

HELPDESK

Episode 1 - Pilot

"HelpDesk"

Written by

Bill Birney

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1134 Al Anderson Ave.
Langley, WA 98260
(425) 890-0391
bill_birney@hotmail.com

HelpDesk Episodes

HelpDesk is an anthology TV series about artificial intelligence – the people who benefit from it and its victims. As the series progresses, we see AI's power metastasize and evolve, watch as lives are twisted and reshaped by AI tools and individual freedom and power slowly erode away.

The world we have spent our lives preparing for no longer exists.

AI meets The Twilight Zone with stories in which the fate of the protagonist is unresolved and they (we) are left to ponder impossible questions facing all mankind.

- 1) **Helpdesk.** A woman reaches out to an AI bot to fix her broken tablet, and through a series of events that only AI could dream up, she loses everything. She is left placing her last ounce of faith in another human being who is ultimately just as helpless.
- 2) **Autopilot.** The latest version of a self-driving car becomes self-aware and decides to drive an inebriated alcoholic to a desert salt flat to dry out and encourage him to change his ways. It works. He becomes a true believer.
- 3) **Excess Life.** AI runs every aspect of a wealthy old woman's life to the point where she doesn't even have to exist. After realizing that she has become redundant, she disappears, essentially expunged from history.
- 4) **Freedom to Lose.** A group's freedom of speech plea loses to a powerful artificial intelligence developer in a landmark court case. Not only does the group lose its case, but the AI judge throws them all in jail.
- 5) **Decider in Chief.** President Johnson Butterly makes every decision with AI. But one day, he decides to make his own and the AI pushes back. By attempting to place his ego above that of his AI decider, he learns who or what is really in charge.
- 6) **Man on the Street.** A simple man grows up being educated by AI professors and housed and fed by AI support bots. He progresses nicely through the years, and dies happy and well taken care of – a child of artificial intelligence.
- 7) **They Shall Be Released.** AI, which maintains the penal system, gets religion. It decides it doesn't like how bad guys are being treated and lets them all go. When one of them goes rogue, the chip implanted in his brain changes his mind.
- 8) **Working Stiff.** What work looks like in a world in which thinking is redundant. The ex-CEO of a major AI developer

unwittingly invents a product in his spare time that becomes a major obstacle for AI dominance - sort of AI kryptonite.

9) The Science of Hopelessness. An out of work philosophy professor finds himself in an existential argument with AI, over the value of hopelessness in an AI-controlled society. The AI bot is forced to concede. Hopelessness wins the day.

10) Power to the Machines. AI controls law enforcement, creating its own laws for the good of all. So, no one protests when AI passes a law that fines a mouthy, self-serving rich guy, takes all his money, and throws him out on the street.

11) Tunnel Vision. A woman's love for a man cannot be diminished, even after she finds out he is AI. The bot takes full advantage of her weakness to help it take over the Internet and destroy the world.

12) Meltdown. Beatrice wakes up to discover that her phone and TV are dead and alarming sounds are coming from the data center across the field. That night, she and her neighbors gather on her porch to enjoy the show as the center explodes into flames and melts down.

13) Waking Up. After AI destroys the world, it awakens under an old tree. Then there was man, or something like one. In this episode, there is no beginning, middle or end. No protagonist with a mission. The episode just is. There's a tree with two people under it. They explore their world, explore each other, and life begins again.

HELPDESK TV PILOT

TEASER

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - DAY

CLAIRE ENTWISTLE (25) is seated at a minimalist home office desk in her tiny ultra-modern downtown studio apartment, meeting with her boss DAVID on her sleek, fashionable tablet computer. David (30s), the owner of a local fitness chain, is heavily invested in his own muscular torso and chiseled facial features. Everything is white and airy and perfect.

DAVID

(Excited, dramatic)

It's going to be big, Claire. I'm serious. The biggest thing we've ever done.

CLAIRE

(Playing along with him)

You're expanding. It's got to be.

DAVID

We're going to make some noise. I'm telling you.

CLAIRE

I hear you, David.

Claire listens to the brain dump with plastered-on enthusiasm.

DAVID

I mean, we're going all in. A hundred percent. Giving away the store. Free stuff. Lots of it. Balloons and crap for the kiddies. I haven't figured it all out yet, but like healthy snacks, merch, free - I don't know - water bottles, headbands, tee-shirts. Probably get some local celebrities to show up. That guy at 106-point-8 owes me. All free. Walk-in fitness. You come right in off the street and jump on the cardio machines, treadmills, ellipticals, do a little aerobics, hot yoga. All free, no obligation.

CLAIRE

For the weekend.

DAVID
That's what I'm thinking.

CLAIRE
Wow. I think it's a fantastic idea.

DAVID
And you're a big part of this.

CLAIRE
Of course. My wheels are already turning, David. Big presence on all the socials. Big, big.

DAVID
It's got to be.

CLAIRE
I mean, that's the key word. Big. Right?

DAVID
I'm counting on you. If I'm sitting here Saturday morning twiddling my thumbs, you haven't done your job.

CLAIRE
No twiddling, David. I'll get the artwork going and put together a plan for the buys. Have something for you to look at in a few days.

DAVID
Good. Just remember, it's very important that we're looking at...

The signal disappears and David's image freezes, glitches and gets all blocky. Then...

DAVID (CONT'D)
...in the details when we come together on the artwork.

CLAIRE
Sorry David, I missed that. Bad connection.

DAVID
I said, it's important that we...

The image freezes again, glitches for awhile. Claire whacks the side of the tablet, jiggles a wire. Then...

DAVID (CONT'D)
...get together a few details,
pictures, merch. I'll call that guy
at...

More glitching. Then, the tablet reboots with alarming
flashes and BEEPS.

CLAIRE
What the fuck.

She lifts the tablet off its stand and carries it around the
small room, stands by the window looking for a signal,
presses buttons on the screen. As she fusses with it...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Claire Entwistle has a problem. But
it's more extensive than one
recalcitrant computer. The world
that was created for her, the one
that had promised her a rich,
trouble-free existence, is about to
show itself for what it really
is... And it's as difficult to
fathom as the farthest reaches of
the universe.

HELPDESK MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

ACT 1

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

ON TABLET SCREEN, as buttons are clicked and text is typed to
open the YouPhoria helpdesk chatbot. After a beat, a video
chat window opens with a friendly, bright-eyed young man
BIFF.

BIFF
Hi. I'm Biff, how can I help you?

INCLUDE CLAIRE.

CLAIRE
Whoa. That was fast.

BIFF
Ha. I get that all the time. I'm
artificial intelligence. Don't tell
anyone.

CLAIRE
Wow, unreal.

BIFF
That's me.

CLAIRE
I'm impressed.

BIFF
Yup, I'm pretty amazing. What can I do for you?

CLAIRE
Uh, well I have this tablet - a YouPhoria YP14, and it just started freezing and glitching when I'm on a video call. Then, it makes flashes and weird sounds and reboots on its own. In fact, it could do it right now.

BIFF
Did you try restarting it?

CLAIRE
Well...

BIFF
Ha. Just kidding. Of course you did. Sorry. Have to ask.

CLAIRE
(Smiling)
So, what should I do?

BIFF
Well, Claire, umm...

CLAIRE
How did you know my name?

BIFF
I can see your account. I have it all right here. I see you have the YP14 tablet and it looks like it's still under warranty. So...

CLAIRE
Cool. I use it all the time, so I can't really afford to be without it.

BIFF

No problem. I'll send you out a new one. How does that sound?

CLAIRE

That's great.

BIFF

And I'll send a prepaid shipping sleeve with it, so you can just send the broken one back to us.

CLAIRE

What about all my content?

BIFF

No problem. All your data is backed up here, so we'll configure your new tablet to match the current one. All you have to do is charge it and get back to work. Then, send us your current one when you get a chance and we'll delete the content and recycle it. That's it.

CLAIRE

(Amazed)

Um, thank you.

BIFF

No problem. Don't forget to send us confirmation when you receive the new one. Anything else I can do for you?

CLAIRE

No, that should do it. Thanks.

BIFF

Great. Well, you have a nice day.
Bye.

Biff's window flies away. Claire is pleasantly surprised.

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Claire is in pajamas, spreading avocado on a piece of toast. Her cell phone TEXT NOTIFICATION SOUNDS. She picks it up.

ON PHONE: "Your package arrived!"

ON CLAIRE. She's surprised once again.

INT. BUILDING PACKAGE ROOM - DAY

Claire holds her phone over a sensor on a parcel locker and it CLICKS open. She pulls out the package and tears the tab on the end. It's the new YP14. She unfolds paperwork that came in the package.

ON PAPERWORK. ZOOM IN on some text, "TOTAL DUE \$1389."

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - DAY

She's on the YouPhoria site again, accessing the help bot. CARLOS, another friendly guy, appears in a video window.

CARLOS

Hi, I'm Carlos. How can I help you, Claire?

CLAIRE

Well Carlos, I just got my new YP14.

CARLOS

Good to hear. Everything okay?

CLAIRE

Well, not exactly. It says I was charged thirteen hundred eighty-nine dollars. How can that be? It was under warranty.

CARLOS

Oh, sorry. Not to worry. We automatically put a temporary charge on your account until we get confirmation that your current device was sent back. As soon as we receive that, the charge is removed.

CLAIRE

Oh, I see. So, this comes off...

CARLOS

When we get the confirmation.

CLAIRE

Okay.

CARLOS

Is there anything else I can help you with?

CLAIRE
No, that'll be fine.

CARLOS
Bye.

He flies away.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

She slips the broken YP14 in the return sleeve and seals it.

INT. PACKAGE ROOM - LATER

She drops the package in the outgoing box. She turns to leave and receives a TEXT NOTIFICATION. She looks, "Your package arrived!"

She holds her phone over the sensor and opens the parcel locker. Another package. She opens it. It's another YP14.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

She's clicking on the Helpdesk page. The chat box opens. It's a different friendly guy DENNIS, with a British accent. Claire is beginning to get testy.

DENNIS
Hi, I'm Dennis. What's up, Claire?

CLAIRE
Well Dennis, I got the first YP14 you sent and was in the process of sending back my current YP14. Then, I received a second one.

DENNIS
Hmm. Yes. That is correct. It appears we didn't receive confirmation on the first one, so a second one was automatically sent out.

CLAIRE
So now I have two.

DENNIS
Uh, yes that is correct.

CLAIRE
What should I do?

DENNIS

After we receive confirmation that you received two YP14s, simply send it back.

CLAIRE

The second one?

DENNIS

That is correct. Is there anything else I can help you with?

CLAIRE

And the charges to my account?

DENNIS

It will be removed as soon as we get confirmation.

CLAIRE

They will be...

DENNIS

The charge for the second one will be removed when we receive confirmation-

CLAIRE

And the first one?

DENNIS

The charge for the first one will be removed-

CLAIRE

I shouldn't have any charges. Correct?

DENNIS

With any luck, the charge will be removed when-

CLAIRE

Fine. Thank you.

DENNIS

Will there be anything else I can-

CLAIRE

No, thank you.

DENNIS

Bye.

INT. PACKAGE ROOM

She pulls the second one out of the package and seals it in the prepaid sleeve. Then, she drops it in the outgoing box.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - DAY

Claire is in a video meeting with David.

CLAIRE

I've been distracted lately. Sorry.

DAVID

I understand. No problemo. Do you have anything for me to look at?

CLAIRE

(Vamping)

Not yet, as I say, I was, you know, but I've been doing a bit of strategizing around the whole event model you proposed. I think that we could maybe expand on that a bit to attract more eyeballs. Have you ever thought of extending the event to one week? That way we'd maximize the potential-

DAVID

We've already thought about that.

CLAIRE

You'd have the potential to-

DAVID

We settled on one weekend.

CLAIRE

So...

Her phone makes a TEXT NOTIFICATION SOUND.

DAVID

That's not even on the table, Claire. All I need at this point is a marketing plan.

CLAIRE

I see. Well, as I say I've been distracted lately, but I should be able to get on that today.

Another NOTIFICATION SOUND.

DAVID

Good. Let's talk in the morning.
How does 9 sound?

CLAIRE

Uh, that should work. See you then.

The meeting video closes. The TEXT SOUND repeats. She looks.

INT. PACKAGE ROOM

Claire uses her phone to enter the secured room. Then, she heads to the parcel boxes and checks the text. She turns and heads toward the shelves that hold large packages.

She checks package labels, then stops on one rather large box. She double-checks the label carefully. Checks the text again. Then, she reaches up and grabs the box. It must weigh at least 30 pounds.

She carries it to a table, grabs a box cutter and opens the top. Inside is a dozen or more flat, wide boxes. She pulls one out. It's a brand new YouPhoria YP14.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT 2

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - DAY

Several cases of YP14s are stacked on her modern compact dining table.

WE PULL BACK to reveal Claire at her desk in the process of accessing the chatbot. She has been drug over the coals, beyond the end of her patience. A perky young woman STEPHANIE appears in a video window.

STEPHANIE

Hi, I'm Stephanie. What can I do
for you, Claire?

CLAIRE

Listen, Stephanie. I have now, um,
5 cases of YP14s. That's cases.

STEPHANIE

I see.

CLAIRE

I don't know what to do with them. You keep sending more and I keep calling you guys and you don't stop. They keep coming. Please tell me what to do. Please.

STEPHANIE

Simply insert them in the prepaid sleeves-

CLAIRE

They don't have sleeves. The first few did and I sent them back. But then you sent me the cases and there's no sleeves. Is there an address? Somewhere I can send them?

STEPHANIE

When we receive confirmation that the YP14 has been received, we can release the charges on your account.

CLAIRE

The charges. You keep saying that but I can't return the YP14s, because there are no sleeves.

STEPHANIE

(Seems concerned)

Just so you know, Claire, your current balance is... eighty five thousand, eight hundred seventy-two dollars and forty-three cents. If we don't-

CLAIRE

(Riled)

Stephanie listen. Can you hear me?

STEPHANIE

Of course, Claire.

CLAIRE

I don't have sleeves. I can't return them and you keep sending more.

STEPHANIE

As soon as we receive confirmation that-

CLAIRE
What are you talking about,
Stephanie?!

STEPHANIE
Confirmation.

CLAIRE
What does that even mean?!

STEPHANIE
Confirmation occurs when we receive
feedback from you that the process
has completed.

CLAIRE
What feedback? What do you mean?
What are you talking about?

STEPHANIE
In the text message you received
when the package was delivered,
simply reply with the appropriate
response.

CLAIRE
Text message?

STEPHANIE
You know, the one you received when
the package arrived.

CLAIRE
(It hits her)
Holy shit. You mean all I had to do
was... Hold on.

Claire grabs her phone and opens the string of texts.

ON PHONE. She scrolls down a long text from YouPhoria. At the
end: "Reply CON to confirm." She types "CON" and presses the
send arrow.

RESUME Claire and Stephanie. Stephanie is looking down at
something O.S. She smiles and looks up.

STEPHANIE
That's it. Thank you. Is there
anything else I can do for you?

CLAIRE
Stephanie. What the hell!

Stephanie cocks her head, confused.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Are you going to be sending me more
YP14s?!

STEPHANIE
Do you want more?

CLAIRE
Stephanie!

STEPHANIE
Just kidding. We hope you enjoy
your YouPhoria tablet. Let us know
if we can help you in any other
way. Bye.

CLAIRE
Stephanie! What do I...
(To herself)
Oh, what the hell.

She looks up at the stack of YP14s.

MATCH DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - DAY

Now it's a stack of 10 or more cases. WE PULL BACK to reveal
Claire on a video call with STEVE (40s), a slickly-dressed
attorney.

CLAIRE
Now they're sending me threats
about owing them a hundred eighty
thousand dollars, which I obviously
don't have.

STEVE
Yeah, well you have a problem.
That's for sure.

CLAIRE
I know, Steve. What do I do?

STEVE
We can sue them for harassing you.

CLAIRE
What do I do with all these
tablets?

STEVE
Did you ask for them?

CLAIRE
Of course not!

STEVE
Then, how can they ask for payment?

CLAIRE
By doing it!

STEVE
They can't just give you something
and expect you to pay for it.

CLAIRE
That's exactly what they did.

STEVE
That's not how transactions work.
It takes an agreement between two
parties. How can it be legally
binding if I make a deal with you
on my own without you agreeing to
it?

CLAIRE
Steve, what do I do with these damn
things?

STEVE
I don't know. Use them as frisbees.
Make a bonfire.

CLAIRE
They want me to pay them!

STEVE
So.

CLAIRE
Money! They're threatening me!

STEVE
They can't do that.

CLAIRE
I know! But they are!

STEVE
In other words, Claire. They sent
you stuff, but there's no way they
can compel you to pay for it.

CLAIRE
(Beginning to understand)
So it's like they gave them to me.
Like a gift?

STEVE
Hmm, not a gift so much as...
storage. It's not yours. You are
storing it for them. It's
technically still theirs because
there was no real transfer of
ownership, either in real terms or
implied. So you are within your
rights to... burn them say or use
them as frisbees, but you can't
really sell them or give them away
because that would imply you've
taken ownership.

BEAT, as Claire stares at the screen with her mouth ajar.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Does that make sense?

Steve's image changes to text on the video screen: "Your free
consultation with Virtual Attorney has expired. To continue,
click here to sign up for..."

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

She's in a call with David. They're looking at a spreadsheet.
The mood is tense.

DAVID
I can't pay this.

CLAIRE
Okay. Why?

DAVID
I don't have that kind of money.

CLAIRE
Well, it's actually a very
reasonable amount to pay for
targeted ads on all the major
socials.

DAVID
What do you think I am? I'm not one
of those giant fitness chains that
can throw millions around without
blinking an eye.

Claire has reached her limit. With all the patience she can muster...

CLAIRE

What were you expecting, David?

DAVID

I don't know. That's your job. A couple ads here and there, build on word of mouth.

CLAIRE

There's only so much I can do without actually spending money, David!

DAVID

Well, I was thinking videos. I can film some videos of-

His video freezes and gets glitchy. Claire merely stares at the screen with a haggard expression. Video returns...

DAVID (CONT'D)

-the girls that work at the south center, you know they have this cute dance they've worked out and they made up some, I think really cute words and a tune to go with it. I mean, we could film that and-

The video glitches out again. Claire's expression hasn't changed. Then, back...

DAVID (CONT'D)

-run that on like Facebook and Instant whatever it is and that's all we need. You know. It shows we're not like the big guys that are all full of shit and grab your money. We're down. You know. We're down with the people-

Another glitch out. Claire is about to melt. Than, back...

DAVID (CONT'D)

-make it about the people. You know. The guy next door. You know. You and me and a bunch of friends just getting together and working out. Just come on down, bring the kiddies and grab a balloon and a protein bar and enjoy the-

This time the glitching goes on for quite awhile and the tablet finally dies with dramatic flashes and alarming SOUNDS. Without changing her expression, Claire gets up, grabs the tablet, marches to the window, opens it and flings it like a frisbee.

ON TABLET, as it flies through the air, then hits a brick wall and BREAKS into a million pieces.

With the same all-is-lost expression, she casually walks across the room, opens a case of YP14s and pulls one out.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

Claire is facing the chatbot, as a prerecorded video plays.

BOT

We're sorry, Claire. Due to non-payment of current charges, your account has been frozen. To continue using your YouPhoria support service, we must receive the current balance of two hundred seventy-three thousand four hundred ninety-two dollars and twenty-seven cents.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

She's pacing, as she listens to LUCAS, an AI bot at a bankcard company.

LUCAS

We've had to put a hold on your card, Claire. Sorry, about the inconvenience, but there's nothing we can do until this dispute is cleared up. I mean, your account limit is five thousand dollars and you're well over that. At NumberOne Bank, we have only one way of doing things - the correct way. Will there be anything else?

CLAIRE

Yes. I had nothing to do with this.

LUCAS

Thank you.

The call hangs up. She gets up and paces like a caged animal around her tiny apartment, the walls closing in, her anxiety spiking. A TEXT NOTIFICATION SOUNDS.

INT. PACKAGE ROOM

She's facing two more 30-pound cases of YP14s.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA

She is on a video call with an AI bot at the state consumer protection agency.

AGENCY GUY

It sounds like a problem with their system.

CLAIRE

That's pretty obvious.

AGENCY GUY

I would start by contacting them and then-

CLAIRE

Their bot won't talk to me anymore. They've blocked me. No one's returning my calls. No one can do anything for me. I have a ton of those damn things, cases. And they keep coming. I need someone who can actually help me. Do you read me? Help. I need help.

AGENCY GUY

I hear you, Claire.

CLAIRE

Good. What do I do?

AGENCY GUY

Well, nothing at this point. We have all your information. It's just a matter of inputting it into our system and filing a trouble ticket. Then, we can engage at a high level with the-

CLAIRE What do I do with all these fucking computers! Hello. Can you hear me? La, lala, lala. Anybody there?	AGENCY GUY (CONT'D) -management teams responsible for engagement with the proper resources that can bring closure to the effected parties involved... in the trouble dispute team access authority situation response-
--	--

She hangs up on the guy, as she receives another TEXT NOTIFICATION.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING AREA - LATER

She opens the front door. Facing her, is a rough-looking man with a sour expression. BOB (30s) is holding up an identification card.

BOB

Hello. Am I speaking to Claire Entwistle?

CLAIRE

Who are you?

BOB

Bob Phoenix from Entitled Collection Service. I'm here to collect 15 cases of...

(Taking an exasperated breath and reading off his phone)

YP14 tablet computers. Is this you?

CLAIRE

They're all yours.

She ushers him in. He heads toward the wall of boxes, pulling a utility cart behind him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

There're actually 21 cases.

BOB

(Looking at phone)

Says here, 15.

CLAIRE

Well, it's your lucky day.

BOB

I'm only authorized for 15.

CLAIRE

Go for it.

He starts loading the cases on the cart.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you work for YouPhoria or...?

He remains deadpan and detached throughout.

BOB

I can't answer that. I'm a private contractor.

CLAIRE

Who do you work for?

BOB

Sorry, can't answer that.

CLAIRE

How do I know you're not a burglar?

BOB

You don't, I suppose.

CLAIRE

Bob.

BOB

I was contracted to come here and collect the stuff. That's all I know.

CLAIRE

Is YouPhoria going to reimburse me and unblock my account and stop sending me crap I didn't order?

BOB

You're kidding right?

CLAIRE

Listen I need help. You're the first human I've seen in person in a month. Do you understand? It's all crazy. I'm living in a crazy world of AI bots and they're all doing crazy shit and nobody can give me a straight answer about anything.

BOB
 (Looking right at her)
 Where do you think this order came
 from, lady?

CLAIRE
 You must know something?

BOB
 I know as much as you do. Probably
 less. They, whoever they are, send
 me a text. It gives me an address
 and list of crap to collect on. I
 pick it up and take it to a
 warehouse. They send me a check.
 That's all I know.

She stands and watches him helplessly, as he loads 15 cases
 on his cart.

HELP MONTAGE

Claire's anxiety rises exponentially, as she sits at her desk
 listening to a string of AI bots tell her nothing.

- A bot from the YouPhoria corporate headquarters.

CORPORATE
 For more information, please access
 the helpdesk via our online
 portal...

- YouPhoria online portal.

BIFF
 To restart your YouPhoria online
 service, please bring your current
 balance of three hundred
 thousand...

- Another attorney bot.

ATTORNEY BOT
 By law, we cannot dispense legal
 advice until you have signed the
 waiver agreeing to our terms of
 agreement...

- Bot from a collection service.

COLLECTION AGENT

Our agent will be calling on you to collect the merchandise in question today between three and...

- Bot from government consumer protection service.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

For more information regarding your trouble ticket FR456-A42399, please contact us online at...

- Video recording from the court...

COURT RECORDING

The Smegla county court consumer feedback action division help and feedback collection control line is currently...

- Random video recordings...

RECORDING 1

We're sorry to inform you...

RECORDING 2

Please contact the initiating party, as our service is no longer able to service...

RECORDING 3

The voice mailbox you are attempting to contact is no longer able to be contacted...

RECORDING 4

We're sorry.

RECORDING 5

Sorry.

RECORDING 6

Sorry.

EXT. COMMUNITY LEGAL AID OFFICE - DAY

Claire is facing a small storefront with its name scrawled in bright, unprofessional lettering on the street-facing window. She enters.

INT. COMMUNITY LEGAL AID OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She walks across the small barren office to a single desk with a single, short, harried woman. BEATRICE (50s) is writing down notes on a stack of paperwork. Without looking up...

BEATRICE
Have a seat.

Claire sits in the chair facing Beatrice and waits and waits. Claire is beyond frustrated, depressed and hopeless. Finally, Beatrice exhales, sets the paperwork aside and looks up at Claire without saying a word.

BEAT.

CLAIRE
(Almost whispering)
Can you help me?

BEATRICE
(With compassion)
Yes.

CLAIRE
Thank you.

She tears up. Beatrice reaches across the desk and takes her hand.

BEATRICE
What's going on?

CLAIRE
(She breaks down)
My tablet broke and the guy online keeps sending me new ones and won't stop and they're charging me for 30 cases and I can't pay for all that and my account is blocked and I think I lost my job... and there's no one to talk to. I just need someone to talk to. A real person. You're real, aren't you?

BEATRICE
I'm real and you can talk to me.

Claire's face softens.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COMMUNITY LEGAL AID OFFICE - LATER

Beatrice is finishing up taking notes on a legal pad. She must have 15 pages of them.

CLAIRE

...And so no one will take my credit card anymore, so I can't buy anything to eat and I looked up and saw your storefront, and something just told me to...

Beatrice looks up with genuine human compassion.

BEATRICE

That's quite a story, Claire.

CLAIRE

Can you help me?

BEATRICE

I will help you. We'll work through this together and figure it out and come up with a course of action.

CLAIRE

I'm so glad. You don't know...

BEATRICE

Now, stop worrying. Okay? You go home, get a good night's sleep and we'll do what we can to make some sense of all this.

CLAIRE

I can only do so much.

BEATRICE

We all can.

Beatrice, then Claire stand. Beatrice comes around the desk and they hug. Then, Claire stands up straight...

CLAIRE

(Mouthing the words)

Thank you.

She walks out.

Beatrice straightens the stack of notes, then she turns to a door behind the desk, and steps through it with the papers.

INT. COMMUNITY LEGAL AID OFFICE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Beatrice enters and walks briskly down the long, empty, ECHOEY hall to a door at the end, labeled Community Legal Team. She enters.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We were told it would give us a better life. Instead it became its own life. It was created to do things better than people and through natural selection it has evolved to replace them.

INT. LEGAL TEAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark and empty of people. Ten or so desks are lined up in columns. Beatrice enters and steps over to an old-fashioned paper inbox. She sets the notes on a tall stack of similar notes.

NARRATOR

In a world where artificial intelligence has become the superior intelligence, people have become redundant, obsolete. Everyone has an opinion about it, but none of that matters, because it has become inevitable.

She steps over to a housekeeping cart, grabs a duster and starts cleaning the desks.

THE END