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## There Will Be Time

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There Will Be Time

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
In  
Creative Writing  
Screenwriting

By

Sherng-Lee Huang

B.A. Amherst College, 2002

December, 2017

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GENERAL NOTES

Dialogue is in English unless noted otherwise.

Depending on the language spoken by the audience, subtitles are to be added so that all dialogue can be understood.

FADE IN:

EXT. PARIS STREETS - DAY (2017)

Present day in the French capital. Faces flicker in and out of autumn sunlight, through the shadows of trees lining Rue Saint-Denis.

SUPER: *"If you want to get to know Marker, you might as well invent him."* - Chris Darke

In voiceover, we hear interviews in different languages. They all describe a particular man.

Among the passersby, we search for him. As details emerge, we focus on men who might be a match. They don't know they're being filmed.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Can you describe the physical appearance?

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)

Medium height, I'd say.

AMERICAN FEMALE (V.O.)

Tall, at least six feet.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)

He didn't strike me as tall. A bit stooped. But taller when he was younger, maybe?

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

And the hair?

FRENCH FEMALE (V.O.)

Bald. Not like a shaved head, but—

SPANISH REMALE (V.O.)

Bald, with big ears. An oval face.

FRENCH FEMALE (V.O.)

A longer face, an angular face.

In Place Dauphine, an OLD BALD MAN plays a game of *pétanque*, tossing a lemon-sized, steel ball at a target on the ground. He has big ears and an oval face.

JAPANESE MALE (V.O.)

Not ... not a memorable face.

FRENCH FEMALE (V.O.)  
French, of course.

AMERICAN FEMALE (V.O.)  
Not just French. He claimed he was  
born in Mongolia. Whether that's  
true or not ...

At an outdoor stall near the Seine, a BALD BOOKSELLER  
arranges his wares. He looks typically French—possibly with  
some Asian heritage mixed in?

AMERICAN MALE (V.O.)  
The pseudonyms were a game for him.  
Marc Dornier, during the war.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)  
Michel Krasna.

AMERICAN FEMALE (V.O.)  
Sandor Krasna.

BRITISH MALE (V.O.)  
Fritz Markassin.

A message is spray-painted on walls throughout the city: "RIP  
Chris Marker 1921-2012."

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)  
Chris Marker.

SPANISH MALE (V.O.)  
Chris Marker.

FRENCH FEMALE (V.O.)  
Chris Marker.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY (2017)

Crowds flow through the Egyptian wing of the Louvre. A BALD  
MALE TOURIST inspects a mummy.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)  
"Chris Marker" is a practical  
choice, because you can pronounce  
it in most languages.

AMERICAN FEMALE (V.O.)  
Leaving your mark. Like what you  
leave behind, you know?

EXT. PARIS STREETS - DAY (2017)

A BALD MALE WORKER prunes a tree in Parc Monceau.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)

What you leave out is as important  
as what you leave in.

A YOUNG WOMAN and her BALD BOYFRIEND chat in an Oberkampf  
cafe.

JAPANESE MALE (V.O.)

You talk with him for an hour, the  
most fascinating conversation, and  
in the end you realize he didn't  
reveal anything.

At a news kiosk, the headlines are all about Trump and  
Macron.

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)

I asked him many times for an  
interview. Always the same answer.

A little sushi joint on Rue Saint-Anne. A LONELY BALD MAN  
dines at the window table. In the corner of the window is a  
*maneki-neko* (a ceramic cat statue, symbolizing good luck).

BRITISH MALE (V.O.)

At the end of our lunch, I ask if I  
can take his picture. His face  
falls, and he says, "No pictures."  
And then he stands up and leaves.  
Just like that.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Did he pay the bill?

BRITISH MALE (V.O.)

I don't recall.

A BALD MALE BACKPACKER walks along the Pont Neuf. He stops to  
take a selfie.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)

I invited him to the film festival,  
and of course he refused. I said,  
okay, can you send me your photo  
for the catalog? He sent a picture  
of his cat. So that's what we used.

Cars zoom through an underpass, past graffiti of a grinning  
yellow cat.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

An Egyptian cat statue scans the museum crowd.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
Can you describe the appearance?

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)  
Of what?

AMERICAN INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
The cat.

SPANISH FEMALE (V.O.)  
Like a famous filmmaker.

EXT. PARIS STREETS - DAY (2017)

A BALD FATHER pushes a stroller across a cobblestone street.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
Was he really born in Mongolia?

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)  
There's a lot of misinformation out there, and I assume some of it came from Chris himself.

In front of Elysée Palace, ACTIVISTS demonstrate for workers' rights. A BALD MALE PROTESTER waves a sign ("Mai 68 La Lutte Continue," not subtitled).

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)  
We've all heard the stories that he was in the Resistance ...

On Rue de L'Ourcq, a BALD MALE CYCLIST rolls by graffiti depicting Donald Trump with devil horns.

FRENCH MALE (V.O.)  
... or that he came from fabulous wealth. Personally, I'm not interested.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)  
Is "misinformation" another way of saying he was dishonest?



FRENCH MALE (V.O.)

It was strategic. All the names and  
the alter egos and the tall tales  
cancel each other out, so in the  
end you are left with nothing.  
Nothing but the films.

A BALD SMOKING MAN approaches a news stand, operated by a  
BALD NEWS SELLER; the two men could almost be twins. The  
smoking man buys a newspaper, crosses the street, and gets  
into a parked car operated by another near-twin, BALD DRIVER.

The car blows up.

FULL SCREEN - MRI MONITOR (2017)

On a black screen, an explosion of grey and white.

Abstract shapes meld and settle into an image of a brain.  
Data scrolls down one side of the screen; we're looking at an  
MRI scan. The brain gives way to ...

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY (2017)

... DR. MARKASSIN's bald head, as he sits at his desk. The  
doctor scribbles in a file. A middle-aged man with an oval  
face and big ears, he matches the earlier descriptions.

Seated opposite is our hero, CHRIS MARKER.

(Note: Marker is always off-screen, assuming the perspective  
of the camera; when other characters look into the camera,  
they are looking at Marker. "O.S." is omitted. Marker's voice  
has the weathered texture of an old man.)

They speak in French.

DR. MARKASSIN

Mr. Marker, I'm afraid you've been  
experiencing the symptoms of  
dementia: the loss of memory,  
confusion, etcetera. They won't get  
better, I'm afraid.

MARKER

But they'll get worse?

DR. MARKASSIN

In time. How fast or slow, I'm  
afraid it's impossible to predict.  
At your age it's quite common, I'm  
afraid—

MARKER

(annoyed)

Dr. Markassin, you can stop saying "I'm afraid." I'm not afraid, so you don't have to be on my behalf.

DR. MARKASSIN

I'm sorry, Mr. Marker.

The doctor sits back and folds his hands. The name plate on his desk reads, "FRITZ MARKASSIN, M.D."

DR. MARKASSIN (CONT'D)

Are you married?

MARKER

No.

DR. MARKASSIN

Children?

MARKER

No.

DR. MARKASSIN

You live alone?

MARKER

Yes.

DR. MARKASSIN

That's not ideal. Given your condition, your age—

MARKER

If you mean living in a place for old people—

DR. MARKASSIN

They're not as expensive as you'd think. France takes good care of its seniors.

MARKER

Dr. Markassin, are you a cat person or a dog person?

DR. MARKASSIN

Excuse me?

MARKER

Actually, I see that you have a dog.

Dr. Markassin turns and smiles at a photo on a shelf.

DR. MARKASSIN  
Ah yes. That's Jean-Luc.

In the photo, the doctor kisses JEAN-LUC, a brindle Cairn Terrier.

MARKER  
Jean-Luc loves you, because in you he sees himself. You could beat him every day, and he would still come running to lick your face.

DR. MARKASSIN  
I'm guessing you're a cat person.

MARKER  
When my Guillaume was dying, he wanted to be alone. Of course "want" is the wrong word. It would be silly to assume he had an understanding of death, not that any of us do.

DR. MARKASSIN  
He ran away?

MARKER  
I found the body a couple weeks later, curled up on a shelf in the basement, behind a row of pickle jars.

DR. MARKASSIN  
It's rather sad, don't you think?

MARKER  
Not at all.

We hear a banging mechanical noise, faint at first but gathering volume. Dr. Markassin seems unaware of it.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(voice growing fainter)  
How about we just take it a step at a time? We can arrange for home visits from a nurse, three times a week to start. And I'll teach you a few mnemonic exercises ...

The banging completely drowns him out.

INT. MRI ROOM - DAY (2017)

A shadowy room. An empty patient table sticks out of the open cylinder of an MRI scanner, which is apparently the source of the banging noise.

A sleek, white CAT creeps across the floor.

He pauses, then leaps onto the table. He peers into the mouth of the cylinder. Blue light pulses from within.

The Cat meows nervously. Then he walks slowly across the table, into the belly of the machine.

Light flashes with blinding intensity.

EXT. PARIS STREETS - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

A computer simulation of present-day Paris.

An animated version of the Cat flies along Rue de Babylone, just above the cars and pedestrians, his tail waving languidly in the night.

Paris has been reduced to crude geometric solids, with photos of the city stitched onto each plane. A splintered collage, at once flat and three-dimensional.

There's a memory lag in the system. As the Cat flies past, the city blocks assemble and snap into place, like a house of cards collapsing in reverse.

The Cat's eyes glint under the street lights. A slow blink, expressing nothing.

He alights in front of La Pagode, an old-fashioned movie palace. The marquee reads, "CHRIS MARKER'S LA JETÉE."

He enters ...

INT. MOVIE PALACE - CONTINUOUS (ANIMATED)

... and pads stealthily down the aisle of the theater. The simulation continues.

The details of the room could be from Versailles: velvet, marble, gilt leaf, hovering cherubs.

The Cat surveys the audience. Most are standard-issue humans, with some exceptions: an OWL in scuba diving gear, a WOOLLY MAMMOTH with dreadlocks, and a polka-dotted DINOSAUR. No one notices the Cat.

The Cat sneaks under the front row seats and settles, unnoticed, behind a pair of dangling legs.

The legs belong to a BOY, about 10 years old, in an old-fashioned tweed suit with shorts. He looks intently at the screen.

On the theater speakers, we hear a familiar voice, in French:

MARKER (V.O.)

This is the story of a man marked  
by an image from his childhood.

The screen reflects in the Boy's wide eyes.

MARKER (V.O.)

The violent scene that upset him,  
and whose meaning he was to grasp  
only years later, happened on the  
main jetty at Orly, the Paris  
airport, sometime before the  
outbreak of World War Three.

Hidden under the Boy's seat, the Cat licks his paw and stares blankly at the projection.

Finally, we see the film: what seems to be Chris Marker's 1962 masterpiece, *La Jetée* ("The Jetty").

ON THE SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

(Note: Marker's most famous film is a sequence of black-and-white photographs, set to a voiceover in the manner of a slideshow. Unlike the movie palace, this version of *La Jetée* is not computer-generated; it's another kind of simulation. The photos are a close but not identical match with the originals. The actors are different. As for the story ... read and see.)

We're on the outdoor observation deck ("jetty") at Orly Airport. Morning. The sun peeks through the crossbeams of a communications tower. From the tower's speakers, a French voice announces departures and arrivals.

Parents have brought their kids to watch the planes. Everyone is in their Sunday best; it's an event.

In the crowd, we see the Boy. He is the non-digital version of the Boy in the audience; he wears the same tweed suit. The Boy runs along the railing, holding a model airplane. He looks up to follow a real plane as it takes off.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

The animated version of the Boy looks up at the screen, at the image of himself in *La Jetée*. He is entranced.

On the floor beneath the Boy's seat, the Cat yawns.

On a stage below the movie screen, MICHEL KRASNA sits at a grand piano. Krasna has the face of Marker's neurologist, Dr. Markassin, but with a full head of blonde hair. His eyes are squinted, almost shut, behind red-tinted glasses.

We hear the film playing:

MARKER (V.O.)

Nothing sorts out memories from ordinary moments. Only later do they claim remembrance, when they show their scars.

On the piano, Krasna hits a single, sustained note.

ON THE SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

The film continues with Krasna playing a live score.

The Boy watches the plane dwindle in the sky. Then he turns to scan the deck.

He sees a woman at the end of the jetty. She's a pretty blonde, about 30, in a black sweater dress. She leans on the railing, lost in thought. This is LIVIA.

A plane, passing low overhead. The roar of engines.

Livia, looking across the jetty. The wind hitting her. Fear in her eyes.

The Boy's face, turning to follow her gaze.

Thunderous chords from Krasna's piano.

The figure of a RUNNING MAN, coming toward Livia.

The Running Man, crumpling to the ground.

Livia, gasping, stunned.

Shocked reactions from the crowd.

The model plane on the ground, smashed.

The Boy's dazed eyes.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED)

We see the animated Boy in the audience, watching *La Jetée*.  
We hear audio from the film:

MARKER (V.O.)

Later, he realized he'd seen a man  
die. Soon after, Paris was  
destroyed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOVIE PALACE - LATER (ANIMATED, 2017)

The lights are up. The cinema screen is covered by red velvet  
curtains. The Owl in scuba gear perches on the lid of the  
grand piano. He addresses the crowd in French.

OWL

Being such a private man, Chris  
Marker never did Q&As. But we are  
fortunate to have with us two of  
his closest friends: composer  
Michel Krasna and legendary  
filmmaker Agnes Varda. Please  
welcome Michel and Agnes!

The Owl flies away as the audience claps.

DISSOLVE TO:

The Q&A proceeds in French. The polka-dotted Dinosaur raises  
a claw.

DINOSAUR

My question is for Mr. Krasna.  
What's it like to write music for a  
film that you can't see?

Michel Krasna is seated onstage.

KRASNA

Hmmm ... I didn't lose my sight  
until I was almost 40. So the early  
films, including *La Jetée*, those I  
composed in quite the normal way.

DINOSAUR

Do you remember seeing *La Jetée*?

KRASNA

I do. It's been fifty years, but I have a clear image of it in my mind. I wonder though, how much my own private *La Jetée* has deviated from the original.

AGNES VARDA is seated next to Krasna. She is a petite, elfin woman in her 30s. She gives the composer an affectionate pat on the arm.

VARDA

You haven't seen me in fifty years either.

KRASNA

My dear Agnes, to me you'll always be the little Belgian girl, running with the boys of the New Wave.

VARDA

Michel, I haven't aged a day.

The audience laughs.

VARDA (CONT'D)

Who needs plastic surgery when you have Photoshop?

More laughter.

KRASNA

I suppose every movie is a time travel movie. But Marker made the essential one.

VARDA

He realized that the essence of time travel is the relativity of experience.

The Cat perches on a balcony overlooking the stage. He watches the Boy in the front row.

VARDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What's his phrase? A "twice-lived fragment of time." At first, we see through the confused eyes of a boy. At the end, we relive same scene, but now the boy has grown into a man.



FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

A man climbs a set of stairs onto the jetty at Orly Airport. He has brown hair and wears an old army jacket. Otherwise, he looks just like Dr. Markassin. We'll call him MARKASSIN.

Markassin scans the crowd. He sees the Boy running with his model plane.

VARDA (V.O.)

For me, the key moment is when the man sees himself as a boy.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

Back to the Q&A. Varda onstage.

VARDA

His childhood memory has come full circle. He realizes on some level that it's a trap. Why does he walk right into it? Fifty years later, I'm still asking that.

In the front row, the Boy closes his eyes.

On the balcony, the Cat closes his eyes.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

Back to the jetty. Markassin stands with eyes closed. His left hand is raised, as if touching something invisible.

He opens his eyes. Beyond his fingertips, he sees Livia, standing at the end of the deck.

Markassin runs toward Livia. We realize he's the Running Man we saw earlier.

SHERNG-LEE emerges from the crowd. He's an Asian man in his 30s, wearing a dark suit and insect-like sunglasses. He aims a futuristic device that could be a gun, or maybe a camera.

Markassin's back arches. His arms fly up. He's been shot.

Livia gasps.

The Boy watches, in a daze.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

Back to the Q&A. The Woolly Mammoth raises his hand.

WOOLLY MAMMOTH

Question for Ms. Varda, on the  
relativity of experience. Is *La  
Jetée* a different film for you now,  
versus fifty years ago?

VARDA

Certainly. Or rather, uncertainly.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

Livia on the jetty. Wind in her hair. A faraway look.

VARDA (V.O.)

When I first saw it, in '62, I  
thought, she's so beautiful and  
sad! She's caught in a loop of  
time, doomed to experience the same  
loss, again and again.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

Back to the Q&A. The Cat sits on the balcony railing,  
watching Varda and Krasna onstage.

VARDA

Now, I'm not so sure. Now I wonder,  
did she love him at all? There's no  
question that she's the bait in a  
trap; the man's obsession with her  
leads to his death.

The Cat's gaze drifts to the audience. He sees a pretty  
blonde woman in the front row. It's a digital version of  
Livia, in a black leather jacket and ruby red hightop  
sneakers.

The Cat watches her as the Q&A continues.

VARDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But was she just an unknowing  
victim? Or was she part of the  
scheme from the beginning?

INT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - NIGHT (2017)

We've come out of the simulation, into a Parisian pub.

Livia sits at the bar, sipping ginger ale. She's the digital version come to life. She turns to Marker, speaking English with a faintly Eastern European accent.

LIVIA

Either way, good girl, femme fatale, she's a type. A device created to define the man. Let me put it this way. Do you think Marker spent a lot of time wondering what went on in women's minds?

EXT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - NIGHT (2017)

"Sans Soleil," in neon letters, glows hazy in the rain. We hear Marker speaking English, with a French accent.

MARKER (V.O.)

He was born in, what, 1921? What do you expect?

LIVIA (V.O.)

That doesn't insulate him from all contemporary critique.

MARKER (V.O.)

Livia, you're a tough audience. Did you even like the movie?

INT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - NIGHT (2017)

Back inside. Livia and Marker at the bar.

LIVIA

*La Jetée*? Oh my God, it made me jealous. That's how I know something is great, because I wish I'd made it.

MARKER

So you're a filmmaker.

LIVIA

Yeah.

She looks at her reflection in the back bar mirror.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

But lately, I've found it impossible to work.

MARKER

Why's that?

LIVIA

In America now, politics is all anyone can talk about. For artists, there's such pressure to join "the Resistance."

MARKER

We had one of those, in my day.

LIVIA

I doubt yours was so self-congratulatory. A bunch of pretentious New York artists stage their avant-garde "protest" in a downtown theater. What did that accomplish?

INT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - LATER (2017)

Livia and Marker play a game of darts.

LIVIA

(aiming)

I want to respond, but I don't know what I can do that's not one, self-serving ...

She throws. The target is a big cardboard cutout of Livia's face. The dart lands in the chin.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

... and two, irrelevant.

She throws a second dart; it hits the hairline.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

Damn it.

MARKER

Livia, my dear, the elephant in the room is kicking your ass.

LIVIA

(rolls eyes)

Dad humor.

MARKER

What's "dad humor"?

LIVIA  
Anyway, New York was just getting  
too heavy. So last week, I got a  
ticket.

She throws again.

INT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - LATER (2017)

Livia and Marker, back at the bar.

LIVIA  
I thought, with my next project,  
what if I go in completely the  
opposite direction?

MARKER  
A film about being an irrelevant  
filmmaker?

LIVIA  
Sort of, yeah. A film about lost  
films. Films where the last known  
print is missing or destroyed, that  
are mentioned in cinema textbooks,  
but now are impossible to see.

She closes her eyes.

CUT TO BLACK:

LIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Art without form, sublimated as  
pure idea.

MARKER (V.O.)  
And how do you make a film about  
pure ideas? What do you see on the  
screen?

LIVIA (V.O.)  
Well, yeah. It's impossible to  
make.

EXT. SANS SOLEIL BAR - NIGHT (2017)

The rain has stopped. Livia and Marker lean against the  
exterior of the bar.

LIVIA  
(glum)  
Which is apparently why I chose it.

She sighs and looks across the street. People are coming out of the La Pagode movie theater. Among them is the Boy from *La Jetée*. He has traded his tweed suit for a windbreaker and jeans.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
What time is it?

She rubs her eyes.

MARKER  
Livia?

LIVIA  
Yeah.

MARKER  
It just so happens, I own a lost film. Number 397 on Cinema Quarterly's list of missing movies.

She looks skeptical.

MARKER (CONT'D)  
It's at my apartment. I can show it to you, if you like.

LIVIA  
You're serious?

MARKER  
But one condition. You can't use it in your film.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT (2017)

Marker and Livia walk along a deserted cobblestone street.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
It was shot in 1921, a record of a fossil hunting expedition in Mongolia. He found the print in his mother's attic, soon after her death.

Marker watches Livia's profile, moving in and out of the light.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
How the reel came into her possession, he wasn't sure.

EXT. PLACE DU QUEBEC - CONTINUOUS (2017)

Marker and Livia continue walking, as the street opens onto a square, centered around the Fontaine l'Embâcle. The modernist fountain bubbles up from underneath the pavement, breaking and lifting the granite.

MARKER (V.O.)

I'm guessing you don't have kids.

LIVIA (V.O.)

No.

MARKER (V.O.)

Well, if you do, your child will have a more complete picture of his mother than I did of mine. Back then, we didn't live in public. It was easier to bury the past.

EXT. SCENIC LOOKOUT - NIGHT (2017)

Marker and Livia come to a walkway overlooking the 13th arrondissement.

In the distance, the Pathé Foundation building—a massive glowing egg—peeks out from a 19th-century city block.

LIVIA (V.O.)

What did they find? The fossil hunters in Mongolia.

MARKER (V.O.)

A nest of dinosaur eggs.

LIVIA (V.O.)

Oh, that's sad.

MARKER (V.O.)

How's that?

LIVIA (V.O.)

Tiny dinosaurs, waiting forever to be born.

She turns to him; now her lips move.

LIVIA

It's irresponsible, you know. The film belongs in a museum.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (2017)

A tin clock hangs on the wall of a moon-lit room. It's almost two.

MARKER (V.O.)  
But Livia, the world has too many  
films. And what's so important  
about this one?

Livia takes down the clock and turns it over; the body is an old storage tin for a reel of 16mm film.

MARKER (V.O.)  
A lost film's power comes from  
remaining unseen. Giving it away  
would only ensure that it's  
forgotten.

She loads the film into a projector.

MARKER (V.O.)  
No, I'd rather keep my hundred  
meters of buried treasure. And once  
in a while, share with a carefully  
selected audience, sworn to  
secrecy.

The projector spins up, and Livia is lit by the screen.

MARKER (V.O.)  
In that flicker of life, they know  
that they are experiencing  
something unique in the world.  
Something they won't forget.

FADE TO:

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Morning. Livia, in last night's clothes, wakes up on Marker's couch. Cellphone ringing. She ignores it.

Suddenly, she grabs a nearby trash can and throws up. She sits back, catching her breath.

The loft apartment is insanely cluttered but strangely clean—not a speck of dust. No sign of Marker. Maybe he's buried in a pile somewhere?

She grabs the trash can and locates the bathroom. She closes the door behind her. We're left in the main room.



LIVIA (V.O.)

He told me, with remarkable calm,  
that he was losing his memory.  
Eventually, the disease who claim  
him in full. But first, he would  
make a film.

Every inch of the place is crammed with the evidence of Marker's non-stop artistic practice. Thousands of books, cassettes, and discs are stuffed onto sagging shelves and piled on the floor. A dozen TVs carry news feeds from different countries. A shopping cart is piled high with lights and cables.

Where the old man sleeps is a mystery; there's barely space to walk. It's hard to imagine someone could actually live here.

LIVIA (V.O.)

He had always addressed his films  
to an audience. This connection to  
the viewer was no doubt the most  
enduring relationship of his life—  
the most intimate, and the most  
impersonal.

On top of a scuffed upright piano, a reel-to-reel recorder sits next to a robotic owl in scuba gear and a stuffed woolly mammoth with dreadlocks.

LIVIA (V.O.)

He was present in his work, but  
always hidden, always encrypted.  
Now he wondered, as he became a  
stranger to himself, if he would  
still recall the access codes.

The tin clock ticks.

The white Cat emerges from behind a pile of books and leaps onto Marker's desk. Marker's computer displays a 3D design program; an animated version of the Cat rotates slowly on a grid. The face is a work-in-progress.

The real Cat meows at his digital double.

LIVIA (V.O.)

He told me that now he could stop  
hiding, because this last work  
would have an audience of  
one—himself. It would be his own  
story, as honestly as he could  
remember it.

(MORE)

LIVIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And as his mind faded, the film  
would be one last bulwark against  
oblivion; it would become his  
memory.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Marker and Livia eat breakfast at a big work table made of  
planks. She has coffee and toast.

In front of Marker is a bowl filled with a lumpy substance,  
which he stirs with a spoon.

LIVIA  
Ew, what is that?

MARKER  
Goat milk yogurt, with raw beef.

LIVIA  
You eat that for breakfast?

MARKER  
It's all I eat. One meal a day, and  
a shot of vodka at sundown. Want  
some?

LIVIA  
No thanks.

MARKER  
(mouth full)  
So, you never answered me.

She sips her coffee.

LIVIA  
What's the pay?

MARKER  
If you've seen my films, it  
shouldn't surprise you that I'm  
broke.

LIVIA  
So it's more like an internship.

MARKER  
2nd Assistant Director.

LIVIA  
Who's the first?

MARKER  
Congratulations, you're promoted.

LIVIA  
And what happens, after you ...?

MARKER  
Eh, burn it. Or bury it with me.

LIVIA  
You're not selling me on this.

MARKER  
How's this: wild youth, mothers and fathers, love, war, the New Wave, the Sixties ... not to mention your favorite, the intersection of art and politics. Lots of intersecting.

LIVIA  
The Chris Marker Story?

MARKER  
Hmm, a Chris Marker story. I don't believe in being definitive.

She takes a big bite of toast. Chews a long time. Finally:

LIVIA  
I wish I could help you.

EXT. THE SEINE - DAY (2017)

Livia's red sneakers on grey cobblestones. She walks along the Seine, past used book stalls. Through ear buds, she listens to the theme from *La Jetée*.

She passes by a blind STREET MUSICIAN. He plays a Casio keyboard, syncing with the music on her phone. He has the face of Michel Krasna. Lost in thought, she doesn't recognize him.

(Note: The same actor plays the Street Musician, Michel Krasna, and Dr. Markassin.)

Someone's calling. She answers on the fifth ring.

LIVIA  
Hey.

A video call. On the phone's screen, we see Sherng-Lee, the assassin from *La Jetée*. No sunglasses.

SHERNG-LEE  
I've been calling.

LIVIA  
I know.

SHERNG-LEE  
How are you?

She walks, avoiding his gaze.

LIVIA  
What are you up to?

SHERNG-LEE  
Um, a lot. We're filming the debate scene, about political art versus propaganda. Remember, we talked about that?

LIVIA  
Vaguely.

SHERNG-LEE  
The trial is coming up. Then off to D.C. for the march on the Pentagon.

LIVIA  
You never stop, do you?

SHERNG-LEE  
I miss you.

LIVIA  
You're managing fine on your own.

SHERNG-LEE  
I'd love your input on the script.

LIVIA  
Sherng-Lee, you know what you're doing. You don't need my approval.

SHERNG-LEE  
Well, if you're not too busy—

LIVIA  
What's that supposed to mean?

SHERNG-LEE  
Nothing.

LIVIA  
I have to do my own thing.

SHERNG-LEE  
How's that going? Have you written  
anything?

No response.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)  
Is there a concept? A visual,  
anything?

She comes to a bench. Sits. Stares at the river.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)  
I'm coming to Paris.

LIVIA  
Sherng-Lee, that's not a good idea.

SHERNG-LEE  
There's going to be a massive  
protest.

LIVIA  
(rolls eyes)  
Another protest? When?

SHERNG-LEE  
Start of Act Three. It could be a  
turning point, I think.

She looks at the water.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)  
When are you coming home?

Still no answer.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)  
Livia?

LIVIA  
My friend arrived. I'll call you.

She abruptly hangs up and takes out her earbuds. Marker takes  
a seat next to her.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
My husband.

MARKER  
You work together?

LIVIA  
Used to.

MARKER

And now?

LIVIA

None of your business.

EXT. ORLY AIRPORT JETTY - DAY

The outdoor observation deck at Orly Airport. Livia and Marker walk together.

MARKER

How's this? You can keep one copy.  
It'll be your own lost film.

LIVIA

To lure innocent filmmakers back to  
my lair?

MARKER

Or not so innocent ones.

Livia runs a finger along the railing.

MARKER (CONT'D)

My mother used to bring me here,  
when I was a boy. This was the  
Thirties; they were just starting  
to fly internationally. I thought  
it all awfully glamorous.

LIVIA

I hate airports.

Livia surveys the deck. She sees the Boy from *La Jetée*,  
leaning on the railing. No tweed suit today, just jeans and a  
sweater. He looks up as a plane passes overhead.

She sees a distant figure at the end of the jetty, aiming a  
camera at the passing plane. It's Sherng-Lee. He slowly tilts  
down until the long lens is pointed straight at Livia.

She turns to Marker.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time I went home.

MARKER

We still have time. Don't we?

The wind catches her hair. She has a faraway look. She closes  
her eyes. Opens them. Turns to Marker.

LIVIA  
I'll do it. But not as your  
assistant.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD:

*Chris & Livia present*

*WHO KILLED CHRIS MARKER?*

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Marker and Livia sit at the work table. He slides a weather-beaten leather case across to her. She opens it; inside is a mint-condition 16mm movie camera.

MARKER  
Beaulieu R16, first made in 1958.  
Spring-wound motor, turret mount  
with three primes.

She picks it up and groans at the weight.

LIVIA  
I thought we were on a budget.

MARKER  
A lot of the movie happens in the  
Sixties, so it's a 16 millimeter  
look.

LIVIA  
You can get that look in post, for  
way less.

As they talk, the scene rotates through several "film look" filters, then back to normal.

MARKER  
How about we use both?

LIVIA  
Sure, that's kind of a thing.

MARKER  
You'll find I'm quite forward-  
thinking, when it comes to new  
technology. We can use film for the  
flashbacks ... and this little  
marvel for the present day.

He slides a digital camcorder towards her.

MARKER (CONT'D)

(proudly)

Sony TRV900. It's like having a Betacam in the palm of your hand.

LIVIA

Wow, this is retro.

MARKER

You don't like it?

LIVIA

My phone has 20 times the resolution of this thing.

MARKER

Really? It cost me 10,000 francs.

LIVIA

What, like in 1998?

MARKER

Fine, who cares, shoot it with your wristwatch. But some things, you can only capture on film.

Livia looks through the viewfinder of the Beaulieu, as the scene transforms into ...

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

... the same room fifty years ago—shot on genuine, grainy, glorious 16mm. (Note: All the 1960s live action scenes have this look.)

Although Livia is ostensibly shooting the scene, the camera's perspective continues to represent Marker.

The mountains of electronics and books have been replaced with mod sofas and chairs. Marker and his friends mill about; the atmosphere is hectic and thick with cigarette smoke. Everyone speaks French.

Marker consults with ALAIN RESNAIS, a jaded man who is disgusted by everything.

MARKER

You know who would be great for the narrator? Imagine if we got Che.



RESNAIS

Guevara? No one's seen him in years. And good riddance, I say.

Resnais sticks a push pin into a wall map of Vietnam.

RESNAIS (CONT'D)

The only thing worse than a hypocrite is a hypocrite with a gun.

Across the room, Agnes Varda is on the telephone. She yells across the room to Marker.

VARDA

It's Joris! He got to Hanoi!

MARKER

Great, can you give him the revised shot list?

VARDA

(into phone)

Joris, we need to get a peasant, defusing a land mine.

Michel Krasna composes at the piano.

KRASNA

(singing)

*The girl she came from Vietnam,  
the boy was here and now he's gone.*

Krasna peers through his red-tinted glasses and jots in a notebook. (Apparently, he's not yet blind.)

VARDA

(into phone)

You don't want the guy smiling. Or would that be interesting? Like being on camera is more strange for him, than defusing a mine.

RESNAIS

(to no one in particular)

It's horrible to talk this way, isn't?

MARKER

Come on, Alain. The biggest jokers are the surgeons in the military hospitals.

RESNAIS

But we didn't save anybody.

JEAN-LUC GODARD (late 30s, sharp Italian suit) bursts into the apartment. He's followed by Jean-Luc, a brindle Cairn Terrier who looks just like Dr. Markassin's dog.

KRASNA

(singing)

*Godard is wanted in seven states,  
he's on the run and always late.*

GODARD

Marker, I need two thousand francs.  
And a cigarette.

With Krasna accompanying on piano, Godard dances through the room in a choreographed sequence. He grabs a cigarette from Resnais, gets it lit by Marker, cha-cha-chas with Varda while tangling her up in the telephone cord, and spins away to the kitchen.

A honk from outside. Resnais looks out the window.

RESNAIS

Did someone call a taxi?

GODARD

No, I still owe him the fare. You  
have ten francs?

Jean-Luc wags his tail and jumps on Varda, who is trying to untangle herself from the phone line.

VARDA

(into phone)

Call when you get to Cao Bang. And  
save your receipts!

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Present day. Livia pans the Beaulieu across the loft; the filmmakers are gone. She speaks in English.

LIVIA

In 1967, Chris Marker called on his  
comrades to make a new kind of  
political cinema, protesting the  
war in Vietnam.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

Back to the past. We see the filmmakers one by one.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
Marker assembled a team of  
filmmakers that included Agnes  
Varda.

Varda cleans a camera lens.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
Alain Resnais.

Resnais looks disgusted while Jean-Luc licks his face.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
Michel Krasna.

Krasna plays the piano.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
And Jean-Luc Godard.

Godard raids Marker's refrigerator.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Present day. Livia aims the camera at Marker. She continues  
in English.

LIVIA  
Trading the autonomy of the *auteur*  
for the shared purpose of a  
collective, they made *Far From*  
*Vietnam*.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

Back to the past. The blinds are drawn. Marker operates the  
projector. Varda, Krasna, Resnais, and Godard watch.

(Note: In this and subsequent scenes, the *Far From Vietnam*  
meetings are conducted in French, unless indicated  
otherwise.)

Projected on the screen, we see an OLD VIETNAMESE MAN  
crouched in the jungle. He uses an army knife to excise the  
detonating components from a land mine. His movements are  
quick and casual; he might as well be peeling a potato. When  
he's done, he flashes a winning smile at the camera.

AGNES

Did Joris ask him to do that?

The projection changes to a village square.

MARKER

Our man shot this in Cao Bang.

Two Vietnamese singers (MCNAMARA and LBJ) perform for an audience of PEASANTS.

MARKER (CONT'D)

The guy on the left is playing Robert McNamara, and the girl on the right, believe it or not, is supposed to be President Johnson.

The two singers hardly resemble their roles. Instead, they wear the makeup and costumes of Vietnamese folk opera, with U.S. army rifles slung over their shoulders. Dialogue in *italics* is sung in Vietnamese.

MCNAMARA

*I'm sorry to report, President Johnson, our A-1 Sky Raiders have gone to heaven!*

LBJ

*Oh my F4H aircraft! We call you Phantom, and now you've become a ghost!*

The Peasants laugh.

MCNAMARA

*Please, Mr. President, these Vietnamese are too tough, let's go home!*

Marker hits pause. The singers are frozen on the screen.

MARKER

And we're in the next chapter. Alain, your monologue could fit here quite nicely.

Resnais heaves a sigh and stands up.

RESNAIS

Might as well. We go from comedy to tragedy, but it's all theater.

Resnais stands and paces moodily in front of the screen, hands thrust into pockets. The paused image of the singers is projected over him.

RESNAIS (CONT'D)

He lives in Paris. A writer, a man of the left. He's been asked to write a play about Vietnam. The deadline was yesterday. He's lost. How can he be the author of this play, when the script has already been written? And performed endlessly? It's all theater, he thinks. The theater of the news, where the images of horror never fail to deliver.

Resnais laughs mirthlessly. Marker hits play. On the screen, LBJ unfreezes, unslings his rifle, and aims it at McNamara.

LBJ

*The cheap show of outrage comes right on cue.*

LBJ shoots McNamara, who falls to the ground.

MCNAMARA

*And the curtain falls on your amnesia.*

Marker pauses the film.

RESNAIS

The theater of protest, with the Vietnamese as convenient props in our drama of white guilt, white absolution.

Marker hits play.

LBJ

*Poor McNamara, do you feel like a prop in a white man's drama?*

McNamara props himself up on one elbow.

MCNAMARA

*Good question, never thought about it before.*

Another pause.

RESNAIS

The Vietnamese are the coveted accessory on this year's red carpet—never mind the suffering of the Yemenis, the Sudanese, the Kurds. If we had to pay attention to all the world's pain, how would we have time for anything else? No, it's better that we stick to the Vietnamese story, the David of Third World Communism versus the Goliath of American Capitalism.

The projection unfreezes again.

LBJ

*My name's not Goliath, I'm LBJ!*

Pause again.

RESNAIS

For we live in a society that has the luxury of tolerating dissent, if only to prove how lucky we are, how open and advanced. We're all complicit; we all play our roles. The show goes on, as we careen from war to war, tragedy to tragedy, and we distract ourselves with the spectacle of our own goodness.

Livia interrupts the scene, in accented French.

LIVIA (V.O.)

Excuse me.

Everyone looks to the camera.

RESNAIS

Yes?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Present day. Livia shoots with the Beaulieu.

LIVIA

I'm confused. Isn't this a protest film?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

Back to the past.

RESNAIS

Hmm.

Resnais sits and ponders. He lights a cigarette.

RESNAIS (CONT'D)

That's really a question for the screenwriter.

LIVIA (V.O.)

Wait, you didn't write this?

RESNAIS

I'm more of a visual guy. I never write my own scripts. Marker, can you patch in the writer, Jacques Sternberg?

MARKER

No problem.

Marker hits fast forward. In the projected film, the "McNamara" singer rapidly wipes off his opera makeup, revealing that he is not Asian, but white.

Marker hits play. "McNamara" is now STERNBERG; he speaks French.

STERNBERG

Jacques Sternberg here.

LIVIA

Wait, you're not Vietnamese?!

STERNBERG

If you insist on being so literal, this movie will be slow going. To answer your question, yes it's a protest film, but it's also dialectical and self-reflexive. In other words, what Bazin called an "essay film."

LIVIA (V.O.)

But still, according to your own text, why are you making the movie at all?

STERNBERG

We're a collective, but we don't have to agree on everything. A question or a contradiction creates an opening for the viewer to enter.

Godard leans toward the camera and whispers conspiratorially.

GODARD

A little trick of the trade: pre-empt criticism by criticizing yourself.

LIVIA (V.O.)

Sounds like cheating.

GODARD

So what?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (1967)

A beautiful NUDE WOMAN lies in bed, stretching sensuously.

GODARD (V.O.)

Each cluster bomb disperses up to 700 bomblets, each the size of a soda can. When a bomblet explodes, it throws off 300 steel fragments, each traveling at thrice the speed of a rifle bullet, and can easily sever an arm, a leg, a head.

The model gently rubs together her pedicured feet.

GODARD (V.O.)

A pulverized foot is the most common injury. When such a foot is handled, one has the sensation of a bag filled with nuts.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

The *Far From Vietnam* team (Marker, Varda, Resnais, Krasna, Godard) sit around Marker's plank work table, over coffee and pastries.

GODARD

Anyways, that's the idea.

The others look at him, then at each other.

GODARD (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

RESNAIS

It's a bit obvious. Perhaps to the point of stupidity.



VARDA

Does the woman ever say anything?

GODARD

No. Why does that matter?

VARDA

Oh, I don't know. Maybe she has an opinion.

MARKER

What if we could get Bardot?

GODARD

BB? She hates Communists. Has a picture of de Gaulle in her bedroom, prays to it every night in her negligee. Terribly erotic. Fonda, I bet she'd do it.

VARDA

Think of the context here.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - VIETNAM WAR

A quick montage of war images: bombs dropping, napalm victims, a prisoner being beaten.

VARDA (V.O.)

Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3 ...

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

Back to the filmmakers' meeting.

VARDA

And Chapter 4 is a Playboy spread? Maybe it would work if there's a tension between what you see and what you imagine. But if we're going to show the reality of the war anyway, what's the point?

MARKER

Jean-Luc, I'm afraid you've been vetoed.

Godard responds, but his voice has been replaced by Livia's, in accented French.

GODARD

(Livia's voice)

Woah, woah, hold on.

(MORE)

GODARD (CONT'D)  
You're saying you were okay with  
Resnais's idea, but you rejected  
nude Jane Fonda?

VARDA  
We made the right call.  
Aesthetically speaking.

GODARD  
(Livia's voice)  
And politically speaking?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Present day. Livia sits at Marker's computer; the previous scene has been loaded into a video editing program.

Livia speaks into a microphone wired to the computer. On the computer screen, Godard's lips move in sync with her voice.

LIVIA  
(lip syncing with Godard)  
In 1967, France was not fighting in  
Vietnam. America was. So ultimately  
you wanted an American audience,  
right?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (1967)

Back to the filmmakers' meeting. Krasna plays piano.

KRASNA  
(singing)  
*Vietnam is more than just a war,  
It's a kind of cry, a prayer,  
To foster revolutions everywhere.*

Godard stands up and paces the room, jabbing the air with his cigarette.

GODARD  
(Livia's voice)  
But if you're going to change  
anything, then you need to change  
the minds of the Americans. And  
what are Americans going to buy  
tickets for? Some depressed French  
playwright rambling about his own  
impotence, or the hottest woman in  
Hollywood?

RESNAIS  
Ah, she speaks the truth.  
Disgusting as it is.

Resnais scowls, grabs a pastry, and chews.

RESNAIS (CONT'D)  
(still looking disgusted)  
This is delicious. Marker, where do  
you get these?

Godard coughs, shakes his head, and speaks in his own voice.

GODARD  
Marker, where did you find this  
girl? She completely misunderstands  
me. I'm fighting against the  
cultural imperialism of Hollywood,  
as much as I'm fighting against the  
war.

Godard sits and rubs his temples; Livia's voice takes over.

GODARD (CONT'D)  
(Livia's voice)  
My head's spinning.

RESNAIS  
Maybe you're hungry. Try the  
baklava, it's terrific.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Present day. Livia sits at the computer and overdubs Godard's  
dialogue in her video editing program.

LIVIA  
(lip syncing with Godard)  
No thanks, I need real food.

She sets down the mic and speaks to Marker in English.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
Can we order something?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

Livia stands at the window, looking at a takeout brochure.

Underneath a picture of Che Guevara, military-style stenciled  
lettering reads, "GUERRILLA PIZZA."

She's on the phone, conversing in French.

EMPLOYEE (V.O.)  
Guerrilla Pizza, may I take your  
order?

LIVIA  
I'd like the Bay of Pigs Meat  
Lover's Special. And could you add  
anchovies to that?

EMPLOYEE (V.O.)  
You got it. It's a revolution in  
your mouth.

Livia hangs up. She feels dizzy. She leans against the  
window, forehead touching the glass.

Outside, concrete apartment buildings in the gritty  
Maraichers neighborhood of Paris. A sunny day.

She closes her eyes.

INT. LIVIA AND SHERNG-LEE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (2016)

Livia leans her head on a window pane, eyes closed. She opens  
her eyes. Outside, brownstone buildings. Prospect Heights.  
Brooklyn. Late night.

LIVIA  
I'm going to throw up.

She takes a deep breath to steady herself. She doesn't throw  
up. Instead, she turns to face the cramped living room.

Sherng-Lee sits on a futon. Beer bottles and a half-eaten  
pizza on the coffee table. Next to him is Jean-Luc  
(apparently, the same Cairn Terrier that belongs to Dr.  
Markassin and Godard).

Sherng-Lee's eyes are glued to the TV.

Jean-Luc paws at him and whines, to no avail.

On the TV: a news anchor who looks just like Dr. Markassin.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(as American news anchor)  
Let's go to our swing states. 95  
percent of districts have reported  
in Michigan. 91 percent have  
reported in Wisconsin. And in  
Pennsylvania, 93 percent ...

SHERNG-LEE  
(eyes on the screen)  
Let's shoot something tomorrow.

LIVIA  
Please, just to turn it off.

Sherng-Lee looks up from the TV. He sees that her eyes are wet. She's about to lose it.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
Sorry, I can't stand it.

SHERNG-LEE  
Come here.

He mutes the TV and goes to hug her. They rock back and forth. A slow dance with no music.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)  
The morning after, in Central Park.  
We'll interview people.

LIVIA  
What people?

SHERNG-LEE  
Real people.

LIVIA  
They don't exist.

SHERNG-LEE  
In black-and-white. It'll be the  
New York version of *Le Joli Mai*.

LIVIA  
Sounds like a crowd-pleaser. It'll  
play great in the swing states.

They rock in silence for a while.

SHERNG-LEE  
Got a better idea?

LIVIA  
Jean-Luc!

Jean-Luc is peeing on the rug. Sherng-Lee rushes toward him and steps into wet poop.

SHERNG-LEE  
Goddamnit.

The pee keeps coming.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Livia waters an orchid in the kitchen sink. Her mind is elsewhere. The water overflows.

MARKER

Easy now.

LIVIA

Sorry.

She turns off the faucet, sets the orchid on a bookshelf, and plops on the couch.

MARKER

If you don't like the Sixties, we could skip ahead. '97 was a good year for me. I made a CD-ROM.

LIVIA

Is that like an app?

MARKER

What's an "app"?

LIVIA

Nevermind. The Sixties are cool.

MARKER

But frustrating, I gather.

She gets up and paces the room.

LIVIA

You guys are trying to change the world, right?

MARKER

That's the idea.

LIVIA

But you start with the aesthetics. With your idea of what a film should be. Rather than thinking about the change you want to effect and aligning your aesthetics to support that.

She looks at a vintage movie poster for "Battleship Potemkin." The graphic style is classic Soviet propaganda.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
I mean, what do you think of  
Eisenstein?

FULL SCREEN: "BATTLESHIP POTESKIN"

We see clips from the 1925 silent film. (Note: It's public domain.) Livia's commentary is conveyed in vintage-style text cards.

TEXT CARD: *Eisenstein's world is black and white.*

A battleship's crew are forced to eat food infested with maggots. A sailor smashes his dinner plate in protest.

TEXT CARD: *The bad guys are bad. The good guys are good.*

The rebellious crew members are brought before a firing squad.

TEXT CARD: *Every cut and every angle reinforce this story.*

Before the execution can take place, the crew stages a mutiny.

MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Livia pours milk for the Cat.

LIVIA  
Your pal Sternberg said a question  
or a contradiction creates an  
opening for the viewer. But I don't  
see any of that in "Potemkin."

MARKER  
Everything evolves.

FULL SCREEN: "BATTLESHIP POTESKIN"

TEXT CARD: *Back then, the medium was young.*

Long concrete stairs—the Odessa Steps—descend toward the harbor of the Ukrainian port. A crowd has gathered on the steps to greet the incoming battleship.

TEXT CARD: *Eisenstein led a revolution in cinematic form.*

Cossack soldiers advance down the steps, as the crowd flees in terror.

TEXT CARD: *But new forms, in time, become formulas.*

The soldiers fire into the crowd.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Suddenly spooked, the Cat hisses and jumps from Livia's arms onto a bookshelf.

MARKER

As artists, formula shackles our thinking as surely as any political system. A revolution begins with freedom of thought. So we question what we're doing—and encourage viewers to question as well.

LIVIA

But do they want to question? Or do they just want the answer?

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY (2017)

A run-down side street in Marais. A brick wall emblazoned with a graffiti portrait of Che Guevara. Over his shoulder: "GUERRILLA PIZZA" in stenciled letters.

Underneath the portrait, a man secures a stack of pizza boxes to the back of a bicycle. He has fierce dark eyes and a scraggly beard; he wears a black beret and a faded army jacket with a red heart sewn on the left breast. This is CHE GUEVARA.

He dons headphones, playing a Tchaikovsky symphony. He mounts the bicycle and pedals away.

MONTAGE - CHE VS. PROPAGANDA

He bikes through the streets of Paris, as Tchaikovsky pumps on the soundtrack. In an Eisenstein-style montage, Che's movements are matched with shots from classic propaganda films. (Note: These are all public domain.)

In *Battleship Potemkin*, a baby in a stroller falls down the Odessa Steps. Che maneuvers his bike down a flight of steps.

In D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, hooded Klansmen ride their horses. Che rides his bike through Paris traffic.

In Capra's *Why We Fight*, a British soldier dons a gas mask. Che, still pedaling, sucks from an asthma inhaler.



In *Triumph of the Will*, soldiers perform a Nazi salute, which segues to the Statue of Liberty's upraised arm from *Why We Fight*. Che extends his arm to signal a turn.

The montage ends with Che chaining his bike outside Marker's apartment.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

The doorbell rings. Livia answers it; it's Che with the pizza delivery. He talks fast in Spanish-accented English.

CHE  
Marker, what's the news? Anything?

Che barges in, past Livia. The Cat rubs against Che and meows. Che looks at a stack of old TVs; each is tuned to a news program from a different country.

MARKER  
It's coming in, but I'm behind on the decryption.

CHE  
Dude, you said that last week!

Che opens the pizza box and starts eating.

MARKER  
(drily)  
Please, join us for lunch.

CHE  
(nods to Livia)  
Who's that?

MARKER  
Livia, my co-director, meet Ernesto.

CHE  
No one calls me that except my mom.  
[nodding to Marker] And my French grandpa over here.

Livia grabs a slice and takes a huge bite.

LIVIA  
Oh my God, this is good. Question for Ernesto.

CHE  
What's up?

LIVIA  
Can cinema change the world, and  
how?

CHE  
Damn, where'd you find this girl?

MARKER  
In a bar.

CHE  
What are you, 90? Got that wrinkly  
old man mojo.

LIVIA  
That's a little offensive.

CHE  
What?

LIVIA  
If I were a guy, you wouldn't say  
that.

CHE  
Girl, I was born in 1928. In  
Argentina, okay?

EVERYONE  
(in unison)  
What do you expect?

CHE  
Anyway, I don't have time for  
movies.

Che digs a copy of Mao's Little Red Book out of his breast  
pocket and tosses it to Livia.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Like the Chairman said, change is  
born in the barrel of a gun.

Livia flips through the book, to photos of a young Mao.

LIVIA  
But images inspire action, no?

CHE  
Action becomes its own propaganda.  
Gimme fifty guerrillas, in the  
jungle, fighting a big imperialist  
army, against all odds?

LIVIA  
Sure, word gets around.

Livia grabs another slice from the "Guerrilla Pizza" box, emblazoned with Che's face.

CHE  
(re: box)  
I know, it's corny as hell, but—

MARKER  
Cheesy, actually.

Marker laughs loudly; the others groan.

MARKER (CONT'D)  
Sorry, "dad humor."

CHE  
People need heroes. To lead the charge, know what I'm saying?

MARKER  
How'd that work out in the Congo?

CHE  
Okay, the Congo was bad.

Che takes a bite. His brow furrows.

CHE (CONT'D)  
But Bolivia is gonna be better. Seriously, when are you gonna decode that message from my man Fidel? It should be here by now.

MARKER  
To be perfectly honest, I've been putting it off.

CHE  
What gives, man?

MARKER  
You're going to get yourself killed, but I suppose you knew that.

CHE  
Dude, you know what's killing me? Your negative energy, man.

MARKER

(sighs)

You two make a great pair. She has a camera, you have a gun, but you think the same way.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - EARLIER (2017)

An outtake from a previous scene: Livia (out of character, headphones around neck) directs the actor playing Godard, while Sherng-Lee adjusts a light.

Livia's lips move in sync with Marker's voice.

LIVIA

(Marker's voice)

Your approach is all top-down. The filmmaker who directs the audience how to think.

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY (2017)

Another outtake: the actor playing Che stands at the curb with his bike, as Sherng-Lee, camera slung from his shoulder, consults with him.

Sherng-Lee's lips move in sync with Marker's voice.

SHERNG-LEE

(Marker's voice)

The revolutionary who parachutes in to tell the locals what's good for them. You say you're trying to empower the common folk, but your instincts are totalitarian.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Back to lunch with Marker, Che, and Livia. She grabs her third slice; she's really scarfing them down. Che sucks furiously from his asthma inhaler.

CHE

Totalitarian?! First, talk about offensive, man. And second, what's your alternative?

MARKER

May '68 was interesting.

CHE  
Here we go.

Ché stage whispers to Livia:

CHE (CONT'D)  
Dude won't shut up about May '68.

FULL SCREEN: MAY '68 TOUR PREVIEW (2017)

A low-budget promo video, powered by thumping rock music and chintzy graphics.

Present day. Dr. Markassin, in a French worker's jacket and a pirate's eye-patch, guides a TOUR GROUP through the Latin Quarter neighborhood of Paris.

SUPER: *MAY '68 PARIS WALKING TOUR!*

Dr. Markassin addresses the camera in English with a French accent.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(enthusiastic)  
Fifty years ago, a spontaneous  
GRASSROOTS UPRISING shook up  
France!

Archival photos of students protesting in May '68.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
At first, it was just students.

More '68 photos: French workers picketing outside an auto factory.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
But soon MILLIONS of workers joined  
them in nationwide strikes that  
almost brought down the government.

Present day. Dr. Markassin leads the Tour Group through the campus of the Sorbonne.

SUPER: *ONLY 29 EUROS!*

DR. MARKASSIN  
For a REVOLUTIONARY BARGAIN of 29  
Euros ...

Present day. Dr. Markassin leads the Tour Group in hurling cobblestones.

DR. MARKASSIN (CONT'D)  
You too can RESIST AUTHORITY by  
throwing cobblestones!

Present day. A TOURIST GRANDMA spray paints graffiti: "Be realistic. Expect the impossible."

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
JOIN THE CLASS STRUGGLE by writing  
Situationist slogans!

Present day. Picnic tables in a park. The Tour Group eats takeout pizza while Che waves his Little Red Book.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
TASTE THE IDEOLOGY and GET  
INDOCTRINATED by Che Guevara  
himself!

Present day. Dr. Markassin helps a LITTLE GIRL light a Molotov cocktail.

DR. MARKASSIN  
FIGHT THE POWER with a Molotov  
cocktail!

Archival photos: '68 protesters throwing Molotov cocktails.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
LIVE THE REVOLUTION that changed  
France—and the world!

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Back to lunch with Marker, Che, and Livia. She goes for slice number four.

LIVIA  
(chewing)  
Hold on. "Changed the world"? Last  
time I checked, the revolution  
failed.

MARKER  
In a sense, yes.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - TELEVISED SPEECH (MAY '68)

President De Gaulle addresses the nation from Elysée Palace, projecting stern resolve.

DE GAULLE  
No, the Republic will not abdicate!  
The people will come to their  
senses!

EXT. LATIN QUARTER - DAY (2017)

Present day. A Left Bank street. Retail chain stores everywhere. A sea of logos.

CHE (V.O.)  
Your factory workers got a raise,  
but now you just export the  
sweatshops to the Third World. So  
what really changed?

MARKER (V.O.)  
Ah, but we did win something.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - LATIN QUARTER (MAY '68)

The same, not yet commercialized street in May '68. The block is flooded with young protesters, some of high school age. The scene is peaceful, a sea of smiling faces.

MARKER (V.O.)  
A new understanding of the world,  
which could only have been won  
through the struggle. Imagine, if  
you can, a revolution of the  
imagination.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Back to lunch with Livia, Che, and Marker.

CHE  
It must've been imaginary, because  
it disappeared overnight. Just like  
this pizza.

Che eyes Livia, who is rapidly finishing off the last slice.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Damn, your skinny ass can eat.

MARKER  
The revolution didn't go away.  
It's hard to see, maybe, but—

CHE  
Tell me, Chris, but how many of  
your "revolutionaries" died in the  
Night of the Barricades?

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - LATIN QUARTER (MAY '68)

Students building barricades out of rubble. Cars on fire.  
Riot police running through the smoke.

MARKER (V.O.)  
There were hundreds injured. But  
killed, zero.

CHE (V.O.)  
(voice rising)  
Zero? Are you kidding me? Those  
bougie punks thought they were  
guerrillas because they got a  
nosebleed!

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Back to Livia, Che, and Marker. As before.

LIVIA  
Hey, take it easy.

CHE  
No, no one ever pushes this guy,  
and he needs to understand.

MARKER  
I'm listening.

CHE  
Call me what you want, but I'm  
committed.

He thumps his chest, hitting the red heart sewn to his  
military jacket.

CHE (CONT'D)  
I put my body in the path of the  
bullets.

He grabs the pizza box.

CHE (CONT'D)  
I put my face on the box.

Che laughs ruefully and nods to Marker.



CHE (CONT'D)

And you? You won't even pose for a picture! You make your little movies for your little audience of film snobs, because that's how you like it. Invisible revolutions by invisible men!

LIVIA

Ernesto, come on.

CHE

No, I'm sick of it!

He points at Marker and sneers.

CHE (CONT'D)

You never made a difference because you never put yourself on the line!

Che pauses, a little stunned at his own outburst. He goes to the window and stares outside.

MARKER

That's quite an accusation.

Marker turns to Livia.

MARKER (CONT'D)

What do you think?

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

The loft has been re-arranged as an impromptu courtroom.

Che is the prosecutor, wearing a tie over his ratty t-shirt.

Agnes Varda has time-traveled from 1967 to serve as defense counsel; she sits next to Marker.

Michel Krasna, also dropping in from '67, is the bailiff.

The trial is conducted in English.

KRASNA

All rise! The Honorable Livia Ungur presiding.

Everyone stands, as Judge Livia takes a seat. The judge's bench is formed from stacks of books and VHS tapes. Livia's leather jacket is draped over her shoulders, and she wields a meat tenderizer as a gavel.

LIVIA

In the case of the People vs. Chris Marker, on charges related to Artistic Cowardice in the First Degree, how does the defendant plea?

Varda leans toward Marker.

MARKER

(whisper)

No comment.

VARDA

No comment, your honor.

LIVIA

I'll take that as a "not guilty." Mr. Guevara, you may call first witness.

GUEVARA

Prosecution has only one witness, Mr. Marc Dornier.

VARDA

(whispers to Marker)

Who is Marc Dornier?

LIVIA

Is Mr. Dornier present in the court?

MARKER

Present, your honor.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

The trial continues with Marker in the witness stand. Che straightens his tie and approaches.

CHE

Please state your birth name.

MARKER

Christian Bouche-Villeneuve.

CHE

More commonly known as?

MARKER

Chris Marker.

CHE

Which is just one of dozens of false names you've used over the years. Guillaume-en-Egypte, Fritz Markassin, Michel Krasna ...

Che eyes Krasna suspiciously.

CHE (CONT'D)

Etcetera, etcetera.

Che takes a hit off his inhaler, looks sharply at Marker.

CHE (CONT'D)

What's with the names, man?

MARKER

An artist may hide himself so that his work may be seen more clearly.

CHE

I like that. Who's it from?

MARKER

Fritz Markassin, I think.

CHE

At the start of 1941, you adopted your first alias, Marc Dornier. Why?

MARKER

I forget. But I have a feeling you'll remind me.

Che holds up a tattered copy of a literary journal.

CHE

May I present to the court, Volume One of *Reports from the Round Table*. Published 1941 in Vichy, France. Founded and edited by Marc Dornier. Look familiar?

MARKER

It's been 70 years, but yes.

CHE

And how would you describe the contents?

MARKER

A mistake. I was 19 at the time.

CHE

Old enough to die for your country,  
and old enough to start a magazine  
supporting the Vichy regime, which  
collaborated with the Nazi  
occupiers and persecuted Jews.

FULL SCREEN - "REPORTS FROM THE ROUND TABLE"

Glimpses of text on the page: "Marc Dornier," "Révolution  
nationale," "Maréchal Pétain."

CHE (V.O.)

And old enough to endorse the  
xenophobic, right-wing National  
Revolution of Marshal Pétain.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Back to the trial.

AGNES

Objection, out of context! In '41,  
half the country was occupied by  
the Nazis. The vast majority of  
France supported Vichy as the only  
alternative to a total occupation.

LIVIA

Overruled. As an artist, the  
defendant is accountable to a  
higher moral standard.

Che turns back to Marker.

CHE

In the 70 years since, you never  
mentioned your pro-Vichy activities  
in any interview, any articles, or  
any of your films?

MARKER

I don't do interviews, I don't talk  
about my past, and none of my works  
are autobiographical, in a  
traditional sense.

CHE

Of course, all this is done for  
artistic reasons.

MARKER

As I said, an author may hide himself—

CHE

Yeah, yeah, but it's all awfully convenient, isn't it?

AGNES

Objection, Mr. Marker is—

CHE

Mr. Dornier, you mean?

AGNES

The defendant, as is well-known, fought for the Resistance in World War II—

CHE

Hearsay!

AGNES

So this youthful flirtation with Vichy was brief, if at—

LIVIA

Miss Varda, you'll have your witness. But if the defendant wishes to respond to Mr. Guevara, now would be the time.

Silence from Marker ... Finally:

MARKER

No comment.

Varda shakes her head.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

Markassin stands on the observation deck at Orly Airport. Eyes closed, left hand raised.

We are once more in a world of black-and-white photographs, unfolding like a slide show.

Markassin opens his eyes.

He sees Livia at the end of the jetty.

He runs toward her.

His back arches. His hands fly up. He's been shot. We're frozen at the moment of impact.

KRASNA (V.O.)  
(in French)  
Through his death, he saves the world. But that's not what motivates him.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

We're in the computer simulation of the La Pagode movie theater. The *La Jetée* Q&A. Michel Krasna and Agnes Varda sit onstage before a packed house. They speak in French.

KRASNA  
He's just following a personal obsession. Saving the world is a byproduct. He's the hero, but I'm not sure he's heroic.

VARDA  
If intention is the key, then the heroes are actually the scientists running the time travel experiment.

INT. FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

Sherng-Lee's face peers out of the darkness, behind insect-like sunglasses. We're once more in a world of black-and-white photographs, strung together like a slide show.

AGNES (V.O.)  
Yes, they are brutal.

A dark, windowless room. Light from a dim, bare lightbulb. Hints of pipes in the shadows. Faint echoes of dripping water.

Sherng-Lee stands over Markassin, who lies in a hammock hung between two pipes. Markassin wears an eye mask; two wires are attached to the mask, leading to an unseen machine.

Standing next to Sherng-Lee, Resnais prepares a syringe.

AGNES (V.O.)  
But they are brutal for a higher cause.

Resnais sticks the needle into Markassin's arm.

Markassin writhes in agony, biting the edge of the hammock.

Suddenly we're back at Orly airport. Sherng-Lee stands by the railing. He spies Markassin, running across the jetty toward Livia. A plane roars overhead.

Sherng-Lee, his face an emotionless mask, takes aim at the running man.

AGNES (V.O.)

Death is one kind of sacrifice. But pulling the trigger also carries a cost.

Once again, but now from Sherng-Lee's vantage point, we see Markassin go down.

Sherng-Lee lowers his weapon. He turns to see Livia running toward the fallen man.

Sherng-Lee blocks her path. She is distraught. In agony. He hugs her tight as she fights against him, trying to get to Markassin.

Around them, the crowd panics and starts to run.

Sherng-Lee forcefully leads Livia away, as she looks back. Beyond Markassin's body, through the fleeing crowd, she glimpses the Boy, standing by the railing with a stunned expression. She sees the broken plane at his feet.

AGNES (V.O.)

I think everyone on that jetty lost something.

KRASNA (V.O.)

Lost once, and will lose again. Again and again.

EXT. DOG PARK - DAY (2016)

The rotating spool of an audio cassette. The cassette is an animated image on the screen of a smartphone. We hear an American woman's voice:

REPORTER (O.S.)

Okay, you're married. Livia is a secretary, Sherng-Lee is making corporate videos, not getting anywhere ...

The phone rests on a picnic table in a dog park. A dozen canines chase balls and sniff each other. Beyond the fence, brownstones. Brooklyn.

REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
And then you start collaborating.

Livia and Sherng-Lee sit at the table with a REPORTER who looks just like Agnes Varda, but with horn-rimmed glasses and shorter hair. (Note: The same actress plays Reporter and Varda.)

The Reporter checks the phone to make sure the recording app is running. Then she continues:

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
Did you ever worry that you were putting the relationship at risk?

LIVIA  
We were married first. If the collaboration doesn't work out, we'll just go back to being married.

REPORTER  
Sherng-Lee, you're making a face.

SHERNG-LEE  
How do collaborations stop "working out"? It's not that different from a marriage. Your interests diverge. You have different priorities. You get bored. There's ego, blame, envy, betrayal ...

LIVIA  
(laughing awkwardly)  
This is all hypothetically speaking, right?

SHERNG-LEE  
Jean-Luc, knock it off!

Nearby, Jean-Luc is humping a white BICHON. Sherng-Lee runs over and pulls him away. The two women sit in slightly strained silence until Sherng-Lee returns.

REPORTER  
So there is risk.

SHERNG-LEE  
I hate to complain, because it's not like anyone forced us to choose this life. It's a privilege to do this work.



REPORTER  
And a burden, sometimes.

They watch Jean-Luc chase the Bichon around the park.

SHERNG-LEE  
I guess you don't have a dog.

REPORTER  
A cat.

SHERNG-LEE  
Maybe—

REPORTER  
And a son.

Livia's eyes light up.

LIVIA  
Oh, how old?

The Reporter hits a button on the smartphone, bringing up a photo of her three-year-old SON.

REPORTER  
He just turned three.

LIVIA  
Aw, he's so handsome!

Sherng-Lee barely glances at the phone.

SHERNG-LEE  
(to Reporter)  
Maybe this says something. We live in a one-bedroom. That's also where we edited *Hotel Dallas*. And we got in intense debates, you know, about the film.

Livia looks uncomfortable; the Reporter nods.

REPORTER  
It's your baby.

SHERNG-LEE  
During our arguments, Jean-Luc would disappear. You'd turn around, and he'd be gone. And we would find him in the bathtub. Remember, this is a tiny New York apartment; that's the only place offering any separation.

(MORE)

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)

It got to the point where I'd just say "Hotel Dallas," and Jean-Luc would run straight to the tub.

They watch as Jean-Luc splits off from the Bichon and chases after a much bigger GERMAN SHEPHERD. Jean-Luc's barks reverberate across the park.

REPORTER

He does seem a bit high-strung.

LIVIA

It's not his fault.

The German Shepherd, with Jean-Luc hot on his heels, completes a circuit of the park and starts another. The big dog growls over his shoulder to ward off Jean-Luc, but the little terrier is relentless.

AGNES (V.O.)

(in French)

Courage is simply the willingness—or the compulsion—to take on risk. That doesn't make you heroic.

INT. TRAIN - MOVING - DAY (1941)

1940s France. Black-and-white. Dr. Markassin sleeps in a train compartment. We hear Varda and Krasna, speaking in French.

VARDA (V.O.)

I wonder if that's why Marker never talked about the Resistance. He never claimed to be a hero. It was more about proving something to himself.

Markassin opens his eyes; he looks out the window at vineyards gliding past.

KRASNA (V.O.)

Sounds almost abstract.

VARDA (V.O.)

If anyone could treat war as a kind of personal experiment, it was Marker.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

We've been here before. The dark, underground room. Sherng-Lee stands next to Resnais, who holds a syringe. Markassin wears an eye mask.

VARDA (V.O.)  
As artists, that's what we do,  
isn't it? We are the experimenters.  
As well as the guinea pigs.

Resnais injects Markassin, who writhes in pain.

KRASNA (V.O.)  
But at some point, we must take  
responsibility.

Markassin's pain seems to subside; he raises his left hand.

KRASNA (V.O.)  
Art touches the world—can change  
it, even.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

We are back at the *La Jetée* Q&A, onstage with animated versions of Michel Krasna and Agnes Varda. They speak French.

VARDA  
Apart from occasional delusions of  
grandeur ...

Laughter from the crowd.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
What concerns me more is the effect  
our little experiments have on  
those closest to us.

KRASNA  
Perhaps the creative life isn't so  
conducive to having a family.

VARDA  
It's not just the financial issue.

INT. LIVIA AND SHERNG-LEE'S APARTMENT - DAY (2016)

Sherng-Lee works on his laptop while Jean-Luc paws at him and whines. Sherng-Lee ignores him.

VARDA (V.O.)  
The bigger problem is that most  
artists are completely self-  
absorbed.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (ALTERNATE VERSION)

A black-and-white photograph of Markassin on the jetty with  
eyes closed, left hand raised.

VARDA (V.O.)  
Half the time, we're in another  
world.

INT. MOVIE PALACE - NIGHT (ANIMATED, 2017)

Back to the *La Jetée* Q&A. Krasna and Varda onstage.

VARDA  
As for Marker, he constructed a  
world of total freedom. No past, no  
wife, no children. Only the films.

She sighs.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
And that ridiculous apartment.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Digital versions of Krasna and Varda rotate in a 3D design  
program on the screen of Marker's computer.

Hazy afternoon light streams through vertical blinds, casting  
bars of shadow on the wall, across the old man's crazy maze  
of books, vinyl, electronics, and trinkets. His treasures and  
his junk.

No one in sight. No longer set up as a courtroom, the room is  
back to its old, meticulous chaos.

Tick goes the tin clock.

Marker's Cat tiptoes across the lid of the piano. Then he  
leaps down, striking dissonant notes on the keyboard before  
bounding to the floor and disappearing behind a carton of  
records.

The sound of wood knocking on wood.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

Judge Livia strikes the gavel again.

Marker's apartment is once more arranged into a courtroom. We're back at Marker's trial. As before, the proceedings are in English.

KRASNA

All rise!

The parties stand: Marker and Varda on the defense side, Che on the prosecution side.

LIVIA

On the charge of Artistic Cowardice in the First Degree, the court finds the defendant Not Guilty.

Varda flashes a relieved smile and kisses Marker (i.e., kisses the screen).

LIVIA (CONT'D)

However, the court is introducing a new charge: Lack of Forthrightness on Historical Matters of Interest to the Public in the Second Degree. The court finds the defendant Guilty. Defendant is sentenced to 70 years as a "Filmmaker's Filmmaker" who enjoys critical adulation but marginal commercial success. Time already served, you are free to go.

Che shrugs; he seems satisfied enough.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

Next up, Jean-Luc Godard on charges of Ideological Inflexibility at the Expense of Cinematic Pleasure.

She strikes the gavel.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

A tiny guillotine cuts off the head of a Cuban cigar.

Che lights up while looking over Livia's shoulder. She wears headphones and edits video on an iMac. Marker sits beside her.

CHE  
Homegirl is fast, eh?

MARKER  
Faster than me.

On the screen, blocks of video shuffle on a timeline. We see snippets of recent news shows in the sequence window.

MARKER (CONT'D)  
During the war, de Gaulle would send coded messages on BBC Radio. If you heard the first stanza of Verlaine's "Autumn Song," that meant that the invasion would start within 24 hours.

CHE  
You could get the signal in France?

MARKER  
Oh yeah, all over the country. Paris is only an hour ahead of London, you know.

Che checks his Rolex.

CHE  
What's the time difference with Havana?

MARKER  
About 50 years.

Livia takes off her headphones.

LIVIA  
It's ready.

MONTAGE - NEWSCASTERS

We see snippets of news shows. All in English, all contemporary. The newscasters have been edited together so that their words form a continuous message. It's like the video version of a ransom note where the letters have been cut and pasted out of magazines.

NEWSCASTERS  
Greetings / old / friend / from /  
sunny / Havana / full / stop /  
Bolivia / is ready / to go / full /  
stop / You / may / return / home /  
for one day only / to / see / your  
(MORE)

NEWSCASTERS (CONT'D)  
/ family / full / stop / Your /  
daughter / is / growing up / so /  
fast / full / stop / She looks /  
just / like / you / full / stop /  
The visit / must / be / top secret  
/ for / their / safety / and / for /  
yours / full stop / Then / you /  
will / go / to / Bolivia / full /  
stop / Long / live / the Revolution  
/ full / stop / Your / brother / in  
/ arms / Fidel

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Snip, snip.

Marker watches as Livia cuts Che's hair with kitchen scissors. The top of Che's head is bare, as if he's balding. The beard is gone.

MARKER

Ernesto, I hope you don't mind me  
saying ...

Che looks up.

MARKER (CONT'D)

I've enjoyed our talks. Perhaps we  
can pick them up again.

Che looks pensively at his reflection in the mirror.

CHE

There's a kind of talk you can have  
in Paris. And a different kind of  
talk in the jungle.

MARKER

I suppose you find our  
conversations to be a bit ...  
removed from reality.

CHE

Nah man, it ain't like that. We  
have a lot in common, Marker.

MARKER

You think so?

CHE

You were right, you know. The  
imperialists eventually catch up to  
me. Bolivia is the end of the line.

Snip, snip.

CHE (CONT'D)

You know what they find in my  
backpack?

MARKER

Dynamite?

Che smiles.

CHE

My smokes, of course. And a journal  
of the campaign, which is not so  
interesting, to be honest. How far  
we marched, how much ammunition  
left, who died today ... Boring,  
right?

MARKER

Life and death are rarely boring.

CHE

But at the bottom of the bag, get  
this, they find a notebook of my  
poems.

MARKER

I didn't know you wrote.

CHE

Oh yeah. I love language, man. The  
rhythm of speech. I can talk  
poetry, philosophy, politics.  
French, Spanish, English. I can  
talk all night.

Che locks eyes with Marker in the mirror.

CHE (CONT'D)

But eventually, you run out of  
time.

MARKER

There will be time, there will be  
time, to murder and create.

Snip, snip.

CHE

In a minute there is time for  
decisions and revisions ...



LIVIA  
Which a minute will reverse.

Snip, snip.

The tin clock ticks backwards.

Che looks at Livia.

CHE  
Girl, can you hurry up? I'm gonna  
miss my boat.

LIVIA  
You'll make it.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - LATER (2017)

Che comes out of the bathroom. He wears a cheap grey suit, a silver striped tie, and a red pocket square. His hair is dyed grey, and he seems to have aged three decades.

CHE  
How do I look?

LIVIA  
Like a French grandpa.

EXT. SHIP - MOVING - DAWN (1967)

We're back in the Sixties. Again, the look is 16mm film.

Pale light on the Caribbean.

Che leans on the railing of a ship as it approaches Havana. His jacket catches the wind.

EXT. HAVANA - DAWN (1967)

Che pedals a bicycle through the Cuban capital.

It's still early, the city not yet awake. Che passes by pre-revolution Cadillacs and Buicks, silhouetted palm trees, balconies with laundry lines, and the occasional wall mural showing his own face.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY (2017)

We are behind the scenes. Che pedals a stationary bike, with the streets of Havana projected on a screen behind him. A fan simulates the breeze.

We're in a small film studio. Livia stands next to Sherng-Lee, who shoots with a digital video camera.

EXT. HAVANA - DAWN (1967)

Che pedals through mostly deserted streets, in a half-daze, a stranger in his adopted hometown.

He rolls past, but doesn't notice, a poster for *Far From Vietnam*.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (1967)

The living room of a well-appointed, pre-war house.

Che peers in from the back yard. He opens the window, throws a leg over the sill, and enters. Taking a hit from his inhaler, he looks around. The house is quiet.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (1967)

Che stands at the toilet and pees.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY (1967)

In a little girl's bedroom, Che tidies up toys and dolls. He picks up a picture from the night stand and squints at it.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (1967)

Che comes into the kitchen. An old BLACK CAT rubs against his leg. He picks her up and holds her at arms length. They regard each other ambivalently.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER (1967)

The Black Cat laps milk from a saucer. Che takes a pot off the stove and pours coffee.

From the other end of the house, we hear the sound of a door opening, footsteps, children's voices.

A four-year-old boy (CAMILO) runs down the hallway, screaming happily. He doesn't see Che in the kitchen.

Behind him comes Che's wife ALEIDA; she carries the two-year-old NETO in one arm and a bag of groceries in the other.

Trailing her is a NANNY carrying more groceries and the three-year-old CELIA.

Finally we see the six-year-old IDA. She carries a stuffed polka-dotted dinosaur. (The dinosaur looks like the one we saw earlier at the *La Jetée* screening.)

Ida hangs in the doorway to the kitchen and stares at Che. She has her father's eyes.

Aleida locks eyes with her husband. She whispers to the Nanny, who sets down Celia and takes Neto. The Nanny herds the children down the hallway, leaving Aleida alone with Che.

A long silence.

She sets down the groceries, crosses the room, and slaps him hard across the face. She pulls back to hit him again, but he seizes her wrist and smothers her in an embrace.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY (1967)

Aleida and Che make love on their bed. He is ravenous for her. She is passive and subdued, her eyes closed.

The sound of a child crying in another room; it's Neto.

Aleida turns away from Che. He grabs her, anger in his eyes. He kisses her roughly. With much effort, she pushes him away. She quickly puts on a robe and leaves the room.

Breathing hard, he lies back and stares at the ceiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (1967)

Aleida and Che sit at a table in the living room, eating a simple dinner. Stony silence between them. She picks at her plate. He mechanically shoves the food into his mouth, a soldier who knows the value of fuel.

On the rug nearby, the children play happily with their Nanny. Camilo chases Ida around the room; Cecilia tries to keep up. The Nanny makes a tower of wooden blocks with Neto. With a swipe of his hand, he knocks down the tower, laughing wildly.

The two parents look at him, then at each other. Che breaks into the hint of a smile.

IDA (O.S.)

Owwwwww!

Ida writhes on the ground, bleeding from a cut to her forehead. Camilo looks scared; Cecilia starts crying.

Che is cool under pressure. He quickly wipes his mouth with a napkin before going to Ida and scooping her up in his arms.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY (1967)

Che carries Ida up the stairs, softly patting her back as she cries. He's relaxed, in his element. She clutches her dinosaur.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (1967)

Che holds the crying girl while searching the medicine cabinet. He speaks Spanish in a soothing cadence.

CHE

Breathe in, two, three, four. And out, two, three, four.

She follows his instructions and begins to calm down. He turns down the toilet seat and gently sets her on it. With practiced hands, he soaks gauze with iodine and cleans her wound.

CHE (CONT'D)

And in, two, three, four. And out, two, three, four.

By the time he has bandaged her wound, she has settled.

CHE (CONT'D)

I've never seen such a brave little girl.

She holds up her dinosaur and points.

CHE (CONT'D)

Sorry Barbarella, I forgot all about you.

He dabs the dinosaur's head with a clean piece of gauze.

CHE (CONT'D)  
If your daddy were here, he would  
be so proud of you.

She looks at him with uncertain eyes.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Do you remember your dad?

She doesn't answer.

Che hesitates, suddenly unsure of himself.

CHE (CONT'D)  
He and I go way back.

He's trying to hold himself together. He looks old and tired.

CHE (CONT'D)  
He's a doctor, like me.

He applies a tiny bandage to the dinosaur's head. He manages  
a smile.

CHE (CONT'D)  
There, now don't forget to change  
that bandage every day. She'll be  
fine in no time.

Ida looks at him curiously. Then she reaches out and touches  
his hair. Only now do we notice that the grey in his hair is  
actually stage powder. She rubs the powder between her  
fingers.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK (1967)

Che walks barefoot on an empty stretch of beach, the bottoms  
of his trousers rolled. The sun is slipping away. He's lost  
in thought, or maybe not thinking at all. The image flashes  
as ...

EXT. BEACH - DUSK (2017)

... the film runs out in Livia's 16mm camera. Present day.  
Livia stands on the same beach where we just saw Che. Marker  
is with her (off-screen, as usual).

Handing the camera to Marker, she walks to the water. Then  
she doubles over and throws up.

MARKER  
You okay?

EXT. BEACH - LATER (2017)

Livia and Marker sit on the sand. She holds the camera in her lap.

LIVIA  
It's his, of course. But I haven't  
told him.

MARKER  
How far along?

LIVIA  
Seven weeks.

She throws a shell into the water.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
Were you ever married?

MARKER  
Long time ago.

LIVIA  
What happened?

MARKER  
She wanted kids.

They listen to the waves.

MARKER (CONT'D)  
It's hard, in our line of work.  
Godard, Resnais, Krasna—none of  
them have kids. Agnes has two, but  
she's basically a superwoman.

LIVIA  
I'm not.

MARKER  
No, you're something else.

LIVIA  
What do you mean?

MARKER  
I don't know. That's a phrase,  
isn't it? "Something else."

The tide is going out. She raises the camera and aims it down the beach.

EXT. BEACH - DUSK (1967)

Back to the past. Che walks along the beach. He stops and looks to the horizon.

He shrugs out of his jacket and tosses it to the sand. He digs in a pocket for his inhaler, then throws that away as well. The rest of the clothes come off, followed by his Rolex, until he stands naked.

Slowly, he walks into the water. He starts paddling toward the horizon.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT (1967)

Night falls as Che swims further into the open water.

EXT. BOATS ON THE WATER - NIGHT (1967)

Che keeps swimming, but he's getting tired. His asthma catches up with him, and he coughs violently.

The ocean is calm under a full moon.

In the distance, he sees two small fishing boats tied together. Faint music wafts over the water. He paddles toward them.

As he approaches, he sees that one of the boats has a small canvas screen installed near the bow. Half a dozen FISHERMEN are gathered on the deck, watching a movie.

ALFREDO GUEVARA stands up from the stern. He's an owlish figure in Gucci glasses, with a silk blazer draped over his shoulders. He has Che's face. (Note: the two Guevaras are to be played by the same actor.)

Alfredo waves to Che. They speak in Spanish.

ALFREDO

Mr. Guevara!

CHE

Mr. Guevara!

ALFREDO

Stop the film! We have a visitor!

The Fishermen lower a pole into the water. While they bring Che aboard, we focus on Alfredo.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
(in English)  
Alfredo Guevara had served the  
revolution since he was nineteen.  
One of Castro's oldest friends, he  
now headed Cuba's state-run cinema  
program.

EXT. CINEMA BOAT - NIGHT (1967)

A 16mm projector is secured to the boat's stern. Livia loads  
the next reel. Her blonde hair sticks out of a Cuban army  
cap.

The two Guevaras sit with the Fishermen. Che is wrapped in a  
wool blanket.

Livia hits play. The Fishermen's weather-beaten faces are lit  
by the projection, with the dark sea behind them.

ON THE SCREEN: "DAGUERRÉOTYPES" (PARODY VERSION)

Varda sits in the kitchen of her Paris apartment, holding the  
three-year-old MATHIEU in her lap. (Note: The same actor  
plays Mathieu and the Reporter's Son.) She gives him a  
popsicle and then addresses the camera. Her voice is dubbed  
in Spanish.

VARDA  
Hello! My name is Agnes, and I make  
movies. You haven't heard from me  
for a few years, because I've been  
raising this little man.

She nods to Mathieu, who is busy with the popsicle.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
In case you're wondering, the  
filmmaker's life is everything you  
might imagine.

We see an archival photo of the REAL AGNES VARDA (not our  
actress playing Varda) standing on the red carpet with JANE  
BIRKIN.

VARDA (V.O.)  
Hanging out with the stars ...

An archival photo of the Real Agnes Varda smiling with Black  
Panther leader BOBBY SEALE, who looks tough in a beret and  
leather jacket.



VARDA (V.O.)  
Living on the edge ...

An archival photo of the Real Agnes Varda operating a movie camera.

VARDA (V.O.)  
And searching the world for  
unforgettable images.

Film footage of Varda (our actress) trying to appease Mathieu as he throws a tantrum, hurling toys across the room.

VARDA (V.O.)  
But as the mother of a small child,  
it can be hard to leave the house,  
much less think about a new film.

Back to Varda in her kitchen, holding Mathieu.

VARDA  
To get myself going again, I've  
devised a little game.

Now we're in the living room. GRANDMA sits on the couch.  
Varda enters with Mathieu.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
(to Mathieu)  
Go play with Grandma!

Mathieu runs to his Grandma. Varda crosses the room. In the corner stands a tripod holding a 16mm movie camera. A cable runs from the camera, forms an enormous coil on the floor, and plugs into a wall outlet.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
This camera has no batteries.  
Instead, it has a power cable that  
runs for 90 meters and ends here in  
my living room.

We're in the apartment stairwell. Varda exits her apartment and comes down the stairs with the camera on her shoulder, trailing the power cable.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
The cable will be my umbilical  
cord.

We're outside now on a lively market street in the 14th arrondissement. Varda stands on the sidewalk with her camera. The power cable runs down the block, back to her building.

VARDA (CONT'D)  
Everything I shoot will be within  
90 meters of my home, within 90  
meters of my son.

She aims the camera at a butcher shop, at a bakery, at a  
corner grocery.

VARDA (V.O.)  
This is where I walk every morning.

We see portrait shots of a cheesemonger, a bookstore clerk, a  
hair stylist.

VARDA (V.O.)  
These are the faces I see every  
day.

We see a street sign: Rue Daguerre.

VARDA (V.O.)  
This is my street. And this is my  
new film.

TITLE CARD: *Daguerréotypes: A documentary by Agnes Varda*

EXT. CINEMA BOAT - NIGHT (1967)

*Daguerréotypes* continues playing on the screen.

Livia watches intently.

The Fishermen's reactions vary from fascination to  
indifference. One man snores.

EXT. BOATS ON THE WATER - NIGHT (1967)

The Fishermen unhook their boat, shoving off to start the  
night shift, while Livia and Alfredo wave goodbye from the  
cinema boat. They speak in Spanish.

LIVIA  
Good luck, boys! Travel safe!

ALFREDO  
We'll find you again in a few  
weeks!

FISHERMEN  
(waving and laughing)  
Thanks you, Alfredo!  
(MORE)

FISHERMEN (CONT'D)  
Bring us a comedy next time! With  
Brigitte Bardot!

EXT. CINEMA BOAT - NIGHT (1967)

While Livia attends to the boat, Alfredo sits with Che. In contrast to Che, his old friend smiles easily and has a delicate, refined manner. They speak in Spanish.

ALFREDO  
We have many trucks, some wagons  
with horses, and now I'm  
experimenting with boats. Every  
unit has a projection kit and a  
selection of films.

CHE  
And where do you go?

ALFREDO  
All over Cuba! Into the mountains,  
the jungle, the tiniest villages.

CHE  
And Fidel is paying for all this?

ALFREDO  
It makes people happy.

Che leans back and closes his eyes.

ALFREDO (CONT'D)  
How's the family?

CHE  
I need a power cable that runs from  
here to Bolivia.

ALFREDO  
(whistles)  
You get around. Seems like  
yesterday you were leaving for the  
Congo.

Alfredo lights a cigarette.

ALFREDO (CONT'D)  
You look like crap, by the way.

This elicits a laugh from Che, but then he starts coughing.  
It takes him a while to recover.

CHE  
Congo was a disaster.

ALFREDO  
I heard.

CHE  
I can't free people who don't want  
to free themselves.

ALFREDO  
Ernesto, people need more than guns  
to inspire them.

CHE  
They need martyrs.

Che stares gloomily at the sea. Alfredo puts a hand on his  
friend's shoulder.

ALFREDO  
They need to hope. They need to  
dream. That's why we bring cinema  
to the people, where they live and  
breathe, because cinema is the art  
form which is closest to a dream.

Alfredo passes a cigarette to Che and lights it for him.

CHE  
(drily)  
Seen any good movies lately?

ALFREDO  
Actually, there's one I haven't  
seen, that I'm really looking  
forward to. *Far From Vietnam*. Have  
you heard of it?

CHE  
Not sure.

ALFREDO  
A collective protest film, made by  
the biggest legends of the French  
New Wave: Godard, Resnais, Varda,  
Marker. And Jane Fonda—rumor has  
it, in the nude. Imagine that! The  
Americans will go crazy.

Che raises an eyebrow.

ALFREDO (CONT'D)  
If any film could start a  
revolution ...

Livia hits play on the projector; it spins to life.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE - NEW YORKER THEATER (1967)

The facade of the New Yorker Theater, an arthouse cinema in NYC's Upper West Side. Judging by the cars and passersby, we're in the late 1960s.

The marquee reads, "FAR FROM VIETNAM. ONE WEEK ONLY."

We hear an American woman's voice:

RENATA ADLER (V.O.)  
I seriously think it is impossible  
for anyone concerned with facts or  
words or the war to sit through it  
...

FULL SCREEN - MICROFICHE

We're looking at the screen of a microfilm reader, as one would find in a library.

We swipe through pages in a blur, before settling on a *New York Times* review by Renata Adler: "*Far From Vietnam: Six Directors Join to Shape a Collage.*"

RENATA ADLER (V.O.)  
It is all too facile and slipshod  
and stereotyped—designed to enrage  
one cliché cast of mind against the  
Administration and another against  
the enraged. The movie has, in any  
case, been overtaken by events.

INT. NEW YORKER THEATER - NIGHT (1967)

We're inside the New Yorker Theater. By the flickering light of the screen, we see a drab but serviceable cinema with about 200 seats—all empty.

MARKER (V.O.)  
We booked a week at the New Yorker.  
We hoped for more, of course. But  
the *Times* review killed us.

LIVIA (V.O.)  
Did you manage to get Fonda?

MARKER (V.O.)  
What do you think?

On the screen, an animated film plays.

ON THE SCREEN: NYC STREETS (1967, ANIMATED)

A computer simulation of Manhattan on an autumn night in 1967.

The graphic style recalls the earlier simulation of Paris, combining geometric volumes with photographic surfaces.

The animated Cat flies along Broadway, dapper in a tuxedo. A hole in the seat allows his tail to wave freely.

He floats over the go-go bars and peep shows of Times Square.

He continues uptown, past Columbus Circle.

Below him, he sees Lincoln Center. A red carpet has been rolled out, surrounded by fans and flashing cameras.

The marquee reads: "5th New York Film Festival, FAR FROM VIETNAM."

The Cat bypasses the glitzy scene and lands unnoticed on the roof of the main concert hall. He enters through the mouth of a vent.

INT. NEW YORKER THEATER - NIGHT (1967)

We've come out of the simulation. Marker's Cat pads casually down the aisle of the New Yorker Theater.

No one else in sight.

The cat looks up at the theater's screen and sees ...

ON THE SCREEN: PHILHARMONIC HALL (1967, ANIMATED)

... a computer simulation of the Philharmonic Hall at Lincoln Center, filled to its 2700-seat capacity. The *Far From Vietnam* premiere screening is in progress.

The animated Cat sneaks down the aisle.

He takes a front row seat between Livia and Agnes Varda, both in formal evening dresses. They smile at him.

On Livia's feet are ruby red heels.

We hear, but don't see, what they're watching.

JANE FONDA (V.O.)

In a few minutes, you will leave this theater. And most of you will return to a life without war. A life that is far from Vietnam. But it's this failure of imagination that enables the war to continue.

As the crowd watches the film, we watch them.

MUHAMMAD ALI looks ready to rumble in white shorts and red gloves.

GLORIA STEINEM, as a Playboy Bunny, sits next to JACKIE KENNEDY, in a pink suit and pillbox hat.

All eyes are fixed to the screen, but their faces are blank, revealing nothing.

JANE FONDA (V.O.)

The Vietnamese fight for survival, for the future of their nation. But whether they are aware of it or not, they fight for all of us.

In the audience, we see TWIGGY with a body made of matchsticks.

We see the Lizard King, JIM MORRISON, as an iguana with a crown and scepter.

We see a contingent of BLACK PANTHERS, as felines with berets, leather jackets, and submachine guns.

We see the Boy from the *La Jetée* screening. As before, he wears an old-fashioned tweed suit with shorts.

Sherng-Lee, in his insect sunglasses, sits next to the Boy.

Poker faces, all of them.

JANE FONDA (V.O.)

By supporting the revolution of a colonized people, we make possible a revolution within the colonizers—which is to say, a revolution within ourselves.

On the screen, the credits roll, starting with "NARRATED BY JANE FONDA."

Silence from the audience.

In the front row, Livia looks nervously to Varda.

Finally, there is polite applause, which soon dies down.

JACKIE KENNEDY  
(to Gloria Steinem)  
I liked it. A bit abstract,  
sometimes.

BLACK PANTHER  
(to another Black Panther)  
Very French.

JIM MORRISON  
(to Twiggy)  
You going to the after party?

In the front row, the Cat and Varda look at each other and shrug. Livia buries her face in her hands.

People stand up to leave. The house lights cut out. The audience looks around, confused.

The projector restarts, showing ...

ON THE SCREEN: NEW YORKER THEATER (1967, LIVE ACTION)

... the inside of the New Yorker Theater. It's empty except for the Cat sitting in the front row.

The rear doors burst open. A man enters on a bicycle. It's Che, in his old man haircut and rumpled suit.

A spotlight tracks Che through the dark theater. We hear gasps and shouts as Che greets an invisible audience.

CHE  
(shouting)  
My name is Ernesto Rafael Guevara  
de la Serna! I know that's a  
mouthful. So just call me Che!

Massive cheers bounce off bare seats.

The Cat looks at Che. Then he turns to watch the theater's screen.

ON THE SCREEN: PHILHARMONIC HALL (1967, ANIMATED)

Back to the *Far From Vietnam* premiere at Lincoln Center. The animated version of Che rides down the aisle, the spotlight following him as the audience goes wild.



This Che is young and dashing in a black beret and combat fatigues. He is the Che of our dreams.

He circles the room, touching hands from the audience.

CROWD  
(clapping)  
Che! Che! Che!

CHE  
It's time for art and action to  
come together, in one Revolution!

We see the Boy, clapping happily.

BOY  
Che! Che! Che!

LIVIA AND VARDA  
Che! Che! Che!

Seated between the ecstatic Livia and Varda, the Cat is silent.

CHE  
Our cameras will be guns, firing  
truth 24 times per second! Our guns  
will be cameras, recording our  
story in blood!

Coming full circle, Che stops at the front of the auditorium. On the screen behind him ...

ON THE SCREEN: NEW YORKER THEATER (1967, LIVE ACTION)

... the non-animated version of Che bellows to an empty theater.

CHE  
I will personally bring this film  
to every corner of America. To the  
orange groves of Florida. To the  
factories of Detroit. To the little  
towns in the desert that don't even  
have a theater, we'll find a way to  
show this film.

He looks terrible. The spotlight catches his bald forehead and the cheap, polyester sheen of his grey suit. He pulls out his red pocket square and mops his sweaty brow.

The Cat watches from the front row, inscrutable.

CHE (CONT'D)  
We'll project it on the sides of  
Grand Canyon! On the walls of the  
Pentagon! And we will bring Vietnam  
to the White House!

On the screen behind him ...

ON THE SCREEN: PHILHARMONIC HALL (1967, ANIMATED)

... we're back at the Lincoln Center premiere. The computer-generated crowd roars its approval. The digital Che smiles.

CHE  
But first, I'd like to introduce  
Alain Resnais! Agnes Varda! Michel  
Krasna!

The filmmakers wave to the crowd and join Che.

CHE (CONT'D)  
My boy Jean-Luc Godard! Whattup  
dawg!

Godard's avatar looks like his dog Jean-Luc, a brindle Cairn Terrier.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Jane Fonda!

We recognize Fonda's avatar as the polka-dotted Dinosaur. She has a bandage on her forehead.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Bringing them all together must be  
like ... What's the phrase?  
"Herding cats!"

Laughter.

CHE (CONT'D)  
So who better to lead them than a  
cat? Ladies and gentlemen, my  
friend, Chris Marker!

The spotlight finds the Cat in his front row seat. As the room erupts in the loudest cheers yet, the Cat looks up to the theater's screen.

ON THE SCREEN: NEW YORKER THEATER (1967, LIVE ACTION)

Back to the empty theater. The spotlight falls on an empty seat.

The Cat hides below the seat, licking a paw. He looks up at the theater's screen.

ON THE SCREEN: PHILHARMONIC HALL (1967, ANIMATED)

Back to the premiere at Lincoln Center. The spotlight frames the animated Cat in his seat. The roar of the crowd is overwhelming.

The Cat looks to Che, who beckons to him.

He looks to Varda and the other filmmakers, all waving him on.

He looks to the polka-dotted Dinosaur, who blows him a kiss.

He looks to Livia. She flashes an encouraging smile.

The Cat leaps onto the back of his seat and surveys the crowd. He locks eyes with the Boy. The Boy swallows nervously. Next to the Boy is Sherng-Lee, who nods to the Cat.

Che waves for silence. A hush falls over the great hall.

The Cat takes a deep breath.

CAT  
(Marker's voice)  
It's time—

Electronic noise drowns him out. His face pixelates.

GLITCHY MONTAGE: NEW YORKER THEATER VS. PHILHARMONIC HALL  
(LIVE ACTION & ANIMATED)

A malfunction rips the system. The Cat glitches in and out.

The scene spasms between live action and animation, New Yorker Theater and Lincoln Center.

The Boy glitches out and is replaced by Dr. Markassin, who glitches out and is replaced by Michel Krasna.

CAT  
(Marker's voice)  
It's time—it's time—it's time—

We're caught in a loop. The room falls apart.

CAT (CONT'D)  
(Marker's voice)  
It's time—it's time—it's time—

Everything disintegrates.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Present day. We've come out of the simulation. We're in Marker's perspective, looking into the lens of Livia's camera. Behind the glass, the aperture blades tighten, a shrinking octagon.

His vision explodes. An electric map of ocular veins. The world turns sideways as he hits the floor.

A silence like deep space.

Marker is delirious as PARAMEDICS lift him up. Livia's face, somewhere in the chaos. He goes into a dream ...

MONTAGE - EDITING HISTORY, PAST VS. PRESENT

1967:

The click of a projector. Rollers engaging with sprockets. A 16mm reel spinning into a blur.

Che's American film tour, in slashing cuts. Improvised screenings turn every surface into a cinema. Vietcong soldiers are projected on a wheat silo. Bomber planes span the brick wall of an old gas station. Napalm explosions lick the sides of the Grand Canyon.

Present:

A computer screen, reflected in Livia's eyes.

A sequence in a video editing program, time distilled to color-coded blocks. The blocks divide and shuffle.

1967:

A stack of wooden blocks, crashing down. Che's toddler son, laughing.

An American newscaster who looks like Dr. Markassin.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(as American newscaster)  
The crowds for this film are like  
nothing we've ever seen, and  
they're grow-grow-grow-

Present:

Dr. Markassin's image stutters on Livia's computer screen.

Livia's fingers on the mouse.

Cut, roll, trim. Click, click, click.

1967:

Archival footage of the March on the Pentagon. Among the marchers, we see Varda, Krasna, Godard, and Resnais. Che leads the march.

Present:

Livia squints at her computer screen.

In her editing program, she manipulates footage of the Pentagon march. An overhead crowd shot is duplicated, off-set, superimposed, then duplicated again, and again, and again.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
(as American newscaster)  
How many marchers? At least 7  
million. 8? Maybe more than—

Cut, cut, cut. Paste, paste, paste.

1967:

The newscaster again, glitching.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(as American newscaster)  
President Johnson is withdraw-  
withdraw-withdrawing all troops  
from Viet-Viet-Viet-

May 1968:

Paris. Archival footage of protesters, counter-protesters, occupiers, rioters.

Images splinter, get entangled.

A French newscaster who looks like Dr. Markassin.

DR. MARKASSIN (CONT'D)  
(as French newscaster)  
The capital has been overrun by  
students and workers, em-em-em-  
emboldened by events in America.

Present:

Livia scrubs through her editing timeline. In the sequence window, the action accelerates to a frenzy. She adds a filter. The colors go radioactive, recalling the crude synthesizer effects of Marker's 1983 film *Sans Soleil*.

May 1968:

Paris riot police with turquoise skin and hot pink hair.

A Molotov cocktail exploding into a rainbow inferno.

A green-and-yellow Che, rifle in hand, running through the Latin Quarter, a band of guerrillas behind him.

The French newscaster again, now as a white-and-black film negative.

DR. MARKASSIN (CONT'D)  
(as French Newscaster)  
This is an armed-armed-armed  
rebel—

The broadcast glitches out.

Present:

Livia shuffles her timeline.

Trim, roll, click.

DR. MARKASSIN (V.O.)  
(as French Newscaster)  
President de Gaulle has mobilized  
the army and the—

May 1968:

Unreal Paris. Fractured time, captured by a broken camera.  
Purple tanks. Yellow guns.

Dr. Markassin again, as a British TV journalist reporting from the Latin Quarter. He has blue hair and green skin.

DR. MARKASSIN  
(as British Journalist)  
Would it have been worth it, after  
all—after all—after all, to have  
squeezed the universe into a ball?

Dr. Markassin glitches out.

Pink smoke.

Black fire.

Blue cobblestones.

Lime corpses.

Red blood.

FADE TO:

ON TV: NEWS BROADCAST (1968)

A broadcast of a press conference. Through the scan-lines of a TV, the colors are smeary but otherwise normal.

Che stands in front of a French flag, one arm in a sling, microphones in front of him. Cameras flash. He speaks in Spanish-accented French.

CHE  
The revolution continues. The  
outcome is uncertain. But we have  
already lost many brave men and  
women, and today we honor them.

A distant—or not so distant—explosion. Che ignores it. He reads from a scrap of paper.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Jacopo Berezini. T.T. Toukanov.  
Guillaume-en-Egypte. Dolorés  
Walfisch. Chris Mayor. Hayao  
Yameneko. Sandor Krasna. Marc  
Dornier. Christian Bouche-  
Villeneuve.

He stops, brow furrowing.

CHE (CONT'D)  
Chris M—

The TV clicks off.

FULL SCREEN: "LA JETÉE" (PARODY VERSION)

We've been here before. A slide show of lost images. A dream without color.

The observation deck at Orly airport. Markassin on the jetty. Eyes closed. Left hand raised. Touching a ghost world. Somewhere, a blind man plays the piano.

Markassin open his eyes. His outstretched fingers frame a figure at the end of the jetty. Her. The answer to a question he's been asking since he was a child.

He runs toward her. A plane roars overhead.

The piano builds, approaching a climax. We've been here before ... Haven't we? We brace for the critical moment: the shot, the fall, the closing of the circle ...

He keeps running.

Closer. Closer.

Her back is to him. He raises his left hand. He touches her shoulder.

She turns. Not Livia. Another BLONDE. She looks at him blankly. He backs away, apologetic.

He walks across the jetty, through the crowd. We hear a familiar voice, in French:

MARKER (V.O.)

The loop of time is broken. The  
nexus of his memory, now replaced  
with an unfamiliar present.

Markassin sees something on the ground: a model plane, abandoned, wing smashed. He picks it up.

A plane takes off from the runway. Markassin looks up to follow it.

We're looking down on Markassin. He's now a small figure among many, gathered on the jetty. They grow smaller.

We're watching them from inside a plane. The Boy sits at the window in his familiar tweed suit and shorts. His bare legs dangle off the seat.

Livia and Sherng-Lee sit beside him. Sherng-Lee folds his insect glasses and hangs them from his breast pocket.



They all look out the window. The cabin looks like it's from the Fifties or Sixties.

MARKER (V.O.)

And now, the burden of choosing.  
They have their means of transport.  
The destination is up to them.

Looking down from the plane window. Rivers and mountains.

MARKER (V.O.)

They could go forward. The logical choice. But ahead of them, all trajectories converge to one inevitable outcome.

Viewed from above: Bomb blasts. A city in ruins.

MARKER (V.O.)

The war of the future. They've been here before.

We turn our gaze to the horizon. The photographs shuffle rapidly, as we fly in reverse over a mountain peak.

MARKER (V.O.)

Another path takes them back.  
Further into the past. This way is not so clear.

Livia's face, eyes covered by a sleep mask. We're back inside the plane. Sherng-Lee is next to her, also wearing an eye mask. Beside them, the Boy looks out the window.

MARKER (V.O.)

So much has been forgotten. Or misremembered. Or never remembered at all.

Outside again. We continue backwards through the sky. A cloud swallows us. Everything goes white.

MARKER (V.O.)

But perhaps there is freedom in what is lost.

Back inside. The plane cabin looks different, the corners boxier, less streamlined. The seats resemble Victorian couches with floral patterns. The Boy is gone; Livia holds a BABY in her lap. Sherng-Lee reads a newspaper.

A runway in the desert. Parked on it: a 1920s-era passenger plane with big propellers. The fuselage is covered with shiny, grooved steel. Four CAMELS wait by the runway;

a Mongolian MERCHANT holds the reins. Parked next to the camels is a black Ford Model T automobile.

Livia and Sherng-Lee disembark from the plane. She is very pregnant.

They get in the Model T and drive into the desert.

The Model T looks like a toy, tooling across the vast flatness of the Gobi. In the distance, we see the outlines of yurts.

MARKER (V.O.)

Perhaps, in some mislaid corner of history, they might find what they seek. A time to call their own.

They park at the base of a dune. The two travelers get out of the car and start climbing. Livia strains with the weight of her belly; Sherng-Lee helps steady her. They reach the top and survey the land.

Endless waves of sand. Cloudless sky. An ocean of absence.

She closes her eyes. She raises her left hand.

INT. PARIS HOSPITAL - DAY (2017)

Her eyes open.

Present day. Livia is slouched in a chair in a hospital corridor, her leather jacket balled as a pillow.

Dr. Markassin is gently tapping her left hand, which is resting on his shoulder. He wears scrubs.

She sits up. She touches her stomach; it's flat. They speak in French.

LIVIA

What's happened?

DR. MARKASSIN

He's in a coma. He's very weak, but stable for now. Frankly, at his age, I'm surprised he's still alive.

LIVIA

Is he going to wake up?

DR. MARKASSIN  
We're still running some tests, but  
it's going to take several hours.

LIVIA  
I'm beat. Maybe I should go home  
and rest.

DR. MARKASSIN  
Where do you live?

LIVIA  
20th arrondissement. Maraichers.

DR. MARKASSIN  
That should be relatively clear,  
it's away from the center. But are  
you sure you want to risk it?

She blinks, confused.

LIVIA  
I'll be alright.

DR. MARKASSIN  
As you wish.

LIVIA  
Thanks, Dr. Markassin.

The doctor leaves.

Livia stretches and yawns. She walks down the hallway to a coffee vending machine. As she's waiting for an espresso, her eyes drift to the TV mounted over the nurse's station.

The news plays, on mute. There seems to be a crisis in the center of Paris: protesters and riot police, ambulances and fire trucks, overturned cars and a bombed-out storefront. The ticker reads, "PARIS UPRISINGS - HUNDREDS DEAD ..."

The newscaster is yet another version of Dr. Markassin.

Livia squints at the screen.

Below the television, a NURSE checks in a new arrival—Michel Krasna in dirty and torn clothes, with bloody bandages covering his eyes. Agnes Varda helps prop him up.

Livia runs to them. They speak in French.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
Michel, are you okay?

Krasna mutters something. Varda looks away nervously.

VARDA  
Nurse?

LIVIA  
Agnes, what happened?

VARDA  
Nurse, this woman is confused.

LIVIA  
Agnes, are you okay?

VARDA  
My name's not Agnes. Would you  
please excuse us?

NURSE  
Everything alright here?

Livia backs away.

LIVIA  
Sorry, I ...

An ORDERLY comes to lead away Krasna; Varda follows. Livia watches them go, not sure where she is.

A gurney speeds down the hall, pushed by two doctors; they are Resnais and Godard in scrubs.

Livia sees a version of herself strapped to the gurney. Another Livia. Unconscious. Her face and clothes are spattered with blood. She has a big pregnant belly.

Livia steps aside to let them pass. She leans against the wall, feeling dizzy.

A door opens. A man comes down the corridor. His clothes are covered with dust, and his face is cut and bruised. He carries a heavy video camera on a shoulder strap; headphones hang from his neck.

Livia, in a daze, watches him approach. She recognizes her husband, Sherng-Lee.

He's close to her now; she doesn't move. He looks exhausted.

Uncertainty hangs between them.

LIVIA (CONT'D)  
Your hair's grey.

He touches his head, looks at his fingers.

SHERNG-LEE

It's dust. There was a bomb.

She throws her arms around him. He hugs her tight.

EXT. TAXI - MOVING - DAY (2017)

We see Livia in the window of a taxi, rolling through Paris. Blurred reflections of the ravaged city pass over her face.

INT. MARKER'S APARTMENT - DAY (2017)

Livia unlocks the door and leads Sherng-Lee into the loft. They are greeted by the big, sad clutter of the old man's stuff.

The screens are blank. The news feeds have gone silent.

The stillness is broken by the Cat, emerging from behind the piano. He meows. Livia picks him up and kisses him.

While Livia goes into the kitchen, Sherng-Lee peruses the bookshelves. Leaning against a volume of Murakami is a stuffed polka-dotted dinosaur.

Sherng-Lee sits down on the couch.

SHERNG-LEE

I'd love to see what you've been working on.

Livia comes out of the kitchen.

SHERNG-LEE (CONT'D)

When you're ready.

LIVIA

It's not finished yet.

She sets down a saucer of milk for the cat.

LIVIA (CONT'D)

I'll show you something else.

Livia takes down the tin clock from the wall. She turns the clock over and opens it; inside is the reel of Marker's "lost film."

Sherng-Lee draws the blinds, while Livia loads the film.

The old projector clatters to life.

They sit together, as the screen illuminates their faces. The two filmmakers look at each other, then up at the screen.

FADE OUT.

THE END

#### NOTES ON FAIR USE

This screenplay's author asserts fair use for parodic, transformative references to the following films:

*Daguerréotypes*. Directed by Agnes Varda, Ciné Tamaris, 1974.

*Far From Vietnam*. Directed by SLON, Contemporary Films, 1967.

*La Jetée*. Directed by Chris Marker, Argos Films, 1962.

This screenplay's author also asserts fair use (commentary) for brief quotes from the following poems:

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." *Prufrock and Other Observations*. London: Egoist, 1917. Print.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. *The Wasteland*. New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922. Print.

#### NOTES ON PUBLIC DOMAIN SOURCES

The screenplay references the following public domain films:

*Battleship Potemkin*. Directed by Sergei Eisenstein. Goskino, 1925. Film.

*Birth of a Nation*. Directed by D.W. Griffiths. Epoch Producing Corporation, 1915. Film.

*Triumph of the Will*. Directed by Leni Riefenstahl. Universum Film, 1935. Film.

*Why We Fight: Prelude to War*. Directed by Frank Capra. War Activities Committee of the Motion Pictures Industry, 1942. Film.

## VITA

Visual artist and filmmaker Sherng-Lee Huang was born in Knoxville, Tennessee. He obtained his Bachelor's Degree in English from Amherst College in 2002. In 2004, he joined the Creative Writing Workshop at University of New Orleans to pursue an MFA in creative writing (screenwriting concentration). His works have been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art, Berlin International Film Festival, and Ann Arbor Film Festival. He was included in Filmmaker Magazine's *25 New Faces of Independent Film 2016*.