

SEPARATE STATES

Written by

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FADE IN:

A SLIT SCAN DISTORTED IMAGE AS THE TITLES APPEAR.

TITLES: SEPARATE STATES.

THE MAN I is wearing a plastic translucent MEDICAL MASK behind which his skin has been scarred with BURNS. He has a shaved head, with scarring also over his head. The combination of the mask and the scars renders him lacking in identity.

This opening conveys his mental State.

INT. DRS SURGERY.

SHOT: WIDE

A cut to reality. THE DRS SURGERY is a well-lit consultation room separated into two sides with both a desk and bed area. There is a computer, artificial plants, anatomy / molecular models, medical supplies and synthetic curtains. The lighting design evokes a molecular model with each light connected in a metal structure. The sound design creates a dream-like atmosphere.

THE MAN I (30-40) dressed in casual, plain clothes is having a consultation with his surgeon, THE DR (40+) who wears a lab coat and trousers. They both stand, at equal distance between each other and the frame, in a theatrical blocking.

They are clearly having a consultation regarding these burns. It's unclear how they have been caused, fire, acid, explosion, accident, an act of terrorism or war? The combination of the mask and the scars renders him lacking in identity.

V.O.:

THE MAN

I've changed my face so often, this
mask is just another frontier.

SHOT: MEDIUM CLOSE-UP.

As THE MAN I stares silently into the camera THE DR stands behind him, out of focus and speaking to him. The sound track renders what THE DR says indecipherable, but with each word an abstract sound is created, like a code.

HOLD as he speaks.

SHOT: WIDE.

The Man, pushes himself up onto the bed, and lies down, flat and straight. The curtains separating this section of the room are on either side of the frame, as if he's a character in a play. He purses his lips.

SHOT: CLOSE-UP.

The Man's face, part-mask, part-flesh. He slowly blinks as if drugged or in a trance.

SHOT: MEDIUM

A ground's eye perspective of the ceiling lighting. The molecular structure is now clear and seeing this perspective is jarring for the audience.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. FLAT.

SHOT: CLOSE-UP.

THE SUN. SLOW PULL OUT TO A MEDIUM, revealing THE MAN II, who is sitting at his KITCHEN TABLE. The flat and furniture is contemporary and cold, like a showroom, the kind that is owned by somebody wealthy. The flat has glass windows all around it and a concrete ceiling.

There is a BUZZ of the Intercom.

SHOT: MEDIUM

THE MAN II, OPENS his FRONT DOOR for the DELIVERY DRIVER. He signs a tablet marking an 'X', instead of his signature and is handed a small CARDBOARD BOX. They are shot from neck down, this transaction focuses on their hands, removing their identity. The door is closed.

THE MAN II comes back into this kitchen, places the box on the table and grabs a KNIFE from THE KNIFE RACK to open it. He purses his lips. He takes out a small GLASS BOTTLE and inspects it, as he turns to read the back label we can see the front label says 'SULPHURIC ACID - WARNING HIGHLY CORROSIVE SUBSTANCE.'.

SHOT: MEDIUM.

The KITCHEN TABLE shot from directly above. This separates the frame into 3 areas, with the table directly in the middle and the floor on either side. We see THE MAN II decant the SULPHURIC ACID carefully, into another BOTTLE using a FUNNEL. As he finishes, he leaves the frame and the two bottles are left placed near each other, like character blocking in a storyboard.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

SHOT: WIDE.

A metal structure protrudes from the ground, like a modernist sculpture in an misty empty town square at dusk. It's unclear whether this is a sculpture, a statue or serves a particular function.

Shot as one long sequence shot we see THE MAN I walking whilst reading something on his PHONE. He wears an expensive suit, handsome with medium length well groomed hair. He is a figure of authority, potentially a politician or businessman. As he slowly walks through this square the dramatic tension along with the sound-track builds. We hear his footsteps.

THE MAN II, who is revealed only now to be his doppelganger quickly walks up to him and throws the SULPHURIC ACID in his face, attacking the separate version of himself. This happens in a spinning 360 degree tracking shot with both characters visible in the frame. Before THE MAN II can react, the film cuts instantly.

FADE TO BLACK.