

HOME TIME

EPISODE 2: FAMILY TRIAL

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INT. HOME/DINING ROOM - DAY

MOM, DAD, BRO, & SIS sit at the table. Soft SLURPS are heard as each member ingests a thick green liquid with an egg yolk in the center.

MOM

Hearing the sound this morning?

DAD

I haven't heard anything yet.  
Perhaps after my coffee.

MOM

Yes. Perhaps.

Dad stares at Mom in an attempt to gauge her meaning.

BRO

I don't know why they allow  
caffeine. It hinders the focus on  
the System.

MOM

I find that it makes one more  
productive for the System. If I  
didn't have it, I don't think I  
could have practiced my spiel as  
much as I did this past week.

Mom and Dad smile at one another.

BRO

I suppose you're right. But why  
would dad need it to hear the  
signal?

MOM

Hmm. Yes. Why would he need it?

SIS

Dad may just be affected  
differently. It took the Kawolski's  
daughter a fort night to hear the  
sound regularly. Let it be.

BRO

Maybe so.

Sis nods at Dad. He gives a meek smile. SLURPS round the table.

BRO (CONT'D)  
Dad, did you leave the den light  
on?

Everyone pauses for a moment.

DAD  
I... I may have. I only remember  
going into Mom's room. I mean, *our*  
room.

Bro rolls eyes.

BRO  
Ham it up, won't you.

Bro picks up his phone and fiddles with it.

BRO (CONT'D)  
So maybe you don't remember leaving  
the top locked unlocked then.

DAD  
If it's something that isn't done,  
it isn't something you remember.

SIS  
I agree. That's more like absent  
mindedness.

BRO  
Oh, like stupidity?

DAD  
I don't think she said that.

BRO  
Then what do you call it when there  
is jam left out?

Mom eyes Dad.

MOM  
I thought you were off the jam?

BRO  
That's *right*. Dad doesn't eat jam  
anymore.

Everyone turns their head. CLOSE IN on the jam.

BRO (CONT'D)  
Quite unordinary.

DAD  
(defensively)  
I'm not having any jam.

MOM  
I suppose if you say you aren't,  
you aren't.

DAD  
Uh, yes. That's right. I'm not.

MOM  
I mean, who's to say if you are  
having jam.

SIS  
Yes. Who's to say.

DAD  
(anxiously)  
No...not 'who's to say'.

BRO  
(cruelly)  
Yes. Who's to say?

SIS  
Oh...OH, 'Who's to say.' Oh, I  
don't think we need to do this.

DAD  
It does seem like quite an  
escalation. Having an inquiry or a  
trial isn't necessary.

SIS  
It does seem quick.

BRO  
It's not quick. It only helps him.  
Guaranteed!

MOM  
Yes, it only helps. So it's  
settled. We'll have a family trial.

DAD  
(miffed)  
I'm not having any jam.

MOM  
Who's to say?

BRO  
Who's to say?

DAD  
This isn't about jam, is it? I'm  
sure I'll hear the sound soon.

MOM  
But you've heard the sound before?

DAD  
I have heard the sound.

MOM  
Good! Then we're just following up  
on your performance evaluation with  
Omni.

Mom abruptly places her spoon aside, scoots back her chair,  
and exits the room. Dad and Sis stare at one another. Bro  
eats, unaffected.

DAD  
I...I suppose, I'll be going  
myself.

Dad exits. Sis stares at Bro with stern disapproval. Bro  
continues to eat, never looking up.

INT. Home - Living Room - Day

Mom stands in front of a group of System Members seated  
around the living room. Spread across the coffee table are  
several products laid out in an orderly fashion.

MOM  
Down time can be bothersome.  
Wouldn't you agree?

MEMBER X  
Yes, it can be. Sometimes, I don't  
know what to do.

MOM  
I agree. And you don't want idle  
hands.

Mom reaches for the first item, FIDDLER, and shows it to  
everyone.

MOM (CONT'D)  
This is Fiddler. It keeps your  
hands busy.  
(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)  
 No more need to feel anxiety. Just  
 keep fiddling. Try it.

Mom hands it to Member Y, who fiddles with it. Then pauses.

MOM (CONT'D)  
 How do you like it?

MEMBER Y  
 It fiddles just fine. But I don't  
 think I like it.

MOM  
 Are you sure you don't like it?

Member Y gazes at it for a moment and then puts it down.

MEMBER Y  
 Hmm. Yes. I'm sure I don't like it.

MOM  
 I appreciate your honesty.

MEMBER ZED  
 It may help to explain the special  
 features. A good spiel includes  
 special features.

Mom's eyes peel in slight annoyance.

MOM  
 Yes that would benefit a spiel. But  
 Fiddler doesn't have special  
 features.

MEMBER ZED  
 It doesn't? Hmm.

Member Zed pulls Fidget out of her pocket.

MEMBER ZED (CONT'D)  
 That's odd because my product,  
 Fidget, not only satisfies  
 wandering hands but also exfoliates  
 the hand skin. No more wrinkles!

MEMBER X  
 That is interesting.

Mom quickly places Fiddler down on table and picks up  
 Spangler's Lotion. She's quick and snappy to reel them back  
 in.

MOM

I'd like to learn more about Fidget, but let's do that later. You said it exfoliates, right?

MEMBER ZED

Right. I did say that.

MOM

And I'm sure many of us spend time in front of our Televisors and TravelTelevisors.

MEMBER Y

Yes. I do that.

MEMBER X

I do that as well.

MOM

Then you may be concerned about the effects of screen glow. Spangler's Cheek Gel assures protection.

Mom opens the lotion and applies it.

MOM (CONT'D)

Just apply in a rectilinear fashion. It's that easy!

MEMBER Y

I don't mean to interrupt, but I'm not sure this pitch is persuasive.

MOM

Then I can throw in Lapper's Taste Bud Enhancers for free. But act now, that's a limited time offer.

MEMBER Y

Despite the assumed superiority of Omni System products, your spiel is actually dissuading me of interest.

MOM

Oh. I see. And do you all feel this way?

The members look at one another then back at Mom. They nod.

MEMBER X

Yes. I think we all feel this way.

MEMBER ZED  
The spiel is lacking in influence.  
Might I suggest-

Mom is quick to cut off Member Zed & pulls out SHOCK COLLAR.

MOM  
What about this personal shock  
collar? Maybe you have someone in  
your family who needs re-education?

The members look at one another.

MEMBER X  
My family is in order.

MEMBER ZED  
(salty)  
Yes. Our families are in line.

Mom sighs, looks frustrated, but keeps composure.

MOM  
Ok. Then let's relax. Have some  
tea.

MEMBER ZED  
That sounds good. Let's have some  
tea.

Mom saunters toward the kitchen, contorting her face in  
discomfort and worry.

INT. DAD'S DUNGEON - DAY

Dad stands uncomfortably. He taps his foot in nervous habit.  
PAL sits on Dad's mattress, sipping from his mug.

PAL  
Finding the System pleasing?

DAD  
Yes... I mean... Pal... I'm not  
finding it pleasing.

PAL  
Oh?

DAD  
I'm not finding the System at all.  
I haven't been hearing anything.

PAL  
You haven't heard anything?

DAD  
I presumed you knew when I saw you  
outside my house.

PAL  
No. I didn't know.

DAD  
Let me be forward. What were you  
and They doing at mine yesterday?

PAL  
We were just checking up.

DAD  
Do They know?

PAL  
Look, buddy, we were just checking  
in on you.

DAD  
But why was *he* there?

PAL  
People check in. People need to  
assess.

DAD  
Pal, I don't understand what that  
means.

PAL  
What's to understand? Life is so  
much easier when you don't  
understand. Just take everything  
for what it is.

DAD  
You don't think I want to?

PAL  
I don't know. You seem like a  
chronic worrier to me. Worry causes  
harm. You probably already worried  
yourself into diabetes.

Pal takes a huge sip of his drink, makes a refreshing 'ahh'.

PAL (CONT'D)  
It's easy. Just think less.

DAD  
Maybe you're right.

PAL  
You are in good company. Let go and enjoy yourself. Let's do some non thinking together.

Pal and Dad sit in a moment of silence. Dad tries to contain himself, but breaks in worry.

DAD  
Look, I'm sorry to be so nervous. I want things to be better. I just don't think my family believes me.

PAL  
You want them to believe you? So you want to stay then?

DAD  
Sure. The world outside is not so- I am just not interested in it anymore.

PAL  
(unconvinced)  
Wow. You have made some progress.

DAD  
Pal, I think my family is going to dig deeper into this. They say this is about jam.

PAL  
I thought you were off the jam?

DAD  
(defensive)  
I am off the jam. I don't think this is about the jam. I think it's a test that I'm hearing the sound.

PAL  
A test?

DAD  
My wife is suspicious of me. She wants to know 'who's to say'.

PAL  
Wow. A family trial? So soon? Are you sure this is not about... *her*?

DAD

I fear that & don't think I can handle discussing all the details of the affair again. It's over. Why can't leave it at that?

Long pause.

PAL

A trial might actually be something to worry about.

DAD

(facetious)

Oh, you think so?

PAL

Watch it, buddy. I'm the only friend you got.

DAD

Sorry. I just don't know what to do.

PAL

I can coach you. It's easy work.

DAD

How's it easy?

PAL

You you could just tell them what they want to hear.

DAD

You think that'll work?

PAL

It's better than telling them what they don't want to hear.

DAD

I suppose. So what do they want to hear?

PAL

You give them a specially designed truth. Here's how it works. When they ask you about your affair, you say: "I'm sorry. I deviated from the path. Now, I'm back on it."

DAD

I think I got it. "I'm sorry. I deviated from the path. Now, I'm back on it."

PAL

That's it. When they ask, "How do we know it's over?", you say, "It's over because the system wills it. It's over because I want my family."

DAD

But what if they ask about the sound?

PAL

Try describing a generic sound.

DAD

You mean like "Boop" or "Beep"?

PAL

Those are generic, but not what we're looking for. Try using broad descriptions.

DAD

Like inspiring?

PAL

Yes, that works.

Both think for a moment.

PAL (CONT'D)

I think you should say, "ethereal."

DAD

That is a good word, but it is also odd. I'll need to write it down. What was it again?

PAL

Ethereal.

DAD

So like ghostly?

PAL

Yes. Something like that. You should prepare a message.

DAD  
Does the sound say something?

PAL  
I think so.

DAD  
Ok. Let me think.

Dad begins to write down a message.

DAD (CONT'D)  
"Let go, spend more, and -"...  
and...hmm

PAL  
No spitting.

DAD  
Ah. "and no spitting."

PAL  
You just tell them all this and  
you'll be good to go.

INT. HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Mom is cleaning up after tea time. As she washes up, she breaks down. She contains her weeping to hushed sniffles. A cold voice sounds:

VOICE (O.S.)  
You are displeased?

Mom's head whips up as she stares blankly forward.

CUT TO:

INT. MOM'S OTHERWORLD - SAME

Mom is startled as she's swiftly sucked into a hyperreality. They appears from the shadows of a neon vectored floor.

MOM  
My goodness! I didn't expect you.

THEY  
You sound displeased.

MOM  
I'm just a bit tense. That's all.

THEY

You should not be displeased if you are working with the System.

MOM

I know. Like they say: "Happiness is Conviction if that conviction is to the System."

THEY

What else do they say?

MOM

"To follow is to find yourself."

THEY

Yes, that is something they say. What about consuming?

MOM

"Consuming makes the world go round."

THEY

And what is that world?

MOM

That world is all that the System gives us. The System is our worldsphere.

THEY

Good. You know how to repeat your protocols.

MOM

Thank you.

Beat.

MOM (CONT'D)

I have a question if I might. Why have you visited me in the Mindsee? Please don't take that the wrong way. I'm happy to have your company. It's just... I'm curious.

THEY

Perhaps you should temper your curiosity. Yes?

MOM

Yes. I'm sorry. I know that "curiosity is chaos".

THEY

It only hurts us...Although I do think you should know why I'm here.

Mom peaks her head up in nervous anticipation.

THEY (CONT'D)

I've seen your product reports.

MOM

Yes, those have been-

THEY

(curtly)

Don't tell me what they've been! I can read! I have eyes! I can see!

Mom wells up. Her fists grit. She bites her lower lip and holds back. They's voice evens out to a chilling tone.

THEY (CONT'D)

Can you though? Can you read?

Mom nods.

THEY (CONT'D)

How about the wall? Can you read the writing on them?

MOM

I don't know what you mean.

THEY

You can memorize your protocols, but you can't put two and two together?

MOM

I'm selling when I can.

THEY

It doesn't appear that way. I'm uncertain you can continue. And that is... disappointing.

MOM

(desperate)

I can do this. Please.

THEY

These sales are grim. I need you to push the products.

MOM

I'm trying.

THEY

Your presentation is clumsy. Do you even practice your spiel?

MOM

Of course. I've gone over it at least ten times every evening for two weeks.

THEY

You have to spiel well to progress with Omni. You get that, right?

MOM

Yes, well-

THEY

A successful spiel earns you influence-

MOM

-and acquisition of high influence gains you value.

THEY

That's right. The system accepts you and awards you with value. You have no value without influence and no influence without a good spiel.

MOM

And I want influence-

THEY

Not enough apparently. Affirmation Day is months away, but your sales trajectory is not promising. I don't think anyone else sells as little as you.

MOM

I'm sorry. It's just a valley. I'm on the uptick.

THEY

Hmm. I hear that often. Usually when someone's heart isn't in it. I'm beginning to think-

MOM

I'm in this. I swear it. I'm giving my whole self.

THEY

I don't see it. How can I know if I don't see it.

MOM

Watch me! I'm all in. Please, just watch.

THEY

I don't want to watch.

MOM

Then how can I show you?

THEY

With SALES! Money! Product out! Credits in! That's how!

Mom cries, but muffles the sound with her hand. Shadows slowly begin to creep onto They, like tentacles pulling him into some unseen mouth.

THEY (CONT'D)

Without capital gains, without influence... I'm afraid we can't even trust you as a Loyal to the System.

They disappears. The room fades like a poor transmission.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME/KITCHEN - SAME

Mom is back in front of the sink. She's trembling. Sounds of the System members can be heard. Mom spys through the kitchen doorway into the living room. Member Zed is wowing the other members, much to the her chagrin. She sees Dad come up from his dungeon.

MOM

Influence...

INT. HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The System members are toying with one of Member Zed's products.

MEMBER ZED

You can attach these to any pair of glasses or sunglasses and they will protect you from unwanted side glances.

Dad nervously approaches the members.

DAD

Sorry to bother. Would any of you happen to know where my wife is?

Before anyone can answer, Mom appears. She is unnaturally jovial.

MOM

Hello, darling.

DAD

Oh, there you are. Listen, I don't mean to interrupt-

MOM

You're not interrupting. In fact, I could use your help.

DAD

(incredulous)  
You want my help?

MOM

Yes. I want your help. Can I please have everyone's attention.

The members settle into attention. Mom begins to spiel.

MOM (CONT'D)

You may have been quick to dismiss the shock collar, but perhaps that is my failing. How can you be of interest without a demonstration.

Mom picks up the shock collar and extends it to Dad.

MOM (CONT'D)

Honey, if you will please.

DAD

You want me to put this on?

MOM

Yes.

DAD  
This? A shock collar?

MOM  
Yes.

DAD  
I don't know.

Mom stares daggers at Dad.

MOM  
I'm certain you would want my spiel  
to go as well as possible.

DAD  
Yes... I mean-

MOM  
And you want to please the System?

DAD  
(sighs)  
Yes. I want to please the system.

MOM  
Then, please, proceed with attiring  
yourself.

Dad complies.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Excellent. Now how does he look?

MEMBER Y  
I say it's fitting. It  
seems...appropriate on him.

MOM  
Appropriate. That is a good word.  
Now, honey, could you please sit  
down.

Dad finds a seat. Mom places a hand to her ear.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Sir, you may want to come and see  
this.

A loud KNOCK is heard at the front door, startling Dad.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Kids! Could you get that.

Bro and Sis enter from 'house' door and answer the front door to find They on the other side. He's got that pearly white crocodile smile spread across his face and a clean cut suit.

THEY

Hello.

Dad's expression becomes tight. Everyone except him stands and salutes They.

DAD

*He's here. Why is he here?*

Dad is ignored as Mom approaches and welcomes They. They whispers into mom's ear.

THEY

Perhaps you *can* show me your loyalty.

MOM

Perhaps I can show you my *influence*.

Mom holds her head high, musters strength for a direct march towards her husband.

MOM (CONT'D)

Kids have a seat. Your father and I are about to discuss "Who's to say."

DAD

Now!? Aren't you in the middle of your important spiel? What happened to the demonstration?

MOM

Ah, yes.

Dad's collar gives a small jolt. The System members clap. Sis gasps, Bro giggles.

MOM (CONT'D)

But allow me to fully demonstrate during a real life family trial. A trial which I've asked They to officiate.

DAD

They...They is going to officiate my trial?

THEY  
'Trial' might be a bad way of  
putting it.

They looks at Dad.

THEY (CONT'D)  
Try to look at it as more like...  
an assessment.

They gives Dad that wide toothy grin that leaves him  
unsettled. Dad quickly turns to address Mom.

DAD  
I don't think anyone is interested  
in the details of our affairs.

MOM  
We share everything. This is what  
solidarity within the System is.

Mom pulls out a comfortable chair for They to sit on. Dad  
looks at everyone.

DAD  
Might it be a touch uncomfortable  
to view a domestic?

MEMBER X  
No. It's our job in the system to  
solve things as a community. It's a  
pillar of us-ness and our way of  
saying thanks.

DAD  
Thanks for what?

No response, just blank stares. Dad looks to his family.  
Appears tense. Sis' is daunted and mouths "I'm so sorry".  
Bro finds this situation pleasant. Dad glances at They. The  
unsettling smile is wider than ever.

THEY  
Can we begin this thing or what?

MOM  
Of course.

DAD  
(muttering)  
I can't believe this is happening.

MOM

Oh come on, I think we were all expecting this.

BRO

Yes. I believe this is called a reckoning.

THEY

Dad, let's have Sis represent your interests. Mom, you'll be representing the interests of the System. And, of course, our dear members will serve as jury.

DAD

Should the kids be here?

THEY

Why wouldn't they be?

BRO

I think he has a problem with priorities.

THEY

Is that true?

DAD

No. I know better.

THEY

You know better because...

DAD

...because "family is the second tenant of unity, highest in power just under the System".

Bro rolls his eyes.

THEY

Excellent. If you understand that, then let us begin. Mom, please begin your questioning.

Mom approaches Dad.

MOM

How do you feel about uniformity?

DAD

I understand uniformity. "To fall in line is to fall in love." I believe this is what the system teaches.

MOM

Yes. The system does teach this. Do you believe it?

DAD

I believe what the system tells me.

MOM

Very obedient. The system is pleased.

DAD

I enjoy pleasing the system.

MOM

It is good to hear you say that. You are, of course, here though. Do you know why?

DAD

I'm uncertain, but what I can say is...I'm sorry. I deviated from the path. Now, I'm back on it.

MOM

Back on the path, huh? Then this will be simple: What is it that you're not telling yourself?

DAD

I'm not sure what you mean.

MOM

It's not the system you should fear. It's not your family either. You are your own worst enemy. What is it that you're not telling yourself?

DAD

I don't know...I'm not certain I'm hiding something.

Dad's collar jolts. They chuckles.

MOM

How's the sound? Heard it yet today?

DAD  
 (hesitant)  
 Yes. It's been inspiring.

MOM  
 Oh?

DAD  
 Or perhaps, ethereal is a better  
 way of describing it.

The system members whisper to one another. One looks over and  
 winks at dad.

DAD (CONT'D)  
 You understand, right? How would  
 you describe it?

THEY  
 I was unaware you were the one  
 asking questions here.

They gives Dad a sharp stare.

DAD  
 Yes, well, it had a message-

MOM  
 Do you believe you are a good  
 father?

DAD  
 Uh, yes, I submit that I am. So did  
 you wanna hear the message?

Mom purposely ignores his questions.

MOM  
 There are no secrets in the system.  
 So let me ask again: What is it  
 that you're not telling yourself?

Dad is taken unaware. He stumbles to find answers.

DAD  
 I... I suppose I falter from time  
 to time.

MOM  
 Falter? Yes. I think so. But you  
 know who might know better? Your  
 son. Let's ask him.

THEY

Yes. Let's ask him. May I have the son take the stand and speak.

Bro stands.

BRO

I motion to act as an Inquisitor in place of Witness.

THEY

Oh, yes, absolutely.

SIS

Sir, I object. That doesn't seem fair.

THEY

(chuckling)

You're right to think it's unfair, but this is certainly more interesting. Guaranteed!

SIS

Ok...Then may I have a moment to address Dad and counter Mom's argument.

THEY

You can certainly try.

SIS

Thank you.

Bro stubbornly takes a seat as Sis stands and addresses the System Members.

SIS (CONT'D)

Dad has been asked, what is he not telling himself. He says he does not believe he is hiding anything. Who's to say?

System members mutter to themselves.

SIS (CONT'D)

I will tell you who is to say! If my dad says he is not hiding anything, he is to say so. Dad has said he is sorry, he is back on the path, and why not try to accept someone who has accepted the System?

System members nod.

SIS (CONT'D)  
So Dad, might I ask-

Bro stands.

BRO  
Permission to interrupt.

THEY  
Please do.

SIS  
But I have not asked Dad any questions?

THEY  
Yes, well, a good trial is an interesting trial. That thing you were doing was lacking quality, style, & convenience. Let's see what Bro has to say. Unless you have a problem with that?

SIS  
(mumble)  
...no.

Sis sits, her arms crossed in frustration. Bro stands before everyone.

BRO  
My father says he falters from his duties at times.  
(slight chuckle)  
He certainly falters to put it lightly.

The system members chuckle.

BRO (CONT'D)  
Your turn to the System raises some alarms. I am with the System. I believe you're either for it or against it. Your past skepticism belies your current claim.

DAD  
People can change.

BRO  
But it doesn't mean we forget the past. Family is important.  
(MORE)

BRO (CONT'D)

I value it. But I'm not certain you do. Care to let the members know? There are no secrets.

DAD

I have... done some things. But that's over. It's over because the system wills it. It's over because I want my family.

BRO

How about what you haven't done?

DAD

I'm sorry?

BRO

Your sin is negligence.

DAD

Negligence?

BRO

What are you not telling yourself, Dad?

DAD

I thought this was about the sound?

BRO

How about I tell everyone who you are: An absentee.

Dad attempts to speak, but can't find the words. He's perplexed. Bro turns to address the system members.

BRO (CONT'D)

My name day, something special to me. Not to my father, apparently. I wanted to go to the aquadome. He was supposed to fish with me. He made the promise. To my dismay, he was not around. Nor was he at his workstead when I called. I walked to the market for a regulated snack ration to comfort my feelings. I felt worried. Had something happened? But as I wandered the neighborhood, I looked across the way. Dad and Pal were having a stroll. He had forgotten. Or, maybe, he just did not care.

Dad nervously looks around, thinking of what to say.

DAD  
I'm sorry. I deviated from the  
path. Now, I'm -

BRO  
Hold on to that thought. What is it  
that you are not telling yourself?  
I am not the only one you hurt.

Beat as Dad thinks. He looks to Sis. She shrugs. Dad defaults  
to a mechanic response.

DAD  
I'm sorry. I deviated from-

BRO  
How about your daughter's garden?

DAD  
Hold on, I was saying some-

BRO  
How about your daughter's garden?

DAD  
(frustrated)  
What about it?

BRO  
Say it.

DAD  
I don't even know what this is  
about anymore.

BRO  
You sabotaged the garden. You  
stomped over it.

DAD  
The delivery man did that.

BRO  
You did it while sneaking in the  
house.

Members mutter.

DAD  
What? I didn't-

Dad's collar shocks him.

BRO

I would like Sis to come to the stand.

DAD

What? But she's my representation!

SIS

He's right. That's a conflict of interest.

THEY

Come on now guys. Where is your sense of fun? This will be so fun!

DAD

I am inclined to disagree.

THEY

(laughs)

That's hilarious. Because you are also inclined to do as I say. See? It's already fun. Sis, take the stand.

BRO

Permission to assert strong Inquisitional gestures at the witness.

THEY

It would be my pleasure to grant that.

Bro gestures violently at Sis.

BRO

Tell him. Tell him what he's done.

SIS

(timidly)

The delivery man...like dad said.

BRO

Don't go easy on him. The system has no secrets. Tell the truth.

SIS

I saw Dad...sneaking in.

Dad's face grow pale.

SIS (CONT'D)

I don't want to continue this.

BRO

You have to say it. To fall in line is to fall in love. This is a merciful thing. Expose him.

SIS

(distressed)

We suspected someone was treading on our ground. I often heard movement during the night. One week, I kept alert. I held a hit stick waiting to catch them. But instead, I saw you. Sneaking into the front window. My garden was under the window.

The System members audibly gasp.

BRO

So who's to say? Not Dad apparently. What he says...is not what is.

DAD

(to Sis)

There's not a chance you can cross examine yourself, is there?

Sis can't look at dad. She rises and joins Mom and Bro on their side of the room.

SIS

I resign from further counsel.

There is a silence followed by and abrupt KNOCK at the door. Mom gets up and answers the door. It's the Delivery Man. He hands Mom the weekly ration of MILK. She takes it back to the living room.

MOM

That was the Delivery Man. I suppose if anything goes wrong here you can blame it on him.

The System members laugh.

MOM (CONT'D)

I feel now is a good time to take a break for some soothing milk.

MEMBER Y

I'd like that.

Mom prepares milk for everyone and passes around the glasses. Dad is glazed with sweat and distressed. He rubs his forehead in disbelief. A glass appears in forcefully in his face.

DAD

Oh yes. Thank you.

MOM

Do drink it up quickly. I'd like to get back to the questions.

Dad complies. Mom takes the empty glass.

MOM (CONT'D)

We are the System. There are no secrets. They were sold long ago. The only secrets are the ones you hide from yourself. I ask again: What are you not telling yourself?

DAD

Why do you keep asking that?

MOM

You're not asking questions. You're answering them. What are you not telling yourself?

BRO

You're only hiding from yourself. What are you not asking yourself?

DAD

I've said I messed up. I'm back on the path now. I want convention.

MEMBER ZED

What are you not telling yourself?

DAD

Ok, I'm certain the jury should not-

Dad's collar shocks him.

THEY

I don't believe you're trying.

DAD

I suppose...I could be a better father?

Dad's collar shocks him. Some members start looking dad up and down.

BRO  
 You have to believe it. What is it  
 you are not telling yourself?

DAD  
 I'm trying. I just...

Dad stops as he see the room distorts in VHS-esque fashion.

DAD (CONT'D)  
 Hmm.

MOM  
 Having a think there?

The members start flirtatiously eyeing Dad, but it's not  
 certain it's real or not. The members appear glitchy.

DAD  
 I thought you believed me.

Dad is clammy and sweaty. He rubs his hand on his face. He  
 notices the glasses of milk. None of them have been sipped.

DAD (CONT'D)  
 Why has no one drank their milk?

Dad's collar shocks him.

DAD (CONT'D)  
 Take this thing off of me.

SIS  
 Dad. Please. What are you not  
 telling yourself?

MOM  
 You think you're a good person.  
 You want us to believe that. You  
 want to believe that.

DAD  
 But I am a good person.

Dad's collar shocks him.

DAD (CONT'D)  
 I am a good person!

Dad's collar shocks him. He looks up and sees people looking  
 somewhat pixelated. Some have censor blocks on their eyes.  
 Dad's HEART thumps loudly. The room is overlaid with a neon  
 vector that fades in and out to the rhythm of it's beat.

DAD (CONT'D)

What's happening here? I'm a good person...I'm a good person!

Dad's collar shocks him.

MOM

You need to stop hiding from yourself. We know who you are.

DAD

Who am I? Just tell me!?

BRO

You have to unhide yourself.

The members in the room are licking their lips. Articles of their clothing begin to look skimpier. They begins to cackle.

DAD

Why are you all acting this way!?

MOM

They're waiting to hear it.

DAD

Take this thing off! What are you doing to me! This is enough!

SIS

I can't see him like this. Please, show him some mercy.

DAD

Take this off!

MOM

Unhide yourself.

Dad grabs at the collar. He's shocked viciously.

SIS

He's not ready. Just let him go!

Bro gets up and walks Sis out of the room. The system members begin to look more uniform to Dad, like clones. They stare at him. It's cold. Blank. Waiting.

DAD

What do you want to hear!?! Please!?!?

EVERYONE

What are you not telling yourself?  
What are you not telling yourself?

Dad musters words, but only guttural sounds bellow out.

DAD

I can't... I can't say it.

Dad's head is ringing. Everything sounds distorted and slower. Dad attempts speech but still only makes incoherent noises. The collar keeps shocking him until...

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm a bad father! Is that it? I'm a failure as a father and a husband.

Everyone is silent.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm only concerned with my own happiness. I'm frightened at the banality of my lot in life. I'm weak. I have no will power. I'm not the man I appear to be at the market buying milk. That man is an illusion. A mask of normalcy. But I'm not normal. I'm just a man who let's everyone down...including himself.

Beat. They laughs. Mom stares at Dad. The members hum and slowly, mechanically begin the System salute

DAD (CONT'D)

That's...that's what I'm not telling myself. I'm a failure. I can't keep anyone happy. Not even myself.

MOM

You have no secrets now. Not even your own.

DAD

Can I please take this collar off now. I feel ill.

Dad breathes heavily. He looks around. No one is helping him.

DAD (CONT'D)

I said can I take this off now?

Beat. The collar shocks Dad. Then again. And again. The colors he sees distort into violet, teal, pink. Each member hums a protocol. Mom watches as They walks up behind her, grinning. Dad collapses to the floor. He looks up and sees They's face on everyone. His screams fade with his consciousness.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dad awakes in a stupor. He reaches for his neck. The collar is gone, he sighs slowly...but then jerks up. He's scantily clad. He panics, sees clothes everywhere. The system members are still there, barely covered with robes. Leather rods on the ground, candles, wax on all surfaces, mysterious liquids...

THEY

That was quite a show.

DAD

I don't understand.

THEY

You will put it together. The story is already there.

They points to his head.

THEY (CONT'D)

You just have to... unhide it.

They laughs. Dad spies a pile of cock rings and anal beads.

THEY (CONT'D)

Do you know yourself better now?

DAD

This is some System ritual? You torture someone into revealing themselves...in front of everyone?

THEY

Aww, you don't like being this free?

They reaches out brushes Dad's arm with the back side of his fingers.

DAD

My kids...were they-

THEY

Now that is a good question.

They laughs again. Dad is horrified. He awaits a response that never comes. They eats Dad with his hungry eyes.

DAD

What are you doing? I don't know what you want...

THEY

It's you who doesn't know what they want.

DAD

This was a gruesome trick. Was my wife a part of this?

They continues like he's having his own conversation.

THEY

Your wife knows what she wants. In fact, she took what she wanted.

They unbuttons his shirt's top button.

THEY (CONT'D)

Her spiel has matured. So influential.

They hisses the last word. Dad takes a step back.

DAD

Why did you do this to me?

THEY

People are not always certain of what they want.

They step towards Dad.

DAD

I know that I didn't want to be exposed that way.

Dad takes another step back, They steps forward.

THEY

Sometimes people even want things that they *really* don't want. Maybe you just needed a little push.

DAD

A push towards what?

THEY  
What you *should* want.

They grabs Dad by the waist and stares hard into Dad's eyes.  
Dad can't break the gaze. It's hypnotic.

DAD  
You've had your fun. I'm a mockery.  
You're playing head games.

Dad seems to be fawning.

THEY  
Oh my fun is just beginning. I know  
what I want.

They and Dad's heads move closer.

DAD  
What's that?

They chuckles.

THEY  
Try not to enjoy this too much.

BLACK.

END OF SHOW