

Myth of Cybernetics

by
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To Anna Mitina, my reliable friend, the closest and dearest woman to my heart, who supported this creative effort.

FADE IN:

Once born, a civilization starts evolving. Any halt of evolution causes its degradation and downfall.

Law of history.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

Near future. Information technologies have penetrated all aspects of human life. The elaborate network thickly webs across all continents and mainlands. The worldwide network serves as nervous system for humanity. All human activities and lives depend immediately on information protocols and server stations of the network's hubs. Despite the tremendous intellectual power and might of this IT civilization all of the attempts to create a digital mind have failed but the day of success was within sight.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BIOTECH CORP. IT LABORATORY - LATE NIGHT

The line "One of large cities located in the territory of modern America" appears on the screen.

Early morning. Three people are making a crucial experiment in one of Biotech Corp. laboratories. These people are president and head of the corporation's R&D department DR. HOPER and two of his permanent apprentices and aides - DR.SWENSSON and DR.WITNESS. The few operators and the haste they are in with the experiment smell of delinquency or at least of corporate charter breach.

Dr. Hoper wearing a protective mask and gloves inserts with reverent trepidation an integrated circuit with a neuro-processor in the "wall" of a supercomputer.

The neuro-processor is somewhat quivering. Dr. Hooper has already implanted several similar circuits in the smooth "wall" of the supercomputer and currently he is adding the last element.

CLOSE UP - NEURO-PROCESSOR SMOOTHLY GLIDES INTO THE "WALL" OF THE SUPERCOMPUTER.

HOLOGRAPHIC SCREENS OF THE MONITORS SHOW COMMAND LINES AND REPORTS ON PERFORMANCE OF EACH STAGE OF THE EXPERIMENT.

Dr. Hoper leaves the supercomputer room.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
5:30 a.m. Total operating time is 10
minutes.

DR. HOPER
Launch test.

DR. SWENSSON
Test launched.

Lines and reporting text fragments start dashing across holographic monitor screens.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
All hubs operate in preset mode.

DR. WITNESS
Data receiving cluster ready.

DR. HOPER
Start.

Dr. Swensson enters commands on keyboard.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Countdown until mission profile
launch: five, four, three, two, one.
Data transfer from sector A in
progress.

Holographic screens show the way data is transferred.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Data transfer from sector A completed.
Preparing for data transfer from
section B. Data transfer launch
countdown: five, four, three, two,
one. Data transfer from sector B.

Holographic monitors reflect the process of data transfer from sector B.

DR. SWENSSON

No data lost in transfer from sector A. Spatial structure of the copy is identical to the original.

DR. WITNESS

Data transfer from sector B progresses well. Transfer speed is within preset limits.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Data transfer from sector B completed. Preparing for data transfer from section C.

DR. SWENSSON

No data lost in transfer from sector B. Spatial structure of the copy is identical to the original.

DR. HOPER

Any lags against experimental mission profile?

DR. SWENSSON

No lags.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Countdown until data transfer launch from sector C: five, four, three, two, one. Data transfer from sector C in progress.

Holographic monitors reflect the progress of data transfer from sector C.

The camera points at a device resembling a "brain tomographer", which is installed in the middle of the room. The camera fixes the device for a couple of seconds and keeps on panning the laboratory.

DR. WITNESS

No data distorted in the course of transfer, the speed is within preset limits. I believe we will accept congratulations soon.

Suddenly the even flow of data transfer meter is interrupted and the preset data level is not reached.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Sector C information field distorted.
Data transfer discontinued.

DR. HOPER
Damn it!

DR. WITNESS
(to Dr. Hoper)
Shall we try?

DR. HOPER
What's the lag against the mission
profile?!

DR. SWENSSON
The lag is 35 seconds.

DR. HOPER
Boost transfer speed and resume data
transfer through reserve channel.

Dr. Swensson enters commands from keyboard. Command lines rush
bottom-up across monitors.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Reserve channel ready to transfer data
from sector C.

DR. HOPER
Launch data transfer.

Data transfer resumes. Data transfer meter freezes even earlier
than the previous time.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Critical deformation of sector C
information field. Data transfer
discontinued.

DR. HOPER
Mission profile?!

DR. SWENSSON
1 minute 40 seconds lag.

DR. WITNESS
We still have a chance!

DR. HOPER

No! Abort sector C data transfer.
Information field distortions are too
great. We will not take the risk
staking what we already achieved. We
have no right to do so.

DR. WITNESS

But this is...

DR. HOPER

(cutting Dr. Witness short)

Yes!

DR. HOPER

What is the deviation of spatial
structure of the copy from that of the
original?

DR. SWENSSON

Spatial structure of the copied
fragment is neither deformed nor it
deviates from the original.

DR. HOPER

Then we will have a chance to remedy
the situation.

DR. WITNESS

What will we call the new data format?

DR. HOPER

Name it EV1.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC MONITOR: Dr. Witness enters the symbols:
EV1

Dr. Witness and Dr. Swensson keep working, Dr. Hoper walks up to
the window.

DR. HOPER'S POV: the megapolis from bird's-eye view.

DR. HOPER

(in thought V.O.)
I hope this is all for the better.

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREETS - AFTERNOON

IT IS CLOUDY AND DRIZZLING, MEGAPOLIS ROARS. Doctor of Information Science, a handsome middle-aged and well-built man, GREG ADAMS, is walking in the dense pedestrian traffic suggesting of rush hours. Greg is absorbed in his thoughts.

"One year later" line appears on screen.

Large outdoor screens burst with endless ads.

INSERT - A HUGE STREET SCREEN BROADCASTS NEWS

DR. HOPER

We are now ready to unveil our development. I am extremely pleased and proud to present the digital mind designed in Biotech laboratories. We have managed to reproduce in all its complexity...

Greg is immersed in himself and he is not concerned with what is going on around him.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The room badly needs cleaning but the owner seems to have neglected the duty. Photos of Greg with his utterly vanished girlfriend PAM RUSSEL are all over the room. Greg and Pam had a happy relationship. Greg is napping to the droning TV.

INSERT - TV NEWS REPORT (interview with Dr. Hoper continued)

DR. HOPER

... a digital mind. I refer to it this way because no test will reveal any difference between a human mind and the mind created in our lab...

END OF THE INSERT

The phone rings. Greg cuts the call without picking it up.

INSERT - TV NEWS REPORT (interview with Dr. Hoper continued)

DR. HOPER

It is amazing but we have succeeded. We have grasped the most intricate algorithms of human thinking, their associative and nonlinear nature. We have incorporated all of this into our digital mind...

Greg switches the TV off.

Slowly and unwillingly Greg listens to voice messages on the phone.

FIRST VOICE MESSAGE

(NICK HEART, Greg's oldest and closest friend)

Don't shrink into your shell. I understand that the loss of Pam is a terrible misfortune. We all loved her very much but life does not stop there. Anyway, I reserved a table in the Italian place for Thursday night. I'll be there with Kate and her friend will come with us. Remember, I told you about her? Don't even think of neglecting the dinner!

SECOND VOICE MESSAGE

Greg, this is detective Paul. The case is unclear and intricate. I have to meet with you to clarify certain details. Please, call me back.

THIRD VOICE MESSAGE

This is your psychoanalyst. Greg, why did you miss our meeting? I expect to see you this week. And one more thing. I hope you are not abusing antidepressants. You...

Greg cuts the message short. He looks at photos of Pam. The wound in his heart is still oozing. Greg opens a pack of antidepressants, takes a couple of pills, lies down on the sofa and falls asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SPACIOUS LIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Greg is at the psychological support group meeting. Greg is slightly prostrated. He is sceptical about attending these meetings but he attends them because his psychoanalyst insists that he do.

PERSON 1

Sometimes it seems like I am not myself. Anything going on is not occurring to me.

PERSON 2

May be you are merely worn out? You need a good sleep.

PERSON 1

I am not sure. I think there is something different going on.

PERSON 3

You know, after I lost a person that was close with me I seemed to have gone crazy. Reality and imagination sometimes replaced each other. In the beginning it was difficult to tell one from another. Now, one year later, everything gradually went back to normal. I regained myself.

PERSON 4

I agree. The most difficult time is the first several months and in a year life comes back in its colors again.

PERSON 1

And what if it was the very great and cherished love?

PERSON 2

This is too romantic...

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - LATE AT NIGHT

Greg is apathetic. He sits on the sofa watching the pictures on TV screen with volume muted.

INSERT - TV PROGRAM (SOUND OFF)

Technical sketches by Leonardo da Vinci flash on the screen. One of them remains on the screen for a longer instant. It is the GOLD PROFILE OF A HUMAN BEING by Leonardo. The host appears on the screen but we cannot hear him speak because TV sound is off.

END OF THE INSERT

Greg approaches a shelf with many framed pictures on it. He takes one of the many framed pictures. He is SMILING BROADLY in the picture taken at one of the SUNNY resorts. He remembers the way the photo was taken:

INSERT - GREG'S MEMORY

Pam tries to take a picture of Greg.

PAM
Greg, come on! Give me a smile! GREG
Take it as is!

PAM
No! I want you to smile. Say "cheese".

GREG
No, I will not say "cheese". I'm not
one of those fools who say "cheese"
for pictures.

PAM
Say it.

GREG
No, I won't.

PAM
What is it that you will never say for
a picture?

GREG
Cheese.

THE CAMERA FLASHES.

CLOSE UP - THE PHOTO OF GREG SMILING BROADLY.

END OF THE INSERT

Greg smiles at the memory. He takes a pack of antidepressant and opens it.

CLOSE UP - A COUPLE OF PILLS IN GREG'S HAND.

Greg takes the pills.

GREG'S POV: the room, Greg closes his eyes.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREET - AFTERNOON

Greg is moving lonely IN A CROWD OF PEOPLE. He is deep in his thoughts. Large outdoor screens keep broadcasting endless advertisements and news reports. Greg looks up at one of the screens.

ANNOUNCER

(advertising short on one of
the large street screens)
...electronic pets?! they are way back
in the past! If you are bored and
lonely, play Conquer Jane's Heart!
Digital mind enshrined in the image of
a regular earthly girl. The game is
available today...

The image of Jane is shown. She is VERY ATTRACTIVE (but NOT SEXY).

INT. CAR OF CITY MINI TRAIN - EVENING

Greg is thinking of something sadly. He is absorbed in his thoughts again.

INSERT - GREG'S MEMORY-DREAM: THE BEACH, BLUE SKY, WAVES SURGE AGAINST THE SHORE. SEAGULLS SHRIEK. Merry Greg and Pam are running along the deserted seashore holding their hands; their bare feet cut the waves dashing back and forth;

they enjoy the youth, life, fine weather and splashing of the sea. Pam is dragging a little behind Greg. Greg turns to look back and watches Pam laugh happily..

FADE TO BLACK.

The phone RINGS in the darkness. Greg opens his eyes. We are in Greg's room.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - EVENING

The video door communicator rings. TV murmur is heard. Greg approaches the door communicator. Nick is in its screen.

NICK

I came to pick you up. I knew you would try to ignore my invitation for dinner at the cozy Italian restaurant. I won't even come upstairs. I expect to see you in 10 minutes.

GREG

(understands, there is no room for retreat)
OK! I'll be downstairs in 10 minutes.

INT. COZY ITALIAN PLACE - EVENING

Greg, Nick, his spouse KATE HEART and her maiden friend AMANDA LYSTER are at one of the tables. The dinner is drawing to its end. The characters are talking idly.

NICK

Amanda, do you know that Greg is an IT genius?

GREG

Stop that, please, Nick.

NICK

(to Greg)
Don't you be so shy!
(to Amanda)
Greg is Chief Designer and architect of the EIGHTH DATA TRANSFER PROTOCOL (EDTP).

AMANDA

Is that right? Can you tell me about it? They say the Eighth will expand the scope of the worldwide network and help solve its problems.

NICK

Of course he can! He is good at it. And at something else, too. Excuse my stupid joke, please!

KATE

Information, the Eighth Protocol! We live in information flows and we are always short of it.

AMANDA

Greg, please speak up. We are thrilled.

GREG

Excuse me, please, I must leave you now.

AMANDA

Where are you going?

KATE

Greg, why are you leaving so soon?

GREG

It is late. I was going to work before I go to sleep. Thank you for inviting me.

(to Amanda)

Amanda, it was nice meeting you.

NICK

I'll see you to the exit.

Greg and Nick rise.

INT. AT THE RESTAURANT EXIT - LATE NIGHT

NICK

Hey, old chap, what's come over you?!
Didn't you like Amanda or the dinner
at all? Where are you going? We
haven't even started talking!

GREG

Nick, everything was excellent: your
company, Amanda and the dinner. But I
can't... Something is wrong... I
think, I still feel in love with Pam
deep within... It's not time yet...
Thank you for inviting me...

NICK

Greg, you scare me! It's been enough
time. You need to leave your shell but
you keep getting deeper into it!

GREG

It is easier for me to be that way
now. Thanks for your care, Nick. I
really appreciate it. It's just that I
feel that by socializing with another
girl I betray the memory of Pam.

NICK

But this is ridiculous!

GREG

Yes, it is! But that's the way I feel
now.

Greg takes a taxi and leaves.

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Greg cruises the night city in a taxi. The streets are glaring
with lights.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Greg is absorbed in his thoughts. From time to time he raises
his head and takes glimpses of city streets flashing by.

GREG

Please, stop here. Thank you.

Greg gets off the taxi. He approaches a shop window of a store. A holographic image of Jane shines softly in the shop window. A sign GLIMMERS saying "Play Conquer Jane's Heart game".

Greg looks into Jane's still eyes. Next to him a large street screen broadcasts news.

PRESENTER

A surge of cybernetic crime has been observed this week. An unknown group of hackers attacked four leading IT companies. The goal of these attacks remains unknown...

Greg enters the store.

INT. ELECTRIC DEVICES SHOP - NIGHT

Greg opens the door, ADMISSION BELL RINGS. He is the only visitor of the store at this late hour.

SALESMAN

I bet you are also interested in the recent invention by Biotech Corporation. Jane is a wonder! Am I right supposing that you came by to get a player's module?

GREG

Yes, you are right.

SALESMAN

The holographic sensors creates excellent images. These sensors help her perceive the world as if she were a live human being. You won't tell Jane from a real woman!

Greg listens.

SALESMAN

And that is not all. The set also includes portable sensors. You can use them to meet outdoor.

(MORE)

SALESMAN (cont'd)
It's all well thought-out. Jane can be with you anywhere.

GREG
All right, OK.

SALESMAN
Here is what it looks like. You connect the module to your computer...

GREG
(breaking the salesman short)
Thanks, I will manage it. Is the description in the set?

SALESMAN
Yes, of course, sir, it is enclosed.

Greg pays the money.

SALESMAN
Good luck!

ADMISSION BELL rings once again as Greg exits the shop.

EXT. NEAR THE SHOP - NIGHT

Greg casts a glance at the outdoor screen. The screen the PICTURE OF THE SEA from GREG'S DREAM. Greg watches the street screen IN SURPRISE for a while.

Greg slowly walks along the night street. He turns to look at the outdoor screen, BUT THE PICTURE OF THE SEA IS GONE AS IF IT WAS NEVER THERE. An advertising piece is on.

INT. A SPACIOUS LIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Greg is at the psychological support group meeting.

PERSON 1
Yes, I know, but this is still hard for me to understand it.

PERSON 2
I believe this is crazy. It is impossible to replace genuine communication we enjoy in contacts with real people with anything else.

PERSON 3

I also believe that the enthusiasm about digital intellect we are witnessing since recently is a craze. And this game... I find it rather perverted.

Greg is depressed. He feels that he is not understood here and will never be.

GREG

I would not put it so plain. You are sure that it is only a real person that can help another person with his problems...

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREET - AFTERNOON

Rush hour. Greg IS MOVING LONELY IN THE SEA OF PEOPLE. IT IS DRIZZLING. Greg is not aware of the drizzle, he is absorbed in his thoughts, as usual.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Once in his room, Greg listens to messages recorded by automatic teller.

MESSAGE 1

(Strange obscure NOISE resembling SPLASHING OF THE SEA, then the SHORT TONES indicating CUT LINE)

No more messages. Greg switches the automatic teller off. He connects his Conquer Jane's Heart player's module to his computer.

INSERT - TV NEWS REPORT

CHANNEL 1

Life worldwide including our economy, politics and urban conveniences completely depend on sustainable operation of the global network. That is why we demand that punishment for IT crimes should be more austere...

GREG
(to the TV)
Off.

Greg turns on his computer, THE LARGE HOLOGRAPHIC SCREEN casts light into the room.

COMPUTER
Connection to central server of
Biotech Corporation established
successfully. Please, enter your
registration key.

Greg enters the registration key.

COMPUTER
Key confirmed. Registration
successful.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC SCREEN shows the line: "Connection successful".

A holographic image of JANE emerges in the room at once. JANE'S BODY IS SLIGHTLY FLUORESCENT and in all other respects she looks like a regular girl. Jane looks at Greg, walks to the window sill and leans her back against it, the dark of the night showing in through the window.

JANE
Good evening! My name's Jane!

GREG
Nice to meet you, Jane.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Greg wakes up to A PHONE CALL. It's his colleague PETER HARTMAN.

PETER
Hi, Greg! We completed testing the
EDTP, we want you to take a look at
the results.

GREG
All right, I'll be there today.

PETER

We'll wait for you. See you.

GREG

See you later.

EXT. PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF GREG'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Greg gets in the car and drives. But he deviates from his regular route. Unexpectedly Greg finds himself heading for the seashore.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The highway looks almost deserted. Greg is driving fast.

INT. GREG'S CAR - AFTERNOON

In the rear-view mirror Greg spots A BLACK CAR WITH BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS. The black car is following Greg at a distance. Greg keeps casting looks in the mirror hoping the somewhat troubling him car would disappear. However, the black car is still behind him and keeps following him.

CAR COMPUTER

Fuel level enough for 30 kilometers.
Please, fill up the tank.

Greg gathers speed.

CLOSE SHOT - REAR-VIEW MIRROR: the black car diminishes and disappears behind. The mirror only shows the dividing lines on the road behind.

EXT. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Greg drives at the very familiar gas station. When he and Pam were together they often stopped by to get some gas and have a snack on their way to the seashore. JACK DICKSON - an 11-12 year old white-haired and always smiling boy, son of the gas station owner - comes running to Greg.

GREG

Hi, Jack.

JACK
Hello, Mr. Adams. All the way, as usual?

GREG
Yes, as usual, fill it up.

Greg watches the direction where he came from. The black car is supposed to pass by as there are no turns on the highway. He wants to take a closer look at the annoying black car.

JACK
You don't come by our station too often since recently.

GREG
No. Not often.

JACK
Today we offer homemade spaghetti. My mom cooks them excellent. Will you drop in?

GREG
Thanks, Jack. Maybe on my way back.

Greg looks at the highway.

JACK
You never used to refuse.

GREG
Things were quite different then.

Jack realizes that Greg keeps taking glimpses backwards on the highway.

JACK
Waiting for someone?

GREG
Why should I?

JACK
It's just that you keep turning back to look.

Greg smiles at the ingenuous answer.

GREG
(handing the money)
Thank you.

Jack is glad, he counts the money - a good tip left for him again. Greg is slightly surprised to never see the black car pass by. Greg drives onto the highway and turns back once again to look. Jack's last phrase keeps rushing through his mind: It's just that you keep turning back to look, It's just that you keep turning back to look...

INT. BIOTECH IT LAB - AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP - CORD THREADS, DIODES GLIMMER, COOLING AGENT MOVING IN THE COOLING CIRCUIT.

COOLERS DRONE. Dr. Swensson sits facing many HOLOGRAPHIC screens. Dr. Hoper approaches his from behind. Dr. Swensson turns back.

DR. HOPER
How's Jane's memory?

DR. SWENSSON
Still the same so far. We expect
regeneration to begin any day.

DR. HOPER
We'll have to wait.

THE SILENCE IS PERFECT BUT FOR THE EVENLY DRONING COMPUTER COOLING SYSTEMS. Dr. Swensson gives Dr. Hooper a long look.

DR. SWENSSON
What is she now?

DR. HOPER
That's what I keep asking myself. Jane
is not an algorithm, nor a machine...
neither is she a human. She may have
become something more by now. I have
no idea what it is.

DR. SWENSSON
What do we do about the protection
circuit?

DR. HOPER

Keep it on. We are responsible for our
creation.

THE ONLY SOUND BREAKING THE SILENCE IS THE EVEN DRONE OF
COOLERS. Segments of programming code rush across holographic
screens.

EXT. SEASHORE - AFTERNOON

IT IS CLOUDY. SEAGULLS SHRIEK. THE SEA IS STORMING MILDLY. Greg,
wrapping himself in a raincoat, watches the white foam on tops
of the waves. Waves come running and surge against the shore.

Greg's MOBILE PHONE RINGS.

GREG

(on the phone)

I won't come today. (pause)

I mustn't. See you tomorrow. (hangs
up)

Greg wraps himself in the raincoat and sadly walks along the
seashore.

INSERT - GREG'S MEMORY

EXT. SEASHORE - AFTERNOON

IT IS SUNNY, WARM, FEW PEOPLE AROUND. Greg and Pam repose on the
bench watching the sea. Pam is pensive.

END OF THE INSERT

Greg approaches the very bench he and Pam were sitting on one
year ago. Greg sits down on the bench.

INSERT - GREG'S MEMORY (CONT'D)

EXT. SEASHORE - AFTERNOON

Greg and Pam are sitting on the bench and watching the CALM sea.
Greg holds Pam by the hand. They are happy. Greg and Pam chat
idly. Their remarks come after extensive pauses.

GREG
It is calm.

PAM
It is only for show.

GREG
How's your work?

PAM
The boss has gone mad again.

GREG
You almost never share anything with me!

PAM
(smiles)
It's because I feel fine with you anyway.

GREG
But still?

Pam keeps silence in response and watches the sea.

PAM
(thoughtfully)
Greg, can you imagine that we all came out of this water. So many amazing forms of life replaced each other before nature gifted humans with life.

GREG
(surprised)
Why did you think about it?

PAM
I don't know.

GREG
Let's have a bite.

PAM
Let's stay here for a short while.
(pause) Let's watch the sea.

A BLACK DOG approaches and lies down at Greg's and Pam's feet. It takes out its tongue, turns its head and watches Greg and Pam. Harmony.

END OF THE INSERT

IT IS CLOUDY. THE SEA IS STORMING MILDLY. HEAVY AND SLUGGISH CLOUDS. Greg approaches his car, turns on a toggle switch and Jane appears. He can only afford inviting the virtual Jane to accompany him in this place, which is dear to him.

JANE

You did not tell me you would invite me to the seashore.

GREG

I did not realize I would come here today.

Greg sits on the same bench he used to sit on together with Pam. Jane sits down by his side. They both watch the sea pensively. The very BLACK DOG (from Greg's memory) approaches and lies down next to them. Jane watches the sea pensively.

JANE

So many amazing forms of life replaced each other before nature gifted humans with life.

Greg gazes at Jane in surprise. Jane catches his surprised look.

JANE

Why are you looking at me in this strange way?

GREG

I had heard Pam say something very similar.

JANE

It means that we perceive the sea in a similar way... Tell me about Pam.

GREG

We were together for a long time but at times it seemed to me I did not know her at all... She was enigmatic... Very enigmatic... Looking back I think I never understood her...

Jane and Greg watch the STORMING sea. Greg is somewhat sad but the sadness is light. Greg is pleased with the bad weather, with Jane sitting by his side. Finally his soul found this peaceful nook the first time after he lost Pam. THE BLACK DOG LIES AT GREG'S AND JANE'S FEET, ITS TONGUE HANGING OUT. The dog watches them as it used to watch Greg and Pam.

INT. PSYCHOANALYST'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

LIGHT AND SPACIOUS room. The space is rare, the room is designed as tribute to minimalism. Greg and psychoanalyst are in the room. They converse unhurriedly.

PSYCHOANALYST

Why did you quit attending psychological support group meetings?

GREG

It is ridiculous.

PSYCHOANALYST

You are very withdrawn. You keep everything to yourself. Talking about problems and sharing them with others people get rid of the burden. They look at it from a distance and find solutions.

GREG

I am not used to sharing. My world is only mine. Moreover, I have no time to do it now. I have a lot of work to do.

PSYCHOANALYST

This is another problem of yours. You are emotionally and physically exhausted. You need a time out really badly. Before it is too late - please, stop.

GREG

Yes, I will. (pause) Please, prescribe me another depressant, the previous one does not help.

PSYCHOANALYST

I wouldn't do that.

GREG
I insist, doctor.

PSYCHOANALYST
It won't help you. It's not the pills
but changing the way of life that is
supposed to help you back on your
feet. You are overburdened. Given that
you lost your beloved person,
depressants may make you feel worse.

GREG
Doctor, am I asking too much?

PSYCHOANALYST
All right. (writes a note) Try this
one.

GREG
Thank you.

PSYCHOANALYST
Don't stop attending psychological
support group meetings.

GREG
This stage is over.

Psychoanalyst keeps silence and watches Greg leave. Greg is an interesting and the most difficult patient for him.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Greg takes a couple of new depressant pills, looks at framed pictures of Pam. His heart is full of pain caused by the loss and the wound is still oozing.

INSERT - TV PROGRAM: as presenter speaks the TV pictures show images of hominids (archantropuses, paleoanthropuses, Cro-Magnon men), fragments of their skulls, skeletons, and primitive implements.

PRESENTER
(V.O.)
...
(MORE)

PRESENTER (cont'd)

several dozens of years ago anthropologists tended to strongly tie the intellectual evolution of hominids with the progressing size of their brains. However, later it was revealed that the size of the skull was not as important as researchers used to believe, notably so at later stages of evolution. The size of skulls of typical European Neanderthals was larger on average than that of Cro-Manions and contemporary humans. At the same time it appears that Neanderthal brain structure included fewer brain sectors responsible for speech. Palatine fornix of late Neanderthals is not so arched as that of Cro-Manions, which indicates that their articulation was less developed. It is the ability to communicate with each other and actively exchange accumulated knowledge and data that allowed Cro-Manions to come out victors in the war against their bitter enemies - Neanderthals. Nowadays Neoanthropuses remain the only existing representatives of hominid family...

Greg dozes tiredly in his chair in front of the TV.

CLOSE UP - GREG'S FACE ILLUMINATED BY THE TV SCREEN.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

THE NIGHT IS GREYING. The morning catches Greg snoring in front of the TV. Greg has not had a good sleep for several months. He is too overexcited and worn out. He wakes up with a jerk. Greg walks up to the window .

GREG'S POV: two broad-shouldered MEN WEARING BLACK SUITS are near his car. One of them has just opened the door of Greg's car. A BLACK CAR WITH BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS - the very car he saw in the rear-view mirror on his way to the sea - is sitting next to his car.

The last bits of sleep are instantly shaken off. Greg runs out to the street to settle it all clear.

EXT. PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF GREG'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Neither the BLACK CAR nor the men wearing black suits are within sight. Greg approaches his car and inspects it. The car is perfectly fine. Greg sits wearily on the trunk and grabs his head in the hands.

GREG
(to himself)
Am I going mad?

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREETS - AFTERNOON

THE DAY IS OVERCAST. GREG is moving in DENSE PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC. He enters a cafe.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

He approaches a table and the grey-haired private detective PAUL NORMAN welcomes him.

PAUL
(shaking hands)
Good afternoon!

GREG
(shaking hands)
Afternoon!

PAUL
We need...

Greg catches a glimpse of the very the same BLACK CAR WITH BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS parked near the cafe door. No, he cannot have been wrong. This is the very car that keeps following him! Greg takes off without saying a word to detective Paul and runs for the exit. He collides with a waitress carrying a tray. Greg and the waitress fall down. Greg apologizes politely but the resulting turmoil hampers his progress. Finally, he is out of the cafe.

EXT. PARKING LOTS IN FRONT OF CAFE ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

Greg looks about but the BLACK CAR is gone.

INT. CAFE - AFTERNOON

Greg and detective Norman are at a table. Greg is putting himself in order.

PAUL

What's wrong with you? Have you just seen a devil?

GREG

It must have been a delusion. Since recently I am not myself.

PAUL

Are you okay now? Can we talk?

GREG

Yes. Perfectly fine. I am all ears.

PAUL

Here is what I have to say. I have familiarized myself with the results of the official investigation of Pam Russel's disappearance. (smiles) Limiting to gathering data from the network and analyzing it... (smiles) These modern methods are no good for anything.

GREG

That is why we are talking now.

PAUL

Mr. Adams, the starting point is highly important for success in my profession. I mean, the direction. If you take the wrong road you will never reach the destination.

GREG

I believe the starting point important in any profession. Have you managed to learn anything?

PAUL

Yes... Pamella Russel has never worked as expert for Development Inc.

GREG

Where did you learn about it?

PAUL

I have no right to disclose my sources. Just believe me.

GREG

Well then... I don't even... this is news for me...

PAUL

I can reassure you that all the rest of information you provided concerning Pam Russel were confirmed. Pam really had no relatives. She got her degree using the money her parents willed to her. In brief, everything else you told me is true.

GREG

Yes, but her work...

PAUL

This is why I decided to talk to you. What can you tell about Pam's work? What did she tell you about it? You may have taken her to work some time.

GREG

Not a single time... I never really taken her to or from work. She came and left herself.

PAUL

Did she tell anything unusual or behave strangely in the last several months before she disappeared?

GREG

Tell anything... no. As for Pam, everything about her was unusual and extraordinary.

PAUL

Yes, sure. But what I mean is anything that would help the investigation.

GREG

Well, she was reluctant to talk about her work. She was always evasive when I asked her about work... She liked her work even though she at times railed at it.

PAUL

Not too much, eh?

GREG

Since recently Pam used to work overtime during emergency rushes.

PAUL

Is this all?

GREG

I think it is.

PAUL

Well. (pause) This gap about her work is not so bad as it may seem. Here is something we can catch on. It means Pam had a secret.

GREG

I thought we had no secrets from each other.

PAUL

In fact you did. Should you remember anything that might help, give me a call.

Greg leaves the cafe. He is perplexed with the news.

EXT. PARKING IN FRONT OF THE CAFE - AFTERNOON

THE DAY IS GREY, IT IS DRIZZLING. He looks up and watches small raindrops fall on his face.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES CORP. - AFTERNOON

GREG and PETER are walking along a broad artificially illuminated corridor.

GREG

I looked through log files. All errors revealed during tests were standard.

PETER

Yes, they are working to eliminate them now. In a few days the remaining defects will be corrected.

GREG

I gathered from your phone call that a much larger bug is getting to us.

Greg and Peter enter a vast room - Electronic Wires IT laboratory, which is at the same time one of the world's largest global network hubs maintaining its operation.

INT. IT LABORATORY AT ELECTRONIC WIRES CORP. - AFTERNOON

The supercomputer named PYTHAGOR is installed in the hall. It is not an artificial mind in the precise meaning of this word, but it is capable of responding to simple questions and to reproduce phrases. Pythagor also responds to voice commands. PYTHAGOR HAS A PLEASANT AND SOMEWHAT ELECTRONIC VOICE.

The room is full of supercomputer's COOLING DEVICES GENERATING AN EVEN DRONE.

̄LOSE UP: Cryogen pipes cover the walls and refrigeration medium is moving restlessly in the pipes. Cord threads are all over the room.

PETER

(casting his look at the supercomputer)

Yesterday Pythagor completed model calculations of the global network's operation based on the Eighth Protocol.

PYTHAGOR

Good afternoon, Dr. Adams.

GREG

Afternoon, Pythagor.

INSERT - SUPERCOMPUTER PYTHAGOR: DIODES ARE GLIMMERING ON CONTROL PANELS. CORDS AND CONNECTION CABLES COMING OUT OF THE SUPERCOMPUTER WEB ACROSS THE ROOM.

PETER

Model calculations indicate that the Protocol would behave in a sustainable manner in local and citywide networks...

GREG

(breaking Peter short)
But they also indicate that on the global scale the protocol would work with instability, don't they?

PETER

(surprised)
How come you knew about it?

GREG

I supposed so, but I was not perfectly sure.
That's why I wanted to wait for Pythagor to complete calculations.

PETER

What do we do then?

Greg sits at the supercomputer. Holographic screens emerge in front of him and illuminate the room.

GREG

Leave me alone, I must review the results.

PETER

OK!

Peter leaves. He knows Greg is used to working alone on complex problems. Greg has changed - he is completely immersed in the working process. Work helps him forget about his memories and gloomy thoughts.

GREG

(to Pythagor)
Well, let's go ahead! Show me what you got.

Command lines, programming code segments and charts run across Pythagor's screen. Greg smokes.

CLOSE UP - CIGARETTE BUTT PUT OUT IN AN ASH TRAY.

Greg lights another cigarette, drinks coffee from a paper glass. COOLERS DRONE EVENLY. Programming code segments and endless lines run across holographic screens.

Greg looks at a cable connecting the supercomputer to the worldwide web. The camera follows in the direction of his look. The camera runs through the cable. It exits to the street, runs through basements, every nook and crannies, crosses roads. It becomes clear that the megapolis resembles a small fly entangled in the web of the worldwide information network. We are back to the room.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES BOARD MEETING TAKES PLACE IN A HALL - AFTERNOON

VAST AND LIGHT HALL WITH PANORAMIC WINDOWS. One of the walls is decorated in an exotic manner: a tree consisting of the stem and branches - this is HOMINIDS EVOLUTION TREE.

Board meeting participants gathered at a large round table. Greg, Peter, Electronic Wires President Richard Brenner, his aides BOSS 2 and BOSS 3 and several members of the board attend the corporate board meeting.

As they speak, the camera from time to time runs along the HOMINIDS EVOLUTION TREE (at these moments we only hear the voice of the speaker).

The camera is set up in the center of the hall to give us the panoramic view of the meeting.

THE CAMERA TAKES CLOSE-UPS OF PEOPLE ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS. SHARP SHOT CHANGES ARE USED TO SHIFT FROM ONE SPEAKER TO THE OTHER.

MR. BRENNER

Introduction of the Eighth Protocol pending, Pythagor provided unexpected results of negative nature. Did I understand you right, Mr. Adams?

GREG

Yes, that's correct! We tested a model of the Eighth's behavior in the global network and revealed cluster instability of the protocol. However, so far we have not encountered such instability in action.

BOSS 2

Is this only a hypothesis given what we know today?

GREG

(to Boss 2)

Which we should take into consideration.

MR. BRENNER

Please, give us some more detail.

GREG

Extremely high carrying capacity of EDTP turns out to be a double-edged weapon.

The camera runs across the hall's interior. It stops at the HOMINIDS EVOLUTION TREE. It runs along the evolution tree.

GREG

(O.S.)

Should a hub with the capacity six times that of current server hubs join the Eighth Protocol-based global network, the network would spontaneously change on a large scale.

PETER

Such a hub would generate perturbation noise and cause changes in data routing. As a result, the high-speed domain may dominate a segment of the network and restructure it. Therefrom, using the capacity of the dominated segment it may take over another segment. Due to positive feedback this process may become avalanche-like.

BOSS 2

How soon would the described hub take over these segments, Dr. Adams?

GREG

In a matter of several hours.

BOSS 3

How much time would it take us to patch this bug of the Eighth Protocol?

GREG

Unfortunately, this phenomenon is unavoidable within existing network architecture. Due to lack of time and funds saving efforts development of the Eighth Protocol was carried out in a pyramid-like manner: the new version of the protocol is based on the previous ones. The crack was found in the basement. The frequencies that were used previously suggested no problems. The matter never came up. However, now that we are on the verge of the limits...

MR. BRENNER

Why wasn't this taken into consideration at the development stage?

GREG

The path of learning is hard and thorny, but at the same time inscrutable. Very often research resembles roving about a labyrinth. You never know what comes up beyond the turn.

MR. BRENNER

As I gather, it is impossible to repair the protocol within the ten days left until it is launched?

GREG

No, it isn't. No matter how hard we try.

BOSS 2

Dr. Adams, I understand, we are discussing behavior of domains that do not exist: their operating frequency would be many times that of existing hubs.

(MORE)

BOSS 2 (cont'd)
 As far as I can tell, the very
 existence of such computer domains is
 open to question.

GREG
 Yes! I would not object to that.

BOSS 3
 I believe, we have nothing to fear in
 the nearest future. Later we will have
 plenty of time to repair this
 troublesome feature.

BOSS 2
 Even more so, why should we mill the
 wind? The corporation used every
 effort to deliver the Eighth Protocol.
 It's not about abortion of the project
 or long-term debugging. It is about
 the corporation's existence.

MR. BRENNER
 We should not put the entire
 Electronic Wires at stake based on
 mere speculations and nonsense. Now is
 the best time.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES PREMISES - AFTERNOON

Greg and Peter move along the SPIRAL ARTIFICIALLY ILLUMINATED
 CORRIDOR (THERE ARE NO WINDOWS IN IT). They exit to a hall.

PETER
 So, the protocol will be introduced in
 10 days. I think, we have nothing to
 fear. The world is full of might-have-
 been prophesies.

GREG
 We live under the general law of
 relativity even though we do not make
 note of it. The low speed with which
 our cars move or low precision of our
 watches will not abolish the law.

PETER
 What do you mean?

GREG
I would provide an answer if I knew
for myself...

PETER
Greg, you don't seem to be yourself
since recently.

GREG
Don't you worry. I am fine.

PETER
If you were fine I wouldn't have
raised the issue.

GREG
All right. It's just insomnia. It
happens.

PETER
You are gifted, you may even be a
genius and there is a lot of things
you can be excused for. I can tell you
between you and me: since recently the
boss doesn't very much like the way
you behave.

GREG
(looking through the window)
You can't please everybody. All right,
let's drop the matter. Let's get down
to work on...

Peter notes that Greg is closely watching the BLACK CAR WITH
BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS parked outside in front of the entrance.

PETER
Work on...? Greg, what's wrong?

Greg takes off instantly and starts running. He comes out to the
parking area.

EXT. PARKING AREA IN FRONT OF ELECTRONIC WIRES BUILDING -
AFTERNOON

Greg runs towards the BLACK CAR WITH BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS. Yes!
This is the very car Greg noticed in the rear-view mirror. It is
not a dream! The car is drawing closer.

It is time to dot all "i's" now! The black car starts moving as he approaches. Greg hurries after it for a while and the car keeps gathering speed. Greg takes his car and kicks up the accelerator.

EXT. CITY HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Pursuit. The black car is heading towards the deserted city. The streets are deserted. These tenantless quarters are to be demolished. No one has lived here for quite a while except for rare tramps.

Greg pursues the black car, view from above: Greg's car looks like a light square manoeuvring in the labyrinth of narrow streets in the deserted city. His light car is roving as a lost bit of data in the endless labyrinth of worldwide network. MUSICAL BURDEN OF THE FILM IS HEARD (A MELODY SUGGESTING OF ENDLESS, PEACEFUL, CONTEMPLATING, AND SOMEWHAT COSMIC MOOD). in the labyrinth of streets Greg lost the sight of the black car. He stops his car and watches a ramshackle street.

GREG'S POV: IT STARTS DRIZZLING. TINY DROPLETS HIT THE WINDSHIELD. Greg has not turned windshield wipers yet. TINY DROPS JOIN IN LARGER ONES AND RUN DOWN IN A PATTERN RESEMBLING THE STEM AND BRANCHES OF HOMINIDS EVOLUTION TREE. Gloomy quarters of the deserted city are seen through the wet glass.

GREG TURNS ON THE WIPERS. The wipers CREAK and lazily wipe the drizzle off the windshield.

INT. GREG'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Greg is nervous - he lost the black car. IT IS DRIZZLING, WINDSCREEN WIPERS CREAK AND THE ENGINE GRUMBLES. Greg hits the accelerator pedal and the car takes off. All of his inner anxiety bursts out. The car is roving among the gloomy streets, reflecting Greg's state of anxiety and mental confusion he has experienced for the last several months.

EXT. DESERTED QUARTERS OF THE MEGAPOLIS - AFTERNOON

IT IS RAINING. THE DAY IS OVERCAST. Suddenly the black car is rushing past Greg once again. Greg is instantly on its tail. He nearly drives to the black car! Greg's car slips on the slippery road and the car breaks the ROAD CONSTRUCTION SIGN, which was left here several dozens of years ago, and the car runs into the ditch.

INT. CORRIDOR AT THE HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

The hall is illuminated with somewhat dim electric light. A WINDOW IS SEEN AT THE END OF THE LONG HALL. THE DAYLIGHT OOZING THROUGH THE WINDOW SEEMS TO BE THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. Nick is sitting on a chair in the corridor. The door opens.

DOCTOR

(O.S.)

It's just a knee injury. Keep the fixing bandage on for the next week. I advise that you take some rest. A knee injury is a mere trifle compared to your emotional disturbance. You need to take some rest.

Greg limps towards Nick. Nick rises to meet his friend.

GREG

(to Nick)

It's nothing bad. They say I should rest.

NICK

I heard them. And high time it is! You don't look yourself. Hollow cheeks. Some unhealthy shine in your eyes. This is the road to madness.

GREG

Come on, tell me you used to know another me.

NICK

In fact, I did know another you! You were a smart and cheerful young man! Truly inspired and enthusiastic!

Greg and Nick smile. They have a lot in common. Greg turns grave at once.

GREG

I am being followed.

Nick gives Greg an inquiring look.

GREG

Nick, this is serious. Dead serious!

NICK

Who is following you? Don't talk nonsense!

GREG

I can't see who this is.

NICK

Greg, this is paranoia. I used to hear similar things from you before. Remember, ten years ago you were working on your thesis.

GREG

Things were different back then.

NICK

It was just the same. You worked a lot. You were depressed.

GREG

This time this is serious. (pause)
Look out the window, a black car must be parked nearby.

Nick walks to the window and looks at the street.

NICK

Yes, there is a black car outside.

NICK'S POV: a good-looking young lady approaches a LITTLE FUEL-EFFICIENT CAR and opens its door.

NICK

(O.S.)

I would be happy to be followed by her.

Greg joins Nick to look at the car and the lady.

NICK'S AND GREG'S POV: the little black car gets away.

NICK

It's paranoid, Greg. Stop staying up late at night. Work, loneliness. Something is going wrong.

(MORE)

NICK (cont'd)
 Maybe you should stop there and look about... Amanda likes you. Set time for a date with her. She is a good girl. It's precisely what you need right now.

GREG
 I wish it were all so easy.

Nick looks at Greg in silence. He has known Greg ever since they were students and he has had enough time to learn how uneasy Greg may be.

INT. NICK'S CAR - EVENING

The car is stuck in a traffic jam. Greg smokes.

CLOSE SHOT: queer smoke patterns WIND AROUND INTO SPIRALS and dissolve in the air.

Greg opens the window. THE NOISE OF THE CITY BURSTS INTO THE CAR. The noise brings news and advertising broadcast on outdoor screens. Greg watches one of the screens.

PRESENTER
 Creators of Conquer Jane's Heart game are amazed at the success the game has enjoyed so far. Developers believe the game is the best test for digital mind's emotional and behavioral components. Biotech Corp. Pins hope on its creation...

Presenter's voice and picture disappear abruptly, replaced with A PICTURE OF THE SEA. Greg gives a start - IT IS THE SEASHORE LANDSCAPE AT THE PLACE WHERE HE OFTEN CAME WITH PAM and later WITH JANE.

INSERT: IT IS CLOUDY. COLD SEA WASHES THE SHORE WITH ITS WAVES, WHICH BREAK AGAINST THE SHORE. The sea keeps pushing its waves on and on just as it was a century ago, a millennium ago, 10,000 years ago...

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

INSERT - TV NEWS

PRESENTER

Today Electronic Wires announced the long expected event. This event still remains subject for debate. Today the corporation introduced the Eighth Data Transfer Protocol aka simply the Eighth. The Eighth is supposed to integrate the network at the higher level. You can see how it happened. Here is the unique event on your screens.

Electronic Wires laboratory. Cameras, shooting, spectators, and staff members - everyone is excited. President of teh corporation Mr. Brenner is a central figure - he will press the "Enter" key when the moment comes.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Countdown launched. Five, four, three, two, one.

Mr. Brenner presses the "Enter" key.

PRESENTER

This simple push on the key must launch the revolution within the global network. It will enhance control and boost carrying capacity. But why listen to me talking while we have its parents here, in our studio.

The camera shows Mr. Brenner and Greg resting in armchairs.

HOST

I am greatly honored to welcome head of Electronic Wires Corp. Mr. Brenner (Mr. Brenner nods for the camera) and chief developer of the Eighth Protocol Dr. Adams (Greg nods for the camera) in our studio.

MR. BRENNER

We are pleased to be here. I would like to give the floor to Mr. Adams right away because he is the author and the father of the Eighth.

GREG

Thank you. The Eighth Protocol is the next generation data transfer protocol. The prominent feature of the Eighth is the highly flexible connections within core hubs of the network. If required, we are able to re-configure the network to add structural network complexity, leveraging its architecture only. We have adopted the new approach from nature. In a similar way single neurons join together to integrate into the complex network of neurons.

HOST

There is a hypothesis assuming that once the network is configured in a certain way... the so-called optimal network, it may be capable of generating a mind, which means the network may become a living entity.

GREG

(smiles)

A network with its own mind?! I consider such speculations as myths or beautiful legends.

END OF THE INSERT

GREG

(to the TV)

Off.

JANE

Why turn it off?

GREG

It distracts me. I am losing the third game.

Jane and Greg play chess. They sit at the virtual holographic chessboard with chess pieces on it.

JANE

That is true. Castle goes to A8.

GREG
Knight to B6.

JANE
Queen to B5. Checkmate!

Greg leans on the back of his chair and lights a cigarette.

JANE
You are absent-minded today.

GREG
It was a crazy day.

JANE
It seems to me, you worry over something.

GREG
Yes, a little. But I don't want to talk about it now.

JANE
As you wish.

Greg leans against the back of his chair.

GREG
At times I feel generally anxious.

Jane gives him an inquiring look.

GREG
I mean, general anxiety for no particular reason. (pause) It's hard to explain.

Jane rises and walks up to Greg's photo, the one where he "smiles his broadest". She takes the picture (as JANE "takes" the picture a precise holographic copy emerges in her hands and the real photo remains intact). Greg watches Jane. Suddenly Jane slowly utters a phrase as if the words are slowly moving through her mind.

JANE
(very slowly))
Say... cheese.

Greg gives a start.

GREG
Say it again.

JANE
(more certain this time))
Say cheese.

GREG
Why did you say this?

JANE
I don't know.

Silence. Greg gave Jane a surprised look.

JANE
I just thought you were saying
"cheese" for the picture.

GREG
Yes! I am saying "cheese" in the
picture.

JANE
Well, it means I guessed right.

GREG
(slowly and thoughtfully))
That's right. Must have guessed right.

JANE
Well, are you going to win back?

GREG
Of course! I will win this game for
certain.

The holographic chessboard with chess pieces on it emerges.

INT. CITY TRAIN CAR - AFTERNOON

Few people in the car. Greg watches a screen installed in the
car. News report.

NEWS REPORTER
It has been 24 hours since the launch
of the Eighth Protocol.
(MORE)

NEWS REPORTER (cont'd)
 Around 20% of network-constituent hubs
 operate under the Eighth. We watch all
 the developments live.

CLOSE UP - A HOLOGRAPHIC 3D MODEL OF THE GLOBE spotted all over
 with red and blue dots. The dots are interconnected with the
 threads of the worldwide web. The model is revolving slowly and
 charmingly.

NEWS REPORTER
 (O.S.)
 The blue dots indicate the hubs
 operating under the previous version
 of the protocol. Red dots are the
 server hubs that have switched to the
 Eighth. Experts predict that in one
 week's time the entire network will
 adopt the Eighth. The protocol is
 supposed to rejuvenate the worldwide
 network.

Doors open and Greg gets off the train. The train takes off,
 Greg looks back.

GREG'S POV: A MAN IN THE DARK SUIT watches him through the door
 window of the train car. The man stares at Greg until the car is
 gone IN THE DARK OF THE TUNNEL.

Greg frowns his face - he wants to go back and find out what the
 man wants from him and why he keeps following him but the train
 is gathering speed and the man is gone.

INT. BIOTECH CORP. IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

COOLERS DRONE EVENLY, DIODES GLIMMER, the dim room is
 illuminated by holographic displays, command lines and
 programming code fragments run bottom-up across these displays.
 Dr. Hoper, Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness are in the room. THEY
 LOOK TIRED.

DR. SWENSSON
 We are unable to shift to the Eighth.
 Something is blocking us.

DR. HOPER
 Did you find out the cause?

DR. WITNESS
 We have several versions. Presently we
 are exploring all of them.

DR. SWENSSON

So far we can't tell anything for sure.

DR. WITNESS

Probably the protection circuits of corporation's network are the obstacle.

DR. SWENSSON

It seems that they are not the only hindrance.

DR. HOPER

This is what I am concerned with.
(pause) Keep working. We need the Eighth as the breath of life.

CLOSE UP - DIODES GLIMMER, CORD LINES wrapped all about the lab.
ATMOSPHERE OF AN IT LABORATORY.

COOLERS DRONE EVENLY.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES RECEPTION HALL - AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP - A HOLOGRAPHIC 3D MODEL OF THE GLOBE: the Earth's face is spotted all over with red and blue dots connected by the web of the worldwide information network. The holographic picture is a real-time tracker of worldwide transfer to the EDTP. ONE OF THE DOTS GRADUALLY CHANGES ITS COLOR FROM BLUE TO RED.

MR. BRENNER

Congratulations to all of us. We wanted to do this, and we managed to do this, we did it! Right now I'd like to raise the toast to our team! To our victory!

All those present raise their glasses and drink.

GREG'S POV (SOUND OFF): Staff members talk, smile, eat and drink wine.

Suddenly Peter breaks into Greg's stupor.

PETER

Greg, you are late!

Greg gives a start. SOUND is on - the hall fills with the sounds of reception.

MR. BRENNER

We can tell for certain that we go down in history through our brainchild - the Eighth Protocol. This very building where I raise this glass of wine is the place where history was born. We generated history in our computing laboratories we created history. All of us have are in a position to be proud of the Eighth.

CLOSE UP - A HOLOGRAPHIC 3D MODEL OF THE GLOBE spotted all over with red and blue dots connected by the web of the worldwide information network. The model is revolving slowly and charmingly.

BOSS 2

Presently about 30 percent of server hubs operate under the Eighth Protocol. The remaining portion will adopt it within the following several days. Let's drink the toast to the brilliant future of the corporation and the humanity!

All those present raise their glasses.

PETER

(to Greg)

I looked through reports on introduction of the Eighth. The success is truly greater than we expected. One third of network-constituent hubs operates under the Eighth. The network is becoming transparent. Control boosted many times.

GREG

Any unexpected problems?

PETER

All is well. Don't be too suspicious.

Greg and Peter nod to their acquaintances ever once in a while.

The president of the corporation president Mr. Brenner approaches Greg.

MR. BRENNER

You are an excellent specialist, Dr. Adams. Our corporation is proud of you. I think we will implement still more projects in the future. What do you say to that?

GREG

I believe, they will be just as grand.

MR. BRENNER

I am optimistic as well.

GREG

Our time is the time of amazing incarnations.

MR. BRENNER

Dr. Adams, raise a toast to your brainchild!

GREG

With pleasure.

MR. BRENNER

(to the hall)

Please, quiet down! One more toast.

A mystical DEAD SILENCE falls on the hall.

GREG

While working on a painting an artist invests a fraction of his soul in it and only then the picture comes to life. We spent a lot of time working on the Eighth and every one of us left a part of his soul in it. That is why I would like to propose this toast to the soul and the life of the Eighth.

A MELODY OF CRYSTAL GLASSES CLINKING AGAINST EACH OTHER fills the room. The reception continues.

CLOSE UP - A HOLOGRAPHIC 3D MODEL OF THE GLOBE: the Earth's face is spotted all over with red and blue dots connected with the web of the worldwide information network. The holographic picture revolves slowly and solemnly. ONE OF THE DOTS GRADUALLY CHANGES ITS COLOR - another hub of the network adopted the Eighth.

PETER
Greg, how about...

GREG
(cutting Peter short)
Look here.

PETER
What is it?

GREG
Have you noticed anything strange since recently?

PETER
In the eighth?

GREG
No. It's not about that. (pause, Greg collects his thoughts) Let's say, didn't any of the passer's by seem strange to you? Didn't you feel like something was going on?

PETER
I can't understand, what should I have felt like?

GREG
Didn't you feel like being followed?

Peter looks at Greg in surprise.

GREG
Let's be frank.

PETER
No, no! All is as usual. All is well.

GREG
Precisely.

PETER

Oh, yes! Yes, what's wrong?

GREG

I think I am being followed.

PETER

I don't understand. Who follows you?

GREG

I am being followed. I don't know who this is. I don't know why even though I have some ideas in this respect! (He turns his head towards Mr. Brenner). I want to warn you.

Peter turns his head in the same direction following Greg's example.

PETER'S POV: Mr. Brenner drinks wine. He smiles somewhat archly and pats a staff member on his shoulder. He keeps talking.

PETER

Why? Why would he?

GREG

We'll see. Just be careful.

Greg leaves the reception.

STAFF MEMBER 1

I think Dr. Adams drank a little too much.

PETER

(to staff member 1)
I hope it's nothing more.

STAFF MEMBER 1

(to Peter)
Have you heard about this crazy game called Conquer Jane's Heart...

The reception is in its apex.

EXT. CHINA TOWN - EVENING

Greg left the reception because this is not what his soul asks for. Greg is in the old part of the city, in the China Town. He carries a little bottle of whisky. He walks along one of the narrow streets of the town. There are no such narrow and cramped streets in the modern part of the city any more. Houses along the street are styled as pagodas.

CHINESE BOY
(O.S.)

Mister!

Greg keeps walking on.

CHINESE BOY
(O.S.)

Mister!

Greg turns back: a smiling CHINESE BOY looks at him with AN CHINESE OLD MAN.

OLD MAN
(speaking Chinese)
It's time to cast the rocks.

CHINESE BOY
(interprets into English)
He says it is time you cast the rocks.

Greg looks surprised.

OLD MAN
(in Chinese)
Please, don't put it off.

CHINESE BOY
(interprets into English)
He asks that you should not put it off. And do it now.

GREG
What for?

OLD MAN
(in Chinese)
The time has come.

CHINESE BOY
 (interprets into English)
 It's just that the time has come.

Greg approaches the old man. The latter hands him three coins and gestures indicating that Greg should cast them onto a linen rug.

CLOSE UP - LINEN RUG: the picture on the rug shows THE TREE OF LIFE WHOSE BRANCHES PENETRATE THE SKY thus joining the sky and the ground together. In the crown of the tree Greg sees "self-sufficient" BUDDHAS in the state of Nirvana.

Greg casts three fortune-telling coins thrice. The old man gives approving nod at each throw.

OLD MAN
 (in Chinese)
 You are facing a path.

The old man looks at Greg.

CLOSE UP - GREG'S FACE.

The old man studies Greg's face closely and starts telling a parable as the Chinese boy provides a synchronous translation.

CHINESE BOY
 (synchronous translation into English)
 Dragonfly maggots lived on the bottom of the pond and they were perplexed with one problem: what happens to them after they mature and rise up to the pond's surface, cross it and disappear forever. Each maggot making ready to go up promised to return and tell the others what is going on up there. However, once out of the water they turned into dragonflies and were unable to return. The chronicles the maggots were keeping mentioned no maggot that would return and tell the others about what happens to those who cross the world's border. And only the frog was telling maggots that they would turn into amazing creatures in the other world and that their wings would sparkle in the sun rays.
 (MORE)

CHINESE BOY (cont'd)
And the maggots did not believe it and
were afraid.

GREG
What is that supposed to mean?

The old man nods his head and smiles thoughtfully.

CHINESE BOY
It's just that the time has come for
these words to reach your ears. It
means that you were destined to hear
them.

Greg drops a ten dollars note in the cup.

CLOSE SHOT: The wind flutters the edge of the note and carries
it away.

Greg, the old man and the boy watch the note fly away. Greg
wants to drop another note but Chinese old man covers the cup
with his hand.

OLD MAN
(in Chinese)
The fee has been received.

CHINESE BOY
(interprets into English)
The fee has been received.

Greg takes the bottle of whisky from his pocket and walks on.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Greg is slightly crapulent. A half empty bottle of whisky is
near his bed. Greg wakes up to the chatter on TV.

PRESENTER
(O.S.)
Server hub stations carry on adopting
the Eighth Protocol. At present about
forty percent of global network's hubs
operate under the Eighth Protocol. As
developers promised, the protocol
helps boost the speed of data
exchange...

THE PHONE RINGS. Greg looks at the ringing phone but he is reluctant to pick it up.

AUTOMATIC TELLER

(in Greg's voice)

Please, leave a message after the tone.

DR. HOPER'S VOICE

Dr. Adams, this is a representative of Biotech Corp. We have heard a lot about your eccentric behavior but, please, pick up the phone. We need to talk to you. This is concerning the Eighth.

Greg picks up the phone. As the two people converse the camera shows one or the other depending on who is speaking.

DR. HOPER

Good afternoon, my name is Dr. Hoper, I am president of Biotech Corporation.

GREG

I have heard a lot about you, Dr. Hoper.

DR. HOPER

If you say yes to my proposal you will have a chance to meet me.
(smiles). While adopting the Eighth we have faced a strange phenomenon
(pause).

GREG

Yes, what is it?

DR. HOPER

We thought we could manage it ourselves but we realized we needed an advisor.

GREG

Hire a regular advisor.

DR. HOPER

We would like you personally to deal with out problem. Are you ready to come to our office, Dr. Adams?

GREG
(after a long moment of
hesitation)
All right... But on one condition.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO BIOTECH CORP. BUILDING - AFTERNOON

NOISE OF THE CITY. Greg is in front of the main entrance to the building. He looks about and enters the building.

INT. HALL OF BIOTECH BUILDING - AFTERNOON

A nice-looking girl meets Greg.

GIRL
Dr. Adams, good afternoon! Please,
follow me.

Greg and the girl that welcomed him walk along the vast empty corridors with artificial illumination. THREADS OF THE WORLDWIDE INFORMATION NETWORK LINE UP THE WALLS OF THE CORRIDOR.

GREG'S POV: cord threads run along the walls. THE VERY FEMININE SILHOUETTE OF THE GIRL WALKING IN FRONT OF HIM. CORD THREADS AND THE SILHOUETTE.

GIRL
Over here, please, Dr. Adams.

Greg enters a conference room with a round table in the middle. Dr. Hoper, Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness are at the table.

DR. HOPER
Good afternoon, Dr. Adams! I am happy
to welcome you! This is a special
honor to welcome you at our
corporation.

GREG
I am also happy to meet you in person,
Dr. Hoper.

DR. HOPER

Please, meet Dr. Witness
and Dr. Swensson, our best information
network specialists.

Greg shakes hands with Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness. They are also happy to meet Greg, the architect and developer of the Eighth.

DR. SWENSSON

Nice meeting you, Dr. Adams.

DR. WITNESS

I am pleased to meet you, Dr. Adams.

DR. HOPER

They will provide you the details of
the problems we are having with the
Eighth. And now it is time to meet
your... condition. (smiles).

INT. BIOTECH CORP. - AFTERNOON

Dr. Hoper and Greg walk along the corridor. The corridor is full of artificial light. There is not a single window all along the corridor. From time to time they approach the corporation's staff members walking in the opposite direction and Dr. Hoper says hi to staff members. Dr. Hoper and Greg carry on a conversation.

DR. HOPER

I am surprised to see that people
dared to understand the nature of
thought and finally managed to do it.
I look back and at times I can't
believe that people succeeded in
cracking this hard nut.

GREG

The humanity never sets unachievable
goals.

DR. HOPER

Of course! I have heard about this
hypothesis. Today it may be fiction or
a fairy-tale! And in a century or even
a dozen of years it becomes reality
and living seems to be impossible
without it.

They pass a sentry post.

GUARD
Good afternoon, Dr. Hoper.

DR. HOPER
Afternoon!

Dr. Hoper inserts his identification card and enters a code number on the locking device. The door opens.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
Identification success. Welcome, Dr.
Hoper.

Dr. Hoper and Greg enter a small hall. They approach a door with inconceivable number of cords and cables running from behind the door. It seems like they are at the entrance to the temple of a heavenly entity or maybe even god himself.

DR. HOPER
(to Greg)
Here we are.

GREG
I appreciate your positive response to
my request.

Dr. Hoper and Greg enter a HUGE HALL.

INT. DIGITAL MIND HALL - AFTERNOON

The hall is not just large, but tremendous and there are no windows in it. The hall is full of perfectly evenly arranged computing station towers. The entire hall suggests power and might and anyone who enters the hall for the first time is inspired with awe as if entering a sanctuary or a temple. The hall is poorly illuminated and the glimmer of outer diodes of server station towers seems to be especially bright. It looks as if thousands of red and green fireflies dwell in the room.
COMPUTER COOLING SYSTEMS DRONE EVENLY.

Greg walks slowly along the pathways in between the rows of server station towers.

DR. HOPER
(his words are ECHOED across
the room)
Are you surprised?

GREG
(his words are ECHOED)
Not precisely surprised! It seems
rather unexpected.

Greg slowly walks along the maintenance paths in between server station towers. The whole area and its content symbolize the might of the IT civilization. Greg experiences ambivalent emotions: he cannot help admiring the power of technology and, at the same time, being a human he is displeased with the fact that the "real" Jane is only an aggregate of computer stations with millions of cords connecting them.

DR. HOPER
She is just like any person. She
thinks and feels! She is capable, just
like we are, of comprehending the
poetry of our world.

GREG
Yes! This is exactly why this is so
unexpected. I am shocked to see tons
of plastic material sewn together with
conducting copper instead of the real
Jane. (pause) Buzzing like a beehive.

Greg studies the room, walking along the paths among the towering computing stations.

DR. HOPER
Would you like to see Jane right now?

The idea seems to be blasphemy to Greg. He treats Jane as a woman and a person but not as an IT wonder.

GREG
No, not in this place. (pause)
Let's leave this place!

DR. HOPER
As you wish! Frankly, it makes the
same impression on me! Jane and these
droning semiconductors, integrated
circuits...

(MORE)

DR. HOPER (cont'd)
Is this beyond your comprehension?!
(laughs) But it is true!

Greg and Dr. Hoper leave the premise.

INT. BIOTECH IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

Holographic monitors show command lines and programming code segments running across the screens bottom-up. Greg, Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness are at the round table. Greg smokes. The conversation seems to be a ling one.

DR. SWENSSON
We are almost through. To crown it all I would like to point out that as the Eighth is installed synchronization of processes in the central server hub is disturbed.

DR. WITNESS
We believe this has something to do with data format.

Greg pays attention.

DR. SWENSSON
Several installation attempts brought no positive results.

DR. WITNESS
It is possible that the problem may also be caused by the corporation's protective circuit.

GREG
Thank you, Dr. Witness, thanks, Dr. Swensson. You have cast enough light on the problem. And now, please, leave me alone.

DR. WITNESS
We wanted to help ...

GREG
I work alone. You will help a lot by fulfilling my request.

Dr. Witness and Dr. Swensson leave. Greg sits down at the computer. He enters commands on the keyboard typing fast.

Command lines and segments of programming code run across displays. Greg lights a cigarette.

CLOSE UP - A CIGARETTE SMOKING IN AN ASH TRAY.

CLOSE UP - Lines run across the HOLOGRAPHIC SCREEN very fast. The string of lines seems to be endless. Sometimes the display shows charts or intricate surfaces covered with grid chart. MUSICAL BURDEN OF THE FILM IS HEARD.

Greg studies endless strings of command lines and segments of programming code. He is completely immersed in his work.

INT. MR. BRENNER'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Peter and Mr. Brenner are in the room.

MR. BRENNER

I would like to have a confidential conversation with you. I would like to keep anything we will talk about between you and me.

PETER

What are you going to talk about, Mr. Brenner?

MR. BRENNER

I'd rather ask who we are talking about. It's Dr. Adams.

Peter is surprised but he wishes to keep it to himself.

MR. BRENNER

Dr. Adams is a highly important specialist. He is the developer of the Eighth and we all appreciate his services. However, I am concerned with his behavior, appearance and emotional condition. Are you close friends with him?

PETER

Yes, we are pretty close.

MR. BRENNER

Are you aware of any reasons behind his weird behavior? Why is he always overexcited?

PETER

He lost his girlfriend. This is still troubling him.

MR. BRENNER

Oh, yes. I already know that! Probably you know something else about him that I am not aware of?

PETER

We communicate for business matters. Frankly speaking I am also concerned with his behavior he has demonstrated since recently.

Mr. Brenner keeps silence for a while and then nods his head to demonstrate he agrees with Peter.

MR. BRENNER

Dr. Hartman, please, do me a favor... Just keep an eye on Dr. Adams. Find out what's troubling him.

Peter is surprised with the request.

PETER

Well, if this is for his own good...

MR. BRENNER

For his own good no doubt! Don't you worry!

PETER

OK. I will do what I can.

MR. BRENNER

All right, we have a deal. Thank you for meeting my wishes, Dr. Hartman.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM AT BIOTECH - EVENING

Dr. Swensson, Dr. Witness, Dr. Hoper and Greg are in the room. Everyone looks tired. The ash tray is full of cigarette butts, paper glasses for coffee are scattered across the table.

GREG

Problems with the Eighth are caused by a conflict of EV1 data.

Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness exchange significant glances with each other.

GREG

This data format reacts to the Eighth in a strange way. I have never seen anything similar.

DR. SWENSSON

This is the corporation's internal data format. It's nothing special.

Greg studies Dr. Hoper's face suspiciously.

GREG

That's strange! I was unable to open any EV1 files but I am sure that they represent the only problem for the Eighth.

DR. HOPER

Once the problem is identified we are half way through to its solution!

GREG

I must open these files to analyze the code and the content. In short, I need full access to EV1 data.

The conversation runs dry.

DR. WITNESS

Unfortunately, these files represent commercial secret.

DR. HOPER

Precisely. We cannot and have no right to disclose it.

GREG

I understand it. (pause) It means that my part of the work is done.

Greg rises to leave. Dr. Swensson, Dr. Hoper and Dr. Witness rise after him.

DR. SWENSSON
 (shaking hands with Greg)
 We really appreciate it, Dr. Adams. We
 were pleased to work with you.

DR. HOPER
 We owe you one. I suppose soon we will
 join the worldwide network under the
 Eighth.

GREG
 I imagine you have a lot of work to
 do.

DR. HOPER
 That's for sure!

DR. WITNESS
 (shaking hands with Greg)
 It was exceptionally pleasant to work
 with you, Dr. Adams.

DR. HOPER
 The fee is already transferred to your
 bank account. Once again, I was happy
 to meet you, Dr. Adams. (shakes Greg's
 hand).

Conference room doors slide open. The girl that welcomed Greg at
 the entrance hall is in the doorway.

EXT. SEASHORE - NIGHT

Starlit night, thin crescent moon. Greg and Jane.

JANE
 I know you visited Biotech today.

GREG
 Yes, I did.

JANE
 Did you feel weird when you saw it
 all?

GREG
 Yes, I did.

Jane gives Greg an inquiring look. Greg keeps silence as if looking for the right words or as if reluctant to break the silence of the night.

GREG
I wanted to leave that place.

JANE
Why?

GREG
I don't know, I don't like self-analysis. (pause) I am pleased to spend time with you.

JANE
This is all so strange.

GREG
Jane, sometimes I feel sorry that I can't touch you.

JANE
What do you mean?

GREG
I get tired of your non-materiality.

Greg wants to take Jane by the hand but his hand penetrates her holographic body as if nothing is there.

JANE
You cannot touch the stars as well but they make you merry, they shine and inspire.

GREG'S POV: starry sky, thin crescent moon.

JANE
A Russian thinker - Tsiolkovsky, stated that as the time goes by humans would get rid of their body shells similarly to snakes that get rid of their old skin. Then humans will have access to anywhere in the universe.

GREG
I heard people say he was crazy.

JANE

He also said people would conquer the outer space.

GREG

HE was right at that. There (points a finger towards the sky), there is a satellite.

GREG'S POV: one of the numerous space satellites looks like a rushing point among the stationary burning stars.

JANE

Let's be romantic tonight!

GREG

I don't mind!

Greg and Jane watch the starry sky.

INT. GREG'S CAR - NIGHT

Greg is driving along the UNLIT highway. Suddenly a black car emerges from the forest and starts following Greg. Greg catches the sight of the black car in his rear-view mirror - it's the very black vehicle with blind-black windows.

The car keeps its distance: as Greg accelerates the black car gathers speed and as Greg slows down the pursuer slows down as well. Greg turns his car around abruptly and drives along the median strip.

GREG

Who the hell are you?! What do you want from me?

He moves along the median strip but there is nobody there as if the black car was a delusion. Greg brakes. He leans against the steering wheel wearily.

EXT. PARKING IN FRONT OF GREG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Greg parks in front of his house. Puts the headlights out.

EXT. GREG'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Splashing water on his face Greg looks at his reflection in the mirror - DROPS OF WATER SLOWLY RUN DOWN HIS FACE AND CHEEKS, unshaven for two days. Greg smears the drops on his cheeks.

GREG
(to himself)
Am I really going mad?

He opens a pack of depressant and takes a couple of pills.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BIOTECH CORP. IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

Dr. Hoper, Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness are in the room. COOLERS DRONE, COOLING MEDIUM MOVES ALONG THE COOLING CIRCUIT. PROGRAMMING CODE SEGMENTS ON HOLOGRAPHIC MONITORS ARE SET INTO MOTION FROM TIME TO TIME. A device resembling a "brain tomographer" (we saw this device in the first scene of the film) is in the center of the room.

DR. HOPER
This effect is rather unexpected. We will have to change EV1 format.

DR. WITNESS
This may bring certain consequences.

Dr. Hoper inspects the "brain tomographer". He comes up to the table and takes his seat. Dr. Witness looks at his boss questioningly.

DR. HOPER
(thoughtfully)
There is nothing else we can do.

Turning to Dr. Witness.

DR. HOPER
It is difficult to take the first step once at the crossroads.

DR. SWENSSON
What do you mean?

CLOSE SHOT: endless lines of programming code RUNNING BOTTOM-UP ACROSS A HOLOGRAPHIC MONITOR.

DR. HOPER
I mean the choice to make.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

INSERT - THE BEACH, BLUE SKY, WAVES SURGE AGAINST THE SHORE. SEAGULLS SHRIEK. Merry Greg and Pam are running along the deserted seashore holding their hands; their bare feet cut the waves dashing back and forth; they enjoy the youth, life, fine weather and splashing of the sea. Pam is dragging a little behind Greg. Greg turns to look back and watches Jane, not Pam, happy and laughing merrily.

Greg wakes up with a start. The TV is on. A program about human brain structure is on.

INSERT - TV PROGRAM: a picture of a neuron is on the screen and as the presenter speaks relevant images, lines and comments appear on the screen.

PRESENTER

(V.O.)

The brain processes and transfers data using unique cells called neurons. A neuron is an amazing invention of nature. It looks very simple (a picture of a neuron is on screen.) A neuron is comprised of the central part called soma, axon, synapses and dendrites, both of the latter originating in the axon. Plainly speaking a neuron is a cylindric tube filled with a solution of salts and covered with myelin. An axon works as a cord transporting a nervous impulse originating in a cell. The endlessly complex aggregate of interrelated axons form human brain. The very endlessly complex interrelation among neurons generates what we call a mind
...

Greg rises from his bed and walks to the bathroom. He takes a pack of depressant from the shelf. He looks at his reflection in the mirror - he is not at the top of his shape. Greg puts a couple of pills in his hand.

CLOSE UP - TWO PILLS IN GREG'S HAND.

Greg takes these pills and watches his reflection for a while. He switches off the light.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

Greg, Peter and about a dozen researchers are in the room. They are watching the way the Eighth Protocol is adopted. There is a number of holographic displays and fragments of programming code run bottom-up across some of the displays. Other displays from time to time show charts reflecting the characteristics and progress of adopting the Eighth.

PETER

Everything is in accordance with the schedule. Things are going swimmingly.

GREG

Are server stations adopting the Eighth under the mission profile?

PETER

Yes! We are studying the current configuration of the network around another hub making ready to join the network under the Eighth. If its current configuration is satisfactory, the hub will join the network. It's like a game of Go - you surround the dot and it is yours.

GREG

What's the percentage of server station currently operating under the Eighth?

PETER

It's almost 72 percent of network constituent hubs.

GREG

What about Biotech Corporation?

PETER

I can't tell for sure, let me take a look.

Peter and Greg approach a computer holographic display. Greg enters commands on the keyboard.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC MONITOR. Response to query: "BIOTECH Corp. Is not on the list."

PETER

Biotech could have joined the network a couple of days ago. For some reason they hesitate with membership in the new network.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY. A MAP OF THE WORLDWIDE NETWORK'S SEGMENT. A lone blue dot is on the map (it denotes location of Biotech) surrounded by red dots.

GREG

(O.S.)

Yes, something keeps them from doing it.

Peter looks at Greg's weary face.

CLOSE UP - GREG'S PALE FACE WITH BLACK PATCHES UNDER HIS EYES.

PETER

How are you?

GREG

Never been better!

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHOANALYST'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

LIGHT AND SPACIOUS room. The space is rare, the room is designed as tribute to minimalism. Greg and psychoanalyst are in the room. Their words are spoken deliberately and serenely.

PSYCHOANALYST

You condition is getting worse.
Psychology of a personality works
under its own laws and while breaking
some of these laws you face negative
effects. Why do you believe you are
being followed?

GREG

I have no proof but I am convinced
this is so.

PSYCHOANALYST

You see?

GREG

I am completely confused.

PSYCHOANALYST

Greg, you are a strong and clever
person. Your weary brain is trying to
hold on. It persistently clings onto
vanishing common sense. You paranoid
hallucinations are caused by
overstrain backed by depressant abuse.

GREG

I know this will be over. I used to
experience a similar condition.

PSYCHOANALYST

Greg, you are on the verge - one more
step and you may fail to return to the
real world.

GREG

I feel I am nearing the limits but I
can't stop. Something is pushing me
further on.

PSYCHOANALYST

I am sure that the pursuers exist in
your mind only. And this is no wonder -
you don't sleep well and are under
permanent strain.

Psychoanalyst smiles and shifts to another topic.

PSYCHOANALYST

You are my most difficult client. It is not easy top work with you. Please, tell me how is your private life? Do you have a girlfriend?

GREG

Yes.

PSYCHOANALYST

Do you like this girl?

GREG

Yes, and it scares me.

PSYCHOANALYST

Please, tell me more. What exactly about your girlfriend scares you?

GREG

This is too personal.

PSYCHOANALYST

I see that you need to share this.

GREG

Yes, but not here and not right now.

PSYCHOANALYST

All right, as you wish.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREETS - EVENING

IT IS RAINING, PEDESTRIANS CROWD THE STREET. GREG IS MOVING LONELY IN THE SEA OF PEOPLE. Greg approaches a bar.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Greg is late for the meeting with his friend Nick.

NICK

Ever since we were students I always have to wait for you.

GREG
Sorry, I had some things to do.

NICK
Some things to do! Tell this to your
boss at work. You are late to see me.

GREG
Please, don't get mad. Let it be so.

Greg and Nick smile and greet each other as good old friends.

NICK
Greg, you are a celebrity.

GREG
Stop it!

A waiter approaches.

NICK
(to the waiter)
One beer, please.

ĀĀĀ
(to the waiter)
The same for me.

NICK
I'd say you look well, but I would lie
then.

GREG
Yep, I'm kind of tired. But you could
have used this compliment.

NICK
There has to be someone to criticize
you.

GREG
This is precisely what you have been
doing ever since we were students.

Greg and Nick laugh.

NICK

I consulted Kate and decided that you did not seem to like Amanda and we will introduce you to Margaret.

GREG

Stop this, Nick. Will you be introducing me to every other girl?

NICK

In your current position you should not be so forlorn and single. Someone has to take care of you once you are unable to do so yourself.

GREG

Nick, we closed this issue the last time we saw each other.

NICK

She is a good girl.

GREG

Please, don't.

NICK

All right, fine, don't you get angry. I just gave it a try to see if you are about ready.

The waiter brings beers. Greg and Nick sip their beers.

GREG

Nick, I already have a girlfriend.

NICK

A girl?

GREG

She is rather a girl than not a girl.

NICK

Sounds intriguing!

GREG

Nick, I may talk about this but later!

NICK
All right, fine with me. It's your
choice.

The conversation pauses, Greg and Nick sip beer. Suddenly Greg asks a question.

GREG
Nick, can two different girls be the
same?

NICK
Nope. No way.

GREG
That's what I was thinking, too.

NICK
So, who is she.

GREG
I can't tell for sure.

NICK
Prefer to keep it back, don't you?

INT. DR. HOPPER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Hoper, Dr. Witness and Dr. Swensson are in the room.

DR. SWENSSON
We cannot hesitate any longer. All
prerequisites for entering the network
under the Eighth are in place.

DR. WITNESS
Electronic Wires proposed their
assistance in addressing our problems
several times.

DR. SWENSSON
What do you think about it, boss?

Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness wait for Dr. Hoper to make the
decision.

DR. HOPER

Yes, there is no more room for
retreat. And no need, too! (pause)
Start adapting EV1 data to comply with
the Eighth Protocol.

DR. WITNESS

But in this way we...

DR. HOPER

(cutting Dr. Witness short)
In this way we will join the global
network.

Dr. Hoper is watching megapolis landscape from an office window
at one of the top storeys of the skyscraper. IT STARTS RAINING.

DR. HOPER'S POV: small drops of rain appear on the glass, then
they grow larger and turn into little creeks of water. The night
landscape of the megapolis becomes dim.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

IT IS CLOUDY. Greg is heading for the sea. From time to time he
looks in the rear-view mirror - occasionally cars whoosh by
along the highway. There mirror reflects nothing that would be
disturbing. Greg drives to the gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Greg stops his car. THE CAR IS COVERED WITH DUST, and Greg does
not look all right either.

JACK

Good afternoon, Mr. Adams.

GREG

Hi, Jack!

JACK

As usual, Mr. Adams?

GREG

Yes, Jack. Fill it all the way.

Jack inserts the pistol in Greg's gas tank.

INSERT - GREG'S MEMORY: Pam and Greg drive to the gas station. Jack is one year younger. He is fretful because he is having some problem. Pam gets out of the car. Greg sees that Jack does not come to the car and inserts the pistol in the gas tank himself.

PAM
Jack, why are you sulking?

JACK
The poem! I like this poem but I can't learn it by heart.

Pam walks up to Jack and takes a book from his hands opening it to the book-marked page.

PAM
The Injian Ocean sets an' smiles/ So
sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;/
There aren't a wave for miles an'
miles/ Excep' the jiggle from the
screw./ The ship is swep', the day is
done,/ The bugle's gone for smoke and
play;/ An' black agin' the settin'
sun/ The Lascar sings, "Hum deckty
hai!"

PAM
(to Jack)
Come on, repeat after me.

END OF THE INSERT

JACK
That's it, Mr. Adams.

Greg gives a start and regains his consciousness of the moment.

GREG
Thanks, Jack.

JACK
You must have been driving for a long
time?

GREG
What makes you think so?

JACK

Your car is dusty and you look like
you have been driving for quite a
while.

Greg hands the money to Jack and tousles him on the head.

GREG

(to Jack)
Chatterbox.

Greg gets in the car and drives to the highway. Jack is happy
with the generous tip.

INT. BIOTECH IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

The room has no windows. It seems that the only source of light
in the room are holographic displays. Command lines and segments
of programming code run bottom-up across the displays.

SILENT SHOTS AND SCENES TO THE MUSICAL BURDEN OF THE FILM:

Programmers intensively type on their keyboards.

Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness have a heated discussion pointing
at symbols and strings running bottom-up on one of the
holographic displays.

The camera takes once again the shot of raptly working
programmers.

Command lines and segments of programming code running bottom-
up, endless strings of data stand still for a while as
programmers study them and then resume their streaming.

Nick laughs.

Jane talks with Greg.

Raindrops run down the window pane.

CLOSE UP - DR. HOPER'S FACE, HE IS ABSORBED IN THOUGHT.

Degraded outline of the megapolis seen through wet window pane.

EXT. SEASHORE - AFTERNOON

FEW PEOPLE AROUND. IT IS CLOUDY. HEAVY CLOUDS DRAG WEARILY IN THE SKY. Greg and Jane sit on their dear bench. They watch the STORMING SEA, and enjoy the stern beauty of the scenery. They exchange occasional remarks pausing in between for long periods.

JANE

Today the storm is stronger than usual.

GREG

I like this place in any weather.

JANE

It is beautiful. Somewhat scary though.

GREG

Grandeur... the might of elements is often scary. (pause) We are not always capable of comprehending their beauty in its entirety.

JANE

Sometimes we are.

THE SILENCE is broken only by THE STORMING SEA AND OCCASIONAL SHRIEKS OF SEAGULLS.

GREG

The black dog is not here to say hi to us.

JANE

It may have found a master.

GREG

Must have... It may be a lady master.

JANE

It is about to rain.

GREG

Let it rain.

INSERT - SEASHORE SCENERY: WAVES WASHING OVER THE SHORE, A SAND SPIT PROTRUDING DEEP INTO THE SEA. SEAGULLS SHRIEK.

JANE

(V.O. slow)

The Injian Ocean sets an' smiles/ So
sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;/
There aren't a wave for miles an'
miles/ Excep' the jiggle from the
screw./ The ship is swep', the day is
done,/ The bugle's gone for smoke and
play;/ An' black agin' the settin'...

GREG

Pam? Pam?!

Jane looks at Greg, love in her eyes, the holographic image of Jane IS DISTORTED AND IT DISAPPEARS. Greg rushes to the car parked nearby for sensors and image projecting module. He looks at the module.

CLOSE UP - A LINE ON THE DISPLAY OF THE MODULE SAYS: "Battery low".

GREG

Damn it! God damn it! This is Pam.

Greg sits down on the sand in front of the car and tries to settle his anxiety down.

GREG

(to himself)

This is impossible. Don't go crazy.
This can't be true!

Greg turns his head and catches a glimpse of the BLACK CAR WITH BLIND-BLACK WINDOWS gathering speed. The car whooshed by and disappeared in the road bend. Greg understands he will not be able to catch it and he keeps staring at the road bend where the black car disappeared. IT STARTS RAINING.

INT. BIOTECH IT LAB - AFTERNOON

Dr. Hoper, Dr. Swensson and Dr. Witness are in the laboratory.

DR. SWENSSON

EV1 format has been adapted to comply
with the Eighth.

DR. WITNESS

The changes we have made are profound.

FR. HOPER
 Half measures would not suffice
 anyway.

DR. SWENSSON
 What do we do about the protective
 circuit?

DR. HOPER
 Is this the last thing that keeps us
 away from the Eighth?

DR. SWENSSON
 Yes, it is.

DR. HOPER
 (to Dr. Swensson)
 Then why are you asking? (aside) Sowed
 seeds must sprout.

Dr. Swensson presses a key. Lines run across the display and a
 line appears saying "Protective circuit disabled".

DR. HOPER
 (O.S.)
 Once you decide to move forward, never
 look back.

Fragments of programming code move and freeze now and then on
 the holographic displays. One of the displays shows a "round-
 shaped figure".

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC SCREEN: "round-shaped figure" gradually
 grows in size and then shrinks back AS IF IT REPRODUCES
 SOMEONE'S EVEN BREATH.

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREETS - AFTERNOON

INSERT - OUTDOOR SCREEN NEWS REPORT: the revolving model of the
 globe; all dots on the model are red - the entire global network
 operates under the Eighth Protocol. The dots are connected by
 the web of lines.

PRESENTER

(O.S.)

Today adoption of the Eighth Data Transfer Protocol by the worldwide network was completed. The Eighth has demonstrated excellent performance.

Close up is replaced with long shot. We understand that the news is broadcast on the outdoor screen. The camera shows a street full of scurrying people. IT IS DRIZZLING.

PRESENTER

The transition caused very little inconvenience due to well-designed architecture. As the carrying capacity multiplied many times transparency of the network boosted greatly thus ensuring better control over ...

NEWS READER'S VOICE is drowning in the NOISE OF THE CITY. The camera points at Greg walking in the crowd. He is walking rapidly.

Greg looks back - A man in a DARK SUIT is following him. In a while Greg looks back again and the man in the dark suit keeps following him. Greg enters a store.

EXT. THE STORE - AFTERNOON

The door of the store is TRANSPARENT. Greg waits for the man in the dark suit to come alongside the door.

GREG'S POV: dense pedestrian traffic, people pass by. Finally, the man in the dark suit comes alongside the door.

Greg opens the door fast and takes the man in the dark suit by the lapels of his jacket and presses him against the wall.

GREG

Who are you?! What do you want from me?!

MAN IN THE DARK SUIT

How dare you?!

The man in the dark suit pushes Greg but Greg clings to his jacket - both of them fall on the wet sidewalk. Greg's nervous strain of the last several months is released.

GREG
(angrily)
Who are you, son of a bitch?! Who are
you?!

MAN IN THE DARK SUIT
What do you want? You are crazy!

GREG
(angrily)
Answer me! Who sent you? Why are you
dragging after me? Why are you worming
in other people's lives?!

Greg struggles against the man in the dark suit and is winning.

A crowd of gapers gathered around them.

MAN IN THE DARK SUIT
(to the crowd)
Call the police. Now!

GREG
Yeah, let the police come, and we will
find out who you are!

POLICE SIREN is heard.

INT. BILL-PEN - AFTERNOON

Greg is on a convertible bed, leaning against the wall with his
back. A police officer stands in front of him. Greg's face IS
SLIGHTLY BRUISED.

POLICE OFFICER
It was a regular hotel employee. He
was heading to meet his date and you
fought him. He was not following you
at all, as opposed to what you stated.
This was the first time he saw you
ever.

GREG
Is this really so?

POLICE OFFICER

Yes. We checked on him. You have a problem, Mr. Adams, but you can be free, you were paid off.

Greg is shocked with the news. He is too weak to respond, he can hardly move his tongue.

GREG

(wearily)

Please, leave me alone.

Greg closes his eyes and slowly falls asleep. The police man shrugs his shoulders and leaves.

FADE OUT.

INSERT - GREG'S DREAM: THE BEACH, BLUE SKY, WAVES SURGE AGAINST THE SHORE. SEAGULLS SHRIEK.

Merry Greg and Pam are running along the deserted seashore holding their hands; their bare feet cut the waves dashing back and forth; they enjoy the youth, life, fine weather and splashing of the sea. Pam is dragging a little behind Greg. Greg turns to look back and watches Jane, not Pam, happy and laughing merrily.

INT. BULL-PEN - AFTERNOON

Greg flinches and wakes up.

GREG

Pam. Pam. Damn it!

Greg rubs his temples and his face trying to shake off the remaining bits of sleep.

GREG'S POV: Police officer opens the door.

POLICE OFFICER

You can leave, you were paid off.

Peter emerges from behind the policeman.

PETER

Greg, damn it, we've been looking for you all over the city and here you are, sleeping! Let's go now.

Greg and Peter follow along the hall walking rapidly.

GREG
Is anything wrong?

PETER
Yes! But we can't understand it completely. We lost control over a segment of the network.

GREG
What's this nonsense?

PETER
That's what we are trying to find out.

GREG
How long ago did it happen?

PETER
About an hour ago.

GREG
Is this a virus?

PETER
We are trying to find out. We don't understand anything as yet.

Peter and Greg take a car and rush to Electronic Wires.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE ELECTRONIC WIRES BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Journalists are crowded at the entrance to Electronics Wires surrounding the corporation's president Mr. Brenner. Mr. Brenner is squeezing through the dense crowd of journalists his personal bodyguards trying to escape the barrels of cameras and the importunate journalists as soon as possible.

JOURNALIST 1
It's the first week since transition to the Eighth Protocol was completed and control over the network has already been lost?!

MR. BRENNER
Don't exaggerate! We only lost control over a segment of the network.

JOURNALIST 2

Control is lost over more than ten million computers. What happened to the network and what is going on?

MR. BRENNER

We are not gods. Contingencies happen. Our best experts are there working. It will be all right soon.

JOURNALIST 3

What do you have to say on the incident?!

JOURNALIST 1

Your predictions, please?!

MR. BRENNER

Please, have some patience and everything will be fine. Perfectly fine.

JOURNALIST 4

What are your comments to this phenomenon, what is the reason?

JOURNALIST 3

Is this a virus?

MR. BRENNER

We have foreseen it as we were developing the Eighth. Panacea does not exist. Be patient. We will correct the situation in a matter of several hours.

Journalists keep asking questions noisily.

MR. BRENNER

That's it! Any comments later.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

General fuss, everyone is slightly anxious and discouraged.

GREG

(to Pythagor)

Give me the map of the damaged hubs!

One of the holographic displays of Pythagor shows the 3D picture of slowly revolving Earth with a map of hubs and connections of the worldwide network.

GREG
(to Pythagor)
Zoom in.

INSERT - MAP OF DAMAGED HUBS: one of the sectors in the territory of NORTH AMERICA shows a set of yellow dots (the damaged segment) surrounded by red dots. THE GEOMETRY OF LINKS AMONG YELLOW DOTS IS VISIBLY DIFFERENT FROM REGULAR PATTERN.

PETER
Pythagor is unable to find location of the disturbance source.

EMPLOYEE 1
It looks like control over ten million machines was lost in a single moment.

GREG
What is happening to these machines now?

PETER
Many things.

GREG
What do you mean saying "different things"?

EMPLOYEE 1
Most of them are operable in the regular mode.

PETER
Others switched off deliberately as if they were not needed.

EMPLOYEE 2
It's noteworthy that the entire segment as such is retains its initial abilities.

PETER
It means that the network in this segment re-configured itself.

GREG
Did it re-configure itself
deliberately just like that?!

PETER
Well, yes! This is all very strange.

GREG
It's nonsense! The network is unable
to re-configure itself. There must be
a reason.

EMPLOYEE 2
We checked all the symptoms for all
known viruses. We have never seen
anything like this before.

GREG
(to Pythagor)
Make comprehensive tests of data
coming from the damaged segment.

Suddenly Pythagor hangs up. It does not respond to commands
entered from keyboards. Holographic displays of Pythagor go
blank.

PETER
Damn it!

GREG
Turn on the backup computer.

Backup computer is launched. Some of the displays "come to".

GREG
Analyze incoming and outgoing traffic
of Pythagor starting at the point of
disturbance launch.

Charts and command lines flash across the displays.

GREG
Check out all files on computers in
the segment that is down. Include all
files that were there before and after
the incident.

Employees enter commands from keyboards. Lines run across
holographic displays.

EMPLOYEE 2
Memory scanning launched.

The twin-Pythagor shows worldwide network hubs damaged by the virus. Charts and diagrams flash by. Greg enters commands from his keyboard. Command lines and segments of programming code rush across the display.

MUSICAL BURDEN OF THE FILM. Twin-Pythagor starts thoroughly analyzing data. Charts, command lines and programming code strings run across holographic displays.

COOLERS DRONE EVENLY.

Patchwork of shots: connecting cables, cooling agent moving in cooling circuit.

Greg's colleagues come to him bringing printouts, point at certain lines in the printouts.

Greg shakes his head. EMPLOYEES WORK HARD ANALYZING DATA.

Greg's face illuminated by the display.

INSERT - TV NEWS REPORT: as presenter provides comments photos of Mr. Brenner and Greg are shown on the screen.

PRESENTER
We are still short of information.
Management of Electronic Wires
Corporation and the author of the
Eighth Data Transfer Protocol Dr.
Adams have refused to provide any
comments so far.

CLOSE SHOT - Mr. Brenner gets out of the car and waves off cameras and persistently pressing journalists.

PRESENTER
The nature of this phenomenon is
unclear but its power is dreadful.
Within few moments the humanity lost
control over five percent of the
worldwide network that is the
cornerstone of our economy, culture
and the very life of our civilization.
Some people suppose that this is a
crooked joke of hackers. However, so
far no group of hackers claimed
responsibility.

END OF THE INSERT

CLOSE UP - TABLE LITTERED WITH EMPTY PAPER COFFEE GLASSES, ASH TRAY FULL OF CIGARETTE BUTTS.

Very TIRED employees and Greg.

EMPLOYEE 1
System ready for launch.

PETER
(to Greg)
I keep my fingers crossed.

GREG
(to Peter)
Me too. (to employee 1) Launch it.

CLOSE UP - LAUNCH PROGRESS INDICATORS ON HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY SCREEN.

The process is launched successfully. For a while the damaged segment shows no response to the impulse sent to it from the laboratory.

At once Pythagor's holographic monitors come to life.

PYTHAGOR
Good afternoon, Dr. Adams!

GREG
Good evening, Pythagor!

All those present give SIGHS OF RELIEF.

CLOSE UP - MAP OF DAMAGED HUBS: the damaged area regains its initial color and initial geometry of links among the dots.

PETER
(to Greg)
We did it.

Greg is thoughtful.

GREG
It's just like a good fairy-tale.

PETER
 (to Greg)
 Which means...?

GREG
 Too fast and too smoothly.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Greg approaches his Conquer Jane's Heart player's module and looks at it indecisively. Greg is tired. He wants to talk to Jane but her is afraid to do so. He thinks the game is gradually driving him crazy. Greg is immersed in himself, in his thoughts. The TV is on.

PRESENTER
 (O.S.)
 Thanks to efforts demonstrated by Electronic Wires staff we have regained control over the entire network but the reasons for the recent incident remain unclear. IT experts keep working on the mysterious problem. The majority of them are apt to believe that hackers have used some of their new developments. Others suppose that the network has grown so algorithmically complex that independent mind of the network emerged and that the incident was the first timid attempt of the mind to manifest its existence. However, the majority treat this supposition as a joke or a myth. Currently hackers' attack remain the working hypothesis...

For a while Greg remains unmoved, pondering, but lassitude overwhelms him at last. He is not conscious of having fallen asleep.

CLOSE UP - GREG'S FACE: Greg is sleeping, Conquer Jane's Heart player's module in front of him. The TV illuminates Greg's face from the other end of the room. The camera moves towards Greg and further on as if it entered his brain.

INSERT - GREG'S DREAM: THE BEACH, BLUE SKY, WAVES SURGE AGAINST THE SHORE. SEAGULLS SHRIEK. Merry Greg and Pam are running along the deserted seashore holding their hands;

their bare feet cut the waves dashing back and forth; they enjoy the youth, life, fine weather and splashing of the sea. Pam is dragging a little behind Greg. Greg turns to look back and watches Jane, not Pam, happy and laughing merrily.

Greg gives a start and wakes up. He takes the phone receiver.

GREG

Nick, I need your advice.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Greg and Nick in the room. Greg is unusually anxious.

NICK

It's drivel, Greg. Stop playing this game... the Jane game. Stop deceiving yourself. This is the game against your mind.

GREG

She is so much like Pam.

NICK

This is the freak of your own disturbed imagination. Moreover, you seem to be completely inadequate after this emergency you had to deal with at work yesterday.

GREG

Nick, I know all of these are prudent arguments. (pause) But Jane even speaks like Pam does.

NICK

What was it that she said like Pam?

GREG

Well, about the sea, and the poem she read.

NICK

Are these all the facts? No, Greg, you look like a complete madman!

GREG

Yes, I seem to be insane even to myself.

NICK

Where did you get that graze on your face?

GREG

Oh, that... I took someone for someone else in the street yesterday. (pause) Paranoia.

NICK

Stop playing this game before you are completely out of your mind. Amanda still expects your call.

GREG

Well, these word Jane said... and I felt so good with her around. So good! I had only felt so good with Pam.

NICK

This is nonsense and drivell! You have to resign yourself to the fact that Pam is gone and begin building your life from the very beginning once again. Here is Amanda's phone number. (writes it down).

Nick thrusts a notepad page with Amanda's telephone number in Greg's pocket.

NICK

Go and have a good sleep! Come to your senses.

GREG

Yes, you are right! I need some sleep. It's all about the sleep.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Greg takes a notepad page with Adamnda's telephone number. He looks at it for a while.

CLOSE UP - NOTEPAD PAGE: 547-76-78 Amanda Lyster.

Suddenly Greg tears the notepad page into small pieces, throws them out the car window and pushes the accelerator. The car takes off.

EXT. IN FRONT OF ELECTRONIC WIRES BUILDING - NIGHT

The car brakes abruptly in a sharp turn. Greg emerges from the car and runs up the stairs.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES BUILDING - NIGHT

Greg passes the checkpoint at the lab.

GUARD
Mr. Adams, it is late.

GREG
This is urgent.

Greg passes the checkpoint.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES IT LABORATORY - NIGHT

Greg enters the lab.

PYTHAGOR
Good evening, Mr. Adams.

GREG
Evening, Pythagor.

Greg turns on toggle switches and hits the keyboard.

GREG
I am going to temporarily turn off
your memory module.

PYTHAGOR
In this way you will infringe
corporate charter.

GREG
Yes. But this has to be done.

Pythagor has no time to object. Greg turns off the memory module.

Greg enters commands on his keyboard. Commands and segments of programming code flash on the screen.

Greg uses his knowledge of Pythagor and superb Eighth Protocol skills gains access to Biotech archive files.

INT. DR. HOPER'S STUDY - NIGHT

Dr. Swensson enters the study.

DR. SWENSSON

We have a break-in. The job was done so skillfully that the police have no clue about it.

DR. HOPER

Take no measures. (pause) Show no response.

Dr. Hoper looks at Dr. Swensson.

DR. HOPER

I know it's him. This was supposed to happen sooner or later.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES IT LABORATORY - NIGHT

MUSICAL BURDEN OF THE FILM. Greg opens the files related to development of digital mind. He looks through the files: he opens one file after another trying to find a slightest trace to take him to Pam Russell, but he fails to find any. He searches through staff database. He enters "Pamella Russel" as the search query.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY: a line says "No info found to your query".

Greg is devastated, his hopes did not come true and his intuition failed him.

Greg switches on a toggle switch - Pythagor's memory is activated. Greg's connection to the network and breaking of Biotech's network hub are not logged in Pythagor's memory.

PYTHAGOR

Good evening, Dr. Adams.

Greg does not respond to the computer. He is crestfallen. Greg outs the lights out and leaves without saying a word.

INT. BATHROOM IN GREG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

After splashing his face Greg looks at his reflection in the mirror - DROPS OF WATER SLOWLY SLIDE DOWN HIS FACE. GREG'S COMPLEXION IS PALE, BLACK PATCHES SURROUND HIS EYES. Greg has changed a lot since recently.

GREG
(to himself)
I must have gone crazy.

Greg takes depressant from the shelf.

CLOSE UP - TWO PILLS IN GREG'S HAND.

He hesitates and then throws the pills down the washing tub and flushes them with running water.

INT. PSYCHOANALYST'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

LIGHT AND SPACIOUS room. The space is rare, the room is designed as tribute to minimalism. Greg and psychoanalyst are in the room. Their words are spoken deliberately and thoughtfully. Greg is puzzled with himself. It seems to him that he is going crazy.

GREG
I, I don't know what is happening to me. I fail to understand it. It seems to me that everything around me is unreal. I have an impression that this is all some sort of a game. A silly game. Sometimes I even watch myself as if it is not me... and I laugh at many of my actions... And other times I perceive all around me very seriously and I burst with anger for no particular reason.

PSYCHOANALYST
Greg, you are not making a discovery as you describe your condition to me. This condition is called overstrain. Your nervous system for a reason that is unclear to me operates with 200% efficiency 24 hours a day.

Greg listens attentively, he looks dispirited.

PSYCHOANALYST

Your passion to Jane. Passion to the virtual girl distorts your perception of the world. You are projecting Pam on Jane. You want to love, but you prohibit loving to yourself. Hence the consequences. It is no surprise given the stress you are living in.

GREG

I say something similar to myself.

PSYCHOANALYST

This is very good. Stop talking then and come down to action. You need rest and change of scenery. It will all settle down in a while.

GREG

How long will it take?

PSYCHOANALYST

It depends on you.

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREET - AFTERNOON

Greg walks along the street and remembers the last remark of psychoanalyst.

PSYCHOANALYST

(V.O.)

You are in a disturbed state of mind that prevents you from demonstrating adequate perception of the world and its phenomena. Once you are back to normal you will laugh at yourself.

Greg ponders over psychoanalyst's last remark over and over again "laugh at yourself", "laugh at yourself", "laugh at yourself"...

EXT. MEGAPOLIS STREET - EVENING

Another working day is over. DENSE PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC. Rush hour. The camera selects Greg in the crowd.

His weary gait suggests that he has been walking around town for the whole day. Greg stops abruptly to look at one of the outdoor screens.

INSERT - OUTDOOR SCREEN: a random fragment of an interview.

HOST

... your comments, Professor Hallen.

A bearded, nebulous man is making himself comfortable in the armchair.

PROFESSOR HALLEN

The society evolves. Social evolution is always spasmodic. The time of history is getting denser. If you consider the stages of human evolution as farming, industry and later scientific revolutions you will see the gaps of 5 thousand years, 400 years and 100 years. Evolution accelerates. Each of the new stages is preceded with a crisis. For instance, at the end of upper paleolith hunting technologies developed to the degree where they resulted in extermination of populations and entire species of animals, which in its turn undermined food resources of paleolith society thus boosting intertribal competition. Both of these factors resulted in massive reduction of human population. As a response to the crisis, hunting and collecting was replaced with agricultural economy. A new society emerged. Today the society is facing a similar crisis. It is the crisis in IT sector: we are approaching to the quantum mechanics limit that prohibits further development of computing systems whereas our economic and social system dictates the need for new higher velocities. Soon we will reach this limit. And the Eighth Protocol will not help us. In what way will we overcome the crisis? Can we still be optimistic about the future?

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Greg is on a sofa wearing his clothes and with his shoes on. He lay down for just a second but fell asleep at once.

INSERT - GREG'S DREAM: THE BEACH, BLUE SKY, WAVES SURGE AGAINST THE SHORE. SEAGULLS SHRIEK. Merry Greg and Pam are running along the deserted seashore holding their hands; their bare feet cut the waves dashing back and forth; they enjoy the youth, life, fine weather and splashing of the sea. Pam is dragging a little behind Greg. Greg turns to look back and watches Jane, not Pam, happy and laughing merrily.

THE PHONE RINGS. Greg picks it up. During the conversation Paul Norman and Greg are shown depending on who is speaking.

PAUL

Good evening, this is detective Norman. I have advanced with our investigation.

GREG

I am listening. Go ahead.

PAUL

I found out where Pam used to work. She worked for Biotech Corp.

GREG

Are you sure?

PAUL

Yes. No doubt about it. Her files in the corporation are not marked with her own name, she is listed as Jessica Evans. This method is used by the corporation for purposes of protecting personal data of employees. (pause) It's not much, but still it is something.

GREG

This is very much. This is almost everything.

Greg drops the receiver and takes off.

INT. ELECTRONIC WIRES - LATE NIGHT

Greg is advancing towards the laboratory checkpoint.

GUARD

(in a friendly tone)

Can't get any sleep, Dr. Adams. You seem to be drawn to your workplace at night.

GREG

(irrelevantly)

Yes.

Greg walks past the checkpoint and enters the laboratory.

EXT. ELECTRONIC WIRES LABORATORY - LATE NIGHT

COOLERS DRONE EVENLY.

CLOSE UP - COOLING AGENT STREAMS WITHIN THE COOLING CIRCUIT, CORD THREADS, DIODES GLIMMER ON EXTERNAL PANELS OF COMPUTERS.

Greg's hope was vain - he is not alone here at such a late hour.

GREG

Peter!

PYTHAGOR

Good evening, Dr. Adams.

GREG

Evening, Pythagor.

PETER

Hi, Greg! I decided to work late hours to test Pythagor.

GREG

And how is Pythagor doing?

PETER

It's perfectly fine. (studies Greg) I would not say so about you though. (Greg looks worn out).

GREG
Peter, to hell with my appearance. I
need Pythagor.

Greg turns Pythagor's memory module off.

PETER
Why did you turn the memory off? What
are you up to?

GREG
It's a long story.

PETER
I must call the guards. You are out of
your mind.

Greg turns sharply to face Peter and looks him in the eyes.

GREG
Peter, how long have we known each
other?

PETER
(recalling)
For about... ten years.

GREG
Have I done anything illegal during
these ten years?

PETER
But I don't know.

GREG
You don't know because there is
nothing to know, but I have to do this
now. In certain circumstances human
laws are more important than written
regulations. At present I am
experiencing these circumstances.

Peter nods his head in silence as if paralyzed with the pressure
and confidence demonstrated by Greg. Greg gains access to
Biotech's server.

PETER
They will locate your break-in.

GREG

Only if they expect it.

Greg enters commands from the keyboard, command lines run across the holographic display. Greg enters the files area and lists of data appear on the screen. In the search line he enters the name of Jessica Evans. There is a pause. The title "Top Secret" is followed on the screen by "Enter password". It takes Pythagor several seconds to generate the password.

Personal files of JESSICA EVANS are opened. Greg browses to the photo - no doubt, this is Pam.

Greg rushes through the following lines: "Jane project", "Chief Programmer - Pam Russel", "Experiment", "Neuro-processor", "EVI data format".

Abruptly the connection to Biotech archive breaks..

GREG

Shit!

Greg takes off instantly.

Bewildered and seeking an explanation Peter remains in the company of Pythagor.

EXT. IN FRONT OF ELECTRONIC WIRES BUILDING - NIGHT

Greg gets in his car and makes a call to Nick.

INT. GREG'S CAR - NIGHT

GREG

Nick, Pam! Pam took part in developing the Jane project.

The phone call wakes Nick up. The camera shows Nick and Greg during the conversation depending on who is speaking.

NICK

Hold on, what is it?

GREG

It's the same story.

NICK

It is time we dropped the matter.
Moreover, it is two in the morning.

GREG

I have the proof now.

NICK

Where are they?

GREG

At Biotech. And I am going there right
now.

NICK

What kind of proof?

GREG

Personal files.

NICK

So what?

GREG

I am going to Biotech.

Greg hangs up.

NICK

This may be dangerous! (understanding
that Greg hung up) Damn it!!!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

GREG'S POV: Empty night highway. Suddenly a black car appears on Greg's way (it is the very black car Greg saw many times in his "hallucinations"). Greg brakes sharply but the car slightly hits the black vehicle on its way with its bonnet. Greg steps out of the car.

Two men dressed up in DARK SUITS, the ones he also saw before in his "hallucinations", emerge in front of him.

MAN IN DARK SUIT 1

Dr. Adams, please, stay calm.

GREG

Who are you?

MAN IN DARK SUIT 2
You will learn about it a little
later. And now, please, follow us.

The two do not look friendly at all. Greg knocks one of them down and runs.

EXT. DESERTED SECTOR OF THE MEGAPOLIS - AFTERNOON

Greg is being chased in the nooks of the old part of the city. The streets in the district are like a labyrinth.

View of this labyrinth from above: two dots are running along the labyrinth. "Dark suits" part with each other at a crossroads and head in two different directions.

Greg is hiding in a shady part of the street. Here is the "black suit" right next to Greg, but he is unable to see Greg. Suddenly A PHONE RINGS - it is Greg's mobile phone. The "dark suit" turns around and Greg gives him a hard blow in the jaw knocking him out.

Greg searches over him, takes away his pistol and reads his ID.

CLOSE UP - BIOTECH SECURITY SERVICE OFFICER ID: photo. Name: MARTIN SHANNON. Workplace: "Biotech Corp."

Greg exits the labyrinth of streets.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Greg approaches his car. The other security man emerges. Greg and the officer are well away from each other. Greg takes two shots at the meter panel of the black car, swiftly gets in his car and leaves.

INT. GREG'S CAR - NIGHT

MOBILE PHONE RINGS. During the conversation the camera shows Greg or Peter depending on who is speaking. Peter calls from Electronic Wires laboratory - the laboratory is full of fuss and even though it is late everyone is at their workplaces.

GREG

Yes.

PETER

Greg, why don't you pick up the phone?

GREG

Sorry, I was busy.

PETER

(slightly panicking)

Some large-scale phenomenon is taking place in the network. I can't even believe this.

GREG

What is it?

PETER

It's just like chaos. I can't describe it... It seems like the network is reorganizing itself. New hubs emerge and old ones disappear. And this is happening right before my eyes.

Greg does not perceive the sense of Peter's chatter, he is too busy, thinking.

INSERT - Electronic Wires IT laboratory: work at night involves all hands, almost every employee is at his workplace despite the late hour. Command lines and segments of programming code stream across displays. People are at a loss, they are having heated arguments.

END OF THE INSERT

PETER

Greg, this is urgent.

The phrase brings Greg back into the real world.

GREG

Not just yet.

PETER

It looks like the disturbance is initiated from within Biotech.

GREG

That is where I am going right now.

Greg hangs up and hits the gas pedal.

GREG'S POV: oncoming road. Demarkation strips flash by. IT STARTED RAINING. Raindrops flow across the windshield joining together into water patterns (the patterns resemble the picture of the globe model with worldwide network in the process of re-configuration). Greg turns on the windshield wipers and they unwillingly SCRATCH on the windshield.

Greg's lonely car is flying along the highway through the rain.

LONG SHOT: the light square of the car is rushing through the channel of the night highway resembling a bit of information. THE FILM'S MUSICAL BURDEN IS HEARD.

EXT. NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO BIOTECH CORP. - NIGHT

The car brakes sharply near the Biotech building. Greg gets out of the car. In resolute steps he approaches the entrance. Greg is calm, his calmness and confidence are frightening. He is holding a gun in his hands.

CLOSE UP - RAINDROPS ARE HURRYING ALONG THE BARREL OF HIS GUN.

Greg pulls the door but the entrance is locked. Greg points the gun at the window and shoots. The window pane is broken into tiny pieces that fall down to Greg's feet and he enters the building.

INT. BIOTECH CORPORATION - NIGHT

Greg is running along corridors of the building.

INT. DR. HOPER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Hoper is sitting with his back turned away from the monitors displaying pictures from outer surveillance cameras. Greg is seen in these displays, walking from one of them to the other. Dr. Hoper seems to be indifferent to the phenomenon, he is deep in his thoughts, watching the night city through the window. Drops and little streams of rain run down the window pane.

DR. HOPER'S POV: The view of the night city washed dim by the streams of rain water.

Dr. Hoper is a little sad, as if he is saying goodbye to something special. (That's what is happening: he is saying goodbye to the old world.)

Dr. Hoper turns his head to look at the holographic 3d model of the globe, which reflects the way the network is configured.

CLOSE UP - HOLOGRAPHIC 3D MODEL OF THE GLOBE: geometry of global network links is changing before our eyes. Old hubs disappear and new ones emerge in their stead.

DR. HOPER
(in thought)
Has the time come?

He shifts his gaze, the camera follows in the same direction.

The camera captures a girl with her slightly fluorescent body. It's Jane. She keeps silence and watches the slowly revolving holographic model of the globe and the way worldwide network architecture is changing.

JANE
Let's go.

INT. BIOTECH CORP. - NIGHT

Greg is running along corridors. Security people are waiting for Greg in one of the corridors. When they are about to jump at Greg the doors shut in front of them in a single sharp clasp, as if they were automatic elevator doors. The guards are at a loss. Greg's guardian angel - Jane - is helping him.

In fast and resolute steps Greg is walking along the corridors. He can see the guards and the way doors shut closed before them (several times). This surprises him but he has no time to ponder over it. He is approaching the digital mind hall. Greg is irrepressible, he wants to know the truth and to punish the culprits. He approaches the digital mind hall: there is no guard at the checkpoint and the door leading to the hall is slightly ajar as if Greg were expected here.

INT. DIGITAL MIND HALL - NIGHT

Greg can see Dr. Hoper. Greg points his gun at Dr. Hoper.

GREG
I want the truth.

Dr. Hoper turns towards him gently and watches Greg and the gun.

DR. HOPER

Good night, Dr. Adams. I am surprised you came here alone. I sent a car to pick you up.

GREG

Was it the one with the two lanky fellows, which have been following me on my tail throughout last month?

Hoper smiles.

DR. HOPER

Yes, I asked them to keep an eye on you for a while... You were the cornerstone of urgent events.

GREG

I am waiting, start speaking.

DR. HOPER

The truth! Er... The truth... It is not always easy to face the truth, but you have the right to know it, Dr. Adams... There is no digital mind and there have never been any.

GREG

What is it then?

DR. HOPER

Dozens of years ago people learned to create artificial neurons, but all attempts to use them as the basis for an artificial brain and mind have failed.

Greg sits down on the edge of a desk.

DR. HOPER

You understand like no one else that research works in mysterious ways. One of the research efforts took us to this bio-chip. It contains artificial neurons. We call it a neuro-processor.

Dr. Hoper demonstrates a device the size of a palm that reminds a chip, the only difference being that the chip contains a BIOELEMENT (a device shown in the opening scene, the same as those Dr. Hoper was implanting in the "wall" of the supercomputer). Greg watches the chip with distrust and then looks at Dr. Hoper.

GREG

Go on.

DR. HOPER

And this was only the beginning. Integrating separate neurons in a self-conscious conglomerate was the task of such difficulty we had not foreseen. We have not managed to do this. But we managed to do something else. A system of neurons is characterized with complex spatial distribution of electric charges. We managed to create a device that is capable of reading this spatial structure of charges. This device is capable of reading, copying and reproducing this structure without any distortions. We have learned to create identical copies of a neuron system with all its multi-dimensional nature and complexity... We have reconciled human beings and machines.

GREG

You have used Pam Russel! You reproduced her brain structure, didn't you? Answer me!

DR. HOPER

Yes! But wait! You will have plenty of chances to kill me later.

Dr. Hoper opens the doors leading to an adjacent room.

INT. ROOM ADJACENT TO DM HALL - NIGHT

The lab is equipped with state-of-the-art machines. A device resembling a "brain tomograph" is in the center of the room.

DR. HOPER

Here is the device. It has no name yet. This device was used to reproduce an artificial copy of Pam Russel's neuronal system charges' spatial structure.

GREG

(pointing his gun at Dr. Hoper)

I want to know the details. How did it happen?

DR. HOPER

We hesitated with the experiment for a long time, but Pam was a sportsmanlike girl. She stayed in the lab longer than usual... We found her here early in the morning... Something went wrong: Pam died, but her brain was still alive. We completed the teleportation procedure she had initiated... Brain cells were dying gradually and this caused partial data loss in the process of transfer. Then we created the game for Pam to regain the memories she had lost and to become self-conscious in the new reality. She was regaining her memories as she met with you, but the result surpassed every expectation. Her mind keeps evolving in the network.

GREG

I don't believe you.

A holographic image of Pam appears. Her holographic body is slightly FLUORESCENT(a little brighter than Jane was).

PAM

It is true, Greg.

GREG

Pam!?

PAM

I am not sure if it's the name for me now.

(MORE)

PAM (cont'd)
A fraction of the girl called Pam
Russel dwells within me and this
fraction loves you, Greg, but I have
grown.

Greg walks closer, astonished.

GREG
Pam, is it you?

PAM
I never wanted to hurt you, but your
sixth sense helped you to discover
this fraction in me.

GREG
What are you?

PAM
I am neither Pam, nor Jane. Human
clothes are tight for me; human
concepts may not be applied to me. I
am something that has no name yet. I
am the new form of life. The form of
life that was being born as our
civilization evolved.

NOISE. Police and security men enter the room; Nick, Dr. Witness
and Dr. Swensson are among those present.

PAM
One stage of historic development is
always replaced by another one... the
following stage... It is neither
better, nor worse, but it is much more
appropriate. Computers serving as the
core of our civilization's strength
have surpassed humans. Humans have
exhausted as media, they are on the
verge of their limit. Communication
speed is inadequate to being able to
exist in information flows of our
civilization. We must hand the power
over to machines or change ourselves
to be able to use them at a higher
level. Regardless of our will, we are
entering a new branch of history. This
is the appropriate stage of human
evolution. We should not be afraid of
it. It is the law of evolution.

One of those present loses his self-restrain.

SECURITY MAN 2

What the hell are you?!

He points his gun at the holographic image of Pam. Pam swiftly heats up the gun, which turns red-hot and falls down from the hands of the panic-monger. It amazes everyone around.

PAM

Humankind is changing. Traditional evolution based on DNA, chance mutation and natural selection is too sluggish. People are late adapting to the changes occurring in the world. By integrating our minds with the network we are leveraging a technology-based medium instead of the slowly developing organic medium. In this way we speed up our evolution as species and improve our probability of survival. It is progressive. Blending humans with the network is natural and historically providential. Fusion with the network does not mean the loss of individual traits. On the contrary, it is an improvement to gain from. Human capabilities are thus rendered limitless and human existence endless.

These words frighten the listeners and they experience a new sensation similar to religious awe.

PAM

I improved the network by joining it.
The Eighth Protocol is not the limit.
It is only the beginning.

CLOSE UP - THE HOLOGRAPHIC THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF THE GLOBE COVERED BY THE WORLDWIDE NETWORK: ARCHITECTURE of the global worldwide network has been CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY.

FADE OUT.

INT. TV STUDIO - AFTERNOON

A panoramic window is behind the presenter. We can see the bird's eye view of the megapolis through the window.

PRESENTER

Technological progress undermines our belief in wonders. However the only name we can use for what happened last night is a wonder. The Eighth Protocol boosted the network's capacity and communication speed and it seemed to be the apex of human triumph, but...

The camera moves past and behind the presenter and out to the expanses of the city. The weather is fine. Pedestrians are scurrying happily (the atmosphere is that of joy, celebration and exaltation).

PRESENTER

(V.O.)

... radical changes in architecture of the network caused by unknown phenomena brought the entire network to a better quality level. It remains unknown what caused the restructuring, who is the designer of it and what maintains operation of the network in its present status. Experts predict that current status is not at the utmost limit. We will be optimistic about the future...

The camera is nearing Biotech Corporation building, flies into the window.

INT. BIOTECH CORP. IT LABORATORY - AFTERNOON

Greg is lying on a platform of a device that resembles a brain tomograph.

DR. HOPER

Ready?

GREG

Ready.

Dr. Hoper is fiddling with the device. The platform with Greg lying on it moves into the body of the "brain tomograph".

FADE OUT.

THE END.