

SEA CHANGE

By

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Sea Change

A profound transformation in which the form is retained but the substance is replaced.

Characters

Chris, 37, Californian, Managing Director of an asset management firm. For the majority of the play he is suffering from a rare condition called dissociative fugue, a rare psychiatric disorder characterized by reversible amnesia for personal identity, including the memories, personality, and other identifying characteristics of individuality. The state is usually short-lived (ranging from hours to days) but can last months or longer.

Lizzy, 40, Californian, Chris's sister, works in PR.

Paul, 45, Lizzy's husband, CEO of an Asset Management firm, a native New Yorker.

Maureen, mid to late 50's, Paul's personal assistant, immaculately presented and well spoken.

Ama, 37, Californian, Chris's oldest friend, works in a bar.

Raven, 20, a Goth girl from Coney Island, works in a bar on the boardwalk.

Candy, early 30's, a stripper in a high-end club in Manhattan.

Waitress, from Brooklyn, can be played by the same actress that plays Candy.

Place

Manhattan.

Time

Early November 2008 – October 2009.

Notes

A / in the text denotes overlapping dialogue.

A – at the end of a sentence denotes an interruption by another character.

A ... at the end of a sentence denotes a trailing off.

A... instead of a sentence denotes the character is speechless for some reason.

Design

The design should be stripped back and simple with all furniture on wheels so that the actors can move between scenes swiftly. For example a bedroom is represented only by a bed, the apartment by a large couch and coffee table, the boardroom by a long table and an overhead light, the diner by a booth, the strip club by a pole and a booth etc. Projections can appear on the walls, and screens can be lowered in for the exhibition space.

Act One

Scene One

8th November 2008, 11am. Coney Island beach. Chris is pacing the beach, crying, confused, overwhelmed, and physically shaking. At this point he is a blank slate. He stares out at the ocean which we should imagine is in the audience. His jacket is gone and he wears suit trousers and a shirt which are wet up to his waist and carries a small backpack.

Raven approaches. She is dressed head to toe in black; her face plastered in goth make-up. She watches him cautiously.

Raven Hey. Hi. *(He does not respond)* Hey man. Are you alright there?

Chris What?

Raven Are you okay?

Chris I....I'm not sure...I don't know.

Raven You don't know if you're okay?

Chris I don't know. I don't know anything.

Raven You've been walking up and down like this for the last hour....do you need my help or...?

Chris I...I'm...

Raven You don't know anything?

Chris No.

Raven Are you on something?

Chris Something?

Raven Alcohol? Drugs?

Chris No. I don't think so....I don't know...

Raven Is this some kind of scam?

Chris No.

Raven What's your name?

Chris I don't know.

Raven Where do you live?

Chris I don't know, I don't know!

Raven Okay...it's okay. *(She approaches him slowly.)* We'll figure this out. We will. You're shaking, are you cold? Fuck man, you're frozen. Here have my jacket. *(She wraps her coat around him.)* Do you mind if I check your bag? See if you have any ID on you? I won't steal anything, I promise.

Chris ID?

Raven Yeah. Something to tell us who you are. *(She searches through his bag.)* Damn. No wallet, no phone. Nothin'.

Chris That's the ocean.

Raven Yeah. That's the North Atlantic.

Chris Oh. It's so.....it's so, so....it's too... *(He hugs himself; tears in his eyes.)*

Raven *(She smiles at him.)* Yeah it's really something huh. *(Pause.)* It's gonna be okay. My name's Raven.

Chris Raven?

Raven Well actually it's Lily but I changed it...anyway hi. *(She holds out her hand he takes it automatically and shakes it.)*

Chris *(Looks at their hands puzzled.)* Why do we do this?

Raven What? Shake hands?

Chris Yeah.

Raven *(Smiles.)* I don't really know.

Chris Why did you change your name?

Raven It doesn't suit me, it didn't feel like me.

Chris What does being you feel like?

Raven Oh brother, I dunno.

He visibly shivers.

Raven Shit you're too cold. We gotta get you off this beach before you die of hypothermia. Will you come with me? I'm gonna take you somewhere warmer okay?

Chris Okay...Raven?

Raven Yeah?

Chris I'm scared.

Raven Oh hey, it's okay. I probably look kinda weird to you huh? The way I dress. My make-up.

Chris Kinda.

Raven *(Smiling.)* You couldn't have met a stranger looking stranger could you? You can trust me. I'm harmless really; just hiding.

Chris Hiding? From what?

Raven My face; hiding my face.

Chris I like your face.

Raven Thank you.

Chris Don't you like it?

Raven Not so much, no.

Chris Why?

Raven (*Smiles at him.*) You ask a lot of questions don't you.

Chris Sorry.

Raven It's okay to be scared. Everyone's a little scared sometimes; it's just they don't like to admit it.

Chris Why?

Raven It's just the way people are.

Chris All people?

Raven Pretty much.

Chris Even you?

Raven Even me. I'm scared too. Here hold my hand. It's this way. (*She leads him off.*)

Lights fade.

Scene Two

Lights up on Ama. She talks to the audience as if she is talking to camera.

Ama Okay.... I probably shouldn't be telling you this but what the hell...I gave you...your first hand job. It was my first too actually...the first one I'd given I mean.

You'd broken your leg or ankle or something. A really bad break, and you'd been offa school. I guess you were kind of lonely; so your mom actually let me sleep over, which she never normally did, not even in a separate room.

We'd kissed before, drunk at parties or whatever, but nothing more than that. So it's late and we're in the living room, everyone else is in bed. We're watching a movie in the dark and we start making out on the couch with your leg in a cast up on the coffee table. Fuckin' hilarious! Anyway it all gets a little more heated than I expected and before I know it our hands are down each other's pants...god knows what you were doing down there.

Anyway I start giving you this really inexperienced hand job...but you musta been into it cos suddenly you were like the worst kisser ever, just slobbering all over my face. Still it was kinda thrilling; holding it in my hand, the warmth and solidity...the intimacy of it...wondering what it looked like. Then suddenly you make this noise; like this really loud animal groan that probably woke up the whole neighbourhood! (*She demonstrates.*) I thought something awful had happened; like I'd snapped your leg again or something. I was like 'Shit man. Are you okay?' Course you were more than okay. No one can ever accuse me of being a bad friend.

Blackout.

Scene Three

8 November, 11am. The office boardroom. Paul enters hurriedly followed by Maureen. He wears a sharply tailored business suit, and his tie hangs loose around his neck, he has a thick New York accent.

Paul So what did you tell them?

Maureen I said he'd been taken ill and we had to postpone.

Paul Till when?

Maureen Till midday; we got an hour.

Paul Where's Chuck?

Maureen He's in Singapore; not back until tomorrow.

Paul Martin?

Maureen His wife had her baby last night.

Paul Well get him back in here for Christ's sake! What the fuck is wrong with you?!

Maureen Okay I'll call him right away. (*She dials the phone.*)

Paul Do I have to do everything around here?!

Maureen Hi Martin this is Maureen –

Paul Do up my tie would ya?

Maureen (*Maureen starts to tie his tie.*) I'm really sorry to bother you on such a special day, but could you please come into the office as soon as you get this message, we have an emergency.

Paul That fucking prick I'll skin him alive!

Maureen Congratulations on your beautiful baby boy. (*She hangs up the phone.*)

Paul Fuck him!

Maureen He was really sick Paul.

Paul He's not sick, he's just high.

Maureen It wasn't just that. I've never seen him behave -

Paul He's been like that since September.

Maureen No this was worse.

Paul Well he can go to rehab in his own time, not mine, I'll tell you that right now.
(*Paul starts scratching his side.*)

Maureen I can't get a hold of him. I think we should call the police. He's not answering his cell or replying to his emails. He usually gets back to me immediately; I'm worried.

Paul Prick. Get me some scissors would ya?

Maureen What? Why?

Paul Just do it Maureen.

Maureen Okay. (*She exits briefly and comes back with scissors.*) Here.

Paul Cut my label out, it's driving me crazy. (*He turns the bottom of his shirt inside out to expose the label. Maureen carefully cuts it out.*)

Maureen Better?

Paul Yeah. That's a new job for you. Cut all the labels out of my shirts when they come back from the cleaners okay? I hate how they itch.

Maureen Okay.

Paul Good girl. It's not a priority obviously but I want it done. How many other meetings does he have today?

Maureen Seven.

Paul Seven?! FUCK!! We can't postpone seven meetings! Get him on the phone!

Maureen dials the conference phone, it rings on speaker phone and clicks to voice mail 'Hi you've reached Chris, please leave a mess', Paul smashes the phone off with his fist and throws it across the room.

Paul That little jerk-off I hate his stinking guts! Alright...go into his office get together the information for all the meetings and uh...call Bill and Clare get them in here. Call tech and get the password for his computer changed so we can find the presentations.

Maureen Okay.

Maureen exits.

Paul FUCK!

Paul leans on the table and takes some deep breaths; trying to calm down. Maureen enters with a post-it note in her hand.

Maureen Um Paul...

Paul What?

Maureen I don't think he's going to be coming back anytime soon.

Paul What? Course he is.

Maureen I think not. He left this.

Paul What's it say?

Maureen It says 'This is the way the world ends.' Should I call the police?

Paul Yes...and get my wife on the phone.

Blackout.

Scene Four

8th November 12pm. A small messy room. Chris is sat on a mattress on the floor he's wrapped in blankets and a towel is wrapped around his head. His teeth chattering. Raven comes in with a mug of coffee.

Raven Here drink this.

Chris Thanks.

Raven You're supposed to warm up slowly or I'd turn on the radiator.

Chris How come you know what to do?

Raven I've helped out a couple of homeless people before; on a cold night. We'll get you checked out at the hospital tomorrow. You're not as bad as some I've seen. I saw a human ice block once just off the beach sheltering between some of the shops on the boardwalk. He was all curled up tight with his hands under his armpits. I'd never seen a black man go blue before.

Chris Blue?

Raven Well...ya know...blueish white. His lips and nose: frost bitten. His eyes were wide open. Staring; wild eyes. I wondered what he was looking at. What he saw.

Chris That's horrible.

Raven I wish I'd found him sooner.

Chris Like you found me?

Raven Yeah.

Chris Thank you. For helping me.

Raven That's alright. You're the most interesting person I've met in a long time.

Chris Do you meet a lot of people?

Raven I watch a lot of people. I don't usually talk to them.

Chris Why not?

Raven I don't like many people. They don't like me much either.

Chris Why don't they like you?

Raven They're scared of me cos I'm wearing my disguise.

Chris Why do you wear it then?

Raven It makes me invisible to idiots.

Chris I don't understand.

Raven People are very concerned with the surface of things. Clothes are just costume: they only show what people want you to see. I used to be blonde and wore these cutesy little dresses my parents forced me to wear, and everyone treated me like a mindless little doll; so as an experiment I thought I'd change the packaging.

Chris What happened?

Raven *(With a slight smile.)* They disowned me.

Chris Why?

Raven People are easy to manipulate. Appearances don't mean shit. You should remember that. Just because someone looks respectable it doesn't mean that they are. In fact some of the most despicable people on this earth dress in a suit and tie. Take people as they come and keep your wits about you.

Chris How will I know?

Raven Instinct. Trust your gut and you'll be alright.

Chris I'd like to see what you look like without your disguise.

Raven Well dream on kid. Cos it ain't gonna happen.

Chris takes a sip of coffee and spits it back out.

Raven Is it too hot?

Chris It's bitter.

Raven You don't like coffee?

Chris This is coffee?

Raven You never had coffee before?

Chris I don't know. I know what coffee is but I don't remember tasting it. I don't like it.

Raven I'll put some sugar in it.

She takes it and adds sugar.

Raven Try now. Better?

Chris drinks it.

Chris Better.

Raven So you know what coffee is but you don't remember the taste of coffee?

Chris Yeah.

Raven What's the first thing you *do* remember?

Chris I was on a train and everyone was getting off and I realised...I realised I didn't know where I was or how I got there...or who I was.

Raven What did you do?

Chris I followed the other people and got off the train and walked around hoping I would recognise something...I saw the ocean and I knew what that was so I wanted to be near it.

Raven What's this?

Chris A table.

Raven And this?

Chris Your nose.

Raven And that?

Chris A clock.

Raven What time is it?

Chris Twelve forty eight.

Raven How do you know all this stuff when you don't remember anything?

Chris I just do.

Raven What's this?

Chris A pen.

Raven And this?

Chris Paper.

Raven Sign it.

Without thinking Chris signs the paper.

Raven Fuck man. You signed it!

Chris I signed it! I have a signature!

Raven Yes! *(She grabs the paper to read it.)* Too bad it's completely illegible.

Chris *(Distressed.)* I signed it. I'm somebody.

Raven Oh hey, of course you're somebody. *(She looks at the paper.)* Your name begins with a C. I'll choose a name for you if you want? Just for now, till we know the real one.

Chris Okay.

Raven Okay...awesome names beginning with C....Caesar!

Chris Uh...

Raven No you're right. You're right it's not you. How about...Cyclops?!

Chris Are you making fun of me?

Raven I was just trying to cheer you up...Chico.

Chris Chico?

Raven It's Spanish. It means young boy.

Chris But I'm not young.

Raven I know but...you kinda are. It's a term of endearment. Like we're friends.

Chris Alright. I don't mind that one.

Raven Chico it is.

Blackout.

Scene Five

8th November 2008, New York City. 2am in the morning. Chris is sat in the private room of a strip club. He wears a dishevelled business suit and is racking up lines of cocaine on the table in front of him. He is wired and sweating profusely. Candy a stripper in her early thirties enters. The song 'Digital Versicolour' by Glass Candy filters in quietly from another room.

Candy Hey there.

Chris Hey.

Candy You wanted a private dance.

Chris No. No I don't really get off on that.

Candy Then you're in the wrong place.

Chris I just come in here cos it's good for business. No offence.

Candy You didn't ask for me?

Chris No, I did.

Candy What would you like me to do?

Chris All I want is a conversation.

Candy Oh.

Chris What's your name?

Candy Candy.

Chris Candy what? Candy Cane? Candy Lane?

Candy Just Candy.

Chris You want a line Candy?

Candy No thanks.

Chris You want pills instead? I got sleeping pills, pain killers, Valium: whatever you need.

Candy Are you a dealer?

Chris I look like a drug dealer to you?

Candy You look like shit.

Chris *(Laughs)* I like you.

Candy I like you too baby.

Chris Do some drugs with me.

Candy I said no.

Chris I work in finance. Asset management. Used to be a banker some years back, now I have my own firm. How ya like me now?

Candy I like you even more.

Chris *(Laughs)* Now that can't be true. Come on Candy level with me. What do you think of guys like me?

Candy Guys like what?

Chris Guys in finance.

Candy You tip well.

Chris Come on Candy, the truth now.

Candy I get paid not to have an opinion.

Chris Well now I'm paying you to have one.

Candy Can't I just dance? Or show you my asshole or some ordinary shit like that?

Chris No I wanna talk.

Candy *(Resigned.)* I always get the chatty ones.

Chris throws a wad of dollar bills on to the table. Grabs her and forces her to sit.

Chris Have a seat.

He stuffs a rolled up dollar bill into her hand.

Chris Have a line.

She sighs and rolls her eyes.

Candy Alright! *(She does a line.)* Happy? What's the deal? You want me to treat you like dirt? Smack you around a little bit? I can do that.

Chris I want your honest opinion on the state of the world Candy! I wanna know what happened to your hopes and dreams? If you had any. I want to know what you think about when you're shoving your tits in the face of the CEO of Goldman Sachs! That's what I want to know!

Candy Why?

Chris How's business been since the crash? Has it slowed down at all?

Candy No. Actually, if anything, it's been busier.

Chris That's interesting isn't it Candy? That's fascinating don'tcha think?

Candy Not really, no.

Chris No?! All those banks and financial institutions crumbling; thousands of lay-offs and prostitution is unaffected. That means you're in a growth market Candy. Maybe one of the few growth markets around at the moment. You're a lucky girl.

Candy I'm not a prostitute, I'm a dancer. I don't do extras.

Chris Pardon me. Of course you don't. Do you enjoy dancing for money Candy? Does your work provide you with job satisfaction?

Candy Not particularly.

Chris Does it make you feel powerful and independent?

Candy No.

Chris Do you hate it? Does it make you despise mankind?

Candy I'm indifferent.

Chris Do you wish you'd never been born sometimes and cry yourself to sleep at night?

Candy Are you getting a kick out of this? Humiliating me?

Chris No. No Candy. I'm just trying to connect with you in some kind of real human way. I'm trying to get at the truth. Cos no one tells me the truth anymore: no one tells you the truth when you're rich. When you have enough money everyone becomes a fucking liar. But tit for tat Candy, I'll tell you something now: I hate my fucking job, I hate it and I hate myself too.

Candy *(Completely unsurprised.)* Oh how about that.

Chris Wanna know why?

Candy Not really.

Chris We're rolling toward the edge of the precipice, ya know that? At frightening speed and, and, and most people don't even seem to realise that they're in the barrel....

Candy Haven't we already hit the rocks?

Chris Oh no Candy, no, no, no, things are gonna get much, much worse. Oh things will improve at first and we'll all think 'It's over! Business as usual!' but then will come the really big crash. Because no lessons have been learned here! Nothing will change. And no one, NO ONE is prepared for the big one. When we hit the rocks we will *all* fucking know it.

Candy Dark.

Chris Yes it is. Yes it is Candy. YES. IT. IS. *(He offers her another line.)* Another?

Candy Fuck it. *(She does the line.)*

- Chris I think I'll join you. *(He does a line.)* You ever been to China Candy?
- Candy No.
- Chris I didn't think so. I have. I been there a ton a times, Beijing, Shanghai, Macau. But the last trip...usually I just fly in, have meetings, sleep in a hotel and fly home but this time...this time I couldn't sleep, so I went for a walk.
- When you look out of hotel window over Beijing financial district it looks much the same as any other city but when you take to the streets on foot...behind the skyscrapers is an ancient world, like you stepped into a time machine...the squalor, the degradation, the stench...unimaginable poverty. The men, women and children that make all our electronics, our gadgets and gizmos, earn so little they live on rubbish dumps. And the land and the air and the water are so polluted people are dying of cancer, they have cancer villages now, babies being born with tumours. Oh yeah business is booming in China! China has the fastest growing economy in the world! Isn't that great?!
- See Candy I can't shake it off, what I saw; I close my eyes it's all I see. Everything I own stinks now; my apartment smells like a sewer. My clothes are decaying. It's all filthy. I can't look myself in the eye in the mirror anymore. Do you understand? Do you know what I'm talking about? Do ya? Do ya? Do you under...do you understand?
- Candy No. I told you. I ain't never been to China.
- Chris Right. Course ya did, course ya did. You're a scintillating conversationalist you know that Candy?
- Candy Thanks.
- Chris You want some pills? I got these new pills to help me sleep. You want to try some?
- Candy No I do not.
- Chris Mind if I indulge?
- Candy Knock yourself out.
- Chris *(Grins.)* That's what they're for.
- Chris takes four pills and another line.*
- Candy You wanna be careful mixing all that shit together.
- Chris You know for a stripper you're a real drag. Anyone ever tell you that Candy? You're meant to be fun. That's your job isn't it?
- Candy If you say so.
- Chris So what's your story? You paying your way through college?
- Candy You like em' young? I can play young.

Chris *(Furious. He grabs and shakes her.)* No I don't want you to play at anything Candy! I want your story! I want honesty! How many times do I have to tell you that?!

Candy I started off paying my way through school but I realised I was making more money dancing than I ever would in a real job so I quit school and kept dancing.

Chris How long?

Candy Twelve years.

Chris How much do you make?

Candy Five grand on a good week. Cash.

Chris That's a decent amount of money for shaking your ass.

Candy Yes it is.

Chris You saving up for something? You got kids to support?

Candy Look hunny, I'm not a hooker with a heart of gold; I'm just a girl making a shit load of money so she can spend it on shit she doesn't really need. I don't think much about it; I work, I earn and I spend: just like you, just like everybody. And yes I think guys that work in finance are assholes: we all do! Anything else you wanna know?!

Chris Thank you! Thank you Candy for telling me the truth!

Candy YOU ARE FUCKING WELCOME.

The lights and music swell loud and bright and then cut dead to blackout.

Scene Six

8th November 2008, 7 am. Lights up on an office boardroom. Maureen is frantically putting together information packs for a meeting. A PowerPoint presentation is projected on to a screen behind her. Chris enters, he looks a complete wreck and is still high on a mix of cocaine and sleeping tablets.

Chris What time are we on Maureen?

Maureen Chris?

Chris What time are we on?

Maureen It's seven o five.

Chris In the morning or the evening?

Maureen In...in the morning.

Chris And what time are they arriving?

Maureen Chris are you alright? You look –

Chris What time are they arriving Maureen?!

Maureen Eight thirty...

Chris Right...good... who is?

Maureen What?

Chris WHO?! WHO?!

Maureen Global. Global is. Are you...?

Chris Global is?

Maureen That's right. You had me set up the meeting yesterday remember?

Chris I did?

Maureen Yes.

Chris Oh god. Oh fuck I'm gonna have to tell them the numbers went down. They went right off a cliff.

Maureen They already know that Chris. It happened over a month ago. It's happening everywhere.

Chris Right. Right. Did you hear? Bush he bailed them all out. \$700 billion of taxpayers money but it'll be way more than that, believe me.

Maureen That was last month too Chris...we have a new President remember? He was voted in four days ago.

Chris Right, right. Can you believe it though? Can you?! (*He laughs.*)

Maureen There wasn't really any other choice, he had to prevent a depression.

Chris They're all gonna get away with it! Don't you understand what this means?! The lunatics are in charge of the asylum Maureen. We got away with it!

Maureen We? We didn't do this.

Chris The numbers they don't exist. We don't pay for things with money, we pay for things with time.

Maureen Chris you seem unwell. I'm not sure you should be here.

Chris You're right. You're right I shouldn't be. I should not.

Maureen You should go home.

Chris Every day when I wake up, I wish I hadn't.

Maureen Chris...we'll get you some help. Everything will be okay.

Chris Okay?! Okay?! No Maureen everything will not be OKAY. What happens when supply can no longer meet demand?!

Maureen I'm not sure... I don't know what you mean?

Chris starts to shake. Maureen dials a cab.

Chris I should never. / I should never. I should never.

Maureen /Hi Jim? Can you collect Chris and take him home as soon as possible please. He's not feeling well. Thank you. *(To Chris)* He'll be here as soon as he can.

Chris It's too late.

Maureen I'm calling a doctor. *(She dials the phone)* Hello? I need to make an appointment. Today. As soon –

Chris gets up and walks out of the room.

Maureen Chris?! Chris where are you going?! Chris?! Chris?! *(To the phone.)* I'll call you back. Chris?!

She exits after him. The lights fade to black.

Scene Seven

12th November 2008, 10am. A hospital room in Coney Island. Chris is pacing the room.

Chris He's coming to get me?

Raven That's right. That's a good thing.

Chris Any minute?

Raven Chris, this is what you wanted. We know who you are now.

Chris Don't call me Chris. Call me Chico.

Raven It's gonna be alright Chico. You're going home. You're gonna meet your sister and your brother-in-law and they'll take good care of you okay? Nothing bad is gonna happen.

Chris Promise?

Raven I promise.

Paul enters. Chris hides crouched up in the corner of the room.

Paul Okay where's my guy?! *(On seeing Raven)* Jesus H fuck is it Halloween or somethin'?! I must have the wrong room.

Raven Who are you looking for? I might know him.

Paul I doubt it. You're not his type.

Raven What 'type' would that be?

Paul The night of the living dead type.

Raven Sorry what was your name?

Paul Paul.

Raven Hi Paul. *(She holds out her hand, Paul looks at it but doesn't shake it.)*
(Pointedly) What does he look like?

Paul Look, I don't got time to stand around shooting the breeze with a Coney Island
freak show, okay? I think I'll just go ask a nurse.

Raven He's hiding in the corner.

Paul What?

Chris stands up slowly – he is wearing Raven's clothes.

Chris Hi.

Paul Chris? What the fuck are you wearing?

Chris No I'm Chico.

Paul *(Laughs.)* Did she do this to you?! You musta been on one hell of a bender
this time buddy!

Chris This is Raven she's been looking after me.

Paul Is that so?! Wow you're really into some fucked up shit when you're wired!
That's all I'm saying. No judgement.

Raven He's not high. He has psychogenic amnesia.

Paul Sure you didn't put some kinda voodoo spell or witchy curse on him...?

Raven Didn't you speak to the doctor? All the memory connected to his identity is
gone. He doesn't know you.

Chris She's my friend. *(He holds Ravens hand.)*

Paul Aw how sweet. Well will you tell your friend to stop giving me the evil eye?
She's givin' me the heebie jeebies.

Raven I was thinking about putting a hex on you.

Paul Alright Chris, enough fuckin' around. I've handled all the paperwork. Get
your stuff.

Chris I don't like you. I want to stay here.

Paul *(Amused.)* You don't like me?

Chris No.

Paul Listen...I may have left a few irate messages on your phone in the heat of the moment but I'm prepared to let bygones be bygones. Just come back to the office; all is forgiven.

Chris I want to stay here.

Paul Well that's not an option. I told your sister I'd take care of it. She's waiting at your apartment probably tearing her hair out.

Chris I don't know you!

Paul Look this is getting' old real fast. Get a move on would ya? I fuckin' hate hospitals.

Chris I don't wanna go with him. Don't make me go.

Raven What's the matter with you? He's scared. You're making things worse.

Paul Well what do you suggest Mortitia?!

Raven Okay Chico. I'm real sorry about this but it looks like this idiot is married to your sister /so you're gonna have to go with him.

Paul /Hey watch it!

Chris But he's wearing a suit and tie.

Raven I know kid. I don't like it any more than you do. I'll come visit. I made you a promise, remember?

Chris Okay.

They embrace.

Raven I'll miss you Chico.

Paul Who the fuck is Chico?

Chris Bye Raven.

Paul Finally!

Raven Hey Paul!

Paul Yeah?

Raven Hold his hand.

Paul What? No!

Raven Just hold his fuckin' hand.

Chris holds out his hand. Paul looks disgusted.

Paul Get that thing away from me! I'm not a fuckin' fairy! What's wrong with you?!

They leave.

Scene Eight

Lizzy talks to the audience as if talking to a camera.

Lizzy What do I remember? You mean the first memories I have? Uh...Okay I uh...there are a couple that stand out...

I remember this walk in San Francisco, the two of us and mom and dad. Golden Gate Park in the fog. Fog so thick you could barely make out your own hand in front of your face. I wandered off. The shapes of trees looming out of the white and towering above me like grey goliaths.

I imagined I was breathing it in, fog slipping down my throat, filling up my lungs with white cloud and creeping into my organs and my veins until I evaporated and became part of it. Invisible. My secret power. Fog girl. Voices called out to me but I didn't answer I wanted to remain hidden, unseen. Boy dad really gave me a good whack for that one.

We were always so well behaved when we were kids, we were forbidden to swear or anything like that...We used to go down to the laundry room when the machine was running and say as many cuss words in a row as we could – shit, fuck, asshole, tit, fart – then giggle uncontrollably. Mom caught us once – I can still taste the soap.

I remember things I'd rather forget and forget the things I want so badly to remember. I mean I remember the event but not the sensation of it, if that makes sense? My first kiss, what it feels like to fall in love, to be loved...forgotten. But I remember in the minutest detail a broken promise, a separation, a death that changed everything – the nasty stuff is clear as crystal like it were yesterday. I can still feel the pain of that right here. (*She touches her sternum.*)

There are so many lives weaved in and out of our own all remembering things slightly differently. What are we really? Are we just a collection of life events? Is that all a person is? Who am I? Who are you?

Blackout.

Scene Nine

12th November 2008, 12pm. Lights up on a boardroom. There is background office noise. Paul enters followed by Chris and Maureen.

Paul So what ya tell him?

Maureen I said there was a family emergency and you'd meet him tomorrow at three.

Paul How many times I gotta tell ya Maureen?! Don't mention family, it makes me look bad, if they think I put family before business they'll go elsewhere!

Maureen Sorry, I just thought under the circumstances -

Paul You didn't tell him where I was did ya?

Maureen No, no, no, no.

Paul Good.

Maureen How are you feeling Christopher?

Chris Confused...

Maureen We're so glad to have you back.

Chris Back?

Maureen Well, yes. You were so upset and angry when you left. I wasn't sure -

Paul He's fine. Just needed to blow off a little steam. Isn't that right Chris?

Chris Uh -

Paul When are the guys from Macau arriving?

Maureen In a half hour.

Paul Great. We got plenty of time to get you up to speed.

Maureen Um...Paul?

Paul What?

Maureen Um...what is he wearing?

Paul Don't ask. Just make him presentable.

Maureen There's some spare clothes in your office I'll get them.

Chris Where are we?

Maureen Don't you know? This is your office. You said he was alright.

Paul He is. There's nothing wrong with him.

Chris What do we do?

Maureen He doesn't even remember what we do Paul.

Paul I've been covering for him for long enough. They're his clients; they want to see his face in the room.

Maureen But how can he?! This is crazy!

Paul *(To Chris.)* We're haemorrhaging clients by the way. As if the financial crisis isn't enough to deal with, you gotta have a crisis of conscience at the same time?!

Chris I don't want to stay here.

Paul How many times I gotta tell ya?! This has nothing to do with us, WE ARE NOT THE CAUSE!

Chris What? I don't know –

Paul We specialise in gaming for Christ's sake! We don't have anything to do with this!

Chris What does that mean?

Maureen We're an asset management firm.

Chris I don't know what that is!

Maureen We manage portfolios for companies that invest in casino developments.

Chris What?

Paul Yes it's terrible; people are losing their homes blah blah blah. But we built this company from the ground up and I'll be damned if I'm gonna let you quit the business by POST-IT NOTE!

Chris Did I do that?

Maureen That was the last time we saw you.

Chris Oh...I don't...I don't feel well.

Maureen Paul he's sick.

Chris I'd like to leave here please.

Maureen Take him home Paul.

Chris Please! I need to leave!

Maureen Paul, take him home!

Paul KNOW YOUR PLACE!!

Maureen I'm sorry but you're not thinking straight.

Paul Remember all those people you had to lay off?

Maureen Yes.

Paul You're next.

The phone rings.

Maureen CGL good afternoon. Oh hello Elizabeth.

Paul *(To Maureen.)* We're not here.

Maureen No. Did you try his cell?

Paul *(To Chris.)* That's your sister. Let's go. / Maureen, find me the best neurologists in town and schedule some appointments cos this is bullshit.

Maureen /I'm sure they'll be back soon. Probably traffic. I'm so glad they found Christopher. You must be so relieved. I better let you go in case they're trying to call you. Yes of course I will. Goodbye.

Paul and Chris exit. Maureen puts the phone down and sobs.

Scene Ten

12th November 2008, 1pm. Chris's apartment. Lizzy is waiting anxiously. Paul and Chris enter, she jumps to her feet.

Lizzy What took you so long? I've been tearing my hair out.

Paul *(Looks at Chris)* What I tell ya?

Lizzy Where have you been?

Paul I've been taking care of the bill that's where I've been! 'Thanks Paul you're a wonderful husband.' 'Oh no problem sweetie you're welcome.'

Lizzy I'm sorry but I've been sat here tearing/ my hair –

Paul Tearing your hair out. I know. He's fine by the way.

Lizzy Oh thank god! *(She goes to hug Chris but he moves away from her.)* Chris are you okay? Do you remember me?

Chris I don't know.

Paul Chris you know her. He knows, trust me.

Lizzy You do know me Chris.

Chris I thought that II thought I would remember you.

Lizzy Oh god.

Paul *(To Lizzy.)* It's alright, he's fine.

Lizzy Are you scared of me Chris?

Chris You're my sister?

Lizzy Yes sweetie. I'm your sister. Why don't you take a look around your apartment, change your clothes?

Chris Okay.

Chris walks around picking things up and putting them down again.

Lizzy Is that what you call fine? He's not fine Paul.

Paul Yeah, yeah.

Lizzy What's that supposed to mean?

Paul's cell phone rings.

Lizzy Don't answer that.

Paul Hello? Hi Maureen...yeah. *(To Lizzy.)* I gotta take this.

Paul wanders to the back of the apartment and continues his conversation.

Lizzy Do you recognise anything?

Chris No....nothing. Not yet anyway.

Lizzy Nothing? Really? Look. Look closer. Your books, your music, your photos; the photos on the wall you took them. You don't remember? Paul will you get off the goddamn phone!

Chris I'm sorry.

Lizzy It's fine. I'm sorry I didn't mean to....Let's just go through some things. Okay?

Chris Okay.

Chris wanders into his bedroom.

Paul Liz I gotta go.

Lizzy Oh no. You are not just gonna go back to work Paul. I need you here. Come on; don't be an asshole.

Paul I'm no help to you anyways.

Lizzy Please. I don't know what to do. I don't know what I'm doing.

Paul Yeah well he's your brother, not mine, so what do I know? I'm no shrink. I got work yelling in one ear, you in the other: a man has to choose.

Lizzy You're a first rate shit you know that?!

Paul Yeah I know that. You tell me every fuckin' day.

Lizzy Please. Please don't leave me here on my own with him.

Paul If he can't remember; how come he can talk, how come he can walk and knows the names of things? Huh? Answer me that and I'll stay.

Lizzy I can't.

Paul It's bullshit that's why. Fugue state my ass.

Lizzy I've been reading up; it usually only takes a few days, a week or so... *(Pauls phone rings.)* Do not answer that. Do not.

Paul *(He answers it.)* Hi Chuck. Yeah I know. Stall them. Anything! Champagne and roses, hookers and crack; whatever they fuckin' want just keep them there!! 'Kay bye. *(To Lizzy)* I'm outta here.

Lizzy Paul, no.

Paul Look he can wipe his own ass and feed himself, why we gotta look after him?

Lizzy I want to be here when he remembers that's why.

Paul He remembers. Those brain scans turned up nothin'. All those tests and not a shred of evidence there's anythin' wrong with him at all. This is just an infantile little prank.

Lizzy A prank? Why? Why would he do this?

Paul I don't know. I don't wanna know. I'm goin' to work.

Lizzy No Paul.

Paul Why do you need me here? You're here. You're not making any sense.

Lizzy Go then. Go on. Go. Go!

Paul leaves. Chris comes back into the room. They are both extremely uncomfortable around each other.

Lizzy Piece of shit! Sorry Chris I didn't mean you.

Chris Is this mine? *(He holds up a suit.)*

Lizzy Yeah. That's yours.

Chris Oh brother.

Lizzy What did you say?

Chris Oh brother, they don't seem like mine.

Lizzy You'll get used to them.

Chris I don't think so.

Lizzy This is so surreal. Keep thinking pinch me somebody so I wake up, you know? One day we're gonna laugh about this....I don't know what to do here....are you hungry? I stocked up the fridge.

Chris No not really.

Lizzy Maybe...maybe we should go through some photos, I brought some albums.

Chris Sure.

She lays out them out on the coffee table; he begins to go through them.

Lizzy Here. This one. Our last family reunion in Cali- everyone's in that one except Dad. Look.

Chris I'm sorry Lizzy I don't...I don't recognise any of these people.

Lizzy Or this one. This one of you and Mom in the garden before you went off to college.

Chris No.

Lizzy (*Lizzy becomes more frantic as she shows each photo.*) This one then, of you and me at the lake that time with all our friends camping. We got drunk and you made out with Keesa and I was pissed at you cos she was my friend.

Chris No Lizzy...

Lizzy Ama! You remember Ama; she was your best friend.

Chris I don't remember her.

Lizzy You were inseparable at school, you did everything together.

Chris I don't remember her Lizzy.

Lizzy Okay...uh...this one! This one you'll remember.

Chris No. I don't.

Lizzy You're not looking properly. Look!

Chris I don't want to look at them anymore.

Lizzy Burning man festival when we were in our twenties. Our Grand Canyon road trip. Yosemite family vacation. Or this one. Or this one. You and Dad! You and Mom! You and me!

Chris Stop! Stop it please.

Lizzy No! You remember. You have to.

Chris Stop!

Silence.

Chris What are they like?

Lizzy Who?

Chris Mom and dad.

Lizzy They're dead.

Chris Oh. I'm sorry.

Lizzy Are you?

Chris No.

Lizzy Fuck Chris....

Chris I wish I could remember. I do.

Lizzy Maybe I could... I don't know... I could ask you quick fire questions and you could just answer them without thinking?

Chris I don't think so. I'm kinda tired Lizzy.

Lizzy Music then. Let's try listening to something.

Chris Okay, sure.

Lizzy puts on a CD: 'First Impressions' by Edgar Meyer, Mark O'Connor and Yo Yo Ma. They sit and listen together in silence. Family photos appear, projected behind them. Slow cross fade to Ama.

Scene Eleven

Ama speaks to the audience as if speaking into a camera.

Ama It's like you're my oldest friend...but you're not. You're different. A familiar stranger...I find you...captivating...enchanted. (*Laughs.*) I know! Enchanting is not a word I would ever use about *anyone* but you fuckin' are man! Every waking moment is so full of...WONDERMENT! Everything is fresh and new. There are no clichés, no stereotypes. It's liberating!

I actually believe in a soul now. A soul that we have from the day we come into this world. You have this inner light; the distilled essence of you, my friend, at your core, with all the memory stripped away, yes, but pure unadulterated... Chris!

Don't get big headed.

Blackout.

Scene Twelve

I am, late November 2008. Lights up on Lizzy sat on the couch drinking wine. She is on her second bottle and continues to drink throughout. Chris is asleep in his room. Paul enters.

Paul I'm here to take over. Have you fed him? Is his diaper changed?

Lizzy You are such a –

Paul A first rate shit?

Lizzy I was gonna say prick actually.

Paul How'd it go today?

Lizzy Same. Memory tests, hypnosis, PET scan, MRI.

Paul What they say?

Lizzy It's a waiting game; he'll remember in time and when he does he won't have any memory of anything that's happened to him during the amnesia and things will go back to normal. There's nothing else they can do because there's nothing physically wrong with him.

Paul Have ya ever considered...ya know...that maybe there ISN'T anything wrong with him?

Lizzy I would know Paul! I would see it in his eyes – there's not a trace of recognition for me, for photos, for anything he owns.

Paul I'm just sayin', six of the best neurologists in town and not one can find anything wrong with him. It makes you wonder.

Lizzy It's psychological trauma Paul; it's not physical. How many times do I have to tell you that?

Paul I'll have Maureen find us someone new.

Lizzy He doesn't want to go anymore, he's exhausted. I'm exhausted.

Paul So we do what they said and we wait.

Lizzy I thought I'd lost him. That he was dead or one of those people that disappear from their lives on purpose.

Paul Why would he do that?

Lizzy Oh come on everybody thinks about it: leaving everything behind and becoming someone totally different.

Paul I don't.

Lizzy Liar.

Paul No. I've never thought about it.

Lizzy Well that's just sad.

Paul What is?

Lizzy That you have so little imagination.

Paul You need to stop drinking and get some sleep.

Lizzy Do you love me Paul?

Paul Sure I do.

Lizzy Really?

Paul When you're not yelling at me.

Lizzy I've been a bitch haven't I?

Paul *(Pretending not to hear the question.)* What?

Lizzy I've been a bitch.

Paul ...

Lizzy Paul? Answer me!

Paul I was sugar coating the silence.

Lizzy *(Lizzy starts laughing.)* Fuck you!

Paul It's good to see you smile, it's been a while. You can't afford to take any more time off; the climate the way it is you'll lose your job.

Lizzy I know. They called, my clients have been complaining I haven't kept up with their publicity; I have to go in tomorrow.

Paul I'll have Maureen keep an eye on him. Maybe we can hire someone?

Lizzy No strangers.

Paul Friends or family then.

Lizzy I'll make some calls.

Paul Drink some water and go to bed. I'll stay up.

Lizzy Promise you won't sleep.

Paul I doubt he's gonna just wander off into the night Liz.

Lizzy Promise!

Paul Alright! Fuckin' pinky swear. Goodnight.

Lizzy leaves. Paul waits a few moments to make sure she's gone and then lies back on the couch to sleep. Chris enters from his room.

Chris Oh. Hey Paul.

Paul Hey yourself.

Chris I heard voices....is everything alright?

Paul Oh ya know the usual. I go to work, come back here to find your sister drunk, we argue about you and then I go to bed on the couch, get up and do it all over again. I don't even remember what our house looks like it's been so long since I slept in it. How are you doin' Christopher?

Chris Sorry.

Paul Just how long you gonna keep this up huh?

Chris What do you mean?

Paul You know what I mean. Grab a seat. You want some wine?

Chris No thanks.

Paul Have some; it's a good year.

Paul pours him a glass.

Chris What's the year got to do with it?

Paul You're funny. What's your angle?

Chris Angle?

Paul Yeah. What's your angle?

Chris I...don't-

Paul I know you. You're a sly son of a bitch I'll give you that. You got Lizzy fooled, you even got those doctors fooled but you don't fool me. I'm on to you.

Chris Why would I lie?

Paul That's what I'm trying to figure out, it doesn't sit right with me somehow: a man doesn't just walk away from a successful career with no good reason; no back-up plan nothin'.

Chris Maybe I had a good reason.

Paul Business takes a down turn, so what? See it as a fuckin' challenge. There's always more money to be made, ya just gotta sniff it out.

Chris I don't know what to tell you Paul.

Paul Tell me you want back in!

Chris I don't.

Paul Our stocks in Las Vegas Sands just took a massive nose dive. They're worth nothin'; I'm talking peanuts. I need you to help me find investors for their construction in Singapore, if we can do that, we save ourselves. Gaming is about to take off in a big way over there. We'd be making money hand over fist in a couple of years.

Chris *(Looks Paul straight in the eye.)* I literally do not understand one single thing you just said.

Paul Look, help me get the company back on its feet and then you can take your bonus and retire to Coney Island and dance around with your freaky friends or whatever the fuck you want, just don't puss out on me now that's all I ask!

Chris Do it without me.

Paul We always work as a pair. Our clients want reassurance.

Chris I can't help you anymore Paul. You're gonna have to make those deals on your own.

Paul You're a fuckin' ingrate! Seven years ago *you* were grovelling to *me* 'make me a partner Paul, get me out of banking.' And this is my thanks? I took you with me when I left Lehman's, I coulda taken anybody but I took you! They're belly up now; you'd have been walking the streets resume in hand if it weren't for me! As soon as the shit hits the fan, you're out the door?!

Chris I guess so.

Paul I'm gonna make that money back with or without you.

Chris I'm sure you will. I'm sorry you're angry.

Paul Ooh you're good. 'I'm sorry you're angry'. You don't even talk the same.

Chris You don't have to stay here. Go home if you want to. I'm going back to bed.

Paul I'm okay here, thanks all the same.

Chris Okay...goodnight.

Paul Fuck you.

Chris goes to leave.

Paul Chris.

Chris Yeah?

Paul I know you.

Chris exits. Paul lies back on the couch.

Scene Thirteen

6am, early December. Lights up on Chris's apartment. Ama enters. She puts her luggage by the door.

Ama Holy shit Lizzy is that you?!

Lizzy Do I look that different?

Ama Well yeah, the last time I saw you, you were in your twenties now you're what..?

Lizzy Forty.

Ama Right forty...and you look...ya know...older.

Lizzy I thought I'd aged alright.

Ama You have, you look your age!

Lizzy Thanks a lot.

Ama Contrary to popular belief there is nothing wrong with lookin' the age that you are! What's wrong with that? Come here and gimme a hug ya big dummy! (*They hug.*) My god you've gotten so skinny!

Lizzy Thank you.

Ama It wasn't a compliment.

Lizzy Oh.

Ama Seriously eat a couple a pizza's now and then Jeez!

Lizzy I'm lactose intolerant.

Ama (*Rolls her eyes.*) Of course ya are. What happens?

Lizzy (*Embarrassed.*) It gives me gas.

Ama So fart! Problem solved. You do fart don't ya Lizzy?

Lizzy Yes Ama, I fart.

Ama Woah look at this place! It's a palace!

Lizzy You're not living here. It's temporary.

Ama I know, I know.

Lizzy A couple of weeks.

Ama So this is how the other half live huh? What a waste I'll bet he's never even here.

Lizzy How was your flight? Can I fix you a drink?

Ama A drink? It's six in the morning.

Lizzy It is?

Ama Well what the hell, I'm on vacation. I'll take a Jack and Coke.

Lizzy That's not a drink that's an abomination. And this is not a vacation Ama, you're here to look after Chris. I'll make you some coffee.

Ama Right yeah, absolutely. How is he?

Lizzy The same.

Ama I'm sorry.

Lizzy Where are you living nowadays? Still in the Mission District?

Ama I wish! I was priced out of Frisco years ago. I'm in Oakland.

Lizzy Isn't that dangerous?

Ama It's okay in some parts.

Lizzy You should of bought somewhere before the tech boom.

Ama You're fucking kidding me right? Have you seen the news lately? I don't work in finance Lizzy, I work in a bar. If I didn't rent my apartment I'd be living in tent right now.

Lizzy I misspoke. I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking.

Ama Are you alright? You look like shit...I mean you look exhausted if you don't mind my saying...

Lizzy I've not been sleeping very well.

Ama No of course not. It must be quite a shock. *(She starts to roll a cigarette.)*

Lizzy What are you doing?

Ama Don't worry I'll smoke it out the window.

Lizzy No Ama. You are not smoking drugs around my brother.

Ama Chill out! It's just tobacco. I've only been in New York five minutes there's no way I coulda got hold of any weed yet.

Lizzy Ama, no.

Ama I was kidding! Jeez.

Lizzy I can't believe you're still like this.

Ama Like what?

Lizzy Such a mess.

Ama *(Playful.)* Oh blow it out your ass.

Lizzy You haven't changed at all have you?

Ama No but you have. What happened to you? You used to party with the best of 'em.

Lizzy I grew up.

Ama Well that's a shame cos you used to kick ass.

Lizzy *(Smiling)* We used to dance on tables.

Ama Yes we did. I still do.

Lizzy Give me a toke on that.

Ama It really is tobacco.

Lizzy I don't care I need a hit of something. *(Lizzy lights the cigarette and takes a long drag.)* To be honest part of me asked you here cos I knew Mom would hate it.

Ama Ha! Still trying to piss off your Mom even now huh? She'll be turning in her grave. You bad girl you!

Lizzy That and you were the only one that would come.

Ama Really?

Lizzy Yep.

Ama What a world you all live in: hundreds of business associates and no friends.

Lizzy No need to be insulting.

Ama So...he really doesn't remember anything at all?

Lizzy Not from the past. He only has new memories.

Ama He won't know me.

Lizzy Only from photos.

Ama Wow. I'm kinda excited to meet him. Can we wake him up? (*Chris enters drowsy from sleep.*) Oh hey, there he is! Good morning! Look at you! You guys both look so different!

Lizzy Chris...this is Ama.

Chris Hi Ama. Good to meet you.

Chris holds out his hand to shake. Ama ignores it and goes in for a hug instead.

Ama Put that hand away and gimme a hug! I know you don't know me but I sure as hell know you!

Chris Oh. Okay. (*He hugs her. She grabs his ass.*) Ow!

Lizzy Behave Ama.

Ama (*Laughs.*) Sorry I couldn't resist his peachy little butt cheeks. How are you?!

Chris (*Awkwardly.*) I'm fine. (*Pause.*) How are you?

Ama (*Watchful.*) You really don't have any idea who I am, do you?

Chris No. Only what Lizzy told me.

Ama Wow. Really?

Chris Yep.

Ama (*Teasing.*) What did you tell him? All good I hope.

Lizzy I told him the truth.

Ama Ha! This is far fucking out man!

Lizzy Sorry to leave so soon but I have to get to work.

Ama No problem.

Lizzy I'll drop by and check up on both of you later.

Ama *(She watches Chris intently, so fascinated she can barely tear her eyes away.)*
Okay yeah, yeah, yeah. See ya.

Chris Bye Lizzy.

Lizzy Bye. *(She kisses him on the forehead and leaves.)*

Ama Soooooo.....

Chris Yeah...

Ama Your apartment is totally dope.

Chris Thanks. The former me picked it all out himself.

Ama *(Laughs.)* Yeah classy guy. *(Indicating framed photos on the wall.)* These photos are awesome...

Chris I took them....apparently.

Ama Holy shit! You took these?!

Chris Yep...it's a hobby I think.

Ama They are fucking great! You should be a professional, I'm serious...

Chris Thanks.

(Uncomfortable pause.)

Ama Anyhoosooo wotcha want to do today?

Chris I don't know.

Ama Well I for one am starved.

Chris Oh there's food in the –

Ama No let's go out and grab a bite. I feel like pancakes, where around here is good for brunch?

Chris Oh I don't know I haven't really been out much...except to neurology appointments. Lizzy prefers for us to stay here the rest of the time.

Ama What? Why?

Chris She's worried we'll get separated; I might get lost and something might happen....

Ama So you've just been cooped up inside this whole time?

Chris Pretty much.

Ama What do you do all day?

Chris Watch TV mostly. Read stuff on the internet.

Ama That is nuts. Uh-uh there's no way we're gonna do that.

Chris We're not?

Ama No. Get dressed.

Chris Uh okay...maybe we should check with Lizzy...

Ama Why what's Lizzy's plan? You're gonna just sit in your apartment rotting until your memory comes back? Month's maybe years of your life could pass you by?! No. No fuckin' way! Not on my watch. Get dressed. You live in New York: the most exciting city in the world and you've never seen it!

Chris Uh...

Ama Oh and bring your camera!

Chris I don't remember how to use it.

Ama Well you better learn again man cos you're really good. I'll show you the basics. We'll experiment. Look it up. How hard can it be?

Chris Okay.

Ama Quick, go change.

Chris Right.

Chris goes into his room to change. He pops his head back out.

Chris Ama?

Ama Yeah?

Chris I don't like my clothes. Can we buy some new ones?

Ama Yeah sure, okay.

Blackout.

Scene Fourteen

Maureen speaks as if to a camera.

Maureen Coming home from the hospital with my first baby: Joshua.

Nine months go by so fast and then you're driving home from the hospital and EVERYTHING has changed. Suddenly you have a new person in your house who is totally dependent on YOU. I wasn't sure my husband was going to cope...I mean I had wanted a baby so much

and he wanted one but maybe not so soon. He was always more career oriented.

Josh was crying when we got back and my husband held him like he was the most precious thing on earth, gently rocked him to sleep and then he just...stared at him for hours – I watched my husband watching Joshua and I saw him fall completely head over heels in love with our baby. THAT. That is my favourite memory.

Scene Fifteen

8am, early December. Lights up on Chris and Ama in a typical American diner booth. Chris's mouth is stuffed with pancake.

- Chris *(Speaks with his mouth full.)* Mmmph this is delicious! Just mmmph!
- Ama *(Laughing.)* Slow down there Chrissy! You're gonna choke yourself. Death by pancake.
- Chris This is amazing! The syrup, the explosion of flavour! And with the bacon, it's like...a match made in heaven.
- Ama Maple syrup. The nectar of the gods. Here try my French toast.
- Chris *(He takes a mouthful.)* MMmmph! Oh brother this is mmmph!
- Ama Wow you really love breakfast foods don'tcha!
- Chris Yes! Death by pancakes would be the way to go! Or death by French toast!
- Ama This is fun. Let's order some more stuff for you try. *(She calls to the waitress.)* Hey! Hi can we order something else please?
- Waitress Sure what can I get for ya?
- Ama Uh...we'll take the omelette aaand the breakfast burrito with home fries on the side....what else would you like?
- Chris I dunno...I want to try everything!
- Waitress Everything?
- Ama Yeah fuck it. We'd like one of everything!
- Waitress Okay! One of everything comin' up.
- Ama Starting with the chocolate cake. Wait till you taste it Chris it'll blow your fuckin' mind!
- Chris Lizzy's food tastes like cardboard compared to this.

Ama That's because Lizzy's always on a diet. Macrobiotic mung beans and fuckin' spelt. This is just the beginning my friend. You got Italian, Chinese, Korean, Barbecue, Mexican, Thai - so many restaurants and so little time!

Waitress One slice of chocolate cake. The rest is on its way.

Ama Okay are you ready for this?

Chris Bring it on.

Chris takes a bite of the chocolate cake and his reaction is of complete physical ecstasy.

Chris MMMMph Oh WHAT THE?! That should be illegal!

Ama *(Laughing.)* I take it you like it then?

Chris *(Shovelling more food in from different plates.)* Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Ama *(Laughing.)* You are welcome. You're lucky you know that? I wish I could taste everything again for the first time. Wow you know you get to do it all again man. So many amazing new experiences are ahead of you now! Sunsets, sunrises, snow, mountains, rivers, lakes, history, art, theatre, music, dancing, fuckin' ice cream! You get to read all your favourite books again for the first time! Watch every movie.....I'm jealous. I'm jealous as all hell!

Chris Really?

Ama YES REALLY! Holy shit Chris, wait till I show the night sky. Up in the mountains where it's pitch black there are like gazillions of stars!

Chris I've never seen stars. Not many anyway.

Ama I know! This is so exciting I could piss my pants!

Chris Oh...I hadn't really thought about it that way....Lizzy she's been so upset.

Ama Yeah well...I get that, I do...but you gotta work with what you got; embrace the possibilities. Lizzy she has a tendency to...dwell on the negatives.

I got it! I'm taking you to the Natural History Museum, the perfect place to start, then on to the Met to see some art....then...well who knows we'll see where the day takes us.

Chris Okay yeah....that sounds...I'd like that.

Ama Chrissy...

Chris Yeah?

Ama *(Smiles.)* We're having an adventure.

Lights fade to black.

Scene Sixteen

'Five golden sections' by David Byrne plays. Projected images appear – photographs flash up in quick succession - pieces of art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, artefacts from the Museum of Natural History, dinosaur skeletons, New York city streets, people of all colours, shapes and sizes, Broadway, Central Park, the Empire State Building, the Manhattan skyline at night etc. These continue throughout Chris's speech. Lights up on Chris. His clothes have changed. Ama is holding a video camera and taping him.

Ama Okay...go.

These words pour out of him in a torrent of emotion. He is trembling all over, his voice is shaky, he has tears in his eyes and is half laughing, half crying throughout.

Chris I fell in love today. This town has swallowed me whole. It's like this place is an animal. A wild animal. Assault on the senses. The deafening city roar. Noise. Smell. Taste.

If New York City were a body; a living thing, the streets would be its veins, the people and the traffic streaming down them its life-blood. Overwhelming. Insane. I was speechless. I was shaking. Vibrating. I could hardly breathe; the excitement, the vitality, the buzz! I felt a tightness in my chest like I was...like I was... swelling to bursting point.

The Met, it was... – people created all that...from nothing...all that...just astonishing...I was... Human beings built all this, ordinary people: every building went up brick by brick, every road, every sign, every sidewalk was put there by someone. Isn't that mind blowing?!

The unbelievable, breath taking beauty. The beauty! The colours! The colours, shapes, sizes. And people. People by their hundreds, thousands, millions. Brooklyn, Harlem, Queens, the skyscrapers, Central Park, ground zero. Creation and destruction. Chaos. Anarchy. Devastation and restoration. An unstoppable force. A living thing. A metropolis in perpetual motion. Every ethnicity under the sun. Pulsing. Teeming with life. Life. Life! I cried. I cried. The whole world and its history. Every story ever told is here. Right here. And I want to know...I want to know them all! Every one! Every single one!

Music, projections and lights fade.

Act Two

Scene One

19th December 2008. Morning. Cross fade back to the diner. Lizzy is waiting nervously for Chris and Ama to arrive. Paul is impatient. They are drinking coffee.

Paul *(Looks at his watch.)* They're late.

Lizzy You think I don't know that?

Paul I don't got all day Liz.

Lizzy We're waiting.

Waitress Refill?

Paul God no.

Lizzy I'll take a top-up, thank you.

Waitress Can I get you two anything else?

Paul Based on this crappy coffee, no thanks.

Lizzy Paul enough!

Paul What?! I said thanks.

Waitress Your welcome.

Ama enters; her jacket is dusted with snow.

Ama Sorry, sorry! I lost track of the time. We were enjoying the snow!

Lizzy Where's Chris?

Ama In the park. He doesn't want to come inside. He's just sitting, staring at the heavens; watching it drift down.

Lizzy What do you mean the park? You left him in Central Park on his own?!

Ama It's okay Lizzy. He'll be fine. Really. He's taking photographs, making little movies. We're working on an art project. He's taken some astonishing images. I thought, ya know, maybe you could help publicise it? It could be -

Lizzy I gotta go check on him. Paul we gotta go check on him.

Ama You can't keep him on a leash anymore he's a grown man.

Paul That's what I said. We can't watch him forever.

Lizzy Paul, shut up.

Ama Let's just get some breakfast okay? We can check on him after. We'll all go play in the snow.

Paul Do I look like I'm five years old to you? Freezin' my ass off is not my idea of fun. *(To Lizzy.)* Can I go now?

Lizzy Paul, Ama. Ama, Paul.

Ama Hi Paul. Good to put a face to a name.

Paul We've met.

Ama We have?

Paul On your last visit. You're Chris's nutty, slutty high school friend from way back when.

Ama Excuse me?

Lizzy Don't listen to him. He's just trying to provoke a fight so he can leave.

Paul Did I mix you up with someone else? *(To Lizzy.)* She's not the dippy, hippy chick going nowhere fast?

Ama Oh yeah? And just where the fuck do you think your headed Paul?!

The waitress hovers in the background enjoying the show.

Paul Back to work. Liz I don't need this shit.

Ama Well that's not exactly what I meant but if you choose to take it literally go right ahead. Work, work, work, money, money money. Farewell my friend. Good luck to you.

Paul Well some of us have to work. Not everyone can prance around in the snow all day. Some people have more ambition than working bar jobs and leeching offa their friends.

Ama Hey I don't leach off anyone. I make more than enough money working bar jobs thank you very much.

Paul *(Snorts.)* How is that even possible?

Ama Just how much money do you think one person needs?!

Paul I'll tell ya' once it's in my back pocket. *(He goes to leave.)* See ya around.

Ama Hey Paul!

Paul What?

Ama We're here for a good time, not a long time man.

Paul What's that supposed to mean?

Ama I guess you got some real important business to attend to right?

Paul I do as a matter of fact.

Ama And what does your really important job entail Paul? Rushing around the world first class, business conventions in five-star hotels, shaking hands and convincing other companies to 'INVEST'?

Paul Something like that.

Ama But in what? That's the million dollar question isn't it? In what?

Paul In casinos.

Ama In casinos! Not anything useful or beneficial to mankind.

Paul Tell that to the jackpot winners.

Ama I have a question. What happens when Vegas runs out of water?

Paul The water will be siphoned offa some other State.

Ama All the surrounding States are in severe drought.

Paul Every job in Vegas is connected to gambling. The whole economy of Nevada is dependent on it. You want all those people to lose their livelihoods and have to pack up and go elsewhere? What kind of a bleeding heart liberal are you?

Ama The earth's resources are finite you know that right? Man cannot live on dollar bills alone you stupid fuck!

Paul is speechless for a moment.

Paul She's a real piece of work ain't she?

Lizzy *(Resigned.)* Just go, Paul.

Paul gets his coat on and starts to leave.

Ama Lizzy he's a goddamn prince! A real life Prince Charming!

Paul Go fuck yourself!

Ama So eloquent. I wish we'd met years ago!

Paul We did!! Ya fuckin' loon! Can nobody around here remember a goddamn thing?!

Paul leaves.

Waitress Can I get you ladies anything?

Lizzy Not for me. I'm not hungry.

Ama Just a coffee and some French toast. Thanks.

Waitress The coffee is on the house. I hate that guy.

Ama Oh wow score! Thanks.

She pours a coffee and puts it on the table, winks at Ama and leaves.

Ama Well you sure know how to pick 'em.

Lizzy He wasn't always...I don't want to talk about it. (*Lizzy is tired and close to tears.*) I'm so tired. I feel so old.

Ama Lizzy you're only forty, come on, you're not old.

Lizzy How's the week been? How's Chris?

Ama Amazing...unbelievably amazing. He has this voracious appetite for knowledge, for food, for life. We ran around Manhattan like a couple of crazed kids. Took art and photography classes. Went on every sightseeing tour going. This is the most excitement I've had in a long time.

Lizzy (*Bitter.*) Well I'm happy you're having so much fun.

Ama You should be.

Lizzy Should I?

Ama Why are you angry with me?

Lizzy Cos you're moulding him in your own image and I don't like it.

(Pause.)

Ama Ya know...I'm gonna say something you're not gonna like...you need to change your attitude. This is not all bad –

Lizzy Don't tell me what I should and shouldn't do! You don't know. You haven't seen him for years! That is NOT my brother and I want him back! I want *him* back not that...IMPOSTER! That clone! It's like he's dead. I mean nothing to him. We've known each other our whole lives and I mean nothing to him!

Lizzy breaks down into tears. Ama lets her cry for a moment.

Ama (*Softly.*) My grandma...she got Alzheimer's...I literally watched her disappear...this terrible, slow disintegration of self...bit by bit...piece by piece as her memories vanished...that glint...that sparkle in her eye...gone...all that was left was a shell.

But this is NOT like that. IT'S NOT. Chris is here with us and you're missing out. You're missing out. Get to know him...he's really great to be around Lizzy...really. He appreciates life in a way we could all enjoy and learn from. Create new memories.

Lizzy I...I'm not like you Ama...I can't ...I don't know what to say to him.

Ama Try...at least try. What other choice do you have?

Lizzy He might remember.

Ama But he might not.

Lizzy The doctors said he –

Ama Yeah but he might not. What then?

Lizzy I don't know....There isn't one.

Ama There's your answer...So breakfast and then come out to play?

Lizzy Yeah...yeah okay let's go play.

Lights fade.

Scene Two

Lights up on Lizzy she talks to the audience as if talking to a camera with Ama behind it.

Lizzy How long has it been since you just stopped and looked at things? I mean really looked? The snow. When I first moved here from California I'd never seen snow. I was so excited the first time I saw it. This city in the snow has a magical quality. Everything slows for a moment; it's peaceful and soft. A layer of bright white coating everything...and in the sun...when the sunlight hits it glints and sparkles like precious jewels. Like living in a fairy tale land.

My brother...he reminded me today of what I had lost. His sheer joy startled me. It felt like...I was jolted awake. I looked and looked at his face, as if seeing it for the first time. As though we'd just met in that moment. The lines carved out in his forehead, around his eyes, his frown lines – a history of stress and laughter and anger – that map of lines is still there but his face has relaxed and opened. I looked at my face in the mirror and wondered what he saw when he looked at me. Wondered what a stranger on the street could see in my face.

When you see someone regularly you stop noticing all the little changes...their face...their shape...they age and change...and you don't notice because it happens so gradually ya know? At some point along the line they become frozen in time in your head and that's how you think of them. Memory is like a time machine I guess...but Chris can't travel back anymore he is only eight weeks old....

Scene Three

24th December 2008. 11pm. Lights up on Chris, Lizzy and Ama in Chris's apartment which is now a mess, every surface covered in photographs. Lizzy is hanging up stockings.

Ama Soooo...I managed to get hold of a little weed...

Lizzy *(Smiling.)* You are unbelievable.

Ama Come on, it's Christmas! Are you game?

Lizzy Oh I dunno, it's been a while...

Ama Come on. The old Lizzy is in there somewhere. Cut her loose! I know you want to.

Chris What's it like?

Lizzy *(Begrudgingly.)* It's... fun.

Ama It makes food taste even better.

Chris I'm in!

Ama laughs.

Lizzy Where did you get it?

Ama I smuggled it from Frisco in my vagina.

Lizzy Eww!

Ama Chill out it was in a baggy. I was nervous. I thought it might help break the ice.

Chris You were nervous?

Ama We didn't part on good terms the last time I saw you....

Chris Oh...

Ama It doesn't matter we got a second chance.

Ama pulls out a joint, lights it and hands it to Chris.

Chris What do I do?

Ama Inhale. Hold it for a bit and then blow it out. Then we pass it back and forth.

Chris does as she says, goes into a coughing fit and passes it back to her.

Chris *(Coughing.)* Oh shit...

Ama That's normal you'll be alright in a minute. Oh I brought you something else...

She turns on the DVD player and a film is projected on to the back wall.

Chris What is it?

Ama It's a home movie of us when we were young.

Lizzy No way!

They put the film on. It's a super 8 film of them with friends dancing and fooling around at a house party which has been edited to music – this should be projected behind them while they face the audience. They continue passing the joint around between them. Chris is wide eyed.

Chris Wow. *(Laughs.)* Wow. Look at us! Look at you!

Ama *(Laughs.)* I know right? Look at my hair man, what was I thinking?!

Lizzy You look stunning.

Ama Shut the fuck up!

Chris It's true....you do too Lizzy ...who are all these people?

Ama Old friends.

T-Rex's song 'Twentieth Century Boy' plays on the DVD as background music.

Lizzy God I love this song.

Lizzy jumps up and starts dancing. Ama turns it up and she and Chris join her. Ama sings along to the song. Lizzy gets up on the coffee table and dances. Paul enters amongst the chaos.

Paul What the hell...?

No one notices him so he turns the DVD off.

Paul What the fuck is going on?!

They all stop still and stare at him like a rabbit caught in the headlights. Pause.

Chris Ama?

Ama Yeah?

Chris I'm hungry.

They all crack up laughing.

Paul Are you stoned?

They roar with laughter.

Chris Why are we laughing?

Ama I don't know...I don't remember...

Chris I don't remember either...I don't remember anything.

They laugh even harder.

Paul Will someone please tell me what the hell is going on? Lizzy are you smoking drugs now?!

Lizzy Why yes Paul I am. Would you care to join us? *(She offers him the joint.)*

Paul No I wouldn't.

Ama We'll leave you guys to it.

Lizzy Goodnight.

Ama Goodnight Lizzy. Night asshole.

Paul Goodnight.

Ama Who knows maybe Santa'll bring you a conscience.

Lizzy He hasn't been good enough.

Chris and Ama go into his room.

Paul Jesus this place is a tip.

Lizzy We've been out exploring. Chris took all these aren't they great? And they've been making movies about memory. I think it will make a really interesting installation.

Paul You haven't been home in a while. Why haven't you answered my calls?

Lizzy I've been having fun.

Paul I can see that. I thought you'd at least come home for Christmas.

Lizzy Are you taking time off?

Paul I was gonna take the afternoon.

Lizzy Oh big whoop! You're no fun. We used to have fun.

Paul Liz -

Lizzy When did we stop?

Paul I don't remember.

Lizzy Why did we? Was it me? Was it my fault?

Paul No.

Lizzy When you quit Lehman's...I thought things would change. I thought you meant it.

Paul Once things have settled we'll -

Lizzy The park looked so magnificent in the snow; you should have come with us...

Paul I've seen the snow a million times.

Lizzy Look at me Paul.

Paul I'm looking.

Lizzy What do you see?

Paul I see you, Liz, my wife, stoned out of her fuckin' mind.

Lizzy Yes but what do you see? Has my face changed since we met?

Paul I dunno. Sure. But whatever you don't like, we can pay to have someone fix it.

Lizzy Oh forget it.

Paul What?! I was joking!

Lizzy Why must you cheapen every little thing?

Paul You used to find it funny.

Lizzy That's cos I'd just stepped off the boat and I thought you were so authentic. Now I can't stand it. I can't stand the way you see everything through this nasty New York lens of dirt and grime. You bring everything down to your level.

Paul It's not my fault you lost your sense of humour.

Lizzy Everything's so ugly when you're around.

Silence. Paul is hurt.

Paul You're not coming home are you?

Lizzy No.

(Pause.)

Paul He's faking it.

Lizzy Not this again.

Paul It's an art project. The whole thing. The memory loss, it's fake. He's faking it.

Lizzy No, he's not.

Paul Who's gonna do his PR? You?

Lizzy Well of course but –

Paul Come on. All you have to do is get the media interested, tell his story to the papers and he'll have sell out show.

Lizzy He'd have to keep up the story for the rest of his life. He wouldn't do that to me.

Paul He can decide to get his memory back at any time. Whenever it suits him.

Lizzy My brother is not that twisted.

Paul You wanna believe him.

Lizzy And you don't want to.

Paul Listen -

Lizzy No.

Paul Come home.

(Pause.)

Paul Please.

Lizzy I'm not coming home.

Blackout.

Scene Four

Midnight. Lights up in Chris's room. Chris is setting up the video camera and then sits behind it filming Ama, who is sat on the bed. At some point in the scene he moves and sits on the bed with her.

Chris Tell me a story from our childhood.

Ama What do ya wanna know?

Chris How we met?

Ama We were...I dunno fourteen? Some guy was being an asshole to me and you defended my honour. You were a real innocent back then. Shy and sweet. So I corrupted you and made you ditch school with me.

Chris Really?

Ama It was the only time I ever managed to get you to do it. You were really under your mothers thumb. So studious and eager to please. But that day, that day I took you to the beach. We hitched a ride. It was a day of firsts for you. We had a picnic, beer, you smoked your first joint; went swimming naked for the first time.

Chris That's a good memory. I wish I could remember that one.

Ama You told me once it was the best day of your life.

Chris I did?

Ama Yep. It's stupid but...I never told you...I mean I wanted to tell you that it was mine too. It was my best day too.

Chris Why didn't you?

Ama Pride I guess...wanting to seem cooler than I was. When you're young you think your life is gonna be full of perfect moments...but they're really rare, ya know? Where everything is just right. Happiness washing over you.

Chris I want that one back. It was my favourite day and I don't remember it.

Ama But you can never get it back anyway. It's gone. It's in the past.

Chris I still want to do that again.

Ama That can be arranged. We should do that again. Swimming naked is the best feeling in the world. You feel so free.

Chris I was found on the beach. Coney Island.

Ama Who found you?

Chris A young girl...she smiled at me...the relief of seeing a friendly face...

Ama I'd like to meet her.

Chris Ama?

Ama Yeah?

Chris I'm so glad you came here -

Ama Don't mention it.

Chris I think if I had to choose between remembering my whole life or just the last two weeks I'd choose the last two weeks...

Ama Really?

Chris I dunno...yeah...I mean there are things I want to remember, like the beach when we were young, but I don't know what else I'm missing out on so...I'm happy...I'm really happy.

Ama Maybe you've been given a gift, Chris, ya know? Maybe memory is overrated. I mean there's bad as well as good. I certainly have a few I could do without. Everywhere you look, every person you see carries with them a lifetime of memories loaded with disappointment, mistakes, heartbreak. Insecurities that have built up over years and years that hold them back...you don't have any of that anymore...you're free of it...you can literally do anything you want!

Chris grabs Ama and kisses her. A long deep kiss.

Chris Wow.

Ama Holy shit.

They kiss again.

Chris Kissing is....I really, really...

Ama Yeah...

They kiss again. It becomes more passionate.

Ama Chris wait...I'm not sure this is a good idea.

Chris Why not?

Ama I'm feeling a bit freaked out right now...like I have a responsibility...I mean normally...but...you've never done this before. This is a big deal.

Chris Don't you want to?

Ama Yeah...yes I want to but...

Chris I want it to be you.

Ama I dunno man...I feel like I'm taking advantage...like I'm some dirty old pervert taking your virginity or something...

Chris We're the same age and I'm not a virgin I could just use a little guidance.....it might help jog my memory!

Ama You told me like five seconds ago you don't want to remember!

Chris Well maybe I do now...I changed my mind.

Ama Ha! Guys will do anything to get laid. Some things never change.

Chris Think of it as a scientific experiment!

Ama Oh in the name of science?! A memory fuck?

Chris Well...I wouldn't put it that way but if it makes you feel better about it...yeah. Or if not that...a Christmas present!

Ama A Christmas present?

Chris Yeah.

Ama Okay...okay I can live with that.

They kiss.

The lights fade.

Scene Five

I am. Lights up on the boardroom at Paul's office. Paul is on the phone. There are papers strewn across the table. Maureen enters while he is on the phone.

Paul I understand you're angry but please believe me when I tell you: to sell those stocks now would *not* be in your best interests. I do understand. Just listen. Listen to me. Lis-

Paul puts the phone down.

Paul Another day, another client.

Maureen I'm sorry Paul.

Paul They're halting construction. All those guys just lost their jobs. Merry fuckin' Christmas.

Maureen That's awful...

Paul We gotta a load more calls to make.

Maureen Shouldn't we leave it till after Christmas? Let them enjoy themselves for one more day.

Paul There's a ton of paperwork -

Maureen I know but do we really need to do it now? My kids are home for the holidays and I'd like to be there for breakfast. I have the whole day planned.

Paul Do you even care about their jobs?

- Maureen Of course I do. It's just –
- Paul You all think I'm the bad guy but I'm the only one fighting for the regular Joe's out there, like those construction workers. Chris didn't fight for them, he just walked away. I do it for them too ya know? I do it for the hotel porters and the black jack dealers and the waitresses: ordinary people; just like my folks were, just like I was. That's what this country is all about. Any man can work his way up if he puts his mind to it.
- Maureen I'm not so sure that that's still the case.
- Paul Sure it is.
- Maureen Things are much harder than they were when we were young. If you had kids you'd know that.
- Paul I guess so.
- Maureen You still have an offshore bank account?
- Paul (*Defensive.*) Why shouldn't I have one? That's not illegal.
- Maureen Then how can the money trickle down?
- Paul Hey I came from nothing and there is no way in hell I'm going back there. But I'm not the shit you all think I am; I have morals, I have standards. They may not be exactly the same as yours...but I'm fair. I worked my ass off to get where I am today, I earned my money.
- Maureen I know that Paul. I do.
- Paul I got outta banking. Do you know why?
- Maureen Yes I know why Paul. I was there.
- Paul No, not cos of that. I don't talk about that.
- Maureen Why not?
- Paul What good would it do? It doesn't change anything. It doesn't bring people back. Ya move forward.
- Maureen But –
- Paul I got outta banking cos I saw what it had become and it turned my stomach. I figured the stock market is just one massive rigged casino anyway so why not cut out the middle man. I even invested alongside my clients so they knew they could trust me. That's honest. What's wrong with making money if it's honest?

Maureen Nothing.

Paul I could be advising people to invest in pharmaceutical companies or arms manufacturers but I don't. I could be making money out of war, disease, even crime – the prison system. There is a LOT of money to be made out of incarceration. But I don't! I don't! I make my money out of leisure and entertainment! What about that makes me a shit?

Maureen Nothing. You're not. You're a good man, Paul.

Paul You think?

Maureen Absolutely.

Paul I think so. Yeah. I am. I am a good man.

Maureen It's 1am, can I go home now?

Paul Lizzy left me.

Maureen Oh dear. I'm...I'm so sorry.

Paul At Christmas too.

Maureen Oh no. *(She checks her watch.)*

Paul She hates my guts.

Maureen I'm sure that's not true.

Paul It is. She does. She told me.

Maureen Well that's terrible. I'm really sorry that that happened. *(She moves tentatively towards him.)*

Paul I'm really sorry too. It didn't feel good I can tell you that much.

Maureen You poor thing. *(She hugs him awkwardly.)* Do you have somewhere to spend Christmas?

Paul No. I figured I'd just work.

Maureen No. You're in no fit state. Come and spend Christmas with me and the kids.

Paul I wouldn't want to put you out.

Maureen You wouldn't be. There's plenty of food. The more the merrier. Really.

Paul Thanks Maureen.

Maureen It's my pleasure.

Paul Thanks.

He kisses her, stops and they look at each other for a moment. He kisses her again and she lets him. He sweeps the papers off the table and they start to undress. Blackout.

Scene Six

Lights up on Raven's interview.

Raven Okay...uh...what do you wanna know? My first memories or my favourite one? I uh...I might need some more time to think about that. Is that okay? It's just...to be honest I don't really like being filmed. I mean I think the project's great but I'm not really comfortable...I would...but it makes me wanna vomit. Sorry.

Blackout.

Scene Seven

August 2009. Dusk. Lights up in an art gallery. The exhibition is in the process of being installed. Flat screen televisions show the film interviews of Chris, Ama, Maureen and Lizzy silently in the background. Chris, Ama, Lizzy and Raven are popping the cork from a champagne bottle. A jubilant atmosphere.

Lizzy The word is out Chris. It's gonna be huge, I can feel it.

Chris Thanks.

Ama To the first of many!

All Cheers! *(They toast and drink.)*

Paul enters with an open champagne bottle in his hand. He is extremely drunk. Maureen runs in after him.

Paul Congratulations big guy! Ya pulled it off!

Lizzy What are you doing here?

Paul I came for a sneak preview.

Lizzy The gallery is closed Paul.

Paul Aren't you gonna at least offer me a drink? I'm feelin' kinda left out here.

Maureen I'm so sorry Christopher I tried to stop him.

- Paul *(Paul takes a quick look around.)* Let's take a looksee shall we? Hey why ain't I in any of these photographs? I'm insulted.
- Maureen Come on Paul, let's go. We're not wanted here.
- Paul It's genius Chris! You've really surpassed yourself this time buddy.
- Chris I'm not your buddy.
- Paul I mean who in their right mind would pay for this shit?! You're gonna rob 'em blind!
- Ama We have been working so hard on this show! Chris had to re-learn everything from scratch so he could create all this, so don't you dare –
- Paul And for what?! A few home movies and a couple of photographs.
- Lizzy Paul would you please leave?
- Paul Well hats off to you all. I mean the prices people will pay for nothin' when you get the right people to endorse a product are unbelievable.
- Ama Art is not a product!
- Paul Sure it is. What's your cut?
- Ama *(Furious.)* I wouldn't expect you to understand but this exhibition is not about making money you soulless piece of shit!
- Paul *(Smiling.)* Maybe not to people like you, but it is to the people who can afford to buy it.
- Maureen Stop it Paul.
- Ama Oh man I give up.
- Paul Art is just a commodity to be bought and sold like everything else sweetheart. You think people buy this because of its 'meaning'? They buy it based on what they think it'll be worth years down the line, it's nothing more than an asset to them, another piece of property. That's the world we live in, you may as well get used to it.
- Ama If you can't beat 'em, join 'em?
- Paul Take a look around. You're on your own. We all are.
- Ama You're wrong.
- Paul You think if we all just united we could beat the system?

Ama Yes.

Paul It's corrupt to the core. I know cos I worked for those fuckers. Bank lobbyists are writing the regulations. Regulators are being paid by the institutions they're regulating. Economics professors from the top universities are bank rolled to say whatever the banks want them to fuckin' say. Everybody's being paid off. There were plenty of warnings about the bubble, believe me. But being honest never got anyone anywhere.

And uniting to fight the good fight? Never gonna happen. People are ultimately selfish: they don't give a shit about anyone but themselves and maybe their family. They're comfortable. They're apathetic. So look out for number one cos there ain't nobody gonna bail any of us out when we fuck up.

Ama I feel sorry for you.

Paul Yeah well don't. I see what's there, not what I want to see. These photos don't represent the New York I know. Where are the homeless guys on the street? Where's the murder? The incest and disease? The fight for survival against the odds. This is a pretty fuckin' lopsided view of the world if you ask me. A child's view. It's bullshit. There's no truth in any of it.

Lizzy So you think he's for real now?

Paul What?

Lizzy You just called him a child.

Paul No I...I don't know...

Chris I can't encompass the whole world into one art show Paul.

Paul No. Lemme guess there's gonna be a whole series?! A whole lifetime of material. You got it all mapped out. It's brilliant! You can't erase the past just because you've forgotten it ya know.

Chris What?

Paul Maureen, give him the papers.

Maureen No Paul, don't.

Paul Give them to him! (*Maureen hands them to Chris.*)

Chris What's this?

Maureen You've been served. I'm sorry.

Ama You son of a bitch.

Paul You signed a contract. You can't just walk away without fulfilling it.

Lizzy Why are you doing this?

Paul I had to sell my company today.

Lizzy Paul if you do this I swear to god...

Paul Save it hunny, the divorce papers are being drawn up as we speak.

Maureen Paul there's no need –

Paul *(He approaches Chris and starts pushing him into the corner threateningly.)*
I'm gonna sue you for everything you got.

Chris Don't.

Paul Your apartment, your possessions, even the clothes you're standing up in;
they're all gonna belong to me!

Chris Stop!

Paul I'm gonna make your life a living hell!

Chris Stop.

Paul This is the way the world ends buddy!

Chris collapses. Ama and Raven run to him.

Lizzy/Ama Chris!

Paul Not this shit again.

Maureen Of all the things you've ever made me do this is... *(She begins to cry.)*

Paul Ah shut up Maureen! It's not real.

Maureen I will not shut up. Go fuck yourself!

Paul What did you say to me?

Maureen I'm not doing this ANYMORE. It's not worth it. You're on your own!

Ama Chris?! Chris?!

Blackout.

Scene Eight

September 2009. Chris's bedroom. Evening. Music introduction from 'This guy's in love with you' by These New Puritans. Chris is sat in bed, totally still, staring out the window. There are bottles of pills next to him. Lizzy sits by his side holding his hand. Chris barely responds to anything Lizzy says.

Lizzy I wish you'd talk to me...tell me what you're thinking. Ask me something. You must have so many questions.

I missed you so much. I wanted so badly for you to get your memory back...it never occurred to me that when it came back you would feel like this. Ama...she's going home... she can't bear to see you like this. You were in love with her. (*Chris looks at her.*) I've never seen you so happy, it was infectious.

The exhibition you created...you should see it. See what you are capable of. Because I believe that it was you that created it – a part of you that is still here even though you don't recall it. Please...please...say something.

Chris does not respond.

I've got to go to work. You and Ama filmed a whole bunch of movies and interviews, you should watch them...

Chris turns his head away.

I'll leave the disc in the machine in case you change your mind.

Lizzy places a laptop on his bed next to him and leaves. Chris sits for a moment and then picks up the laptop and clicks play on the films. Slow fade.

Scene Nine

Lights up on Maureen being interviewed.

Maureen It was the most beautiful morning, a crisp fall day. I'd arrived extra early to set up a meeting. Lehman's had a few floors in the World Trade Centre but Paul, yourself and I, we were in one of the other buildings, the Three World Financial Centre, when the plane hit the first tower.

If I close my eyes now I can still see that cloud of smoke billowing towards the window. I don't remember much about the rush to get out of the building. All I remember is running. I didn't look up, I didn't look back, I didn't see the towers collapse or the people jumping or...any...

Normally I can't run more than a couple of blocks without stopping but I remember running barefoot all the way uptown till I reached my son's school and then finding them both and just...holding them so tight.

The rubble burned for weeks. Our building was ruined so we relocated to a hotel till we could set up office some place else. Everything at Lehman's was up and running again within 48 hours: the show must go on. The stock market re-opened 6 days later. But it all seemed so trivial somehow – hard to believe that now isn't it? The stock market seeming trivial?

Everything downtown was covered in this thick layer of ash which created the ambience of snowfall: muffled and quiet. Every public space was wall papered with Xerox photos of missing loved ones, the whole city became a shrine: every street was like walking through a graveyard.

But something else happened I didn't expect...There was a unified spirit on the streets which had not been there before. Exhausted firefighters slept in train stations rather than go home inbetween shifts. Volunteers from all over the city and even across the country came to pitch in and help. News reporters became human beings with emotions instead of actors reciting lines. People began to make big changes in their lives. Couples divorced, couples got married, people who felt stuck in a rut quit their jobs and moved away.

Paul quit Lehman's and he took you and I with him. Course he'll never admit how much that day affected him. He doesn't like to talk about it.

But gradually the trivialities trickle back in. The kindness on the streets disappeared. Paul started yelling. All of us worked too hard and didn't see our families enough.

I didn't go down to ground zero till years later. When I did...I don't what happened...but I looked at that hole in the ground and I...I suddenly felt...warm water trickle down the backs of my legs...my knees just buckled beneath me and I fell to the ground...I stayed there, I don't know how long...trembling in a pool of my own piss and no one said anything. No one came and helped me up, or even asked if I was okay.

But for those two months the city was suspended in time for a while and we noticed each other; who would have thought an act of terror could make you feel so much love? But you see, we all knew with pinpoint precision every single thing that had real importance and value in our lives. What on earth has to happen for us to hold on to that?

Scene Ten

Chris is still in bed looking out the window. Lizzy ushers Raven into the apartment.

Lizzy He hasn't eaten in days. He barely moves from that spot.

Raven Don't talk about him like he's not in the room.

Lizzy Sorry...I...it's just he never says anything.

Raven Can you leave us alone?

Lizzy Sure.

Lizzy exits.

Raven Hi Chico.

Chris My name's not Chico it's Chris.

Raven I call you Chico.

Chris Do I know you?

Raven I'm Raven.

Chris Would you get the fuck outta here please Raven?

Raven The old you is rude. I preferred the new one.

Chris I just want to be left alone.

Raven I made you a promise I wouldn't let anything bad happen to you.

Chris I free you of your promise.

Raven I know you don't remember me but I found you when you were in a pretty bad way and I took care of you, so you owe it to me to listen to what I have to say. You need to stop taking all these pills and come outside.

Chris There's nothing anyone can do for me.

Raven I disagree. Let's go for a walk.

Chris What for?

Raven The new you was crazy about New York. In love with every street.

Chris I know. I watched the tapes.

Raven So come out with me.

Chris I don't think I can face it.

Raven I know it seems safer here all doped up on pills but it's not. You have to go back out there sooner or later.

Chris I wish I didn't.

Raven Ya know, sometimes I think we wouldn't be in this mess, if we all accepted that we can't always have *every fuckin' thing* that we want. What do you think?

Chris smiles slightly.

Raven Is that a smile of agreement?

Chris Yeah.

Raven Come with me. It will only take an hour or so.

Chris Okay.

Raven Atta boy.

Lights fade.

Scene Eleven

Music 'Redford' by Sufjan Stevens. Late night at the art gallery. All the photos and screens are now hanging on the walls. Raven is sat in a room with the projected images of falling snow surrounding her. Chris is walking around looking at his work.

Raven Beautiful isn't it.

Chris It is.

Raven It's been heaving with people every day since it opened.

Chris *(Trying not to cry.)* I can't believe...

Raven What?

Chris I'm not an artist, I don't...

Raven But you did.

Chris It wasn't me though was it?

Raven Oh brother, I dunno, that's an impossible question to answer.

Chris I didn't create this. I never created anything my whole life. I never...I never... *(He fights the tears.)*

Raven Hey man, don't mind me. You cry if you need to.

Chris My name shouldn't even be on this! I'm not an artist. Photos are a hobby. I'm not an artist.

Raven Well you are now Chico. A famous one too.

Chris Oh fuck. Fuck!

Raven People love this exhibition. They love you for creating it. People that have never met you, now love you. Doesn't that make you feel good?

Chris cries. Big wracking sobs. Raven reaches out her hand to him and he holds it. The crying slowly subsides.

Chris I don't deserve it. I don't.

Raven Why don't you?

Chris Do you know anything about me?! I've worked for the companies that brought this country to its knees. I've made them millions of dollars.

Raven I know. But as I understand it you quit your job. That's gotta count for something.

Chris Too little, too late.

Raven My grandma used to say 'So long as you're alive it's never too late.'

Chris What?

Raven 'What's your favourite memory?' That was one of your interview questions...My grandmother. She had this little speech, she'd sit me on her knee and say: 'Never forget that every human being, every animal, every insect and every plant on god's green earth is connected. Every single day that you're alive you are going to have a million choices to make that will have a ripple effect across the whole planet. A lot of people in the world are born without a choice. You are lucky. You have one. Do your best not to waste it. Some days you won't do as well as others but so long as you're alive it's never too late.'

Chris That's a pretty heavy burden for a little kid.

Raven It wouldn't be if we all bore it.

Chris She sounds like a smart lady.

Raven She was; but it's not god's green earth: it's ours.

Chris I never really wanted any of this...isn't that stupid? I mean what child dreams of working in a bank?

Raven But you don't anymore. I say you're an artist, if that's what you want to be. This exhibition is important don't walk away from it.

Chris I don't deserve –

Raven So earn it.

Raven hands Chris his video camera.

Chris Will you help me?

Raven Nope.

Chris Why not?

Raven Cos you should be asking someone else that question.

Ama enters.

Ama Hi.

Chris Hi.

Raven exits. There is a silence.

Chris You look just the same.

Ama I do?

Chris Everyone ages but you. Why is that?

Ama I dunno... just immature I guess. What are you...? How are you?

Chris I'm...not so great.

Ama I didn't think I'd see *you* again.

Chris The last time was pretty rough huh?

Ama I should learn to be more diplomatic.

Chris What did you call me again?

Ama Don't.

Chris You said I'd turned into a 'self-serving grey little banker, working for an institution built on the broken backs of African slaves', if I remember correctly.

Ama Holy shit, I wouldn't want be on the wrong side of me.

Chris You also said that me and my 'cronies were determined to suck the world dry until all that was left was a hollowed out husk'.

Ama My god do you remember every word I said?

Chris They've been ringing in my ears for the last seven years.

Ama Then why has it taken so long for you to heed them?

Chris It's never easy with you is it?

Ama No.

Chris Ama –

Ama Everything I said was true, I don't take it back.

Chris I don't want you to. You were right to say it. I tried to make changes –

Ama You left Lehman's and set up shop with Paul.

Chris YES! Please Ama! I haven't slept without medication for five years! I've gone through ten months of total amnesia of which I remember absolutely nothing. I'm teetering on the verge of breakdown here, would you give me a fuckin' break?!

Ama You're right. I'm sorry. I don't know what's wrong with me.

Chris I mean, I love you, but Christ!

Ama You do?

Chris You're my best friend. Of course I do.

Ama Oh...well I love you too.

Chris Would it hurt you to show it every now and then?

Ama *(An attempt at a joke)* I just told you I fuckin' love you didn't I? What more do you want?

Chris I don't know. I really don't. I...*(He closes his eyes and breathes deeply.)*

Ama Hey are you alright?

Chris I need some air.

Ama You wanna get outta here?

Chris Yes.

Lights fade. Sounds of the ocean.

Scene Twelve

Dawn. A beach in Coney Island. The sky gets lighter throughout the scene.

Ama Well it's not a beach in California but it's a start.

Chris It's perfect.

(Pause.)

Ama So what now?

Chris Now? Now we watch the sunrise.

Ama Shall we film it?

Chris Nah, let's just enjoy it.

Ama Chris?

Chris Yeah.

Ama What's been the best day of your life so far?

Chris You already know it.

Ama Still?

Chris Still.

(Pause.)

Ama It was mine too.

Chris I know.

Ama If I lost all my memories but was allowed to keep just one, that would be it.
Only that.

The sounds of the surf and seagulls.

Ama Oh look here it comes.

Chris Here it comes....

Ama Here it comes....aaaand...pop there she is...our beautiful sun.

The sun pops up. A beautiful sunrise over the ocean is projected behind them but the actors should imagine the ocean is in the auditorium. The sunrise should be a deep orange through clouds so that the light throws shadows across the stage.

Chris It's been so long since I watched one of these.

Ama Me too.

Chris It happens every day; why did I leave it so long?

Ama So beautiful.

Chris So -

Ama Gorgeous. *(She looks around.)*

Chris Ama?

Ama Yeah?

Chris *(He has a glint in his eye.)* There's no one around.

Ama No way? Here?

Chris Why not?

Ama We might get arrested!

Chris Come on, I dare ya.

Ama You're on.

Chris Nothing beats it.

Ama Nothin'.

They begin to undress, giggling as they do so. Chris whips his clothes off quickly and is naked first. Ama stops undressing and watches him. Music begins to play softly. He holds up his hands, turning them over and watching the light hit his skin. He looks down at his feet, he smiles and looks out at the vast expanse of ocean, he keeps walking as the music and lights fade. The sound of the ocean remains.

The End