny must talk like this too. It's a feedback loop.

JESSE

What about the problem of No Story?

DANNY

Simple. Danny has written his character to struggle with the problem of no story. And now Danny finds himself with the same problem. It's a feedback loop.

JESSE

You can say that for anything! You can literally justify any script change with this.

DANNY

I know! Isn't it perfect?

JESSE

You're losing your mind. This project is going to make you go crazy.

Danny's eyes widen.

DANNY

Bingo.

There's a silence. They stare at each other.

DANNY  
That's the story.

JESSE  
No.

DANNY  
That's it. That's the story! Danny  
makes himself go crazy!

JESSE  
First of all, no.

Jesse crosses his arms.

JESSE  
No audience is going to watch a  
film about a character that makes  
himself go crazy.

DANNY  
Why not?

Danny's eyes shift away. He sees PATRON 3 light a cigarette.

JESSE  
(condescendingly)  
Because he needs an opposing force.  
It's called an antagonist Danny.  
You need a character, or set of  
characters, who oppose your  
protagonist's objective in some  
way.

Danny sees PATRON 4 play chess by himself.

JESSE  
Maybe they want to make Danny go  
crazy and maybe Danny doesn't want  
that. *That* would be called a  
conflict, and *that* would actually  
make your film entertaining.

DANNY  
Okay... so who's my antagonist  
then?

5

**INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

5

*Non compos mentis*

Danny adds the sticky note [Brainstorm] to the wall. Thunder and lightning boom outside. He looks out the window, and through the rain, he sees the red semi idling. He looks curiously again at the wall. He reads [Red Semi].

He reads another: [Danny is going crazy]. Danny looks at the voice recorder on his desk. He doesn't use it.

DANNY

This is the real reason Danny has no story. This is why he's just been writing himself over and over again. He's been avoiding the story-

He reads [Avoiding the story].

DANNY

-because he knows that at the end of the film his character will go crazy.

He reads [Danny goes crazy].

DANNY

And since he's confused himself with his character he knows that he himself will go crazy. So he's been avoiding the ending.

He reads [Jesse: The Antagonist].

DANNY

But this is where other characters, like his friend Jesse, come in. They help push the story forward. They encourage the completion of the film and therefore, encourage Danny's insanity.

He reads [They want Danny to go crazy].

DANNY

So Jesse innocently suggests ideas to Danny, but really, he wants to influence Danny. He wants to make him go crazy because he's the antagonist of the film.

-



Danny types the previous sequence.

-

He stares at his glass plasma ball. He finishes his coffee. He looks at the wall. He reads [Too Much Coffee] and [The Same Things Repeat].

He writes [Everything is Connected]. He's about to add it to the wall, when he reads [The Red Telephone Rings], and just as he's reading it, the red telephone actually rings.

Concerned, he looks at the ringing phone. It rings four times.

-

Danny types the previous sequence.

6

**INT. DINER - DAY**  
*Enantiodromia*

6

Danny stares at his empty coffee mug. Jesse flips through the screenplay.

JESSE  
Well I'm flattered you made me the  
bad guy...

DANNY  
Do you like it?

Jesse takes a long ruminating pause.

JESSE  
... Actually I do.

Jesse flips through the pages.

JESSE  
... And I like that Jesse likes it  
too.

DANNY  
(surprised)  
It's interesting isn't it?

Danny sees Jesse write something in his red notebook.

DANNY  
It's as if the audience can either  
interpret that Danny is writing  
Jesse, or-

JESSE  
-that Jesse is really writing Danny  
writing Jesse.

DANNY  
(surprised)  
Exactly... What do you think of the  
telephone?

JESSE  
I like that too.

Jesse is thinking. He bites his thumbnail.

DANNY  
We see he's beginning to fear that  
he's entering a world of fiction.

JESSE  
Because he saw the note of the  
telephone, and then it actually  
rang.

DANNY  
Exactly.

JESSE  
But... we know that already. You  
need something more. You can't just  
tease your audience forever. Like  
you said, he's *entering* the world  
of fiction. But he's not quite  
there. So you need an inciting  
incident, something that massively  
propels him forward into the other  
world... which would also propel  
your whole story forward. What you  
need is a classic call to  
adventure.

There's a long pause. They both ponder. The waitress comes by  
and pours coffee.

JESSE  
(inspired)  
What if Danny picked up the phone?  
What if *that* was the call to  
adventure! A literal call.

DANNY  
The red telephone?

JESSE  
(excited)  
What if he added all of this too?  
This conversation!

DANNY  
You're starting to sound like me.

JESSE  
Well what if Jesse and Danny are  
the same person?

DANNY  
What?

JESSE  
I'm sorry, I'm ahead of myself.

Jesse calms down.

JESSE  
This is all I'm saying-

The waitress comes by again. Strangely Danny's mug is empty again. She pours coffee. She does the same for Jesse's mug. This concerns Danny.

JESSE  
-What if in the next scene, Danny  
wants to know, Danny needs to know:  
Am I going crazy? Am I confusing  
myself with my character? Am I  
actually crossing over into the  
world of fiction?

Danny looks out the window; he sees a black van drive by.

JESSE  
And in order to know this, once and  
for all, he performs a test.

Danny looks across the diner; he sees Patron 1 looking directly at him.

JESSE  
Imagine he's at his computer. He's  
nervous. His fingers hover just  
above the keyboard. He looks at the  
telephone, he looks back at the  
computer, back to the telephone,  
back to the computer-

Danny looks across the diner; he sees Patron 3 smoking, looking directly at him.

JESSE

-his fingers tense up, he wipes sweat from his forehead. He's about to type the words...

7 INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

7

*The Effectual Call*

Danny wipes sweat from his forehead. His fingers tense up. He looks at the telephone and then back at the screen. His fingers hover above the keyboard.

He writes: [Danny wipes sweat from his forehead. His fingers tense up. He looks at the telephone and then back at the screen. His fingers hover above the keyboard. He writes: [Danny wipes sweat from his forehead. His fingers tense up. He looks at the telephone and then back at the screen. His fingers hover above the keyboard.].].

Danny falls into a writing regress. The shots cut faster. He repeatedly wipes his forehead and looks back at the telephone. The music builds up, and then finally-

He writes: [The red telephone rings].

The telephone rings! Danny bursts from his chair. He fearfully stares at the ringing telephone.

He cautiously approaches. On the eighth ring Danny answers.

DANNY

Hello?

PHIL

Hey Danny this is Phil here! I got Larry on the line with me too!

LARRY

Hey Danny this is Larry, how the hell are you!?

He doesn't respond. He sees the sticky note [Who's Calling?].

The voices are fast-talking; they speak right after one-another.

PHIL

How are you Danny!?

LARRY

Danny?

PHIL  
Danny are you there?

LARRY  
Did we lose him?

PHIL  
Is this the right number?

Danny sees a green sticky note [Phil and Larry]. He's stunned. He rips the sticky note off the wall and stares at it.

LARRY  
Hello?

PHIL  
Are you there Danny?

DANNY  
... Hi.

LARRY  
Danny?

DANNY  
... Yes.

PHIL  
This is Danny?

DANNY  
Yes.

LARRY  
The writer of Systems?

DANNY  
Yes.

PHIL  
Great! Thought we lost you.

LARRY  
You're a hard person to get ahold  
of you know that!

Danny puts the sticky note back on the wall. He continues looking at notes.

PHIL  
We tried phoning a bunch of times.

LARRY  
Danny?

DANNY  
... Yes... sorry...

PHIL  
Listen we've read the first sixteen  
pages of the film.

He reads a purple sticky note [Producers want to make his  
film].

DANNY  
...I don't... I don't...

LARRY  
What?

PHIL  
(to Larry)  
What is he saying?

DANNY  
... I don't remember sending you  
anything.

LARRY  
Well we have Systems right here.

PHIL  
We're looking at it right now.

We hear pages flipping. Danny looks at his green and purple  
fish.

LARRY  
Systems. Interior Apartment Day.  
Danny writes the red telephone  
rings.

PHIL  
You are Danny, aren't you?

Danny looks around the room.

DANNY  
... I am

LARRY  
The writer of Systems?

DANNY

... Yes

PHIL

You got some really good stuff here.

LARRY

You really do.

He reads a green sticky note [They want Danny to go crazy].

PHIL

Listen we want to see this story move forward.

He reads a purple sticky note [Evil Producers].

LARRY

But there's a few changes we need to make before we fully commit to this.

PHIL

But we're interested.

LARRY

We're interested.

PHIL

So why don't we let this phone call sort of set things in motion.

LARRY

Why don't you come down to Infinity.

PHIL

That's Infinity Entertainment.

LARRY

Our address is 128--

Danny hangs up the phone. He stands, concerned, thinking. He walks to the computer. He reads [INT. DINER - DAY].

8

**INT. DINER - DAY**  
*Simulacra*

8

Danny looks at Patron 2 and Patron 4 smoking and playing chess together; they're both looking at Danny.

JESSE  
(reading)  
I love the newest addition of the  
phone call, and I love that Jesse  
loves it, and I love that Jesse  
says all of this-

Danny looks at Jesse; he's reading the screenplay.

JESSE  
(still reading)  
Because it's exactly what Jesse  
would say. Danny it's brilliant.

Jesse puts the script down.

JESSE  
Danny it's brilliant.

Danny is concerned. He takes a sip of coffee. He looks  
outside and sees the black van drive by.

JESSE  
Well narratologically speaking, the  
acceptance of the call may be a  
little early in the story, but I  
think you'll make up for it if you  
just have Jesse bring up the fact  
that it's a little early in the  
story...  
(inspired)  
Because you justify it if Jesse  
talks about it! I should write that  
down for you.

Jesse writes something in his red notebook. Danny finishes  
his cup of coffee.

DANNY  
I'm still slightly lost.

JESSE  
You don't know who Phil and Larry  
are.

DANNY  
Exactly.

JESSE  
But Danny looks at notes that  
suggest they're the producers of  
the film. So Danny does know who  
they are.



DANNY  
(confused)  
Right... I don't... I might change  
that.

JESSE  
You can't change that! Evil  
producers who work for Infinity  
Entertainment. A company with the  
sole purpose of causing Danny's  
insanity. And somehow Jesse's  
involved. It's really good.

DANNY  
But, how does Jesse know Phil and  
Larry?

JESSE  
Maybe Jesse gave the script pages  
to Phil and Larry... to help Danny  
move his project along.

DANNY  
Did you?

Danny watches Jesse write something in his red notebook.

JESSE  
(laughs)  
I'm talking about *your* film.

DANNY  
I know that...

JESSE  
Now you're starting to sound like  
me.

Danny doesn't respond.

JESSE  
This is good. What if at this point  
in the film, Danny begins to lose  
it. He begins to think that Jesse  
and Phil and Larry are really the  
writers. They're in control.

Danny reluctantly nods. He doesn't want to believe it's a  
good idea. He looks down at his coffee. Both coffees are  
full, but we hear the sound of coffee pouring.

JESSE

What if in the next scene we see  
all of them together. Danny, Jesse,  
and Phil and Larry.

DANNY

At Infinity?

JESSE

Yes! Thank god. A location change.

Jesse writes something in his notebook. Danny notices but  
tries to ignore it.

JESSE

What if you use a diner scene just  
like this, where you have Jesse say  
everything I'm saying right now.  
That way you emphasize the theme  
that Danny's no longer in control.  
He's not really the writer. Jesse  
is.

Danny scratches his head.

DANNY

Wait... If we see Danny actually at  
Infinity, then we'll know he's  
crossed over into the world of  
fiction.

JESSE

Exactly.

DANNY

And you think that should be the  
next scene?

JESSE

I do. And I think that you think it  
should be the next scene too!

Danny is concerned.

Danny stares concernedly at a large red sign that reads  
[Infinity Studios]. It's as if he finds himself in the room  
for the first time. He swivels his chair and sees Jesse;  
they're sitting at the end of a long boardroom table.

He surveys the room: he sees a clock that reads 8pm, a green coffee mug, and a purple coffee mug.

PHIL and LARRY burst through the doors at the back of the room. Phil is wearing a black suit with a green tie. Larry is wearing a black suit with a purple tie. They're two fast-talking sociopathic businessmen, identical in appearance, and played by the same actor.

PHIL  
Where is he?

LARRY  
Is that him?

PHIL  
I think that's him.

They rush over to Danny's side of the table. Danny swivels his chair to face them. He's about to stand, but they both crouch down to Danny's eye-level.

LARRY  
Danny.

PHIL  
You're Danny.

DANNY  
Yes I'm Danny.

They shake hands with him. Danny watches the prolonged handshake. They smile devilishly.

LARRY  
It's a pleasure.

PHIL  
A damn pleasure!

LARRY  
Danny do you mind-

Phil slowly motions his hand towards Danny's face. Larry follows. They both touch his face, pinch, and feel around.

PHIL  
He's perfect.

LARRY  
He is Danny!

They both stand up.

PHIL  
He is the star of the show!

LARRY  
Our protagonist.

PHIL  
Have you ever considered acting  
Danny?

DANNY  
N... no.

Danny recomposes himself.

DANNY  
I never have.

Danny stands to meet eye-level with them, but they  
immediately walk to the front of the room.

They both stick cigarettes in their mouths and light up.  
Danny sits back down.

LARRY  
Because you *need* to play Danny.

PHIL  
It's a must.

LARRY  
You'd be the perfect fit. Come on!

DANNY  
(nervous laugh)  
I don't know about that.

PHIL  
Hell, we'd play ourselves.

LARRY  
I'd play me.

PHIL  
Think about the marketing.

LARRY  
The writer of Systems IS the writer  
of Systems.

PHIL  
(to Jesse)  
Write that down.

LARRY  
(to Jesse)  
Thanks buddy.

Jesse obediently writes in his red notebook.

DANNY  
Yeah it's neat but-

PHIL  
But we'll get to that later.

LARRY  
We get it.

PHIL  
You're a man with a plan.

LARRY  
We like that.

PHIL  
Let's move on.

Larry flips a large whiteboard around.

LARRY  
What you're wondering now is-

PHIL  
Really what we're all wondering now  
is-

Larry writes [What's Next?] in big green letters on the whiteboard.

LARRY  
What's next?

PHIL  
What happens now?

LARRY  
That's what we're all asking.

PHIL  
So?

LARRY  
So?

Phil and Larry sit casually on the desk. They playfully flip their markers in the air. They wait for the brainstorm to commence.

Danny reads the room. He sees his cue and stands up. He clears his throat.

DANNY

Well-

Jesse cuts him off.

JESSE

Well, we know Infinity are really the writers.

PHIL

Exactly.

LARRY

Bingo.

Danny sits back down.

PHIL

They're writing Danny-

LARRY

Writing Systems.

Phil writes [Infinity], draws an arrow, and writes [Danny], draws another arrow, and writes [Systems].

JESSE

(to Danny)

And you've introduced your newest characters Phil and Larry.

Phil and Larry turn around from the whiteboard.

PHIL

Who we love!

LARRY

Great characters.

JESSE

They're these two fast talking devils-

PHIL

Controlling Danny.

LARRY

Controlling Systems.

PHIL

They're the head honchos.

LARRY  
Hell of a pair.

JESSE  
Right, but if they're the ones  
writing Danny into insanity, here's  
my question: How can Danny ever  
escape?

Phil and Larry are dramatically impressed by this question.

JESSE  
If he's completely bound to the  
story, he has no chance in hell of  
escaping. So why would we root for  
him? We have no reason to care. His  
fate is locked-in. We're not going  
to watch a film if we know its  
outcome from the very beginning...  
Right?

There's a big moment of silence. They're waiting for Danny.  
He stands up.

DANNY  
Well... If he *realizes* he's a  
character, then he realizes he's on  
a path that's been written for him,  
and if he realizes he's on a path  
that's been written for him, then  
he can see that path, and if he can  
see that path, then maybe he can  
depart from that path.

JESSE  
So he realizes he's a character?

PHIL  
He realizes he's a character.

LARRY  
He realizes he's a character!

DANNY  
... Yeah.

Phil and Larry clap slowly. The clapping continues to an  
eventual applause by all three of them.

10

**INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**  
*Amanuensis*

10

Danny stares at a sticky note [Character-Consciousness].

JESSE (O.S.)  
Character-consciousness. That's  
what we call it.

Danny turns around and sees Jesse pacing. We're in Jesse's house: dimly lit, filled to the brim with thousands of red, green, and purple sticky notes, maddening towers of books, and multiple writing desks. This is the room of a mad writer.

JESSE  
Character-consciousness literally  
emerges within Danny due to the  
self-referential parameters of the  
screenplay.

Danny struggles to find his bearing. He doesn't understand where he is or how he's gotten here.

JESSE  
He becomes aware of the fact that  
he's a character inside of a film  
called Systems and we're all  
watching him.

He looks around Jesse's living room; he sees his own 80's TV playing a detective show, an ant farm, a red typewriter, and a small whiteboard that reads [Session 4].

JESSE  
That's your story. That's Danny's  
story. And that's Danny's  
character's story.

Danny looks at Jesse as he passionately speaks. We see close-ups of his hands orchestrating his thoughts.

JESSE  
BUT as Danny confuses himself with  
his character, we can't help but  
ask: Is Danny really gaining  
Character-consciousness, or is he  
just a delusional writer, who  
believes he's gaining Character-  
consciousness?

Danny continues searching the room. He looks at sticky notes; he reads: [Danny's Breaking Point], [The Climax!].



DANNY

Jesse-

JESSE

Just wait. Just wait-

Jesse struggles to finish his thought. Danny continues to read sticky notes: [Chaos/Order], [Jesse is Danny].

JESSE

I need to get this out.

Jesse passionately paces the room. He snaps his fingers.

JESSE

Where was I? Where was I?

Danny reads [Interpretations].

DANNY

The two interpretations.

JESSE

Right. Is he really a character in a film or does he just think he is? But that's secondary to the real question Danny. The real question is this. You should write this down-

Danny hesitates. He looks at the desk and sees a voice recorder; it's the same as his. He presses record and hands it to Jesse.

JESSE

(into recorder)

As Danny gains Character-consciousness, he attempts to depart from the story that's been written for him, because obviously he doesn't want a tragic ending. But, is this attempted departure just a part of the story too? The question is: Can Danny ever truly depart from the story?

There's a long beat.

DANNY

Yeah... Yes he does. He does depart from the story.

JESSE

But that's exactly what Danny would say! Because Danny wants to succeed. Doesn't he? If he doesn't depart, he's inside a tragedy, and so he fails.

DANNY

(nervously)

But he should succeed. Don't we want to see that? As an audience? Don't we want to see Danny succeed?

JESSE

It's not even a question of succeeding. No matter what, Danny is in a tragedy. That's the catch. That's consciousness.

Danny has no response.

JESSE

Think about it! Wouldn't every attempt at escape just be another part of the story!?

11

**INT. INFINITY - DAY**

*Erratum*

11

Danny finds himself in the Infinity boardroom. He immediately looks up at the clock and sees its 8pm.

Phil and Larry, both smoking, finish flipping through the screenplay. They look at each other.

PHIL

I love the last scene, what about you Larry?

LARRY

To be honest, I was confused.

PHIL

Me too. I was lying when I said I loved it just now.

They turn to Jesse and Danny.

LARRY

Why is Danny writing at Jesse's house?

JESSE  
Because Jesse is the co-writer.

Jesse stands up. He slowly paces, owning the space.

PHIL  
A co-writer?

LARRY  
But he wasn't before?

PHIL  
At least it didn't seem like he  
was?

JESSE  
Exactly. It didn't seem like Jesse  
was the co-writer, but now it does.

There's a long curious pause in the room.

LARRY  
What about the earlier scenes?

PHIL  
Are you going to change them?

JESSE  
No need to! And that's the point!

LARRY  
Okay... I get it...

PHIL  
Do you?

LARRY  
No I don't.

PHIL  
Me neither.

JESSE  
We don't need to change the earlier  
scenes so long as you have a scene,  
just like this, where Jesse  
explains that he's the co-writer.

They stare, baffled.

JESSE  
The film we're watching is really  
the *development* of the film we're  
watching, right?  
(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)

We're not just watching the story,  
we're watching the *story* of the  
story. We get to see the making of  
new developments... This just  
happens to be one of those  
developments.

DANNY

Wait-

JESSE

As soon as Jesse explains that  
Jesse is the co-writer, it's  
immediately justified, given the  
context of the film, and of  
everything I just said.

LARRY

Sounds good to me.

PHIL

Sounds justified.

DANNY

But you can say that for anything.  
You can literally justify any  
script change with this.

JESSE

I know! Isn't it perfect? It stands  
true for anything said in the film.

DANNY

Why would Danny let that happen?

JESSE

What?

LARRY

Yeah what are you talking about  
Danny?

PHIL

Danny?

Danny seems almost exhausted by their dialogue. He takes a  
breath.

DANNY

Why would Danny let Infinity take  
over? Why would he let Jesse just  
become a co-writer?

JESSE  
That's exactly what Danny should  
say!

LARRY  
Ohhh should this be a scene?

PHIL  
I think he's saying this should be  
a scene.

DANNY  
No, just answer the question!

JESSE  
Yes! Exactly. Think about it.  
Infinity is taking over, so of  
course Danny dislikes this idea, of  
course he's upset. That's fucking  
brilliant.

DANNY  
What?

JESSE  
You're upset!

DANNY  
Yes.

JESSE  
Exactly!

LARRY  
That's good.

PHIL  
He's good.

LARRY  
A natural!

DANNY  
But, that doesn't mean Infinity is  
controlling the sce-

The scene cuts mid-sentence.

12      **INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**  
         *Cathexis*

12

Danny is stunned, lying on the floor, staring at a red  
ceiling fan. Jesse types on the red typewriter.

Jesse turns around and notices Danny. He turns back to the typewriter.

JESSE  
Listen to this Danny...

Jesse clears his throat.

JESSE  
(reading)  
You're upset. Yes. Exactly! But,  
that doesn't mean Infinity is  
controlling the sce-... Cut mid  
sentence. Fade in. Jesse's house.  
Danny is staring at a red ceiling  
fan.

Jesse turns around. Danny sits up.

JESSE  
Oh hold on!

Jesse turns back and types.

JESSE  
(as he types)  
Danny sits up. Jesse turns around  
and writes Danny sits up. Jesse  
presses enter and stands up too.

Jesse presses enter and stands up.

JESSE  
See what I did there?

Jesse stretches wide, dominating the space. He sits on the red plaid couch. Danny's still sitting on the floor in a daze. Jesse takes a big sip of coffee.

JESSE  
Okay we need to figure this out.  
Why would Danny let this happen?

DANNY  
(unsure)  
He wouldn't... unless Infinity...  
unless they're the writers...

JESSE  
That's one interpretation, but-

Jesse stands back up and continues pacing.

JESSE

Consider Danny is just writing it  
that way. Consider, that really  
Danny is writing Infinity writing  
Danny-

Jesse notices a fly buzzing around. He continues.

JESSE

But even if that is the case, all  
of this is still just... crazy.  
We're still forced to ask  
ourselves: why would Danny, as a  
writer go through with this?

Danny thinks hard. He stands up and looks around the room. He  
sees [Red Typewriter], [Red Notebook], [Buzzing Fly], and  
[Magnum Opus].

JESSE

Why would he want to drive himself  
crazy? You gotta put yourself in  
his shoes.

He sees a page entitled [Character Outline]. Key-phrases  
stand out: [Who is Danny?], [What does Danny want?], [Danny's  
Objectives], [Art], [Legacy], [To be remembered].

DANNY

(reading)  
... Art... Legacy... To be  
remembered?

Jesse squishes the fly with a pink sticky note. He sticks the  
note to the wall. Danny looks at the squished fly.

JESSE

Right!

Jesse paces faster.

JESSE

Above all else, above his own  
sanity, he values artistic legacy.  
He's willing to die, he's willing  
to go insane for his own art.  
Right?

DANNY

Yes... I mean... I don't know...

JESSE

Well you tell me, you're the  
writer!

DANNY

I'm sorry, I can't think right now.

JESSE

This is how I see Danny... He thinks the suffering of a writer is poetic, it's romantic. He finds the existential descent of great minds noble, righteous, something to attain. Does that... resonate?

DANNY

... I mean... sure.

JESSE

If your character goes crazy, then you go crazy. This is... method writing. Right? This is Danny's philosophy: become your character!

Jesse writes something on a red sticky. Danny takes notice.

JESSE

He sees a beauty in artists who suffer and dwell in the reflection of their own consciousness.

Jesse sticks it to the wall. Danny walks over to read it.

JESSE

He even sees a beauty in artists who go so far that they kill themselves for their own art.

He sees the red note. It reads [Suicide].

13

# **INT. INFINITY - DAY**

13

*Anathema*

Everyone laughs hysterically. Danny finds himself in the room, not laughing. Phil and Larry stand up. They're laughing so hard, they can barely make their way to the whiteboard.

They light their cigarettes and point to a story diagram as they speak (notes on the diagram match what they say).

PHIL

So Systems is about a writer who:

LARRY

Writes himself into his own story.



PHIL  
Confuses himself with his  
character.

LARRY  
Goes crazy.

PHIL  
Gains Character-

They momentarily break the flow.

LARRY  
Character... What's it called?

JESSE  
Consciousness.

PHIL  
Right! Gains Character-  
consciousness.

LARRY  
And kills himself!

JESSE  
He kills himself!

PHIL  
He kills himself!

LARRY  
Dead!

PHIL  
Boom!

LARRY  
Bang! Gone!

Danny sweats. He's mortified.

DANNY  
(interrupting)  
When!?

PHIL  
Yeah when?

LARRY  
Yeah that's my question too.

JESSE

The climax. Danny's breaking point.  
This is what we're leading up to.  
This is the progression.

Phil and Larry add to the story diagram.

DANNY

Where? Why?

JESSE

I think we'll need more scenes to  
properly explain that Danny.

PHIL

Does Danny know?

LARRY

Yeah what are all his thoughts on  
this?

JESSE

Well, he's scared. He's definitely  
concerned for his sanity. And he  
does want to depart from the story.  
He's just not quite there yet.

(to Danny)

You should write this down.

Danny hesitantly looks at his notebook and begins writing.

JESSE

If he was, he wouldn't so  
obediently write whatever Jesse  
tells him to.

PHIL

Instead, he'd choose not to write.

LARRY

But he doesn't know he's a  
character.

JESSE

Exactly!

PHIL

He hasn't figured it out yet.

LARRY

Nope, he's still writing.

Danny's head is down; he's still writing.

PHIL  
Look at him go!

LARRY  
Just writing away.

JESSE  
What do you think of that Danny?

Danny has written a note [Am I a character?]. He looks up.

DANNY  
(concerned)  
I think that... even if he did have  
Character-

PHIL  
Consciousness.

LARRY  
It's called Character-consciousness  
Danny.

DANNY  
Even if he did have Character-  
consciousness, then he'd probably  
still write in his notebook.  
Because, maybe he's trying to  
change the ending.

PHIL  
Change the ending!?

LARRY  
But he can't!

PHIL  
(to Jesse)  
Danny's not in control right?

LARRY  
Infinity is.

DANNY  
But, maybe Danny really is the  
writer? Maybe he's just written it  
this way?

14       **INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**  
*Octopoda*

14

Danny stares at a note that reads [Cabin in the Woods].

DANNY  
    (as if Jesse has just told  
    him)  
Why does Danny kill himself here?

JESSE  
Well why did he write it?

Danny turns around and sees Jesse sitting confidently on the edge of the couch, holding a thick stack of index cards, flipping through them like a deck of playing-cards.

DANNY  
The cabin in the woods?

JESSE  
Yeah, where does it come from?

Danny thinks. He looks around the wall; he sees [Childhood Memories].

DANNY  
I don't know.

JESSE  
So Danny doesn't know either then?

He reads [Hunting].

DANNY  
Right.

JESSE  
But why? What's Danny's backstory?  
What is the cabin in the woods to  
him?

He reads [Father].

DANNY  
    (surprised by his own  
    words)  
He used to go hunting there with  
his father.

Danny turns around.

JESSE

I like that. He shoots himself in the cabin in the woods where he used to hunt with his father... When?

DANNY

(surprised)

When he was a child.

JESSE

I love that. We should include a segment on childhood memories. That way we can explore Danny's backstory.

Jesse writes this down. Suddenly inspiration strikes!

JESSE

OH!!!

Jesse starts pacing.

JESSE

BUT THEN, Danny should realize all of his childhood memories are false! They've been manufactured to give Danny the belief that he's a real person! As the film goes on, he deconstructs his past, and comes to the realization that it's all an illusion. It's all been written in! He has no childhood! He has no past! He's just a character!

Danny just stares at him.

JESSE

How old were you - when you went hunting with your father?

DANNY

I don't know...

JESSE

What comes to mind?

DANNY

I really don't know... eight?

JESSE

Perfect!

Jesse writes something down.

DANNY

But, that still doesn't answer the question. Why does Danny kill himself?

Jesse walks to the couch and sits down. He leans over and eats baby squid out of a Chinese take-out box.

DANNY

I don't think he does kill himself. He gains control and changes the story. That's the tale of consciousness. That's what Systems is about.

Jesse's about to talk, but Danny nervously continues.

DANNY

Think about childhood. We're almost unconscious at first. We're reacting to the world. Culture, family, DNA, they program us with ways to react... but as we grow up, our consciousness expands. We break free from whatever's running the show.

Jesse's not paying attention. He opens his fortune cookie and reads it.

Danny gains confidence. He sees a whiteboard that perfectly illustrates his point, there are two columns: [Observational] and [Volitional].

DANNY

We switch from the observational to the volitional.

He draws an arrow from [Observational] to [Volitional]. Jesse throws Danny a fortune cookie; he catches it, but continues speaking.

DANNY

(gaining confidence)

And what if that's the story of Danny. The story of consciousness, where man heroically breaks free from what's been written for him. He learns how to create instead of react. This is the universal story of man. This is the story of all stories... this is good... this is really good.

Danny opens his fortune cookie and reads it: [Danny reads a fortune cookie].

JESSE  
Maybe that's what Danny wants the  
story to be, but that's not what  
the story is.

Danny is mentally fatigued.

DANNY  
Then... what is the story?

15

**INT. INFINITY - DAY**  
*The Infinity Deal*

15

They're sitting in the dark. Phil and Larry munch on popcorn. Jesse clicks to the first slide of a presentation. We see the title [The Story].

PHIL  
I'm excited

LARRY  
Hell of a speaker this guy.

Jesse inserts a CD into the boombox. Intense classical music plays. Jesse gives his presentation.

JESSE  
Danny, an unaccomplished  
screenwriter, struggles to complete  
his screenplay. He values artistic  
legacy above all else. He is  
willing to suffer and die for his  
art. Not only does he want to  
complete his Magnum Opus, but he  
wants it to be the Perfect Story.

Phil and Larry laugh. They give Danny a thumbs up.

On the slides behind, phrases stand out: [Unaccomplished  
Screenwriter], [Wants Legacy], [Genius], [The Perfect Story].

JESSE  
So Danny makes a deal with the  
Infinity Corporation. He trades his  
soul in exchange for infinite time.  
Within infinite time, Danny can  
develop his masterpiece...  
infinitely.

We see: [Contract with Infinity], [Traded his soul],  
[Infinite Time], [Masterpiece].

JESSE

He argues that a Perfect Story must  
be a story about everything. Thus,  
it must explore deeply  
philosophical concepts like  
existence, consciousness, meaning,  
self-reference, free will, and  
determinism.

We see: [The Most Philosophical Film], [The Most Self  
Referential Film], [The Most Mathematical Film], [A Cult  
Classic], [The Universal Myth].

JESSE

His film then becomes a platform to  
express his own philosophical  
doctrine.

We see: [The System of Systems], [The System of Thought],  
[Fractal-8 System], [Polarity System].

JESSE

And all of this is developed within  
the cozy space of infinite time.  
His insecurities as a writer are  
gone. He never has to worry about  
deadlines, about killing off bad  
ideas. He can spend as long as he  
wants editing, creating, and  
finding the Perfect Story.

We see [What's the catch?].

JESSE

So what's the catch? He's traded  
his soul after all.

Danny looks at the clock; it's 8pm. He looks at his hands and  
performs a reality check. He walks over to Phil and Larry and  
touches their faces.

They both laugh and point at Danny as if "who is this guy!?".  
They think he's hilarious.

Danny looks out the window. A red semi idles on the street  
below. A black van drives past.



16

**INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**  
*The Infinity Deal Pt. 2*

16

Danny types on the typewriter.

JESSE (O.S.)  
This is important, write this down.

Danny types: [JESSE: This is important, write this down.],  
[Danny types [JESSE: This is important, write this down.]].

JESSE  
The catch is this.

Danny finds himself typing. He stops and looks at his hands.

JESSE  
Don't stop!

Danny continues typing; he writes everything Jesse says.

JESSE  
Here's the catch. In infinite time,  
all possible stories are written.  
Which means there are infinite  
versions of Systems. Each Systems  
is a Danny Universe, and every one  
of them exists, *right now*.

Danny continues typing, recursively adding layers to what he  
writes. Jesse's speech becomes more impassioned; it's of epic  
magnitude.

JESSE  
There's a Systems where Danny's a  
construction worker, or a hunter,  
or a truck driver, but the only  
version that can be experienced is  
a version that develops  
consciousness of itself and thus  
subsequently converges to a moment  
in the Systems-Space-Time continuum  
whereupon the System of Systems  
collapses. In other words, a Danny  
Singularity occurs.

The scene builds with intensity. Danny types faster as Jesse  
speaks more passionately.

JESSE

This Systems comes into existence  
every time we press play and  
collapses every time the credits  
roll, which is the moment of the  
Danny Singularity.

Danny goes off the script. He writes: [The System is taking over. The System is crashing], [He's not who he says he is], [What the fuck is this?].

Danny departs, writing his own thoughts, while Jesse continues his ever-more perplexing monologue.

He writes: [What the fuck is this!? What the fuck is happening?], [Don't think. Stop thinking], [Don't look in the mirror].

Danny bolts up and sees his reflection in the mirror. He grabs his head in horror. He doesn't have a safe place to be. He reads sticky notes on the wall.

JESSE

And the Infinity corporation knew  
this! Now that Danny's tasted the  
fruit of consciousness, he must pay  
the price.

Danny reads: [Consciousness causes suicide], [Danny Kills himself], [TOO CONSCIOUS!], [HELP!!].

JESSE

The end of consciousness ends in  
annihilation! Absolute knowledge,  
the Perfect Story, the thing of all  
things, whatever the end of growth  
is, when it's finally achieved,  
there's nothing else to become. It  
is the end of becoming, and so it  
is the end of life, for life is  
becoming.

Danny looks at Jesse. He's passionately moving through the room. He's even standing on furniture! Danny turns back to the notes.

He reads: [Complete Understanding], [Annihilation], [Perfect Story], [Danny loses his soul].

JESSE

*This, is the story of Systems: the  
emergence, growth, and destruction  
of consciousness.*

Danny looks at Jesse. His voice doesn't match his mouth (He's not visibly speaking, yet we still hear his speech).

Danny turns back and reads: [Consciousness is suffering], [Consciousness is Hell], [Danny's in Hell], [He's traded his soul].

JESSE

*This, is what he's traded his soul  
for. Eternal perdition. Stuck on  
the thought of his infinite death,  
endlessly aware of the end.*

He reads: [Perdition], [The Devil], [DEVIL], [Danny sees the Devil].

Danny turns around, and instead of Jesse, he sees a big red DEVIL standing at the centre of the room! He's dark-red and muscular. He has large deer antlers. The moment is insane! The music is horrifying. Danny freaks out! He falls backwards! He hits his head on the TV. He's knocked out. The TV plays static.

17.1     **INT. HOSPITAL / ROOM - DAY**  
         *Delirium*

17.1

Danny FADES IN, looking at a TV playing static, positioned at the end of a hospital bed (framed the same as the last shot). He's in a completely white room. Phil and Larry stand over him.

PHIL

Danny!

LARRY

Danny!

PHIL

He's up.

LARRY

Hey buddy.

PHIL

Look at you.

LARRY

You really pulled through.

They hold up two mirrors in such a way that Danny can see the top of his head. He has a big scar running horizontally across his head.

PHIL  
The surgery went off without a  
hitch.

LARRY  
Without a hitch.

PHIL  
And we were worried because you're  
the first.

LARRY  
For this type of operation.

DANNY  
Whaa... what...

PHIL  
Should we tell him?

LARRY  
Tell him what?... OH!

PHIL  
Danny!

LARRY  
We've begun casting and we've-

PHIL  
We've decided who we want to play  
the role of Danny.

LARRY  
Can you guess who it is?

He FADES OUT and then BACK IN AGAIN. Jesse is sitting in the  
corner, flipping through the screenplay.

JESSE  
Act 2 is all about raising the  
stakes. So we really want the main  
conflict of the story to flourish  
here, which I believe is Danny's  
lack of control over the story.

He FADES OUT.

17.2     **INT. HOSPITAL / HALLWAY - DAY**  
*Delirium*

17.2

He FADES IN. He's being pushed in a wheelchair by a NURSE with red fingernails (we can't see her face). Jesse walks beside Danny, reading the screenplay.

JESSE  
 And our hero - you - needs to face  
 this conflict head on. You must  
 regain control!

17.3     **EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**  
*Delirium*

17.3

Danny is pushed down a pathway to where a black van waits for him at the end. The pathway has atomic green grass on both sides. A sign reads [Please stay on the path]. The building sign behind him reads [Infinity Hospital].

Danny looks up and sees bright white clouds in the sky. The door to the black van slides open.

18       **EXT. PARK - DAY**  
*Diegesis*

18

Danny wakes up. He finds himself laying on a small grassy hill overlooking a playground of children.

He sits up, looks beside him, and sees a red notebook. He looks back at the children playing. He sees DANNY-BOY (8), a young boy wearing a white T-shirt and blue jeans.

He opens the notebook. He reads: [Danny wakes up in the park], [Interpretation: This was all a dream], [He sees the red notebook], [He sees the boy in the white T-shirt and blue jeans], [He opens the notebook], [He reads THESE notes], [He sees his voice recorder], [He presses play].

Danny sees the voice recorder. He presses play and stares out as he listens.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
 (brainstorming)  
 Okay, so Danny finds the voice  
 recorder and presses play. He hears  
 Jesse's voice, and Jesse is saying  
 everything that I'm saying right  
 now.

Looking out at the park he observes: a big tree, bright white clouds, a flying kite, and a fountain.

JESSE (RECORDING)

As much as Danny wants to end the playback of this recording, he wants to hear what Jesse says next, because everything that Jesse says seems to narrate exactly what's happening.

Danny flips through the notebook and reads [Big Tree], [Bright White Clouds], [Flying Kite], [Fountain].

JESSE (RECORDING)

If anything, Danny continues to listen for the sake of knowing just how far gone he really is... But, I think he's also distracted, there's something about this park... It seems to resonate with some ancient part of his mind. He should think to himself-

DANNY

I think I've been here before.

JESSE (RECORDING)

(same time as Danny)

I think I've been here before.

Danny looks at the recorder.

JESSE (RECORDING)

And now he's seeing signs.

Danny looks at the elements once more in quick succession as Jesse says them.

JESSE (RECORDING)

The big tree, the bright white clouds, the flying kite, and the fountain.

Danny is stunned.

JESSE (RECORDING)

And Jesse should describe the exact elements that Danny observes as he observes them! This would of course concern Danny very much. This is where he should really begin to struggle with the concept of free will.

Danny grabs his head and holds it tight.

DANNY

Think, think, think, think...

JESSE (RECORDING)

Jesse should say everything I've just said and Danny should be sitting there listening to him. We've entered Act 2, and it's in Act 2 that we begin to raise the stakes. Danny really feels locked-in. He really feels hopeless, as if he's lost all control.

Danny looks at his hands.

JESSE (RECORDING)

Danny should perform a reality check. He wonders to himself, how did I even get here. Where was I before this moment?

19

# **EXT. BEACH - DAY**

19

*Metonymy*

Danny stares at his hands (identical to the last shot). He looks up. He's on a hill overlooking a beach. The landscape seems similar. The same shots repeat.

Danny looks down at his notebook, and then at Danny-Boy who's playing on the beach and eating a cone of red ice cream. Danny hesitantly looks at the voice recorder.

He grabs it and stands up. He walks toward the water. He passes by a bench with a blind man, a sand castle (with eight towers), and two fat men sunbathing. He sees a man on a rowboat in the distance.

DANNY

Where am I? What is this?

As he walks, he presses play.

JESSE (RECORDING)

Danny marches toward the water, he's going to throw the voice recorder in the water.

Danny presses stop. He continues.

As he continues his walk, he realizes that he's not making any progress; he passes the bench with the blind man, the sand castle, the two fat men sunbathing, and he looks at the man in rowboat in the distance.

He speeds up his walk and starts running. And once again, he sees the same elements.

He stops. He sees the boy playing in the distance. He looks at his voice recorder and presses play.

JESSE (RECORDING)

Danny presses play again. He's giving up. The tensions rise. This is what our scene is about...

Danny falls to his knees. He drops the recorder in the sand.

JESSE (RECORDING)

But, but, but, but hold on. There needs to be a light at the end of the tunnel. I mean this can't just be Infinity controlling Danny the whole time.

He grabs his head.

JESSE (RECORDING)

This is why our film is open to interpretation, because maybe it's the case that there is this evil corporation called Infinity, and maybe they are writing this whole thing, or maybe Danny is really the writer, and he's just written it in such a way that it appears he's not the writer!

This catches his attention.

JESSE (RECORDING)

This is a film after all, and films should be entertaining. They should have rising and falling tension. He's just made us believe that Infinity has taken over, only so that in Act 2, he can regain control!

Danny sits cross-legged and intently listens.

JESSE (RECORDING)

This is what Act 2 is really about. Danny realizing that he's the writer. Maybe he's written all of this. Including everything I'm saying right now.

There's a pause. Danny listens.



JESSE (RECORDING)  
 ... Okay... I really like this  
 idea... Perfect. We cut to the pool  
 hall next.

20      **INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT**  
*Behind the Eight*

20

The pool balls break. Danny sits cross-legged on the floor  
 (in the same position as the previous scene).

PHIL  
 Danny get up!

LARRY  
 We don't have time for transitions!

PHIL  
 There's a lot we wanna get to in  
 this scene.

Danny stands. Phil and Larry both hold pool cues. Danny sees  
 PATRON 5 activate the jukebox. Rockabilly music plays.

LARRY  
 But we gotta squeeze it in.

PHIL  
 We're on a strict timeline.

LARRY  
 Why that is may seem unclear to you  
 now.

PHIL  
 But you'll figure it out  
 eventually.

They grab him and walk him to a booth.

LARRY  
 Every scene in the film is exactly  
 2 minutes long.

PHIL  
 128 seconds to be exact.

LARRY  
 See you figured it out!

PHIL  
 That didn't take long.

LARRY  
More on that later.

PHIL  
We want to help you push the story  
forward.

They sit him down. Mugs of beer and documents are sprawled on the table.

LARRY  
Our analytics suggest that Act 2 is  
the hardest act to write.

PHIL  
Now we like what you're doing with  
the childhood memories.

LARRY  
Love it!

Danny notices some beer foam forming an infinity symbol.

PHIL  
The way you're using Jesse as a  
narrator.

LARRY  
With the voice recorder.

Danny notices the TV in the corner playing the weather. There are two weathermen. Text reads: [Weather Systems], [Cool front].

LARRY  
Very cool.

PHIL  
Very cool.

LARRY  
But god damnit listen to us Danny.

Danny sees a document. The title reads: [Pool Hall 1]. Underneath are bullet points: [Time Allotment], [2 minute scenes], [Pushing the story forward], [Act 2 difficulty], [Childhood Memories], [Jesse Narration], [New Character], [Control].

Danny snaps back and listens to them.

PHIL  
We need to introduce a new  
character.

LARRY  
Look at these charts Danny.

PHIL  
Our numbers suggest that this is  
the best moment in the film to  
introduce a new character.

LARRY  
Look at these charts!

PHIL  
Look at them!

LARRY  
Numbers Danny.

Danny takes a closer look. He sees only multiples of eight.

PHIL  
And stop listening to us.

LARRY  
God damnit Danny don't you get it.

PHIL  
It can't be Infinity in control the  
whole time.

LARRY  
Just look at us!

Danny looks at Phil and Larry. They're so excited that  
they're both standing. They sit down and light cigarettes.

PHIL  
Danny needs to regain control.

LARRY  
That's what Act 2 should be.

PHIL  
And that wasn't just Jesse's idea  
either.

LARRY  
We all helped.

Phil and Larry look at each other.

PHIL  
Anyways.

LARRY

Anyways!

They review the document with the bullet points.

PHIL

(reading)

We think that-

LARRY

Danny should realize he's the writer.

PHIL

He's just written it to seem like he's not.

LARRY

But really Danny is the writer.

PHIL

Not Infinity.

LARRY

Danny!

21     **INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY**  
*Psychotic Split*

21

Danny finds himself sitting across from the PSYCHOLOGIST. The room is Easternly and transcendental. Indian designs ornament the pillows, carpets, and curtains. We hear sounds of arrhythmic eastern strings.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Danny, I'm afraid your apparent hyperreality is nothing but a dissociative identity disorder.

DANNY

Where am I?

The Psychologist flips through pages of Danny's screenplay.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Your screenplay Systems, which, for me now, serves as the best tunnel into your psyche, implies all of this, and, so much more.

DANNY

Who are you?

## PSYCHOLOGIST

I mean really each note is a physical manifestation of your mind. Each note, a single idea. It's fascinating.

He puts the pages down and writes something in his notebook. Danny notices a sphynx cat sitting on a pillow.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

And you seem to be an aggregate of every character. They seem to represent fragments of your own psyche. Indeed, this is the nature of the classic hero archetype. Very fascinating.

Danny notices four tribal masks mounted on one wall, and four on the other.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

My point is this: your so-called film could be nothing but a psychotic split, a coping mechanism to deal with both your narratological and psychological development.

The Psychologist writes more.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

Every addition to the development of your film is really a problem-solving technique.

## DANNY

Who are yo-

The Psychologist erupts from his chair and begins to pace.

## PSYCHOLOGIST

I'm the Psychologist, as it says here.

(points to script)

I'm technically the new character you've added in, and since every character is you, then it's highly probable that I'm you too. Meaning this exchange now is nothing less than an exchange between Danny and himself. In other words, Danny is simply talking to himself right now.

Danny erupts from his chair.

DANNY

Talking to myself about what?

Danny follows the Psychologist as he circles the two chairs at the centre of the room. He notices a pendulum clock on the wall ticking back and forth.

PSYCHOLOGIST

About Systems! This is all Systems.  
And Systems is all in your head.  
Therefore, *this* is all in your  
head. Everything, every character,  
every exchange is all a working-out  
of some internal problem.

Danny notices the notebook. He sees that, instead of notes, the Psychologist has been drawing a maze. The ticking of the clock becomes louder.

PSYCHOLOGIST

And it's a clever analogy Danny.  
You've made the narratological  
development of Danny's character  
mirror the *psychological*  
development of Danny's *character*.  
Hence, the aesthetic approach to  
make *me* a psychologist.

DANNY

But who are you?

PSYCHOLOGIST

I'm you!

They both stop. Danny stares at him. The ticking becomes louder. The eastern music has stopped now.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Your film systems is the figuring  
out of your mind. And you've  
fragmented yourself into me to help  
you figure it out.

DANNY

How?

PSYCHOLOGIST

Let me explain... or rather, let  
you explain.

The Psychologist laughs. Danny does not. The Psychologist gets serious and clears his throat. The ticking becomes louder. Danny can't help but notice the clock now.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Often, it's the case that the act of differentiating ourselves, like you have with me, is a strategic attempt to modulate some dysregulation formed in response to a childhood trauma. You've made ME a psychologist to help YOU realize this, to uncover the past and acknowledge the narrative of your own life. Why? Because you yourself could not deal with the existential trauma of your own consciousness... And by the way, *that's* your trauma.

DANNY

What's my trauma?

PSYCHOLOGIST

Consciousness. Your childhood trauma is consciousness.

Danny looks at the clock. The ticking is booming now.

22.1 **EXT. CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY**  
*Homunculus*

22.1

Danny stares at a quaint white house with a white picket fence, red roses, and vibrant green grass. He heads for the door.

22.2 **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
*Homunculus*

22.2

He opens the door. It's an even more chaotic writing space than the last. Thousands of sticky notes of every colour fill the room.

He scans the room and sees: two red dice, a TV playing a gardening show (we see a shot of a ladybug), a toy top, and an unfinished puzzle of a cabin.

He reads: [Childhood Home], ["I think I've been here before"], [The end flows seamlessly into the beginning], [He explores his character's backstory].

He reads from a pile of notes detailing his [Character Backstory]. Key-phrases stand out: [Raised by single parent] and [From a small town: Port Lester].

He continues scanning the room. He sees a blue plaid couch, lamp, coffee mug, and the voice recorder. He picks up the recorder and presses play.

He reads [The elements] and [Why does Danny look at the things he looks at?].

JESSE (RECORDING)  
Why does Danny look at the things  
he looks at? Why are we seeing  
these objects and not another?

22.3     **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / KITCHEN - DAY**  
*Homunculus*

22.3

He walks through the kitchen, holding the recorder as it plays.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
Obviously Danny has written in  
these objects because a higher  
level Danny has written him to  
write these objects. But what about  
the top layer? What is he basing  
his decisions off of?

He sees a bottle of vibrant red dish soap labeled [Dish Soap], an old stained coffee maker, a fridge magnet for "Port Lester", and an egg timer.

He picks up the egg timer. He sees it goes to sixty-four seconds. He puts it in his pocket.

22.4     **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / BATHROOM - DAY**  
*Homunculus*

22.4

He stares at himself in the mirror. A second mirror behind him creates an infinite regress.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
And that's why we're using this  
section of the film to showcase  
Danny's backstory.



22.5     **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / BEDROOM - DAY**  
          *Homunculus*

22.5

He opens the closet and sees it's full of only white T-shirts and blue jeans.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
We're emphasizing the point that  
artistic decisions must be made off  
of something. We are historical  
creatures after all.

22.6     **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
          *Homunculus*

22.6

He explores more of the living room. The exact same shots repeat: two red dice, a TV playing a gardening show (with a shot of a ladybug), a toy top, and an unfinished puzzle of a cabin.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
His artistic choices - the  
locations, the objects, the  
characters - they must be based off  
of something.

He flips through an album of polaroids; they're all photos of Danny-Boy. We see a photo of him with his black cat and another where he eats a cone of red ice cream at the beach. He flips faster and faster.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
Of course, another reason we're  
exploring his backstory now is  
because we didn't earlier in the  
film - which in retrospect may have  
been a better writing decision.

Danny closes the album. He places the recorder on the floor. He stares at it.

JESSE (RECORDING)  
Regardless, we're exploring his  
backstory now because, on a  
fundamental level, development  
arises in the realization of our  
narrative-

He stomps on the recorder, smashing it into tiny pieces. He holds the egg timer and paces.

DANNY

Okay, okay, okay think... think...  
it's time to take control.

He reads: [Free Will], [Where does one go on a directionless walk?].

23

**EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROADS - DAY**

23

*Dianoia*

Danny finds himself standing on BLOCK 1. He looks up and sees a plane fly overhead. He sets the egg timer and walks.

DANNY

If I'm a character inside of a film, then that means people are watching me right now. That means there's an audience watching me right now.

Danny sees a black cat run across the street.

DANNY

Unless the film isn't popular, in that case, maybe no one's watching me... But do the contents of a film exist if no one's watching? What about the characters? Do they exist when the movie's turned off?

Across the street, he sees a house under construction. A carpenter hammers eight times.

DANNY

What about the story? If this is a film, then my story's been written. My future's been determined, and if my future's been determined, then really, I don't have free will. I feel like I have free will, I think I have free will, but maybe I'm just supposed to think that.

Danny looks at addresses as he walks. He sees: [2008], [2024], [2040], and [2048].

DANNY

Maybe I'm supposed to carry the illusion that I have free will.  
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

Maybe that's all for a reason,  
because maybe becoming too  
conscious means becoming too aware  
of my own determinism, and maybe  
that propels me closer to insanity.  
Maybe I'm not supposed to know what  
I know. Maybe I've gone too far.

He makes it to the end of the block and looks at a stop sign.

DANNY

Where does one walk on a  
directionless walk? That was on a  
sticky note. Why was that on a  
sticky note? Why am I looking at  
the things I'm looking at?

He walks to the centre of the four-way stop. He sees a large  
murder of crows on BLOCK 2B. The egg timer rings. Danny takes  
it out of his pocket and looks at it.

DANNY

Everything I look at, every  
decision I make is determined by  
something, but by what? Childhood  
memories? That's... I don't know.  
That can't be it.

He hears church bells ringing. He turns and sees a church  
tower looming over the houses on BLOCK 2A (opposite the  
crows).

DANNY

That's my backstory, sure, but  
that's been written in. If I'm just  
a character, then I don't really  
have a childhood.

He looks again at his options: BLOCK 2A or BLOCK 2B.

DANNY

I don't have a childhood? I don't  
have a childhood and I'm just a  
character?

He chooses BLOCK 2A and continues his walk.

DANNY

But I'm also the writer! I've  
written this. Everything that I'm  
saying *right now* has been written  
by me, the writer!

A black van drives across the intersection ahead. He stops.

DANNY  
So I should already know what's  
going to happen!

Beside him, on a front lawn, he sees a vacant inflatable pool  
with fish designs.

DANNY  
So what's going to happen?

LADYBUG, a girl wearing a red dress with black polka dots,  
bicycles past him toward the intersection. Danny watches her  
and begins to walk again in her direction.

DANNY  
What's going to happen? What's  
going to happen?

He makes it to the intersection. He looks around. We hear the  
sounds of an ice cream truck down BLOCK 3A.

DANNY  
Think, think, think, think.

24      **INT. THE VOID - NIGHT**  
*Spiral Death Trip*

24

RAZZ  
Think Danny! Think! You got this!

Danny is sitting on a sofa. He looks at RAZZ, a psychonaut  
with dreadlocks and lizard eyes (contacts), crouched on the  
arm of the sofa. Razz laughs.

DANNY  
Where am I?

Razz jumps off and throws a small baggy onto Danny's lap.

RAZZ  
The Void man. You are in the Void.

Danny looks around. The Void is a room to have a trip in:  
black lights, posters, and projected animations fill the  
room.

Six psychonauts trip out: four lay on mattresses, stuck in k-  
holes, while one tries to solve a black-and-white rubik's  
cube, and the other plays with a feedback loop on an 80's TV.

DANNY  
What's the Void?

RAZZ

A test, an ally, an enemy... really  
it's a place to have a stellar  
trip.

Danny holds up the baggy. He sees a small green pill with a  
purple spiral.

RAZZ

That is called the Spiral Death-  
Trip. It's a very... prophetic  
high. Maybe you're not ready.

Razz takes it back from him.

DANNY

Why am I here?

Someone turns on music.

PSYCHONAUT (O.S.)

(across the room)

Diabolus in musica!

RAZZ

I don't know *why*, but I can tell  
you *how*.

Razz quickly sits next to Danny. He crushes the pill on the  
table.

RAZZ

Have you ever heard of the Fractal-  
8 System?

DANNY

No.

RAZZ

Where do I begin?

Danny's eyes shift, scanning the room as Razz speaks. He  
sees: a disco ball, a fractal animation, a mushroom farm, and  
a turtle enclosure.

RAZZ

It's a mathematical framework that  
governs the occurrence and  
frequency of film elements like  
objects, characters, locations,  
sounds, colours, etc. into an  
insidious pattern.

DANNY

An insidious pattern?

RAZZ

An insidious pattern of parametric design systematically shaped to send the us into psychosis.

DANNY

Is Infinity involved?

RAZZ

What do you think?

DANNY

I think they're trying to... hurt me. I think they're trying to make me go insane.

RAZZ

They're trying to make all of us go insane. They're not even human Danny. They're nefarious arthropodal beings from another planet, and they're harnessing their power through the occult energies, brainwashing us, stealing our thoughts, manipulating us-

DANNY

But how?

RAZZ

Their movies! They've malevolently incorporated the system into every film they've ever produced. Through a series of occult rituals involving the repetition of the Number 8-

Razz points to an occult looking poster of the Number 8 in large print. He becomes more fearful as he speaks.

RAZZ

-the most ancient and important number known to man. Their system triggers the deepest parts of our psyche, sending us into a deep-trance hypnosis-

DANNY

The Number 8... I've been seeing the Number 8 everywhere.

RAZZ

Exactly! Why is it everywhere?  
Multiples of 8. Sets of 8. 8 sets  
of 8 sets. 8 images with the number  
8. The number 8 said 8 times!

He goes deep into thought. He's not even looking at Danny.

RAZZ

But, we're not supposed to talk  
about this are we? We're not even  
supposed to know this. We're  
considered schizophrenic, or  
apophenic, or fucking delusional if  
we investigate, but there's no  
hiding from the truth. We've  
discovered the code, and we've  
discovered that this code-

Razz takes a deep breath.

RAZZ

-has been written by a group of  
trans-dimensional arthropodal  
beings from another fucking planet.

Razz snorts the crushed pill off the table. Danny stares  
perplexedly at him. There's a long pause. Razz's eyes bulge  
out. He's tripping.

RAZZ

I think we're in a movie...

Razz goes deep. He becomes more frightened.

RAZZ

I think we're characters inside of  
a movie.

Razz looks at Danny and holds his arms tight. They're both  
frightened.

RAZZ

I'm a character man. I'm a fucking  
character. I'm in a fucking movie.  
This is a movie!

Razz completely breaks into an existential crisis.

RAZZ

This is a movie!!! Oh fuck! What  
the fuck. This is a fucking mov-

The scene cuts abruptly.

25

**INT. VHS STORE - DAY**  
**VHS**

25

Danny finds himself alone in a retro VHS rental store; every movie is a VHS. He frantically tries to make sense of the last scene.

DANNY  
... Okay... Okay... what was that?  
What the fuck was that?

He looks around, trying to find his bearings.

DANNY  
Okay... What is this? Where am I  
now?

He takes out the egg timer and sets it.

DANNY  
If I'm the writer, then I should  
know... I've written this scene for  
a reason. Now what reason is that?  
What is this scene about?

Danny looks around. He sees genre signs for [Drama], [Comedy], [Horror], and [Psychological Thrillers].

He notices a small sub-section entitled [Psycho-Cerebral Meta Thrillers]. He sees an even smaller subsection entitled [Infinity] with eight movies. He tilts his head sideways to read the titles.

He slides the movies out one by one: [A Man in a Room], [Spiral Death Trip], [Ladybug], [Chaos Riot], [The Opposite Within Itself], [The Black Figures], and finally [Deconstruction].

The cover of [Deconstruction] is all black with a red title. He reads the back. It's been produced by [Infinity Entertainment].

He reads ["Great use of the Number 8"] and ["An Octave of fun!"].

He brings the movie to the counter. No one's there. He rings the bell. He sees a red ashtray with two burning cigarettes. The egg timer goes off. He resets it.

DANNY  
Well... none of this is real  
anyways.



Danny looks at the front of the store. The front windows reveal an all-white world outside. There is absolutely nothing.

DANNY  
That's strange.

Danny's eyes shift to a TV mounted in the corner. It's playing a [Danny Retrospective]. Danny's being interviewed. A lower third fades in, it simply reads ["Danny"]. On screen, Danny smugly laughs with his INTERVIEWER.

DANNY  
That's strange too.

He continues watching. We see clips of him acting in all the films by Infinity. A lower third shows the title to each film.

During the [The Black Figures], we see the exact same shot of him standing in the VHS store watching the TV.

This horrifies Danny. He turns to the front exit, but four BLACK FIGURES stand in the way. They are fuzzy silhouetted figures with an electrical static-like boundary, and no internal detail.

DANNY  
Okay what the fuck are those.

Danny stares at them. They stare back.

DANNY  
Who are you!?

They give no response. He turns and quickly walks to the back exit. On his way out, he looks at the exit sign.

26      **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
*Deconstruction*

26

He immediately sets the egg timer. He briefly examines the Fractal-8 documents sprawled throughout the room (anyone who pauses now will see hidden rules to the Fractal-8 system).

He inserts [Deconstruction] into the VHS player. He presses play and fast-forwards the title sequence. He kneels down to watch.

The logos for [Existential Productions] and [Infinity Entertainment] fly by. The title [Deconstruction] appears in dark red over black.

Danny grabs a red notebook and writes [8]. He holds his pencil, ready to make notes.

#### DECONSTRUCTION

*Danny-Boy and his father are hunting. We never see the father's face. The two slowly stalk a deer. The boy aims his rifle and fires. The father pats the boy on the shoulder.*

*They approach the deer. The music builds with intensity. The boy stares at the animal; he can't look away. We cut closer; a ladybug crawls on the eyeball of the deer.*

*The scene cuts at the crescendo of the song. Ladybug, the girl, rides her bicycle down the centre of a residential road in bright daylight. We cut to the boy and his father driving in a red pickup truck behind the girl. Danny-Boy watches her.*

#### LIVING ROOM

The egg timer goes off. Danny quickly sets it again. He fast forwards the movie. He presses play.

#### DECONSTRUCTION

*Danny-Boy walks down the aisle of a church. He's at a funeral. We walks to the casket at the front and looks down. He cries. He sees his father - it's Danny.*

#### LIVING ROOM

Danny pauses the movie. He looks at himself on-screen. He examines closer. He sees the timer, it's ticking near the end.

27      **EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROADS - DAY**  
*Apophenia*

27

Danny is still holding the notebook and pencil. He sets the egg timer and begins to walk down BLOCK 1.

DANNY

Okay, roughly every two minutes,  
 I'm in a new place.

He looks up, he sees the plane, he writes [1 - Plane].

DANNY

And that probably means we've cut  
 to a new scene. And that's probably  
 somehow connected to the Number 8.

He walks faster. He sees the Black Cat and the Carpenter. He writes [2 - Black Cat] and [3 - Carpenter]. He reads the addresses and sees the stop sign. He writes [4 - Addresses] and [5 - Stop Sign].

(NOTE: We never actually see odd numbers on the list).

DANNY

Everything I'm seeing is connected  
to the Number 8.

At the centre of the intersection, he sees the crows on BLOCK 2B and writes [6 - Crows]. He walks down BLOCK 2A.

DANNY

If I can see the structure or the  
system that's governing... this,  
then I can break free from...  
this... and make sense of whatever  
the fuck is going on.

He stops midway down BLOCK 2A and looks at the inflatable pool. He writes [7 - Pool]. His egg timer goes off. He immediately resets it. The church bells ring. Danny sees them in the distance. He writes [8 - Church Bells].

Standing at the next intersection, he looks down BLOCK 3B. The black van drives past him - the timing of the elements are off because he's walked faster than last time - he realizes this and looks back at the inflatable pool.

He's puzzled. He hovers the pencil over his notebook. His hand involuntarily shakes. He closes his notebook and continues his walk.

Halfway up, Ladybug rides past him. He hears an ice cream truck in the distance.

28

# **INT. BOOK STORE - DAY**

*Incunabulum*

28

Danny stands in a used book store overcrowded with books.

DANNY

Okay... I'm in a book store.

He sets the egg timer and walks through, carrying his notebook. He finds himself in the [Philosophy] section.

DANNY

Philosophy. Of course... We've established that this film is philosophical. So I'm responding to things that catch my attention.

He looks down and sees a book [*Path to Psychosis*].

DANNY

Like *Path to Psychosis*.

He opens the book and flips through. Italicized is the line: [You're going through a deeply significant transitional period]. Danny puts the book down and flips through a stack of books.

He sees: [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*], [*The Myth of Sisyphus*], [*Godel, Escher, Bach*], and [*Aristotle's Poetics*].

DANNY

Everything I'm seeing, I'm seeing for a reason.

He opens [*Notes from Underground*]. He reads the line: [The overly conscious man].

DANNY

What I see, and how I see it, I see only in accord to the rules of the system.

He opens [*Hermetic Corpus*]. He flips through and finds the chapter entitled [The Number 8]. He reads [The Ogdoadic Sigil of Infinite Rebirth] and [*Ordo aurum solis*].

He sees an image of the Great Star (an eight-sided occult star).

The egg timer rings. He quickly resets it and continues flipping through the book.

He sees an Ouroboros illustration.

DANNY

It's not about the objects. The objects are meaningless in of themselves. It's about the pattern of the objects. The order in which the objects occur.

He sees a rectangle version of the all-seeing eye.

He reads [*Unus mundus*. One world. The underlying base from which all things emerge and to which all things return.].

He reads: [The Chrysopeia], [The Transmutation of the Prima Materia], [The Philosopher's Stone], [The Elixir of Life], [Theurgy], [Henosis], [Chrysopeia], [Prisca Theologia].

DANNY

Everything we feel, the rising and falling tension of a film, is independent of the content. These words mean nothing in of themselves. We only feel what we feel due to the order of these words.

He sees a book called [*The System of Systems*] written by [Infinity].

DANNY

Seeing this book now means something. Whatever I read out loud now, means something, but only in reference to the story. Inherently, these words are meaningless.

He opens the book and reads aloud.

DANNY

(reading)

Life is suffering. What better aim than immortality, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life. This is the quest of enlightenment, the quest of Godhood, and through this great work, we may finally access The Monad.

Danny is somewhat frightened by what he just read. He plays it off.

DANNY

See... it's all bullshit.

29

**INT. THE VOID - NIGHT**

*Turtles All the Way Down*

29

Danny immediately sets the egg timer.

RAZZ

This is what they want Danny! This is what they want!

Razz paces back and forth in the corner. He's having an existential meltdown.

RAZZ

They make you believe in all this meaning! But nothing means anything!

DANNY

What do you mean?

Danny inches closer to Razz. He looks at the other psychonauts - they're uninterested, doing their own thing. One of them has completed the black-and-white Rubik's cube.

RAZZ

Meaning! This means something doesn't it? The things we say, the things we do. The job, the kids, the retirement, all disguised as meaning. But meaning is only meaning in reference to the system. And guess what? They built the system. They designed the whole god damn enterprise. They programmed the rules. They chose our likes and dislikes. Everything we value is a manifestation of their control.

DANNY

Yes. But why?

RAZZ

They use the system to express what they want you to see, where they want you to be. Like here-

Razz points to his turtles. A turtle is standing on the back of a larger turtle standing on the back of an even larger turtle.

RAZZ

-Think about it!

Danny's timer goes off; he ignores it.

DANNY

But *why* do they want this to be the story? Let's just say they are in control, let's just say they are the writers. I can't understand why they'd be telling *this* story?

RAZZ

To control us!

DANNY

I know, but listen. Their story isn't about anything. So far their story seems to be about the story itself, or the meaninglessness of the story. It's as if the film is deconstructing itself, turning in on itself. And maybe that's not supposed to happen. Maybe we're actually affecting the story. Maybe we're actually departing from the story.

Razz lets this thought sink in.

RAZZ

But... okay... fuck... what if that's not a good thing?... what if we're not supposed to depart from the story? What if this is a bad thing!? What if knowing what we know is bad? I think consciousness is a bad thing. We're in unknown territory here! We're too free, too unlocked. We fucked up. We went too deep. We shouldn't be here.

Danny nervously watches Razz implode. Razz paces faster and faster. He's losing it.

RAZZ

We're too conscious. We're too conscious. We're too conscious. We're too conscious. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

Razz rushes to his drawer, grabs a pistol, immediately points it to his own head, and fires.

Danny's frozen in astonishment. He looks at the corpse. His eyes shift to the other psychonauts; they're unaffected, as if nothing out-of-the-ordinary happened.

30      **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
*The Fractal Geometry of Nature*

30

Parasites crawl around in a microscopic world.

DANNY (O.S.)

What... What!?

Danny breathes heavily. An anxiety attack is erupting.

DANNY (O.S.)  
Where am I!? What is this!?

Danny lifts his head. He realizes he's been looking through a microscope. He's relieved. He takes a deep breath and tries to make sense of everything.

DANNY  
Okay... that's fine... He's not a person. He was just a character.  
Okay... okay... No problem... what the fuck... okay. Let's figure this out... Just depart from the story. Just get out of the story. Just leave the story! You're in a story. Break free, break free, break free, break free... Okay... The fractal system. The Number 8.

He grabs a notebook and pencil and begins solving the Fractal-8 system.

He writes: [1,2,4,8,16,32,64,128], [128 seconds/scene], [64 scenes?], [8 main characters].

DANNY  
What does this all mean?

He looks for clues around the room. He reads sticky notes: [Port Lester], [Black Vans], [Black Hole], [Capture Drone].

He continues writing: [8 Objects], [8 Movies], [8 Books], [8 Masks].

DANNY  
(under his breath)  
What does this mean, what does this mean, what does this mean...

He reads more notes: [Ancient Narratology], [The Eternal Story], [The Hero's search for signs], [Semiotics], [Gifts], [He's written himself to forget], [Coma], [Limitations of knowledge].

He writes: [Apartment - 4], [Infinity - 4], [The Void - 2], [Book Store].

He reads: [Chaos], [The Monad], [8 Sessions], [Rituals], [Never use the pink sticky], [Ladybug], [Femininity], [Occult].

He reads: [Story about Everything], [The Significant Idea], [Pencil eye stab], [Psychonauts], [Hamartia], [Autopoiesis], [Hypnosis], [Why does existence exist?].



He rubs his eyes; he's getting lost in the mania of notes.

DANNY

Shots. What about shots?

He writes: [Can Danny ever know the shots?], [Angle], [Shot Length], [Number of cuts?].

Danny stands. His eyes curiously shift with each cut. He tries to predict when the cuts will happen; he doesn't succeed.

31

**INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

31

*Hypnosis*

Danny is sitting across from the Psychologist, who's oddly chugging an entire bottle of water. He ignores the Psychologist.

PSYCHOLOGIST

As I was saying, your lack of female characters is an alarming indication that you suffer from some deep-seated issue regarding femininity.

Danny completely ignores him. He stands and explores the room with his notebook open, taking notes of objects in the room.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Being that your development rests on the successive differentiation of your psyche - which really is the addition of new characters - I highly suggest that you add a female character. I'd even suggest you make her the eighth character, seeing as you love the Number 8 so much.

Danny gets distracted by the tribal masks mounted on the wall. The Psychologist sees that he's not listening. He stands and turns to Danny.

PSYCHOLOGIST

(referring to the masks)

Funny, there's eight masks on the wall... I suppose in a way, we're all characters, wearing masks, playing roles that were written for us long ago.

Danny turns and looks at the Psychologist with a blank stare.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
(laughs)  
Please forgive my divergence.

Danny says nothing.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
Danny, I get that Act 2 includes the so-called "fun and games" stage - which is really just an opportunity for writers to utilize ideas they've refused to discard, forcing them into unimportant and disconnected sequences - but let's be authentic here. All of this feels like filler, doesn't it?

The Psychologist slowly inches toward Danny. He speaks sternly yet compassionately. He's precise with his words and looks Danny dead in the eyes.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
This is nothing more than an unconscious stalling process. The completion of your film threatens your very existence as a writer. To develop a project is to choose from an infinite number of possibilities. And so the infinite must be reduced to the finite. But the writer loves far too deeply the temptations of infinity.

The pendulum clock grows louder; Danny can't help but look at it. The Psychologist closes in. They're almost nose to nose.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
In fact, it is the young writer that lives endlessly and infinitely in potential, never in conviction, never courageously saying anything at all, never claiming "this is who I am", "this is what I believe in".

The Psychologist turns around. He speaks to the room now. Danny looks at the pendulum clock. The ticks become louder.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
Instead, your insecure lack of conviction and endless desire for potential means you could be anything.

(MORE)

PSYCHOLOGIST (CONT'D)  
 Your film could be anything, which  
 would make it a film about  
 everything; and any film about  
 everything is really a film about  
 nothing.

The ticks are thunderous now. Danny is drawn into the clock;  
 he stares closely at it.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
 In the practice of hypnotherapy, we  
 have a saying, "don't let the truth  
 get in the way of a good story".

32      **EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY**  
*Katabasis*

32

The thunderous ticking of the clock continues. Danny sees  
 Danny-Boy playing dice by himself. He watches him for a  
 moment, and then walks over.

The ticking fades out. Danny kneels down. The boy looks up.  
 They have a moment.

BOY  
 Do you want to play this game with  
 me?

Danny looks at the dice - one green and one purple.

BOY  
 It's called "roll a seven, go to  
 heaven, quit and go to hell"

The boy puts the dice in Danny's hands. Danny looks at the  
 dice.

BOY  
 It's easy. If you roll a seven you  
 go to heaven and if you quit, you  
 go to hell... Go ahead, roll.

Danny rolls the dice. No seven.

BOY  
 You can roll again.

Danny-Boy puts the dice in Danny's hands. He rolls again. No  
 seven.

BOY  
 Maybe you want to keep rolling.

Danny rolls again, and again, and again. No seven.

He rolls more. Nothing. He inspects the dice. He's getting nervous.

He rolls more - each roll more intense than the last. The ticking comes back; it gets louder.

He shakes quicker and rolls quicker. Roll after roll, he still cannot land a seven.

The child innocently watches. Danny is sweating. Danny rolls rapidly. Roll after roll. Still nothing. The ticking is thunderous now.

The intensity builds and then cuts suddenly. No seven.

33

**INT. STAGE - DAY**

33

*All the World's Danny's Stage*

Danny stands at the centre of a dark empty stage. A spotlight turns on. The surrounding darkness has a shifting hell-like red glow.

He observes his hands and then the rest of his body. The fear is disappearing. He looks around. He sees only darkness.

He's about to speak (The camera angle will drastically change with each cut in his monologue). He's slow and stoic:

DANNY

I'm a character inside of a film. I understand now. Absolutely nothing is real. My childhood, my eternal contract. It's nothing but a story.

-

DANNY

I am a character inside of Systems. Nothing more.

-

DANNY

Everything I'm saying *right now* has been written. I am a conduit for the writer's voice. Every syllable I utter has been determined by the writer. The writer has written me to say everything I'm saying *right now*.

-

DANNY

But, I feel like I'm the writer. If  
I want to say these words, or move  
my hand-

He raises his hand.

DANNY

-I move my hand. I feel like I have  
free will.

-

DANNY

But I'm thrown around too much. I'm  
a puppet.

He looks out. We see only darkness.

DANNY

I didn't choose to be here.

-

DANNY

I'm only here because the writer  
wants me to be here, to have me say  
the things I'm saying.

-

DANNY

But he's not really a good writer,  
is he?

-

DANNY

He's using this scene to  
communicate directly with his  
audience.

-

DANNY

It's poor exposition. Don't just  
tell your audience what you want  
them to know. Show them! What  
happened to show not tell?

-

DANNY

Maybe it's not for the audience?  
Maybe it's for me?

-

DANNY

Maybe the more I hear these words,  
the more conscious I become?

-

DANNY

So he's written this monologue as a  
tool?

-

DANNY

But just because I say these words,  
just because I resemble someone  
with consciousness, does that mean  
I have consciousness? Is appearance  
the only requirement?

-

DANNY

Do I actually have consciousness?

-

DANNY

Or does it just look like it?

34.1 **EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROADS - DAY**  
*The Arbitrary Nature of Elements*

34.1

Once again Danny stands on BLOCK 1. He doesn't miss a beat,  
he immediately walks and continues his monologue.

DANNY

I feel conscious.

He looks up at the plane.

DANNY

My decisions feel like *my*  
decisions... But I know they're  
controlled by the system.

He sees the black cat.

DANNY  
An arbitrary system.

He looks at the carpenter.

DANNY  
Why the Number 8? It's an arbitrary number.

He looks at the addresses.

DANNY  
But that's the point of Systems. To express the arbitrary nature of meaning.

He sees the stop sign and the crows. He goes down BLOCK 2A.

DANNY  
We find meaning in Systems because the system tricks us into thinking there's meaning.

He sees the inflatable pool.

DANNY  
Audiences love connecting dots, and in Systems, the dots are spoon fed to them, but only to prove a point. The dots have no meaning. This film has no meaning.

At the second intersection, the church bells ring. He continues down BLOCK 3A.

DANNY  
It's just a mixture of concepts, collected over time by a writer, and strung together based upon some arbitrary pattern.

He looks back and sees the black van drive across the previous intersection. He continues forward.

DANNY  
This is the existential exercise! To understand that *this* could mean anything!

34.2 **EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROADS / CHURCH - DAY**  
*The Arbitrary Nature of Elements*

34.2

He makes it to the end of BLOCK 3A. There's a church across the street. An ice cream truck selling only red ice cream pulls up beside the church. Ladybug rides up to the ice cream truck. We can't see her; she's on the other side of the truck.

DANNY  
 I could be the writer if I wanted.  
 I could simply *choose* to be the  
 writer, because I can make this  
 mean whatever the fuck I want!

Danny marches toward the ice cream truck.

DANNY  
 So I'm saying it! I am the writer!  
 I am in control!

He passes the church sign. It reads [Hell is a place where nothing connects with nothing - T.S. Eliot].

DANNY  
 I decide where I go. I decide what  
 I look at-

Danny gets to the other side of the ice cream truck; he freezes. He sees the corpse of Ladybug, massacred, sprawled beside the ice cream truck. Blood is splattered all over her and across the side of the truck. The Devil stands beside her corpse.

35 **INT. CHILDHOOD HOME / LIVING ROOM - DAY**  
*Desideratum*

35

We're watching a kids television show. We cut to Danny, who finds himself watching it. He anxiously turns around.

DANNY  
 Okay... Okay... Okay... What the  
 fuck... fuck... Okay...

He frantically reasons with himself. He tries to brush off the last scene.

DANNY  
 Okay... Nothing means anything. I  
 choose my meaning!

He grabs the screenplay and reads: [He sees the corpse of Ladybug, massacred, sprawled beside the ice cream truck.



The Devil stands beside her body. CUT: / INT. CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY].

DANNY  
I'm in control. I'm in control of  
the scene!

There's a knock on the door. Danny ignores it.

DANNY  
I'm the writer! Helloooo I'm  
speaking to you. I am the writer,  
communicating to you, the audience.  
You're listening to the words I've  
written.

There's another knock. He sees a sticky note [Danny ignores the knock]. Danny rips the sticky note off the wall.

DANNY  
This is a direct transmission of  
information from *me*, the writer of  
this film, to *you*, the audience!  
Why haven't I just communicated  
directly to you as I am now!?

There's another knock.

DANNY  
God damnit! Okay... There is an  
audience, and you are all watching  
this movie right now, listening to  
the words I'm saying-

There's another knock.

DANNY  
Fuck!

Danny sees a sticky note [ANSWER THE DOOR]. He rips the note off the wall. He looks back and sees the note has magically returned. He rips it off again. It's returned.

There's another knock. He stares at the note. He opens the door. TWO DELIVERY MEN stand with a package - a present with shiny green gift-wrap and a purple bow.

DELIVERY MAN 1  
Are you Danny?

DELIVERY MAN 2  
You don't need to answer that.

DELIVERY MAN 1  
We know you're Danny.

DELIVERY MAN 2  
Here.

DELIVERY MAN 1  
Just take it.

They give him the package.

DELIVERY MAN 2  
Thanks.

Danny slams the door. He throws the package across the room.  
He marches to a stack of sticky notes.

DANNY  
Okay here we go!

He writes [Lake] and adds it to the wall.

DANNY  
The next scene is going to be a  
lake-

He sees it's been replaced with [Hell]. He rips it off and  
re-writes [Lake].

DANNY  
The next scene is going to be a  
lake!

He adds it to the wall. It's been replaced with [Hell].

DANNY  
I am the writer!

He writes [Lake] again, but as he's writing it, he sees it's  
been changed to [Hell]. He crumples it. He keeps his eyes  
wide-open this time.

He slowly writes [Lake]. He stares at the note as he carries  
it to the wall. He sticks it to the wall, and slowly backs  
away, keeping his eyes glued to the note. It's still [Lake].  
He blinks once. It's changed to [Hell].

DANNY  
God damnit! The next scene is going  
to be a lake. A beautiful fucking  
lake, with pretty trees, and cute  
little fucking animals. This is a  
declaration to the audience. The  
next scene is going be hell!

He realizes he's just said hell instead of lake.

36      **INT. HELL / ARCADE - DAY**  
*Diabolical Robot Animals*

36

Danny finds himself alone in the cafeteria of a retro arcade. The sounds of game machines, carnival music, and children's laughter juxtaposes the horrifying screams of souls being tortured. A hell-like red glow permeates the space.

Red curtains slide open, revealing a band of eight cheesy animatronic animals. A sign above them reads [Musical Animal Interlude].

Danny anxiously watches. They sing a dark and demonic song:

(Note: Example lyric below).

ANIMALS  
*Danny boy's been stuck in hell.  
 Cause the man upstairs  
 Gave us his soul to sell...*

Danny looks for an escape; there is an exit on both sides of the room.

Danny runs through an exit as he simultaneously enters the room from the other side. He looks at the animals. They continue their song.

He tries again, but another loop occurs. He reverses his direction, but once again, another loop occurs.

He panics and sprints, loop after loop. He cannot escape.

DANNY  
 I'M THE WRITER!!!!

37.1      **EXT. RESIDENTIAL ROADS - DAY**  
*Sub-liberation*

37.1

Danny sprints down BLOCK 1. We hear the plane but he doesn't look up.

He doesn't look at the carpenter, or the black cat, or the addresses, or the stop sign.

He gets to the first intersection in record time. He looks at the crows down BLOCK 2B and takes this route (for the first time).

He sprints to the next intersection. The black van drives past him. He sprints down BLOCK 3B.

He gets to the corner and turns down BLOCK 4B. As he turns, he's confronted by the four Black Figures. He sprints towards them.

The scene abruptly cuts.

37.2

**WHITE WORLD**

37.2

*Sub-liberation*

We see only white. We can hear Danny.

DANNY (V.O.)  
What... Is this it!?... I did it.  
I've gone off the script. I did it!

PHIL (V.O.)  
He did it!

LARRY (V.O.)  
He did it!

Phil and Larry stay silent and wait for Danny to speak.

DANNY (V.O.)  
Hello?

PHIL (V.O.)  
Way to go Danny!

LARRY (V.O.)  
You did it!

Phil and Larry blow party horns.

DANNY (V.O.)  
What?

PHIL (V.O.)  
(Disappointedly)  
What?

LARRY (V.O.)  
What?

DANNY (V.O.)  
Fuck.

PHIL (V.O.)  
Sorry bud.

LARRY (V.O.)  
We upset you.

PHIL (V.O.)  
We thought you'd like the party  
horns.

LARRY (V.O.)  
We get it.

PHIL (V.O.)  
You want Danny to win at this point  
in the film.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Give him hope.

PHIL (V.O.)  
Classic end of Act 2 kinda move.

LARRY (V.O.)  
He's departed from the screenplay  
folks!

PHIL (V.O.)  
Hallelujah! He did it!

LARRY (V.O.)  
Film's over.

PHIL (V.O.)  
Nothing else to see here.

DANNY (V.O.)  
(frazzled)  
I'm the writer... I'm a  
character... I'm the writer... I'm  
a chara-.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Shut up Danny.

PHIL (V.O.)  
Are you going to talk the whole  
film?

LARRY (V.O.)  
Let's get on with the story.

PHIL (V.O.)  
This gags not gonna last anyways.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Plus it's kinda boring.

They're silent for a moment.

PHIL (V.O.)  
(sighs)  
Okay.

LARRY (V.O.)  
We'll just wait.

They remain silent until the scene eventually cuts.

38      **INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT**  
Right on Cue

38

Phil and Larry slide forward a tourism pamphlet for the serene town of [Port Lester]. They're all sitting down at their table full of documents and beer.

PHIL  
Right on cue.

LARRY  
Check it out.

PHIL  
This place was made for you.

LARRY  
A real writer's retreat.

PHIL  
We thought we'd treat you.

LARRY  
The last scene was kinda rough.

PHIL  
Have a look.

LARRY  
They have a lake...

They wait for a response. Danny just stares at them. An unusual and constant laughter permeates the room. Danny's certainties are crumbling. Madness brews inside.

PHIL  
Oh, the package!

LARRY  
The package!

PHIL  
You didn't open it yet did you?

LARRY  
(to Phil)  
Of course he didn't.

PHIL  
We don't even know what's in there!

LARRY  
Honestly, we still haven't decided.

PHIL  
Not yet at least.

LARRY  
We know we want to give you  
something.

PHIL  
Right, we just read somewhere-

Phil flips through some documents. Danny clenches his fists.  
He's about to break.

LARRY  
That the hero needs to receive a  
gift!

PHIL  
(reading)  
Yes! The hero needs to receive a  
gift.

LARRY  
We just don't know what it is yet.

Danny freaks out! He bursts from his seat, grabs a pool cue,  
and smashes the jukebox.

PHIL  
Wow Danny!

LARRY  
Way to go!

They stand up.

PHIL  
I love the initiative.

LARRY  
(to Phil)  
It's liberating isn't it.

Danny swings the pool cue at them twice. They back up.

PHIL  
Nice swing!

LARRY  
Make sure you follow through!

DANNY  
Nothing means anything. I could  
kill both of you. I could murder  
both of you and it wouldn't matter  
because this doesn't matter because  
this isn't real. It's all a story.  
This is a movie.

PHIL  
Wow I love it!

LARRY  
Me too!

DANNY  
We're inside of a movie called  
Systems.

PHIL  
Yes!

LARRY  
Exactly!

PHIL  
(cheers)  
To Systems!

LARRY  
(cheers)  
To Systems!

They clang their beers together. Danny swings and knocks the  
beer out of their hands.

DANNY  
Nothing matters. It's all  
meaningless.

Danny breaks the pool cue over the table.



PHIL  
Then why are you so angry?

LARRY  
Yeah why are you so angry?

PHIL  
Clearly the meaninglessness of this  
means something to you.

They inch their way closer to him.

LARRY  
Do you get that?

PHIL  
Clearly the meaninglessness of this  
*means* something to you.

LARRY  
Do you get it?

Danny is frazzled. He lets off his pool cue.

PHIL  
I don't think he's free.

LARRY  
Definitely not liberated.

PHIL  
Maybe he should try and leave.

LARRY  
Yeah why don't you try and leave?

PHIL  
(taunting)  
Just leave the scene Danny.

LARRY  
(taunting)  
See how much control you really  
have.

PHIL  
You are the writer after all.

LARRY  
Danny just leave the scene!

PHIL  
Look at the door!

LARRY

At least leave the room.

Danny turns around. He tries to open the door. It's locked.  
Phil and Larry laugh.

PHIL

You are a character.

LARRY

You got that right.

PHIL

But you're not the writer.

LARRY

No! We are!

Danny repeatedly tugs at the door with all of his might.

PHIL

We are Phil and Larry.

LARRY

The evil producers.

They perform childish taunts and make silly monster faces.  
Danny tries harder to open the door.

PHIL

And we're making you go crazy!

LARRY

We're gonna make you kill yourself!

PHIL

Did you hear that Danny!?

LARRY

You're gonna kill yourself!

PHIL

Kill yourself Danny!

LARRY

Go crazy!

Danny grabs the broken pool cue and charges Phil and Larry.  
He stabs Phil in the stomach repeatedly. Phil laughs hysterically. Blood splashes everywhere. Larry watches and laughs.

39.1 INT. HOSPITAL / ROOM - DAY  
Asylum

39.1

Danny FADES IN. He's lying in the same all-white hospital room as before. The TV across from him displays the same shot we see (we're watching a feedback loop). The Psychologist stands over him.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Well Danny, I don't know how to put this any other way, but... you've gone crazy. You've absolutely lost your mind. You've lost your marbles as they say. Gone. Done. It's over. I'm sorry but, you're now clinically insane.

He FADES OUT and BACK IN again. The Psychologist is gone. Jesse is sitting in the corner. He seems to wake up as Danny wakes up.

JESSE

I had the strangest dream... I was dreaming that I dreamt I was dreaming about a dream I dreamt.

He FADES OUT and BACK IN again. Jesse is gone. Phil and Larry stand over him. Phil grabs his stomach in a humorous way.

PHIL

Ouch Danny!

LARRY

Ouch!

PHIL

You really got me.

LARRY

Looks like it hurt. Does it hurt?

PHIL

No it doesn't hurt.

LARRY

It doesn't hurt Danny.

He almost fades out.

PHIL

Oh we're losing him!

LARRY

We're losing him!

They slap his face. He's back in.

PHIL

Danny!

LARRY

Tell me what scene did you want  
this to be?

They laugh.

PHIL

Yeah you're in charge now aren't  
you?

LARRY

Command us Danny!

PHIL

What should we say!?

LARRY

(sarcastically)  
Or maybe you've planned all this!

PHIL

(sarcastically)  
Yeah maybe you wrote yourself to be  
unconscious in a hospital.

They laugh. They check their watches.

LARRY

Listen Danny we gotta get through  
this scene.

PHIL

We figured out your gift!

LARRY

Scrap the package from the other  
scene.

PHIL

We're not going to use that.

LARRY

The audience will never find out  
what's inside.

PHIL

Just forget about it.

LARRY  
Your gift is something else...

PHIL  
The operation Danny!

LARRY  
The operation is complete!

They hold up two mirrors in such a way that Danny can see the top of his head. We see a second scar running vertically across the horizontal scar. A perfect cross is formed.

PHIL  
This is your gift!

The CAPTURE DRONE, hovers behind Phil and Larry. It appears to be a simple silver ball: metallic, shiny, and flush without any accessory detail whatsoever - but it's really a state-of-the-art camera drone with impeccable speed and agility.

LARRY  
Don't worry.

PHIL  
You don't have to do a thing.

We cut to the vantage of the capture drone. The drone then re-enters the frame and floats to the opposite position, readying itself for the reverse angle.

LARRY  
Just react as you normally would.

PHIL  
Yeah how would Danny react?

Danny begins to fade out.

LARRY  
Oh that's perfect!

PHIL  
I love it!

Danny FADES OUT.

39.2     **INT. HOSPITAL / HALLWAY - DAY**  
         *Asylum*

39.2

He FADES IN. The nurse pushes Danny in a wheelchair. They pass mental patients and doctors, all with shaven heads.

The capture drone keeps a close proximity. Occasionally, we cut to angles from the drone. Phil and Larry follow.

LARRY  
Now don't panic.

PHIL  
It's going to follow you everywhere  
you go.

LARRY  
This is real immersion Danny.

PHIL  
Pure cinema.

LARRY  
No actors. No script.

PHIL  
No we're done with actors.

LARRY  
Why would we hire actors to play  
you?

PHIL  
You're you!

LARRY  
You're literally the best you.

PHIL  
But we need you to be you.

LARRY  
Yes really step into the shoes of  
your character.

39.3 **EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**  
*Asylum*

39.3

He's wheeled down the pathway, once again toward the black van. The drone captures familiar shots from the first hospital scene. The building sign reads [Infinity Tech].

Danny wants free. He's ready to implode. Finally he screams!

DANNY  
Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.

He bursts from the wheelchair and sprints across the grass, running for the forest that surrounds the hospital.

The capture drone follows. The building sign has changed to [Infinity Asylum].

40.1 **EXT. FOREST - DAY**

40.1

*Capture Drone*

Danny haphazardly sprints through the forest. He anxiously looks over his shoulder. The capture drone follows him with ease, speeding up and slowing down to capture shots.

Danny panics and swings at the drone as he runs; it simply floats back. He takes an elaborate path to lose the drone; it doesn't work.

He stops running, grabs a large branch, and swings at the drone. The drone seems to taunt him, staying just out of reach.

Danny sees a highway. He runs for the tree-line.

40.2 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

40.2

*Capture Drone*

He runs onto the vacant highway. A vehicle approaches in the distance; it's the red semi. He desperately flags it down. A sign behind him reads [Port Lester: 128]. The truck comes to a daunting stop.

The weight of Danny's fate sinks in. He sees the drone hover from a distance. He assesses both of his options. He chooses to open the door to the truck.

41.1 **INT. RED SEMI - DAY**

41.1

*Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood*

Danny travels with LESTER, a cowboy dressed in all-black attire. He wears an authoritative cowboy hat with black aviators. Opera plays on the radio. A white rabbit's foot dangles from the mirror.

LESTER

Including so much technology dates  
your film.

Lester spits chewing tobacco into a spittoon.

LESTER

You want Systems to be timeless. So  
try this, incorporate technologies  
from every time period.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

Never commit to any single period of time. Never be a part of one conversation as they say. You should have me say this. Hell, I'll give you a whole interlude if you want. I'll call it: Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood.

The title [Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood] appears. Danny seems to see the title.

The scene is cut like a montage. Lester's monologue is one continuous piece, and yet the entire day plays out; we see different landscapes over many passing hours. Danny remains in a fugue state.

LESTER

Technology is the extension of human functionality. Consciousness no longer submits purely to the sovereignty of its local body.

They drive past a roadside memorial with an upside down cross and a picture of Danny.

LESTER

Instead, we extend our functionalities out into the world, superseding our bodies' limitations through technology. Subject extends itself to object.

Danny notices Lester's diegetic dialogue is overlapping and interweaving with a non-diegetic voiceover.

They drive past a sign that reads [Vision Limited].

LESTER

Man now finds himself somewhere between animal and god.

They drive past a dead deer.

LESTER

As consciousness perpetually unshackles itself from its biological prison, our technologies become so liberating, so enfranchising, that all of our limitations, which were originally written in stone by some biological code, no longer obstruct us from our truest potential of absolute-consciousness, or Godhood.



Danny notices the capture drone is following the truck.

41.2     **INT. RED SEMI - NIGHT**     41.2  
*Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood*

It's night. Lester's monologue continues as if no temporal change has occurred. An ambulance drives toward them in the opposite lane. The red lights flash across their faces.

LESTER  
 This is the end of ends. The  
 achievement of Godhood.

41.3     **INT. RED SEMI / RAILROAD CROSSING - NIGHT**     41.3  
*Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood*

They're stopped at a railroad crossing. Red lights flash across their faces. It's raining.

LESTER  
 All actions performed are for some  
 end. It follows that there must be  
 an end of ends. A reason for all  
 reasons. An objective of all  
 objectives.

41.4     **INT. RED SEMI / PORT LESTER - NIGHT**     41.4  
*Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood*

They drive past a welcome sign that reads [Port Lester: The locals love it here!].

LESTER  
 This is Godhood. This goes beyond  
 the overman. This grand scheme, or  
 eternal narrative, or prisca  
 theologia is immanent.

41.5     **INT. RED SEMI / MOTEL - NIGHT**     41.5  
*Consciousness, Technology, and Godhood*

The truck stops outside a motel with glowing neon sign that reads [Vacancy]. The red light glows on their faces.

LESTER  
 Godhood is the motivation behind  
 each and every one of man's  
 actions.

42

**INT. MOTEL - NIGHT**  
*Transhuman Ascension*

42

Danny stands in a motel room. He's looking out the window at the glowing neon sign.

LESTER (V.O.)  
Say your objective is to drink a  
cup of coffee.

He turns at the sound of Lester's voice. He seems to hear Lester's voiceover.

LESTER (V.O.)  
It begins as a concept, and through  
time, transitions into a real lived  
experience.

He sees: two beds, a painting of a diner, a full cup of steaming coffee, and an 80's TV playing a creepy black-and-white religious film.

LESTER (V.O.)  
The concept transposes action; and  
just like coffee, all objectives  
follow suit.

There's a knock on the door. It's hard to concentrate. He struggles with the presence of a god-like narrator. He makes his way to the door.

LESTER (V.O.)  
The concept of God is no exception.  
God was at first worshipped like a  
sip of coffee, an abstraction  
external to ourselves, willed and  
manifested until the eventual end.

He looks through the peephole and sees TWO DETECTIVES in black trench coats (the same actors as the Delivery Men).

LESTER (V.O.)  
Collectively, macroscopically, and  
unconsciously, we are becoming God,  
or, the concept of concepts. There  
is no greater concept. If you think  
of a concept greater, *that's* the  
concept.

Danny opens the door. The voiceover abruptly stops.

DETECTIVE 1  
Are you Danny?

DANNY

... I-

DETECTIVE 2

(interrupting)

We know who you are.

DETECTIVE 1

You don't need to answer that.

DETECTIVE 2

Just listen. You see this girl.

They show him a polaroid picture of Ladybug.

DETECTIVE 1

She was last seen riding a bicycle.

DETECTIVE 2

Wearing a dress like a ladybug.

DETECTIVE 1

We're investigating her  
whereabouts.

DETECTIVE 2

And we have reason to believe you  
may be involved.

Danny just looks at them. He begins to close the door. They do nothing. He closes it all the way. He looks through the peephole; they're still standing, looking at the door. After a few moments, they turn and walk away.

LESTER (V.O.)

(continues)

When the intention of the end is  
recognized, as it is now,  
consciousness becomes conscious of  
itself.

Danny looks at the room. He walks to the dresser and opens a drawer. He finds a bible. He opens a second drawer and finds a red notebook.

LESTER (V.O.)

No longer are we in the slumbers of  
the subconscious, but at the  
forefront of conscious thought.

He reads: [Lester: Threshold Guardian], [The atom sees  
itself], [Eschatology], [Can you make a film about  
everything?].

LESTER (V.O.)

Sovereignty will soon extend to the most foreign and extraneous of technological systems. The human will be unrecognizable. Godhood will not appear human. The human disappears.

43

**EXT. PORT LESTER - DAY**

43

*Transhuman Annihilation*

Danny walks down the centre of the main strip (shots are similar to the Residential Roads scenes). Port Lester is a small and idyllic port town.

LESTER (V.O.)

Thus, the end of becoming is our death.

Danny looks at the sky; he can hear Lester's voice.

LESTER (V.O.)

Even death is built into immortality. Even the finite is built into the infinite.

Danny tries to ignore Lester; he walks faster. The capture drone follows Danny in the background.

LESTER (V.O.)

All development is simultaneously our suicide. If we're on a path to the inevitable end, how do we cope?

DANNY

Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop.

LESTER (V.O.)

Do not dwell in the despair of consciousness. Illuminate the tragic truth instead. Liberate yourself.

DANNY

Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop, stop.

LESTER (V.O.)

Go out with a bang! We want a story. That's the point. Give us a show.

DANNY

Stop talking.

LESTER (V.O.)  
Life is absurd, so stop making it  
mean something.

DANNY  
No, stop!

LESTER (V.O.)  
Absolute order in a universe of  
inherent chaos is absurd.

DANNY  
Stop!

LESTER (V.O.)  
We can run, but we cannot hide from  
the end.

DANNY  
Shut up! Stop talking!

Danny grabs his head. He twists and jerks his body like a  
madman.

LESTER (V.O.)  
The point isn't to ignore death,  
but to embrace it.

DANNY  
No!

LESTER (V.O.)  
We cannot change the fact that  
there is an ending, we can only  
change how we deal with that  
ending.

DANNY  
Just stop, please stop talking.

LESTER (V.O.)  
Danny does not live life to the  
fullest. He swells and dwells in  
the suffering of consciousness and  
now his story is a tragedy.

DANNY  
No.

LESTER (V.O.)  
This is the point.

DANNY  
No.

LESTER (V.O.)  
 Live life to the fullest. Embrace  
 the impossibility of knowledge.  
 Embrace the paradoxes and the  
 meaninglessness of it all.

He grabs his head and kneels down.

DANNY  
 Think, think, think, think.

LESTER (V.O.)  
 Act, act, act, act.

DANNY  
 Think!

LESTER (V.O.)  
 Live!

DANNY  
 Shut up!!!

He bursts up and continues walking.

LESTER (V.O.)  
 Revolt. Rebel. Incite a chaos riot.

DANNY  
 Shut up!!!!

LESTER (V.O.)  
 The only option is to live!

DANNY  
 Shut up!!!!

LESTER (V.O.)  
 The end is near.

DANNY  
 Please!!!!

LESTER (V.O.)  
 This is, and will always be, our  
 condition.

Danny enters the cafe. It's a cool 1950's themed restaurant:  
 red decor with a black and white checkered floor.

He aggressively paces the room and speaks out loud. He completely ignores the customers; he's a madman.

DANNY

Okay think. You're thinking. You're a thinking thing. You're an existing thing, existing, with thoughts, and even though you are a character inside of a film, there is no doubt, at all, that you are a conscious being with consciousness.

LESTER (V.O.)

Lester's voiceover resembles that of a narrator, or that of a God.

DANNY

(ignoring Lester)

I am alive with consciousness. I am alive with consciousness. I should say that more. I am conscious of being conscious. I am a character inside of a film, and this film has a story and all stories end, and I need to finish this story well. I need to make sure that when this story ends, I... I stay alive... fuck.

The customers begin to laugh under their breath. Danny briefly recognizes someone wearing a French beret smoking a cigarette (played by the same actor as Jesse).

LESTER (V.O.)

A meaningful analogy can be extrapolated here.

DANNY

(ignoring Lester)

I can't hide from the ending. The ending is near. The end is going to happen no matter what. Okay so, let's figure out how it's going to happen. Let's figure out the story and how it ends. I am conscious and I can change the story... Okay maybe I can look for clues... and from there, redirect the story, I guess...

LESTER (V.O.)

Danny looks, once again, for clues.

Danny forces himself to breathe. He looks around the room. He sees the jukebox from the Pool Hall (not broken). The laughter picks up. They're looking at Danny now.

DANNY

Everything is the same. The same patterns repeat. Fuck! So what! What the fuck am I supposed to do with the patterns!

LESTER (V.O.)

This is the definition of insanity. Danny must try a new approach.

DANNY

Be quiet!!!!

Everyone laughs hysterically. Customers are laughing so hard, they're banging their tables. He frantically walks to the exit.

LESTER (V.O.)

Danny's resistance to the voice of Lester is analogous to the death of god, which is the inevitable result of a growing consciousness.

He's caught off guard by an image on the wall. He looks closer. It's a black-and-white photo of a 1950's gala at a lodge. Danny is in the image, smiling with the group.

LESTER (V.O.)

In a sense, Danny kills god. How ironic that Lester is the one to say all of this.

45.1 **EXT. PORT LESTER - DAY**  
*The Death of God*

45.1

Danny bursts from the cafe onto the street.

DANNY

Listen! Please! If you can hear me, if you're watching me right now, if you're an audience member watching this, this isn't right. I'm conscious! I'm a conscious being with consciousness. I'm feeling. I feel. I'm so fucking scared. Please! Please please please please help me!! How can you watch me right now! I'm a conscious being! I know you're watching me right now!

(MORE)



DANNY (CONT'D)  
 You're just sitting there! This  
 isn't right what you're doing. This  
 is cruel. Fuck! Please! HELP ME!!  
 How are you watching this! I'm  
 going to die! I'm going to die!!!!

Danny hears an accelerating vehicle. He turns and sees a  
 black van; it's heading straight for him!

DANNY  
 Fuck... Stop!! Please!!

He runs for his life. Danny turns the corner. Another black  
 van joins the pursuit.

DANNY  
 Ahhhh! Help! Help! Help!! Help!!!!  
 HELP!!!! HELP!!!!

The vans catch up and lower their speed to match Danny's;  
 they're playing with him, forcing him to run through the  
 streets of Port Lester (running through the same block  
 sequence as Residential Roads). The capture drone joins the  
 chase.

45.2 **EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY**  
*The Death of God*

45.2

Danny's running past an old movie theatre. He stops when he  
 sees eight poster-boxes, each displaying a Systems poster! He  
 gives up running; the sight of the posters ruin him.

DANNY  
 I'm sorry! I'm sorry!! I don't know  
 what I did, but I'm sorry!!!!

A black van gently pulls up in front of Danny. The side door  
 slides open.

46 **INT. MOTEL - NIGHT**  
*Lectularius*

46

Danny springs up from bed and grabs the red notebook.

DANNY  
 Okay help me, I need help. I need  
 to know how I can... die well.

His hands shake. He writes: [Danny realizes the film must  
 come to an end], [He writes a liberating ending, one with  
 hope].

He thinks. He continues writing: [Scene 64], [The Final Scene], [We see Danny], [He looks at us and]-

He's interrupted; there's a knock on the door. Danny walks over. He looks through the peephole. It's Phil and Larry.

PHIL  
(Through the door)  
Hey Danny!

LARRY  
(Through the door)  
How are you liking the town so far!?

Danny ensures the door is locked. He hears a distracting scream. He turns around, taking his attention away from the door to look at the window.

PHIL (O.S.)  
Hot as hell if you ask me.

He immediately turns back. The door is now somehow propped open with a wedge. Phil and Larry stand joyously at the door.

LARRY  
A real scorcher!

DANNY  
(in disbelief)  
No.

PHIL  
Fresh air though.

LARRY  
Great oxygen.

PHIL  
Don't worry we won't come in.

LARRY  
We know you need your space.

PHIL  
We understand you creative types.

LARRY  
Seclusion and such.

PHIL  
How about this motel?

LARRY  
Yeah, how's this motel for you?

PHIL  
Oh, better check for bed bugs.

LARRY  
There was an infestation once.

Danny notices a CLEANER vacuuming behind Phil and Larry. The vacuum grows louder overtime.

PHIL  
Look at us rambling!

LARRY  
Say, meet us down in the tiki lounge?

PHIL  
At around?

LARRY  
Eight?

PHIL  
Eight o'clock?

LARRY  
Sound good?

PHIL  
Danny?

LARRY  
Danny does that sound good?

PHIL  
Danny?

LARRY  
Is something wrong?

PHIL  
What is it Danny?

LARRY  
What's wrong?

They look at him for a moment and then burst into laughter.

PHIL  
We love it!

LARRY  
Danny this is brilliant.

PHIL  
You're going to make us a lot of money.

LARRY  
Each scene is just-

PHIL  
You're really becoming your character.

LARRY  
Your character is jus-

Danny pushes Larry, then he pushes Phil. They all look at each other.

PHIL  
Now do you really think Danny should get physical with them?

LARRY  
It definitely crosses an interesting line.

Danny throws a punch at Phil. Phil easily avoids it.

PHIL  
Wow Danny!

He throws a punch at Larry. Larry easily avoids it.

LARRY  
Danny buddy!

They laugh. Larry starts clapping.

PHIL  
How do you come up with this stuff?

LARRY  
You're knocking this out of the park.

Danny grabs Larry by the throat. He holds him against the wall, choking him. Larry smiles. The cleaner continues vacuuming. Phil checks his watch.

PHIL  
Hey Danny it's almost eight.

LARRY  
(while being choked)  
We better get to the next scene.

47      **INT. TIKI LOUNGE - NIGHT**  
         *Diabolus*

47

Danny finds himself sitting across from Phil and Larry in a tiki themed lounge. He notices the customers are whispering and laughing at him.

PHIL  
Now we have a big night ahead of  
us.

LARRY  
Everything's coming to a close.

Danny glares at the steak knife in front of him. There are oddly four meals on the table and an empty chair.

PHIL  
What if I told you there was a  
film-

LARRY  
-that induced a severe psychosis  
upon its audience.

PHIL  
Without them ever knowing it.

LARRY  
At least, not until it was too  
late.

PHIL  
The film that makes you go crazy!

LARRY  
That's what we're doing here.

PHIL  
Audience insanity.

LARRY  
Whaddya you think?

They both laugh. Danny stares blankly - he's become a mere spectator; every attempt he's made has been futile. Now he's just along for the ride.

PHIL  
He loves it!

LARRY  
I knew he would.

PHIL  
He's wondering how we do it.

LARRY  
Fractals Danny!

PHIL  
God damnit. The Number 8!

LARRY  
That's why we're here.

They lean in to divulge delicate information.

PHIL  
We're testing it on the town.

LARRY  
(nonchalantly)  
Plus some microdosing to their  
water supply.

They lean back out, speaking boisterously again.

PHIL  
That too, but regardless-

LARRY  
This film will be a success.

PHIL  
A cult classic.

LARRY  
(to Phil)  
It's self-referential!

PHIL  
(to Larry)  
It's mathematical!

Phil and Larry are drawn to each other, they can't help but  
riff marketing lingo.

LARRY  
More than any film before it.

PHIL  
A film that induces psychosis.

LARRY  
An existential inquiry of the soul!

PHIL  
A cinematic reprogramming of the  
mind!

LARRY  
A philosophical psycho-cerebral  
meta-thriller!

They slam the table and turn to Danny.

PHIL  
God damnit we're good!

LARRY  
God damnit Danny we love you.

PHIL  
You're the reason we're here.

LARRY  
We owe you so much.

PHIL  
We really do.

LARRY  
Which is why we have a surprise.

They sit up straight and clear their throats. They proudly  
signal to the empty chair at their table.

PHIL  
Meet your eighth and final  
character.

LARRY  
She's so important to us.

PHIL  
And so important to your story.

LARRY  
Danny, meet empty chair.

PHIL  
Empty chair, meet Danny.

Danny is paralyzed with confusion. This was the cherry on top. They all look at the empty chair.

Phil and Larry try to hold it in, but then, they crack up. They burst into laughter.

LARRY

There's no one there Danny!

PHIL

That's not a character!

LARRY

That's just a chair!

PHIL

Clearly there's no one there.

LARRY

That would be crazy.

PHIL

She is a real character.

LARRY

She's just not in this scene.

The laughing dies out. They shift their tone.

PHIL

We actually couldn't afford her for this scene.

LARRY

We had some budget cuts in the film.

They flip through some documents on the table.

PHIL

(reading document)

It was actually due to the climax you wrote.

LARRY

(reading document)

Something about Danny clones?

PHIL

Anyways it doubles the budget of the entire film.

LARRY

Don't get us wrong, it's good!



PHIL  
Great climax.

LARRY  
Hell of a climax.

PHIL  
It just means we have an empty  
chair and meal for this scene.

LARRY  
And no character.

PHIL  
She *is* a real character though! We  
promise.

LARRY  
Who are we kiddin'?

PHIL  
He doesn't believe us.

LARRY  
Of course not.

PHIL  
We're fuckin' liars.

LARRY  
We wouldn't trust us!

They ponder the oddity of that last statement.

PHIL  
Why don't we get outta here and  
show you.

LARRY  
That way you can meet her and see  
for yourself.

PHIL  
To the next scene?

LARRY  
To the next scene!

48

**INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT**  
*Apranihita*

48

Danny stands at the entrance. Everyone applauds the last performance (the stage is adjacent to the entrance, so it looks like they applaud Danny).

Phil and Larry wave him over. Danny goes forth - he's so exhausted at this point, he doesn't fight the cue.

He sits down at their table. They're smoking cigars. Thick smoke fills the air. The stage lights turn red and a JAZZ BAND of four steps on stage. They commence playing jazz noir.

PHIL

Okay she's not in this scene either.

LARRY

It's the next scene.

PHIL

But you know what? We should use this scene-

LARRY

(same time as Phil)  
To go over her character.

PHIL

(same time as Larry)  
To go over her character.

LARRY

Sounds like a plan to me!

PHIL

Are you good with that Danny?

LARRY

Danny?

PHIL

Okay great!

Danny unaffectedly stares at them. They flip through some documents.

LARRY

Now, we know her name is Lillith.

PHIL

Of course.

LARRY  
She's beautiful too.

PHIL  
A beautiful female.

Danny watches as they ash their cigars into a red ashtray.

LARRY  
Okay what else?

PHIL  
(reading document)  
He's nicknamed her "the temptress  
in the red dress".

LARRY  
Nice one.

PHIL  
Good name. I love it.

LARRY  
(reading document)  
She represents "The Divine Female".

PHIL  
(reading document)  
"The Monad" as you call her.

LARRY  
What the hell is a monad?

PHIL  
(trying to pronounce)  
Mo-nad.

LARRY  
A Monad?

PHIL  
It's hard to read in here isn't it?

LARRY  
They have bad lighting here.

PHIL  
(reading document)  
Listen to this: "The Eternal Danny  
Recurrence relies heavily on the  
participation of Lillith, as Danny  
impregnates her every cycle."

LARRY  
(reading document)  
"Lillith gestates yet another  
iteration of"... of you. Another  
Danny.

PHIL  
Well I'll be damned.

LARRY  
(reading document)  
"Giving birth to you at the exact  
moment you kill yourself... thus  
maintaining the order of the  
sacred" blah blah blah.

Larry throws the document down.

PHIL  
(dishonestly)  
This is so good Danny.

LARRY  
These ideas are so... cool.

PHIL  
And they make complete sense.

LARRY  
Total sense.

Danny watches them grab peanuts from a red bowl (where the  
ashtray was).

DANNY  
(to himself)  
... This is just a movie.

PHIL  
(a mouthful of peanuts)  
He speaks!

LARRY  
This is a movie!?

PHIL  
A movie Danny?

LARRY  
Danny?

DANNY  
(to himself)  
... This is a movie.

They lean in and get serious.

PHIL  
But if this is a movie, then  
everything that happens is-

LARRY  
Determined.

DANNY  
(still to himself)  
... so what should I do?

They're back to having fun.

PHIL  
Nothing!

LARRY  
Absolutely nothing!

PHIL  
Don't worry about a god damn thing.

LARRY  
You're just along for the ride.

PHIL  
(to Larry)  
I like that line.

LARRY  
Thanks.

PHIL  
Just sit back and enjoy the show.

LARRY  
(to Phil)  
I like *that* line.

PHIL  
Whatever happens, happens that way-

LARRY  
Because that's the way it was going  
to happen.

PHIL  
Just like the next scene.

LARRY  
Nice segue.

49.1	<b>EXT. BLACK HOLE NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT</b>	49.1
	<i>The Temptress in the Red Dress</i>	

Danny stares into the dark tunnel-like entrance of the [Black Hole Night Club]. The sign has a green and purple neon glow. Unnerving club music booms loudly from inside.

49.2     **INT. BLACK HOLE NIGHT CLUB / DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT**     49.2  
            *The Temptress in the Red Dress*

Phil and Larry wave at Danny from the VIP section called [The Event Horizon]. Danny ignores them and staggers to the centre of the dance floor.

He stares into the trance-inducing disco ball. The dancers form a large circle around him. This catches his attention. He turns his head-

49.3     **INT. BLACK HOLE NIGHT CLUB / EVENT HORIZON - NIGHT**     49.3  
*The Temptress in the Red Dress*

As he turns his head, he finds himself sitting with Phil and Larry and their TWO FRIENDS. Their table is full of drinks and cocaine.

Danny!

PHIL

LARRY  
Hey Danny!

PHIL  
(cheers)  
To Danny!

LARRY  
(cheers)  
To Danny!

Everyone clangs their drinks. Neither of the friends speak.

DANNY  
... Isn't it a sort of anti-  
climatic ending if I just sit back  
and let all of this happen?

Phil and Larry snort cocaine.

PHIL  
Maybe *that's* liberation?

LARRY  
Accepting your fate.

PHIL  
Maybe that's what your film is  
about?

LARRY  
Speaking of fate.

LILLITH, a beautiful woman in a red dress approaches the  
table. Phil and Larry stand and hug and kiss her all over.  
They're overly ingratiating. Danny remains seated.

PHIL  
Beautiful!

LARRY  
Gorgeous!

PHIL  
It's like you never age!

She sits beside Danny without looking at him.

LARRY  
Danny, Lillith.

PHIL  
Lillith, Danny.

LARRY  
Natural harmony!

PHIL  
A perfect fit!

Danny sees Jesse on the dance floor. Jesse's eyes are locked  
to the ground. Lillith puts her hand on Danny's leg, but his  
attention is brought back to Jesse.

FRIEND 1 (O.S.)  
A lithely female of countless  
indiscretions.

FRIEND 2 (O.S.)  
Licentious and unrestrained.

Danny stands to get a better angle.

49.4     **INT. BLACK HOLE NIGHT CLUB / DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT**     49.4  
*The Temptress in the Red Dress*

Jesse bobs his head to the music. The song picks up. His bob progressively builds into an all out erratic seizure-like dance.

Other dancers interstitially block Danny's view. Suddenly Jesse is gone, and the Devil has replaced him.

49.5     **INT. BLACK HOLE NIGHT CLUB / EVENT HORIZON - NIGHT**     49.5  
*The Temptress in the Red Dress*

Danny lurches back. Phil and Larry are already standing, they catch him. They have blood-shot eyes and coke-covered noses.

LARRY

Buddy!

PHIL

Don't worry Danny!

LARRY

It's okay!

PHIL

Listen!

LARRY

We have to move this party!

Lillith stares into Danny's eyes.

50.1     **INT. LODGE - NIGHT**     50.1  
*Mansion Masquerade*

Danny is pushed through a gauntlet of OLD MEN wearing suits and masquerade masks. They whisper, laugh, and stare. "Systems" is muttered throughout. The guests emit subtle alien-like skeletal sounds. A storm brews outside. Lightning flashes through the windows.

Phil and Larry emerge from the crowd. They move with Danny as they're pushed through the tunnel of guests.

PHIL

Danny how are you!?

LARRY

It's great to have you at the lodge!



PHIL  
Listen we don't want to take you  
out of the party.

LARRY  
We know tonight's important.

PHIL  
But we have something to tell you.

LARRY  
Don't trust Jesse.

PHIL  
Don't listen to what he tells you.

LARRY  
We know he's made his way back into  
the film.

PHIL  
We know you just saw him, but...

LARRY  
Something's fishy.

PHIL  
We're conducting a system wide  
investigation.

LARRY  
We believe he's gone rogue.

PHIL  
He's planning a crossover.

LARRY  
To the other side.

The crowd slows down. Danny comes to a stop. It's as if he's  
supposed to respond. Everyone waits.

DANNY  
To what side?

PHIL  
Chaos!

LARRY  
Chaos Danny!

They begin pushing and chattering again. Everyone moves Danny  
through the lodge.

PHIL  
Think about everything we've worked  
for.

LARRY  
Everything Systems stands for.

PHIL  
He plans to subvert it all.

LARRY  
We have to warn you Danny.

PHIL  
We don't know how deep he's gone,  
but...

LARRY  
There may be a virus.

DANNY  
A virus?

PHIL  
A virus in the system!

The grandfather clock chimes as if it's struck midnight.  
Danny looks at the clock; it's 8pm.

LARRY  
Damn it Danny it's time.

PHIL  
Game faces on.

They slap his face.

LARRY  
Make this a performance of a  
lifetime.

50.2     **INT. LODGE / TROPHY ROOM - NIGHT**  
         *Mansion Masquerade*

50.2

Lillith rides Danny on the floor. Her sounds and movement are  
strange and alien-like. He's paralyzed with terror. The room  
is filled to the brim with animal taxidermy. Guests pile in.  
They all wear red cloaks and masquerade masks.

Danny begins to struggle.

## PATRON 1 (O.S.)

The temptress in the red dress  
envelops him in the death of the  
room. Some ineffable deception has  
lured him into her web. She is the  
red queen who gazes into his soul  
with alien eyes. She is the crux of  
this demonic enterprise.

Danny's struggle is a kind of dream-struggle: futile and in  
slow-motion.

## PATRON 2 (O.S.)

Today we witness a generational  
recurrence, where Danny is  
compelled to copulate with the  
breeding queen.

Danny manages to turn over, but Lillith continues to rape him  
from behind.

## PATRON 3 (O.S.)

Endlessly, he impregnates her, and  
endlessly she spawns another on the  
night of his cabin-death, every  
generation, planting his seed for  
all of infinity.

Danny sees Phil and Larry staring, smiling. They wave.

## PATRON 4 (O.S.)

Every generation terminating itself  
in the suicidal cabin-death. The  
harvest prevails once more, in this  
eternal oscillation.

Thunder booms and lightning flashes through the large  
windows.

## 51.1 INT. CABIN - DAY

51.1

*The Infamous Cabin at the Forest of Insanity*

Morning birds chirp. A dark descending soundscape juxtaposes  
the clear day. Danny wakes up on the red plaid couch. His  
soul is exhausted. He surveys the room.

He sees: a mounted rifle beneath deer antlers, a model  
airplane, taxidermy of four black crows, a crucifix on the  
wall, and an unfinished puzzle of Danny's childhood home.

A cuckoo clock bellows.

DANNY  
 Why do I exist? Why do I exist? I  
 exist for you to watch me.

He opens the sliding glass door and steps onto the balcony.

51.2     **EXT. CABIN / BALCONY - DAY**     51.2  
*The Infamous Cabin at the Forest of Insanity*

He walks to the railing and looks down at the lake (the cabin is positioned on a hill overlooking the lake).

He sees a telescope, he looks into it. We see different astronomical objects (impossible as it's the morning).

He looks up at the sky unconvinced.

51.3     **INT. CABIN - DAY**     51.3  
*The Infamous Cabin at the Forest of Insanity*

Danny's locked into a deranged and disconnected gaze. He stares at the ladder leading up to the attic (it's been lowered).

52     **INT. CABIN / ATTIC - DAY**     52  
*Cabin Attic Suicide*

He pulls the string to a hanging light bulb; the room becomes illuminated. All-red sticky notes cover every inch of wall space. Stacks of paper tower high above Danny. This is the craziest room we've seen so far.

He surveys the room - he doesn't actually register what he sees. The walls are covered with a new kind of note: [+] 's and [-] 's.

At the centre, he reads [Master Order], and then underneath: [+++], [-++], [-+-], [++-], [+--], [+ -+], [--+], [---].

On the outskirts of the [Master Order] are positive and negative notes associated with the Fractal Elements:

[+++ Black Vans], [++- Black Crows], [--+ Church Bells],  
 [--- Ladybug], [+-- Ice Cream Truck], [+++ Black Figures],  
 [--- Plane], [+-Black Cat]

(These notes are the key to the entire system, but Danny's too disconnected to comprehend what he's reading).

There's a lamp next to the central desk; he turns it on. He sees a red typewriter and a book [The System of Systems] [By Jesse].

A page sticks out of the typewriter; he reads [DANNY: to reconcile the original divide of objectivity and subjectivity].

DANNY  
(reading)  
To reconcile the original divide of  
objectivity and subjectivity...

He flips through the book: [There are eight Systems within the System of Systems]. He turns the page: [The Fractal System], he skips this section.

[The System of Thought], he reads more: [Extracting "The Significant"], [Increased Accessibility to The Significant through the Alignment of Realization and Expression of Thought], [Contacting the Monad through 8 Sessions].

[The Polarity System], he reads: [The Polarity System converts the elementals of the Fractal System into a spatial/temporal landscape].

He flips to the last section of the book: [The System of Systems]. He continues reading: [The Final Philosophy], [Being and Becoming], [Subject], [Concept-Object Transference], [The Act is Becoming].

He reads faster. Massive amounts of notes are rapidly shown (See appendix *System of Systems* document. This is a real philosophy developed as an ancillary release to the film).

Strange alien music buzzes in. Danny turns his gaze; he sees eight Black Figures.

He looks back to the page: [The Self-Annihilation of Consciousness]. He crumples the page. He rips more.

He rips the entire book a part.

A pile of notes burn on the shore. Danny carries a new batch; he throws it into the fire. Sixteen Black Figures watch from a distance.

He watches some notes burn. In order, he sees: [+++], [-++], [-+-], [++-], [+-+], [--+], [---].

DANNY  
How could this film possibly end?  
How could it be hopeful?

He looks up at the full moon.

DANNY  
I don't even know what I'm doing.

He looks at the cabin, and then back at the fire.

DANNY  
Why am I doing what I'm doing?

He slowly lifts his arm, watching himself move.

DANNY  
Danny finally destroys his project.  
I bet this was supposed to be a  
heroic moment in the film.

He looks at the rowboat tied to shore.

DANNY  
Too bad. Could have been a good  
scene.

54.1     **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**  
*Silencio*

54.1

Danny sits in silence. The capture drone hovers in place.

DANNY  
I just need to be okay with death?  
To learn how to die? Is this why  
I'm here? Is this *why*?

There's four knocks on the door. Danny apathetically looks at the door. They knock again, and again, and again (totalling sixteen knocks).

54.2     **EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**  
*Silencio*

54.2

He answers the door. It's Phil and Larry. They're wearing red tuxedos.

PHIL  
Danny! How the hell are you?

LARRY  
How the hell are you Danny?

A red limo idles behind them.

PHIL  
Where's your tux!?

LARRY  
He doesn't have a tux.

PHIL  
You creative types.

LARRY  
Hilarious.

PHIL  
Well?

LARRY  
What are you waiting for?

PHIL  
He's nervous.

LARRY  
Are you nervous Danny?

There's a very long pause; they wait for a response. Lester appears in the background. He crosses his arms and leans back on the limo. He's wearing a red all-leather outfit.

DANNY  
... For what?

PHIL  
For what!?

LARRY  
The big show Danny!

PHIL  
The big show!

LARRY  
You better be ready.

PHIL  
It is your night after all.

LARRY  
Your big night!

PHIL  
Let's go!

They open their arms and gesture to the limo.

DANNY  
... Where?

LARRY  
To the premiere!

DANNY  
The premiere for what?

PHIL  
For what?

LARRY  
For what!?

PHIL  
Systems Danny!!

LARRY  
SYSTEMS!!

55.1     **INT. LIMO - NIGHT**  
          *The Red Limo*

55.1

Danny sits at the end of a smoke-filled limo. Red interior lights flood through. Phil and Larry sit on both sides; they're smoking their cigars and snorting cocaine. Lester sits at the other end, opposite Danny. Lester get's comfortable, his leather outfit is loud and awkward.

LESTER  
(to no one)  
These two red devils are not who they say they are. There's a plot to all of this. They've planned the whole thing. A treacherous move on their part.

Phil and Larry lean in to Danny, ignoring Lester.

PHIL  
The whole town's ready bud.

LARRY  
Marketing's been a hit.

PHIL  
"The film that makes you go crazy".

LARRY  
And it's true.



PHIL

We even ate our own dog food on  
this one.

They both take huge snorts cocaine off their mirrors.

LARRY

Call it immersive marketing.

PHIL

In a sense, the whole town has  
been...

LARRY

Micro-dosed!

PHIL

You too!

LARRY

Yeah you too Danny.

Danny looks out the window. He sees a full moon. Lester's  
voiceover comes in. Time passes as he speaks:

LESTER

(to no one)

His obeisant subjection to the  
virulent power structures, his  
willingness to go along, to sit  
here with them, substantiates his  
indentured existence to them, as if  
he's permanently fettered to a  
discomposing relationship in some  
hell-like, dream-like, oneiric  
confinement, inflexibly entrenched  
forever into hell. What is this?

55.2 **INT. LIMO / PORT LESTER - NIGHT**

*The Red Limo*

55.2

Danny looks outside; they're already in town. The limo coasts  
through a massive crowd of fans occupying the street. Movie-  
goers of all ages stroll toward the theatre.

Phil and Larry are playing with their coke mirrors, holding  
them up to each other, creating an endless mirror effect.

PHIL

*This* is Systems!

LARRY

No, *THIS* is Systems.

The limo stops in the middle of the road.

56

**EXT. PORT LESTER - NIGHT**

56

*The Cacophonous Birth of Flies*

Phil and Larry boisterously exit the limo. Cigar smoke pours out. They raise their arms and show off the impressive crowd.

PHIL

No *this* is Systems!

LARRY

Yes *this is* Systems!

Hundreds march the street. TWO DRIVERS hold the door open. Danny reluctantly exits the limo. They're a block away from the entrance to the theatre. Phil and Larry disappear.

Jesse springs from the crowd. He passionately circles Danny as he walks to the theatre.

JESSE

Danny you were right. I'm you, and you're me. We have a split personality. I think. I don't know, or, we don't know!

(laughs)

But listen to me, you have to trust me. This is the existential crux of the whole film and it's happening right now!

Danny completely ignores Jesse.

JESSE

Do you know what Absurdism is? In the existential sense?

Danny ignores him. Jesse continues circling him, moving passionately through the crowd.

JESSE

Perfect! I'll talk to myself then... Man's relentless search for meaning is absurd IF he knows he's searching for meaning in a meaningless universe. Why would you endlessly roll a boulder up a hill if you knew it was destined to roll back every time. *That* would be absurd.

Danny continues his slow walk. Jesse continues his dance.

JESSE

A philosopher named Albert Camus questioned this. Should the realization of the absurd motivate one's suicide? As if the thought is so existentially threatening, that suicide is *maybe* the only solution. In fact, for Camus, the greatest question in all of philosophy was whether or not we should commit suicide.

Danny ignores him.

JESSE

When we're confronted with the absurd, should we commit suicide?

Still ignoring him.

JESSE

So do you want to know the answer?

Jesse shoves Danny. Danny stops. They look at each other.

DANNY

The answer to what?

JESSE

To whether or not we should commit suicide!

Danny just stares at him.

JESSE

No! We shouldn't!

Jesse continues his passionate walk. Danny follows.

JESSE

We should revolt! We should rebel! We should embrace the absurd and live life to the fullest. The only alternative is suicide. Don't you see? There is no order or system or inherent meaning. So revolt, rebel, incite a fucking riot.

They're approaching the front doors of the theatre.

JESSE

We need something big. One final push. This is what we've been waiting for.

(MORE)

JESSE (CONT'D)  
 Existential liberation. This is  
 your story! Your story is THE  
 story. The eternal narrative:  
 Tension, catharsis, tension,  
 catharsis. It's time Danny!

57.1 **EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT**  
*Proscenium*

57.1

Phil and Larry wave Danny into the theatre. Jesse grabs  
 Danny's shoulders and looks him dead in the eyes.

JESSE  
 The proscenium's about to open wide  
 my friend. Kill them Danny. Kill  
 them all.

57.2 **INT. MOVIE THEATRE / LOBBY - NIGHT**  
*Proscenium*

57.2

Danny enters the lobby. He sees Phil and Larry, the  
 Psychologist, Razz, Lester and Lillith. Everyone's here!

He walks through the lobby, first passing Lester, who has his  
 arm around Lillith.

LESTER  
 (to no one)  
 The climax! The crucible of his  
 journey, what will soon be an  
 intolerable frenzy, an interminable  
 hysteria, where the composite  
 terror eventually culminates and  
 assimilates into an indiscrete  
 climax of nefarious dread...

As Danny walks farther, Lester's voice drowns out. Phil and  
 Larry approach. Danny continues his walk, ignoring everyone.

PHIL  
 Danny how the hell are you?

LARRY  
 How the hell are you Danny?

PHIL  
 We got you two tickets.

LARRY  
 One for you-

PHIL

And one for your sweetheart.

He looks down. They're holding two red tickets.

LARRY

Who we heard was pregnant!

PHIL

I couldn't contain myself when I found out.

LARRY

Oh me neither, I wanted to throw up I was so happy.

PHIL

We love little children.

LARRY

Yeah we love kids.

Danny completely ignores them. He walks by the Psychologist, who's being interviewed for the news.

PSYCHOLOGIST

(interviewed)

He's a genius, a master, a crusader of his art. Needless to say I'm very proud of his development.

He approaches the auditorium. He stops when he sees Razz repeatedly banging his head on the wall - it's as if he's stuck in some glitch. Phil and Larry walk through. They give Danny's ticket to the DOORMAN.

PHIL

Don't worry about your ticket!

LARRY

We got it covered!

PHIL

Hurry though!

LARRY

Show's about to start!

Danny walks past Razz and enters the auditorium.

58

**INT. MOVIE THEATRE / AUDITORIUM - NIGHT**

58

*The Proscenium Collapse*

Danny enters. He looks over the crowd. It's packed full. Sold out. Audience members of all ages fill the room. They eat popcorn and drink sodas, chattering as they anticipate the show.

The curtains lower. The lights dim. The crowd cheers.

Danny walks down the aisle. Phil and Larry remove a jacket from a seat and wave him over. He sits down.

On screen, the title cards fade in: [Existential Productions] and [Infinity Entertainment].

The crowd cheers. People excitedly stuff popcorn into their mouths.

On screen, the opening text fades in: ["This film is an exploration of your mind"].

Danny's eyes grow wide. Phil and Larry nudge him and give a thumbs up.

On screen, the first scene of the film plays (it's identical to the film we've been watching).

Danny is speechless. The film progresses scene by scene. We continually cut to Danny as he watches himself on screen.

We see quick cuts of sticky notes throughout the film: [Feedback Loop], [The end flows seamlessly into the beginning], [Danny's Eternal Return], [The Fractal Hero].

Danny nervously taps his fingers. He shakes his knee and bites his nails. He sweats profusely.

On screen, the film eventually catches up to the premiere. We see shots of Danny entering the theatre, walking down the aisle, and sitting beside Phil and Larry.

We reach the part of the film that we're watching. The film has caught up to itself... The following shots play out:

SHOT A: Danny watches the screen.

SHOT B: The screen plays SHOT A.

SHOT C: Danny watches the screen. He looks at Phil and Larry. They give him a thumbs up. He looks back at the screen.

SHOT D: The screen plays SHOT C. At the end of SHOT C, we cut to a shot of SHOT D, and then we cut to a shot of a shot of SHOT D, ad infinitum.

A feedback loop has occurred. Endless shots of the screen iterate inward to an eventual speck of white light.

Danny hears rustling in the crowd. They get fidgety. Their hands shake. Their fingers tap. They squirm in their seats.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Fuck!

AUDIENCE MEMBER

What is this!?

Danny looks at Phil and Larry; they're intently watching the screen. Danny looks at the audience.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Help!

Danny wipes sweat off his face. People are shaking.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

What the fuck is this!?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

AHHHHHH!

Danny stands up. He looks over the crowd.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Oh my god! Ahhhhhhhh!

He sees people's hands. They're morphing. Their eyes bulging. They're transforming into something!

AUDIENCE MEMBER

HELP! HELP!!! FUUUUCCKKKK!

Danny runs down the aisle to the front of the auditorium.

AUDIENCE MEMBER

No no nooooo!

He looks at everyone. THEY'RE ALL TURNING INTO DANNY!

Danny runs back up the aisle. He looks at Phil and Larry; they're both in tuxedos, but they have the face of Danny.

He runs to the back. Lester blocks the door. He has the face of Danny! Danny runs again to the front of the auditorium.

Every person in the room now has the face of Danny. They're standing up, looking at him.

On screen, the feedback loop has disappeared, instead: a shot of Danny shooting himself with a rifle at the cabin. The Devil stands beside the corpse.

He looks at a red exit sign. He runs through the fire doors beside the screen.

59.1 **EXT. PORT LESTER - NIGHT**  
*Chaos Riot*

59.1

Hundreds of Danny-clones riot the streets of Port Lester, frenetically bringing destruction to the town. They set fire to vehicles and smash storefront windows. They all have Danny's face, and they all possess a neutral expression.

Some nearby clones stop what they're doing and stare at Danny. Just as Danny sees this, hundreds of other Dannys (sixty-four to be exact) stumble from the exit doors behind him. They catch their footing, as if they're getting used to their bodies.

Danny watches in horror. Those in proximity - behind and in front - immediately chase him. Danny runs for his life.

59.2 **EXT. PORT LESTER / ALLEYWAY - NIGHT**  
*Chaos Riot*

59.2

Danny runs down an alleyway. Sixteen Danny clones pursue him.

A black van pulls up and blocks the end of the alleyway. A Danny-clone, holding an axe, steps out of the driver's seat. He runs straight for Danny.

Danny sees a ladder. He jumps on top of a dumpster and from there grabs a hold of the ladder. The axe-wielding Danny swings the axe at Danny's feet just as he climbs.

59.3 **EXT. PORT LESTER / ROOFTOP - NIGHT**  
*Chaos Riot*

59.3

He makes it to the rooftop. He looks down behind him. The Dannys are climbing. He hastily scans the rooftop. Danny clones climb onto the roof from every angle. He sees a distant tree-line to the forest, he runs for it.

He makes it to the edge of the building. Below is havoc: a group of Dannys play with a firetruck.



They swing the extendable ladder around. Danny looks behind him, the rooftop Dannys are running for him.

Danny sees a red semi coasting below. He runs along the edge of the roof until the truck is near. He jumps just in time. Other Dannys follow, jumping after him. Some miss the truck and fall awkwardly to the ground.

59.4     **EXT. PORT LESTER / TREELINE - NIGHT**  
           *Chaos Riot*

59.4

Danny jumps off the truck and sprints down the road, toward the tree-line.

He runs past a Danny wearing a police uniform. He's wielding a pistol and shooting in every direction. Police-officer-Danny sees Danny and shoots at him.

Danny dodges the bullets and makes his way to the forest.

60.1     **EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**  
           *Amabilis insania*

60.1

Danny sprints through the forest. A group of eight Dannys pursue him. One with an axe. Their silhouetted bodies jump through the trees.

A Danny tackles him from the side. They both tumble down a shrubby hill. The Danny holds him down - he has one green eye and one purple eye. The clone's neutral expression breaks, he laughs and slobbers hysterically.

Danny breaks free and runs for his life. It's a full moon.

He runs past a group of eight aboriginal throat singers in demonic looking masks, circling a fire. Crows fly overhead.

He spots a light in the distance. He sees the cabin and runs for it.

60.2     **EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**  
           *Amabilis insania*

60.2

He makes it to the dirt road leading to the cabin. A black van speeds after him as he runs for the door.

61.1     **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**  
          *Cabin Massacre*

61.1

Danny bursts through the door, slamming it shut and locking it behind him. They crash against the door.

He hears Dannys on the deck. He runs to the sliding doors and locks it just as they strike the glass.

He lowers the attic ladder. He hears glass break up stairs. He quickly closes the ladder.

The Dannys on the deck smash against the glass, cracking it with every strike.

Danny grabs the rifle, he finds bullets and loads it. He aims and anticipates their entrance.

An axe is swung through the front door. Danny spins around and aims. The axe is swung again, and again, and again. A Danny clone sticks his face through the opening. Danny holds the rifle to his head and fires. Boom! The Danny clone drops dead with his head stuck in the door.

Glass shatters behind Danny. He spins around. Two Dannys run for him. He blows them both away. He reloads.

The Dannys upstairs lower the attic door and drop from the ceiling. Danny fires at one, two, three Dannys. He reloads.

Hands reach through the crack of the door and grab at Danny.

A Danny on the floor is still alive; he crawls and grabs onto Danny's leg. Danny struggles. He shoots the one on the floor and then breaks free from the others.

He turns around to shoot the others, but he's run out of bullets. Hands reach through the door; they search for the knob.

Danny holds onto the rifle and runs up the ladder. The Dannys unlock the door and rush at him as he escapes.

61.2     **INT. CABIN / ATTIC - NIGHT**  
          *Cabin Massacre*

61.2

Danny climbs up to the attic. He quickly raises the ladder back up. [Session 8] is written across the wall in blood.

A Danny charges him. Danny turns around and swings the rifle, knocking him back. He swings the rifle again and again, knocking the Danny to the floor.

Danny uses the butt of the rifle and smashes his face in. We see the brutality and detail of the attack.

The Dannys below pull down the ladder. He's about to react, but another Danny grabs him from behind. He's dragged to the floor and pinned by a Danny with red eyes. Danny grabs a mechanical pencil from the floor and stabs it in the eye. The Dannys from below are in the room now!

He pushes him off and climbs through a smashed window. The Dannys grab at his feet just as he makes it through.

61.3     **EXT. CABIN / BALCONY - NIGHT**     61.3  
           *Cabin Massacre*

He jumps from the roof onto the deck. He runs for the stairs, knocking over the telescope as he goes.

62.1     **EXT. LAKE / SHORE - NIGHT**     62.1  
           *Undertow*

He descends the stairs leading to the dock. More Dannys emerge from the hills, chasing him down.

Danny runs to the rowboat. He unties it and pushes it off. He starts rowing. The Dannys jump into the water and swim after him. Danny out-rows them.

62.2     **EXT. LAKE - NIGHT**     62.2  
           *Undertow*

He makes it to the centre of the lake where a thick fog forms. He's unable to see anything.

DANNY  
 No no no no.

He stops rowing. He looks in every direction, but the fog is too thick.

DANNY  
 No no no no.

He stands in the centre of the boat, he looks around.

The fog thickens. He looks in the water; he sees fish. We see Danny's breath.

The capture drone emerges slowly from the fog. It floats around Danny like a curious animal.

Eventually, it floats right up to Danny's face. He stares at it. He sees his reflection. He reaches out his hand, and grabs the capture drone from underneath (an homage to M.C. Escher's drawing *Hand with Reflective Sphere*).

The camera cuts back and forth between Danny's POV and the drone's POV. He murmurs to himself.

DANNY

What... wha... what the... uh...  
ah...

Something is happening...

VFX: A weird sort of half-freeze-frame. Danny's body, along with the background, freezes, but Danny's head continues to move. The colours of his face slightly streak across the screen. His mouth is closed, but we continue to hear his murmuring.

DANNY

Wha... what the... uh.... ah...

VFX: The fog thickens and darkens. The background darkens so much that we see only Danny's head, floating in black space, with a blank emotionless gaze.

DANNY

What... ah.. wha... help... ah.

63

## ASTRAL PLANE

*Bardo*

63

We cut to the reverse of Danny's gaze. We see two floating arthropods with the voice of Phil and Larry.

PHIL (V.O.)

Danny!

LARRY (V.O.)

Danny!

PHIL (V.O.)

How the hell are you!?

LARRY (V.O.)

Good to see you!

An ant comes floating through the black space.

RAZZ (V.O.)

These are your ideas Danny. You're  
inside your own mind.

(MORE)

RAZZ (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 You can talk in here too! I know  
 you can because I'm talking and,  
 well, I'm you!

The space turns half-astral/half-aquatic. An octopus floats  
 by.

JESSE (V.O.)  
 We're all you! Go ahead, say  
 something.

DANNY (V.O.)  
 What should I say?

JESSE (V.O.)  
 There you go! You're doing it!

DANNY (V.O.)  
 What is this?

JESSE (V.O.)  
 The penultimate scene of the film.  
 The second to last. We're using it  
 to cram in objects of the fractal  
 system.

Many objects float by. The scene uses a mix of cheesy-  
 outdated animations with new animations.

PHIL (V.O.)  
 There you go!

LARRY (V.O.)  
 That's the spirit!

DANNY (V.O.)  
 What's going to happen to me?

RAZZ (V.O.)  
 What's going to happen to us!?

DANNY (V.O.)  
 The film's about to end. This is  
 all about to be over.

PHIL (V.O.)  
 Maybe it's already over?

LARRY (V.O.)  
 Love that line!

JESSE (V.O.)  
 Guys! We should give Danny a chance  
 to talk.

We see the planet earth.

LESTER (V.O.)  
The first image of the earth, a  
milestone of self reference. We've  
come so far. Now we're about to  
meet our maker.

PSYCHOLOGIST (V.O.)  
These are the fading, dying  
thoughts of a mind on its way out.

RAZZ (V.O.)  
Yeah and you're a part of that  
mind! We all are!

Lillith performs a strange and exotic courtship dance.

PSYCHOLOGIST (V.O.)  
Why couldn't you of at least given  
your female character a speaking  
role?

JESSE (V.O.)  
Is that what you want to talk about  
now? Let's hear what Danny has to  
say. Give the floor to the artist.  
Can we all agree?

PHIL (V.O.)  
Go for it!

LARRY (V.O.)  
Hell yeah Danny!

RAZZ (V.O.)  
Yes we agree.

PSYCHOLOGIST (V.O.)  
Yes, please, Danny speak. As the  
Psychologist, I realize, you should  
have done more of the talking in  
our sessions.

LESTER (V.O.)  
Danny's final words, deliver us.

The animations disappear. Everyone disappears except for  
Danny's head, floating by itself in an empty black space.

JESSE (V.O.)  
Okay... so... Danny, what's on your  
mind?

His floating head stares directly at us with an impassive gaze. This is all we see for the entire scene.

DANNY (V.O.)

I'm scared... I don't want this to end. I don't want to die, but I know I will. I know I want to exist. That's the only thing I want. To continue existing. I want to live! Is that my meaning? To live? Is that too simple of an answer? Too basic? Should I have a better ending? It's too late for a better ending. I can only work with what I've been given. Maybe that's the point. To live despite your circumstance. I feel pressure to give a worthwhile monologue now. It is the end of the film... What about me? What will happen to me? I want to exist. I want to keep on existing. My consciousness exists, but only in this film, from the moment it starts to the moment it ends. Maybe that's it. That is it! Every time the movie plays, that's how I exist. The movie is my existence. I hope it's a good movie then. I hope people want to watch it. That means I'd exist. I want people to watch Systems again! Can a writer say that about his own film? Of course he wants people to return. So why don't we say it more often? It's authentic, and we should do what's authentic. I want you to watch my film again! I want you to watch me again. Please. I'm the writer speaking to you. I need this. I need to be remembered. I need you to watch me. My consciousness must persist. Every time you watch Systems, I get to live again. Please keep me in existence. Keep me alive. I hope you come back. I hope I come back. I need to come back! So watch me. Please, watch me. Watch me. Watch me. Watch me... Watch me... Watch me... Watch me...

THE END.