

Screenplay

EXT. CAPITAL CITY, FUTURISTIC. MID-AFTERNOON

Camera starts high, the top of a cityscape. It is not recognizable as any modern city. the skyscrapers and towers are streamlined, completely oriented towards functionality, yet with a clean symmetry and elegance to them. Sunlight shines in dull waves off the glass and steel.

DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.)

Years ago, when I was still in University, I had a professor, cranky, old, bitter guy, but he told me something. I don't remember it all, but it was essentially something like: 'All science should be to answer one question, where do we come from?'

Camera begins to zoom in to the city, very slowly. Cars are seen shooting by along busy streets below. Everything is still too far away to make out clearly. The camera never stops, just slowly passes each building.

DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.) CONT'D

Its a fairly decent question. If ALL science has to be based on it, then I guess its a pretty good one. But, even then I was, I don't know. I asked him, 'Professor, even if that's true, what would be the point? Shouldn't the goal of science to be make things better?' And I wholeheartedly believed that then.

The streets below are beginning to become more visible. The cars are much like the buildings, sleek and elegant, beautiful in simplicity, no wasted elements of design. Traffic throughout most of the city is flowing well, yet, in one area it has been diverted. There are the soft sounds of car horns as the mismanaged lines of cars struggle to change course. Beyond the barricade in the street, a large empty area spans the entire block. Abandoned picket signs and knocked over railings are scattered throughout the space.

DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.) CONT'D

He turned to me a said, 'You can't improve, unless you know what you already have. And no one knows what they already have, because no one will ask.' I didn't understand that, at all. But eventually, years later, I started really

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DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.) CONT'D (cont'd)  
thinking about it. People don't want to know where we came from. Its nothing personal, and I don't take it that way, but 'where we came from' scares people. And it should. When you start asking that question, dozens of others start popping up. And I think really, its those questions that people don't want answered. I'm sorry, you asked, 'Why are people resistant to my work?' Right? Well, I guess what I've been trying to get at is that they aren't resistant, so much, of my work, people are resistant of the questions that my work makes them ask. They're, honestly, I think they're afraid of having to ask why.

The camera comes down to near street level now. The people in the background are out of focus, but feelings of anxiety and hardly controlled chaos radiate from the crowd. The picket signs are now visible, dropped and abandoned across the street. Slogans of 'We are not God,' 'They died out for a reason,' and 'Only God can create life' are visible on the signs. As the camera pans over the scene, it stays now very tight on the street. Slowly the booted foot of a man comes onto the screen, he's laying on the hard asphalt, discarded like the signs.

DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.) CONT'D  
Why are we mortal? Why do we have emotions? Yes, they are chemical and electrical signals in our brains, but why? What is the purpose of it? To incentivize survival and reproduction? Those could have been accomplished easily enough without the mess and complication of emotions. Why do we age? Why do our brains require us to learn information. Why do we forget some things and remember others? What is the meaning behind it? And of course, the killer, *big* question...

Moving along the motionless body, it becomes clear the man is dressed in jeans, a leather jacket, and a nice shirt, tucked into his pants. Resting next to his limp hand, a brick passes before the screen. He is not a large man,

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instead, scrawny and young. The camera slowly comes to his head, a thick mass of black hair, and pans around. It only finally comes to a stop on his face. He is young, mid-twenties, a bullet hole just off center in his forehead, white, milky blood flowing from the wound and forming a puddle where his face meets the asphalt. From the size of the blood pool, it is clear the shooting happened only moments before. His eyes are still open, they are not human, instead, they appear robotic, like rounded circuit boards with a shined glaze of glass covering them.

DR. LEXINGTON (V.O.) CONT'D

Why is it that when all organic  
life was wiped out, synthetic life  
survived?

INT. CAPITAL UNIVERSITY, LECTURE HALL

Dr. Peter Lexington stands at a podium, on a raised stage, overlooking the lecture hall, packed with students. He is an older man, but strong and has a stubborn, smug air about him. He stand perfectly straight and looks at home behind the podium. He's well dressed in a suit and tie. His hair looked frazzled, a few hairs sticking out here and there, but it is only enough to keep him from looking too distinguished. His eyes, and the eyes of everyone in the room are the same robotic eyes as the man that had been shot dead on the street. A number of security personal are stationed throughout the room, stern looks are their faces.

DR. LEXINGTON (CONT'D)

Despite what you read in the news  
papers or hear people chanting on  
the street, we aren't playing  
god. We have no reason to try. All  
we are doing is trying to answer  
questions... questions that, until  
now, haven't been asked all that  
often. There are so many 'why's'  
attached to the mere existence of  
synthetic life. And more than  
anything, I think Echo is our  
opportunity to finally answer them.  
Sadly, some people out there,  
really just don't see it that  
way...

He looks over the crowd and selects a raised hand.

YOUNG STUDENT

What makes, I mean, what do you  
think is the main difference

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YOUNG STUDENT (cont'd)  
between your 'Echo' and the Will  
Project?

DR. LEXINGTON  
Absolutely nothing. Sorry. First  
things first, does everyone know  
what the Will Project was?

A number of heads in the audience shake no.

DR. LEXINGTON  
Okay. The Will Project was a  
laughably underfunded military  
project about thirty-five years  
ago. It was the first organic life  
experiment of its kind. Before it  
was shut down, they actually  
created an organic baby boy named  
Will. I mean, the power was pulled  
on the whole thing before they  
could finish testing him, but by  
all indications, Will was alive.  
When I said there was no difference  
between that project and what we're  
doing at the DRI, I meant... So  
there's a common misconception that  
the Will Project failed. But it  
didn't. At all. It succeed with  
flying colors. They created organic  
life. But the project was shut  
down, because the world, as cliched  
as it might be, just wasn't  
ready. I mean, thing about it.  
Think of how drastically our world  
has changed in the past thirty five  
years, and my team still gets death  
threats on a daily basis... If our  
Echo ended up being as successful  
as Will, it would be a dream come  
true to me.

Hands again raise throughout the hall. In the very back, a  
man, Derek Bradley, stands, clothes run down, a heavy jacket  
fitted well over his torso. He is scruffy looking, unshaven  
for the past few days. He's holding up a note pad, but  
instead of taking notes, he's just tapping his pen on the  
paper. His phone rings. Quickly, apologizing to the those  
around him, he answers it and listens.

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DEREK BRADLY

What?... Are you serious?... Yeah  
I'll be right there.

Dr. Lexington picks one of the hands, but then before the person can ask their question:

DR. LEXINGTON

Actually, before we go on, just an interesting note, we actually used a fair amount of genetic material from the Will Project in constructing Echo. But yeah, go ahead.

Unnoticed, Derek ducks out the back door.