

EXT. EASTLAKE SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

ANGLE ESTABLISHING

TITLE: AMERICA, FEBRUARY, 2105

The edifice of concrete, built in the early 2000's, stands as a reminder of the distant post-industrial age - tall escarpments of windowless gray with long featureless lines and sharp angles. Every space has a utilitarian and economic purpose. In the area surrounding the building, there is no room for trees and grass, barely enough room for the people, who move slowly in and out of the structure, like termites.

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

ANGLE WIDE ON A BROKEN ESCALATOR

As a student walks up. Two students at the top are conversing. Everyone moves slowly, emotionlessly, with a common goal.

ANGLE ON A CORRIDOR

A few more students move through the hall, and up and down some stairs. The only color comes from tall LED panels, showing happy, active young people advertising soft drinks and clothing.

ANGLE HIGH OVER A LARGE CLASSROOM

Students are placed evenly around numerous rectangular tables, arranged in long rows, like crops in a field.

LONG ANGLE ON HALLWAY

Large digital clocks lining the hall have equal importance to the advertising. At 10:00, all clocks change in perfect synchronization, an electronic bell goes off, and students gush like heavy syrup from classrooms. The students move silently and purposefully, as expected.

INT. HISTORY CLASS - DAY

ANGLE TIGHT ON a television screen. An attractive, smiling female teacher is delivering a lesson.

TEACHER1

Before there was privatization as we know it today, there were many problems in the world. What were some of those problems? Can anyone tell me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks down O.S., then back up.

TEACHER1 (CONT'D)
Jim?

JIM (O.S.)
Widespread hunger?

TEACHER1
Right. Many people were hungry. But the opposite was also true, wasn't it? Umm April?

APRIL (O.S.)
Many people had too much food.

TEACHER1
Right. The balance of resources and the power that controlled the resources was all out of whack.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK slowly, revealing a large monitor hanging from the ceiling. We continue back down a long row of teen-age students seated at modern desks, watching the screen or referencing their personal tablets.

TEACHER1 (CONT'D)
There were people who had more than enough and others who had next to nothing. Anything else? Umm Bob R.?

We pass BOB R's desk, as he speaks into his tablet.

BOB R.
There were many governments.

TEACHER1
Right. In fact, every country in the world had its own government, with its own set of laws set forth in documents known as constitutions. In America, we also had our own form of government. Does anyone remember what our form of government was called?
(She waits for a response)
Remember? Before the Privatization Charter of 2068 was ratified, what was our form of government?
(waits)
Susan K?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN K. (O.S.)
(with difficulty)
Democracy?

TEACHER1
Very good. We were controlled by
democracy.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ANGLE MOVING PAST STUDENTS

As they wait in lines to take plastic-wrapped trays from automated mechanical dispensers. There are thousands of students, ranging in age from 11 to 18. But even though it's crowded, the students move in an orderly fashion from line to line.

WE STAY with two 16-year-olds, JAY and THEODORE, as they take their trays, and search for a table.

JAY
When's your test?

THEODORE
You mean the SLSA?

JAY
Yeah. Aren't you taking yours
today?

THEODORE
Yeah, two.

JAY
Mine's at 2:30.

THEODORE
Oh.

They sit.

JAY
Aren't you frightened?

THEODORE
By the test? No. You're not
supposed to be. Are you?

JAY
I must admit to some trepidation.

THEODORE
How can you be frightened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

I just don't know what it will lead to.

THEODORE

No one does.

JAY

I know. I guess it's just not knowing that frightens me.

THEODORE

(Confused)

How can not knowing something frighten you?

JAY

You're right. It doesn't make any sense.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Kids are moving quietly between classes. They converse only when necessary. Surveillance cameras and uniformed adults are everywhere, controlling the flow.

PUBLIC ADDRESS (O.S.)

(Friendly)

If you are scheduled for Standardized Life Skills Assessment testing today, remember to arrive a few minutes early. If you are late, you may have to be rescheduled. So please arrive early. Thank you.

INT. SOCIAL SKILLS CLASS - DAY

ANGLE ON STUDENTS

As they watch the ubiquitous monitors.

ANGLE ON TEACHER'S ASSISTANT

Sitting at the front of the class. She does nothing except monitor student activity in the room. She watches them, and can see what they are entering into their tablets.

ANGLE ON TV

STUDENT NARRATOR

For our assignment, we did skits to show inner... interpersonal skills to use instead of fighting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kids do their skit in front of a backdrop they painted.

KID1
Want to see my new game?

KID1 holds up his tablet.

KID2
Yes.

KID2 takes it and starts playing the game.

KID2 (CONT'D)
Hey, this is fun.

KID1
I know.

As KID2 keeps playing, KID1 starts becoming restless.

KID1 (CONT'D)
Can I have my game back, please?

KID2
May I finish this part first?

KID1
All right. I can wait.

On the student narrator.

STUDENT NARRATOR
Both kids were frustrated, but knew that by being patient and considering the feelings of the other person, a fight could be avoided. Here's another example between a brother and sister.

ANGLE ON JAY IN THE CLASS

At his desk, as the bland presentation continues O.S. Jay is watching the clock on his tablet. It's 2:17.

ANGLE ON A GIRL IN THE CLASS

Typing on her tablet.

ANGLE ANOTHER GIRL

As she reads, then types.

INTERCUT BETWEEN the two as they send messages back and forth on their tablets. The presentation drones on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VARIOUS ANGLES ON OTHER STUDENTS

As they become fidgety.

RESUME TV

KID1

(miffed)

How come you get to go to the mall
and I have to stay home?

KID2

Because you don't need new shoes.

KID1

How come you get new shoes and I
don't? I need them too.

KID2

I don't know the answer to that. It
was Mom's decision. Why don't you
ask her?

ANGLE WITH TEACHER'S ASSISTANT

As she scans the class. She notices the two girls giggling.
She looks down at her monitor and touches the icon of one of
the girls. The girl's screen pops up and the TA notes the
messages being sent. She matter-of-factly touches the message
window and types: "Busted."

ANGLE ON THE FIRST GIRL

As she sees the message. The giggling stops and she looks up.

RESUME TV

KID1

(calming down)

Okay.

KID2

I understand how you feel. I have
felt left out before too. If Mom
does not agree to let you come
along, don't take it personally,
okay? There will be another time.

STUDENT NARRATOR

Younger siblings often have not
learned how to handle difficult
situations and cope with
disappointment.

INT. SLSA WAITING ROOM - DAY

Jay holds his ID card over a reader and the LAB RECEPTIONIST'S screen pulls up Jay's data.

LAB RECEPTIONIST
(Smiling)
So... Jay Potter. How do you feel today?

JAY
A little nervous.

She makes a note of this, typing: "Nervous, upset."

LAB RECEPTIONIST
Well, you're not alone. Many children feel apprehensive at first. But as soon as you start the assessment, you'll see there's nothing to it. Students that have said they were nervous in the beginning always end up having a good time, and they're amazed at how quick the procedure is.

JAY
I'm nervous about what they'll find. That's all.

Adding another note: "anxious about outcome."

LAB RECEPTIONIST
Well, I'm sure they won't find anything unusual. Why don't you have a seat? It'll just be a minute.

INT. SLSA TESTING ROOM - DAY

The LAB TECH is facing JAY with a big, soothing smile.

LAB TECH
Okay, Jay. Just relax, remember to keep your eyes open, and just enjoy yourself. It will take about two minutes. Are you ready?

Jay is seated in a comfortable medical treatment chair, wearing a virtual reality helmet.

The Lab Tech views a screen with multiple tracks moving left to right, monitoring different areas of Jay's mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY
(mumbling)
Yeah.

We see a blip on one of the tracks in response. The Lab Tech clicks a start button.

Jay starts to move his head around, and raise and lower his arms, responding to what he is experiencing.

INT. INSIDE VR HELMET - DAY

We SEE and HEAR what Jay is responding to - a high-speed barrage of images and sounds. QUICK CUT faces, animals, explosions, historical photos, flashing colors, hypnotic rhythmic pulses. The SOUNDS are intense staccato tones mixed with classical music, mixed with voices reading words and nonsense.

ANGLE CLOSE MAN'S NEUTRAL FACE

As he speaks in quiet tones, his lips slowly going out of sync with his voice.

VR MAN1
(mechanically)
I think therefore I am. I am
therefore I think. I am therefore I
am, I think. I think I am therefore
I am I think I think. I am because
I think. Because I think, I am
therefore.

ANGLE TIGHT ON A WOMAN

VR WOMAN1
(Screaming)
Clean out your skeleton!

ANGLE SAME WOMAN, JUMP CUT

VR WOMAN1 (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Come along crisp thought to build
bridges interior fortunes wind and
begin to the end or top or how to
manufacture well-done caustic
serenity.

RESUME VR MAN1

VR MAN1
I know I am am I think I know I am.
I know I am I am.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VR MAN1 (CONT'D)

I think I know I have to be. To be.
To be. If I think then therefore
therefore I must.

ANGLE HIGH-SPEED TRAIN, MOVING

INTERCUT with a clock showing conflicting times and a map that shows four stops.

VR NARRATOR (O.S.)

If a train traveling at 40 miles per hour makes three 10-minute stops and arrives at the third stop at 4:30pm, two-and-a-half hours after it starts, at what time does the train arrive at the first stop?

ANGLE TRAIN INTERIOR

Stopped at a station. We study the faces of the passengers. A child is crying. A woman wearing a thick fur coat is cutting pieces out of a newspaper. A conductor is holding his shoe.

VR NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

If the train makes an additional stop after the second stop, does it arrive before or after the third stop, if the first stop were the same as the third stop, would there be a second stop?

INT. SLSA TESTING ROOM - DAY

It is SILENT, except for the WHIR of computers. But we can see the turmoil in Jay's mind from the jumble of waves and blips reading out on the screen.

Occasionally, a particular move that Jay makes prompts the Lab Tech to make a note in the computer.

INT. INSIDE VR HELMET - DAY

SWIRLING colors.

VR WOMAN1 (O.S.)

(without emotion)

Cool. Stop. Park. Enter. Bird. Bus.

The colors change.

VR WOMAN1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Blood, friend, pine, sector, table, kiss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another change.

VR WOMAN1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oxylotl, precox, riticulated, onyx,
broom.

ANGLE ON TWO MEN

In a cold, hard-walled room. One man leans over another man who is lying face-down on a concrete floor. The man on top holds the other man by the hair on the back of his head, and starts repeatedly bashing the man's face against the floor.

ANGLE A BOY AND HIS MOTHER

Rocking on a porch swing.

ANGLE, FLASH CUT OF A PENIS BECOMING ERECT

ANGLE, TIME-LAPSE OF A FLOWER OPENING

FLASH CUTS of more seemingly disconnected SHOTS - some natural, some unnatural, some imaginary.

ANGLE, WIDE ON A MOUNTAIN LAKE

A placid scene of a lake with a yellow sky, accompanied by a high-pitched tone.

INT. SLSA TESTING ROOM

Strangely, this scene produces a flurry of activity on the screen. The Lab Tech notes this.

INT. INSIDE VR HELMET

ANGLE ON VR MAN1

VR MAN1
Each individual exists for the good of the whole. The corporation is the whole. The health of the corporation depends on maintaining the cycle of life within. The health of the cycle of life depends on the flow of the economy. Each individual has complete freedom to exercise his or her will. This freedom is the key to the survival of the corporation, which is the people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE TEST ENDING

With staccato, intense pulsing tones synchronized with black to white to black hypnotic CUTS.

Finally, it all stops. The VR screen goes black and it is SILENT.

INT. SLSA TESTING ROOM

As Jay goes limp. The Lab Tech walks over to him and carefully removes the helmet.

LAB TECH
(Smiling, as expected)
That's all there is to it, Jay. How
do you feel?

JAY
(Extremely dazed)
Okay.

She notes his condition.

LAB TECH
You did very well. If you feel
dizzy, you can lie down for a
moment.

JAY
No, I'm Okay.

He stands and starts to walk, then nearly collapses. The Lab Tech helps him to a cot, where he lies and stares straight up.