

In Greek mythology, Orpheus was a legendary musician. When his lover, Eurydice, died, he took his own life in his hands and descended into hell to find her. He was allowed to bring Eurydice out as long as her didn't look back at her until they'd left the underworld. Of course, he did, and lost her forever. Eventually, his head was cut off and he became an oracle. While reality changes every day, Orpheus continues, throughout eternity, playing the lyre to find the truth. And just as music and love are timeless, so is hell...in all its forms.

HOUSE LIGHTS OUT

START TAPE #1

PRELUDE IN DARK, THEN CF WITH TV SONG

CF X CP ON MUSIC CUE

(EURYDICE ENTERS, GETS REQUESTED ITEMS FROM HERMES DURING FOLLOWING:)

EURYDICE: My coat please.

(HERMES RETRIEVES COAT)

One coat, red.

EURYDICE: There was a hat too.

HERMES RETRIEVES HAT

One hat, blue.

EURYDICE: No, my hat was red. Like the coat.

(HERMES RETRIEVES ANOTHER HAT)

One hat, checked.

EURYDICE: And the camera, with the film?

(HERMES RETRIEVES CAMARA)

One camera, loaded.

EURYDICE: There's a bag too.

(HERMES RETRIEVES BAG)

One bag, shoulder.

EURYDICE: The pack? For the back?

(HERMES RETRIEVES BACKPACK)

One pack, back.

EURYDICE: There was a bigger bag. To carry on?

(HERMES RETRIEVES CARRYON)

Carry on.

CP X LP/RP (EURYDICE VANISHES)

ORPHEUS ENTERS:

Eurydice, is that you?

(ORPHEUS TURNS TO HERMES)

That was Eurydice. I've been going through hell trying to find her. Where did she go?

HERMES: You might try number 1003: Images of Women and Technology in Art.

(ORPHEUS AND HERMES SWITCH PLACES)

LP/RP X CP

ORPHEUS: Where's Eurydice. I was told she'd be here.

HERMES: She's right there. One Eurydice, as requested.

ORPHEUS: You don't understand. I want her. I came to bring her back.

HERMES: Back where?

ORPHEUS: Back... to life.

HERMES: Life? Hmm... how about number 0415: Mind to Life: Thinking About Women Through Time.

+ LP

(DOUBLE SHADOW OF ORPHEUS, ONE HERMES)

ORPHEUS: I've been doing that for 20 years. I don't want to think about her, I want to hold her hand, touch her hair, paddle a canoe through Times Square... that kind of thing.

HERMES: Number 1075 might do the trick. The Psychobiology of Moods.

ORPHEUS: No, that isn't what I mean at all.

HERMES: Perhaps you're having a problem expressing yourself. You could try number 1542: Conquering the Private Hell of Public Speaking.

- CP

(JUST ORPHEUS)

ORPHEUS: That's got nothing to do with it. She's the one who's here. I only came to get her out.

HERMES: You seem to be getting upset.

ORPHEUS: You're damn right I'm upset. I love her. I want her back. Really back.

+ RP

HERMES: I think what you're looking for is 0658: Anxiety and the Nature of Reality.

ORPHEUS: Closer. Just cut the anxiety and give me the nature of reality. Eurydice, both feet standing on real earth, breathing real air, nice blue sky overhead.

HERMES: I've got just the thing.

LP/RP X CP

Number 0804: The Cultural Social and Physical History of Central Park.

ORPHEUS: Great. So where's Eurydice?

+ RP

("FREE-FLOATING" SLIDE OF EURYDICE IN HERMES SHADOW)

HERMES: There you are--number 2563: Conceptual and Intuitive Approaches to Photography.

ORPHEUS: That's not her. It's just a photograph.

HERMES: No problem.

- RP

We'll go for number 2615...

Drawing with Both Sides of the Brain.

CP X LP/RP

(ORPHEUS VANISHES)

ORPHEUS: Now that's really practical as hell.

HERMES: Practical? Why didn't you say so?

(HERMES IN SEAM, TOSSING PAPERS OUT SIDE)

- There's a Phyllo Pastry Workshop. That's 3803.

Or... here's a practical one: 2943: Demystifying Insurance.

Or there's A Walking Guide to Affordable Dining in Greenwich Village; a Genographics PCP Workshop; Emerging Economic and Political Interdependence Among America, Europe, and Japan; The Politics of Water; Business Ethics: An Oxymoron?...

LP/RP X CF

I've got it. Number 3479: How to Get a Good Night's Sleep.

(ORPHEUS WALKS FSC, HANDS OVER EARS)

- CF

(BLACKOUT, EURYDICE BRINGS SCRIM IN)

+ SL WHEN MUSIC ENDS

ORPHEUS VO (POSED FROZEN IN PLACE):

I had a dream that Eurydice was gone. Like music I could remember but couldn't hear, or play.

SL X FL

STOP TAPE # 1

(EURYDICE WHEELS SCRIM AWAY)

ORPHEUS, LIVE:

But she really is gone. Not a dream after all.

(EURYDICE LOOKS AT AUDIENCE AND SHAKES HER HEAD)

Just that aching feeling. Mind without heart. No music. It just keeps...recording

(EURYDICE PLACES BOWL FULL OF TAPE IN HIS HANDS, WHICH HE TAKES FOR GRANTED, WITHOUT NOTICING HER)

Recording what? Life. This...

(REACHES IN AND PULLS OUT A GLOB OF TAPE)

is my life. But...

(DROPS TAPE)

there's no music. Listen:

START TAPE # 2

VO: (BROADCAST STYLE)

(PULLS OUT A PIECE OF TAPE WITH EACH STATEMENT:)

oxygen depletion allowance raised

declared innocent of intended meaning

thought rationed

sex determined

voters decide

PAUSE TAPE # 2

ORPHEUS:

No music, right?

(DUMPS OUT TAPE; LOOKS AT EMPTY FISHBOWL)

No Eurydice.

(SHE TAKES BOWL AWAY)

But she's in here somewhere.

(PICKS UP PIECE OF TAPE AND SCANS IT)

It's just a matter of finding the place where she's a part of *my* life...

(EURYDICE CUTS TAPE)

and then where she not...

(LOOKING AT ONE END)

and then putting her back in.

(LOOKS AT OTHER END, PUZZLED)

In other words, editing. Simply a matter of editing Eurydice...

(HOLDS OUT A SECTION OF TAPE IN ONE HAND)

back into my life.

(EURYDICE PLACES TANGLED GLOB OF TAPE IN OTHER HAND. HE PICKS OUT A SECTION OF TAPE AND HE RUNS IT BY HIS EAR)

RE-START TAPE # 2

(BROADCAST STYLE VO:)

Values added

Shortage declared

Interest down

Rates up

PAUSE TAPE # 2

(SIGHS AND SHAKES HIS HEAD)

So where in hell is she? Trying to edit one's own life is not all that easy. It's quite a challenge, actually. There are a lot of unexpected problems.

Look. Here, for example...

(GESTURES WITH HAND, EURYDICE PLACES AN END OF TAPE IN IT)

we have Aunt Ethyl.

And, on the other hand, there's...

(GESTURES WITH OTHER HAND AND EURYDICE PLACES ANOTHER END OF TAPE IN IT)

Uncle Ben. Uncle Ben made things. From wood.

(TIES TWO ENDS OF TAPE TOGETHER)

And then we have... somewhere...

(LOOKS THROUGH TAPE, EURYDICE HANDS HIM A PIECE, HE HOLDS IT UP TO HIS EYE FOR CONFIRMATION, THEN HOLDS IT OUT)

Aunt Ethyl's cat. Sitting...

(TIES END ON)

On Aunt Ethyl's lap. Universal, right? Everybody can relate to an Aunt Ethyl sitting there with a cat in her lap, Uncle Ben by her side building a bird house.

So Aunt Ethyl and Uncle Ben were related. To each other. But they were not...

(HOLDS THREE LOOSE ENDS OF TAPE)

related to me. The reality is that they were Aunt Ethyl and Uncle Ben and they were related to each other. But the truth is...

(DROPS TWO ENDS OF TAPE, HOLDING ONTO THIRD)

they were not relatives. Just names. Names I remember in relation to each other but not, in reality, related to me, much less Eurydice.

(STARES AT TAPE END, SHAKES HEAD AND DROPS IT)

The hell with "reality."

Another way is to play the lyre to find the truth. That, after all, is the essence of art. Playing the liar to find the truth.

RE-START TAPE #2

(EURYDICE WHEELS SCRIM OVER)

FL x SL

STOP TAPE #2 AFTER MUSIC ENDS

EURYDICE (BEHIND SCRIM): Is it the green dress or the gold one?

ORPHEUS (FRONT OF SCRIM): uh.... it must have been the gold one.

EURYDICE: But your Aunt Ethyl gave me the green one.

ORPHEUS: Doesn't matter, she wasn't really my aunt.

EURYDICE: But she'll probably be there.

ORPHEUS: Then you must have worn the green one.

EURYDICE: I don't like green. And it's got that silly collar. Not me at all.

ORPHEUS: The gold dress then. You wore the gold dress.

EURYDICE: In 1968? I wouldn't wear that dress in 1968.

ORPHEUS: 1968... right. Must have been a black dress.

EURYDICE: I don't have a black dress. Not anymore. It was too long. I gave it to your Aunt Ethyl, for that green one. She'll probably be wearing it. But I can't wear hers. Not with that collar.

ORPHEUS: I've got it--it was 1968, right? So you must have worn jeans.

EURYDICE: I can't. I'm pregnant.

ORPHEUS: Not yet. That was later. You probably weren't wearing anything.

EURYDICE: Not to go meet your father. I have to wear something to go meet your father.

ORPHEUS: I wasn't there when you met my father. He died in the war.

(EURYDICE WHEELS SCRIM AWAY. ORPHEUS WATCHES FOR A BEAT THEN TURNS BACK TO AUDIENCE)

That's what I was told--that my father died in the war. Which war? My father's war. Everybody has to have one. A war, that is. Well, a father too. Everybody has to have a father. So my mother got me a new one.

Look...

- SL

X FF (CREATING SHADOW OF ORPHEUS)

This is me.

FF X CF (L?) (LARGER SHADOW FIGURE WITH ORPHEUS BACKLIT)

This is my father. Apollo, God of light, but not the sun.

CF X CP

This is the father my mother gave me.

CP X RP

Here, by the way, is my mother. She played the Calliope.

RP X FF

This is my son.

But not the light. This son came out of a cereal box.

+ FL, 5" (X FF, 5")

My real son doesn't know I exist. Eurydice told him I died in the war.

(EURYDICE PLACES A HANDFUL OF TAPE IN HIS HAND)

So, Eurydice, my son and both my fathers are somewhere in all this...

(SHUFFLES THROUGH TAPE, TRYING TO UNTANGLE IT)

It's a little clearer if we start at the beginning.

(FINDS AN END)

I just happened to be conceived precisely at the moment the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. I was the very first post war boom baby. From the very beginning, I rode the crest of a wave pushed along by the ever-expanding reverberations of that bomb.

(CONTINUES TO PULL TAPE THROUGH FINGERS WHILE TALKING)

Before me, the expectations of the ages were laid out like plowed fields, ready to be planted and harvested. I couldn't wait to get there. But every moment along the way, whenever my own life entered the present tense--going to school, falling in love, getting a job, having a son--that wave leveled it all and left some glow-in-the-dark civilization in its wake, a newly-defined plastic fantastic past that, somehow, I had never lived through.

Except when Eurydice was...It's here somewhere...that connection between the heart and the mind. Buried like an underground telephone wire.

START TAPE # 3 - FL (X CF)

ANSWERPHONE VOICE, ORPHEUS: I'M PRACTICING THE LYRE SO I CAN'T COME TO THE PHONE RIGHT NOW. PLEASE SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT AND I'LL TRY TO EDIT IT IN.

CF X CP (EURYDICE ENTERS SLIDE WITH DOG)

EURYDICE, VO:

The town where we grew up was divided in two parts by a highway.

+ LP

The town hall, the 5 & 10, the drug store, the fire house, the church, the train station, the politics and the established establishment were on my side of the highway.

+ RP

The other side, where he lived, was filled with woods and streams and meadows that were quickly turning into houses filled with little tax deductions. (EURYDICE TO CS)

- CP (PROJECTORS CROSS)

People on his side of the highway referred to my territory as the other side of the highway. Over on my side, we thought they lived on the other side of the highway.

Orpheus was from the other side of the highway.

LP/RP X FF

ORPHEUS: Eurydice was from the other side of the highway.

FF X CF

MUSIC COLLAGE -- REAR FRESNELS X FADE WITH REAR PROJECTORS (2 SLIDES IN EACH, WHEN SLIDES ARE USED, USE ONLY REAR FRESNELS)

SCREEN DANCE--DISSOLVING, SHIFTING IMAGES FROM FRESNELS

EURYDICE, VO:

Between his house and the highway there was an unviolated strip of land filled with dogwood, birches, sasafra, maples... a virgin woods chastly defying the roaring highway, fending off the ever-encroaching advances of suburbia. These woods somehow survived under the beneficent protection of the Salkins--the lords of this land who lived in a mysterious stone manor house at the far end of the woods. So they were called Salkin's woods. But he never saw a single Salkin.

+ FL (- REAR FRESNELS AS SOUND ENDS)

STOP TAPE # 3

ORPHEUS CARRIES PILE OF JUNK TO CENTERSTAGE AND DROPS IT

ORPHEUS:

Michelangelo described art as simply a matter of chiseling away the excess. Just a matter of deciding what to keep and what to get rid of. Editing.

But I'm not as good an editor as Michelangelo. My life just keeps slipping through my fingers. Every time I try to take something out...

PICKS UP SOMETHING FROM PILE, EURYDICE TAKES IT AWAY

it turns out it wasn't there in the first place. Not really.

PICKS UP "WHAMFLATZER" FROM PILE

Like this...

You might not recognize it. It's a Whamflatzer. When I was ten years old, I was the first on my block to have one. I know, because I made it myself. What I didn't know was that it wasn't real. To be real, it had to come out of a cereal box. I didn't eat cereal. I ate oatmeal. What's the difference? I don't know. All I know is that in the battle of Salkin's Woods the Whamflatzer could not stand up to a Captain Video ring.

START TAPE # 4 - FL (X RP)

(EURYDICE HAS TAKEN AWAY WHAMFLATZER AND PUT A RING ON HIS FINGER AND HE AIMED AT THE SCREEN ON MUSIC/LIGHT TRANSITION)

(TV, SHADOW HAND TURNS OFF ON "TURN OFF") RP X CP (PLANK COVERS CP) CP X LF (HERMES SWEEPS PLANK BEHIND FRESNEL AND SET IT DOWN THEN STARTS TO WALK ACROSS) LF X CP

EURYDICE, VO:

When he was five years old, he crossed over to my side of the highway to come to school. He entered the school through a makeshift side door--planks and plywood temporarily rigged to avoid construction. The old school was being torn down so they could build a bigger one for the next class. I was younger than him but in the same class. To me, the new school had always been there. And on that first day, everyone called him the "new kid".

+ FL (- CP AS SOUND ENDS)

PAUSE TAPE # 4

ORPHEUS:

On my first day of school, a very beautiful and popular girl left for another town. Everyone but me knew and adored her. They all gathered in the school parking lot to wave good-bye as her mother drove her away--long, strawberry-blond ringlets tossing back tearful kisses from the rear window of a 1952 Chevy. She embodied something wonderful, irreplaceable, something that I would never know, moving on up the highway. That was the first time I saw, and lost, Eurydice.

RE-START TAPE # 4

(MEMORY IMPROVISING MOVEMENT TO TEXT)

EURYDICE, VO:

Growing up in the suburbs was like being raised on a tour bus. There was always some guide pointing out how things were, and weren't, to be done. Like reading comic books or cutting across people's lawns. Comic books were kind of radical but cutting across lawns was downright sacrilegious. Trespasses were not forgiven. Unless it happened to be the lawn of someone who had a lover or chickens or ate natural food or voted for Stevenson or didn't have a father. Then it was OK to cut across their lawn and maybe even ring their doorbell if they had one. Maybe his mother got him a father to replace the one who died in the war in order to save their lawn. But instead of cutting the lawn he spent all his time in Salkin's woods.

(MEMORY EXITS)

stop #4 (as Gould cuts)

ORPHEUS :

In spite of not cutting lawns or delivering newspapers or winning an essay contest, I managed to go to college. The summer before my last year was 1967. The summer of love. That's when Eurydice and I came together.

FL X SL, 5 "

She was standing there on the other side of the highway hitching a ride. I offered a walk instead.

(DURING ABOVE, HE JOINS EURYDICE PULLING SCRIM INTO PLACE)

I took her thumb and led her across the highway and into Salkin's Woods. We made love from then until New Year's Eve. Then she asked me where we were.

BEHIND SCRIM

EURYDICE: It's beautiful. Where are we?

ORPHEUS: In love.

EURYDICE: I know that, but where are we in love? The ground is all white and we're walking through the tops of the trees. Everything sparkles.

ORPHEUS: It's Salkin's Woods. The trees are coated in ice and the branches bend down through the moonlight to the frozen snow.

EURYDICE: It's so quiet.

ORPHEUS: 1968 just began. When the sun comes up, you'll hear the highway.

EURYDICE: I don't want to hear the highway.

ORPHEUS: Where were you going, when I met you, hitchhiking out there?

EURYDICE: I was going to the mall. To buy a pair of sunglasses.

ORPHEUS: There's nothing down there but farms. It's where celery comes from.

EURYDICE: That was years ago. Before my time. The farms are gone.

ORPHEUS: The past is a shopping mall now?

EURYDICE: Haven't you been there?

ORPHEUS: No. I hold the highway to my ear and pretend it's the sound of the ocean. That's one way to avoid hearing it.

EURYDICE: And the other?

ORPHEUS: To make love. (THEY EMBRACE)

START TAPE # 5

- SL (X CP)

ORPHEUS, VO: We were the perfect couple. People wanted to bring us home and put us on their mantle, like knick knacks, or bookends.

SCREEN COLLAGE -- CP LONG X TO LP/RP, LP/RP X CP, LONG X LP/RP -- IMAGES FRAMED IN SCRIM, SHADOWS OF CLOSE UP BODY PARTS--ARMS, HANDS, LEGS, HEADS, ETC.

SFX: GUN SHOT, SCREAMS

LP/RP X LP, RP... LP/RP X CP

+ SL (WITH CP)

(EURYDICE BEHIND SCRIM ORPHEUS MADLY CRAWLING AROUND FLOOR SEARCHING THROUGH TAPE)

EURYDICE: Orpheus! Please, we're losing touch.

STOP TAPE # 5 WHEN BACKGROUND SOUND FADES OUT IN FOLLOWING

ORPHEUS: I lost your place.

EURYDICE: Where?

ORPHEUS: I don't know. I'm trying to find it.

EURYDICE: Don't you see me?

ORPHEUS: I can't find the connection.

POKES HEAD UP INTO LIGHT

Where were you when President Kennedy was shot?

EURYDICE: I was in high school. In a history class. I heard about it on the PA system.

ORPHEUS (LOOKING): Different school. They rebuilt it.

POKES HEAD INTO LIGHT

How did you hear about Martin Luther King?

EURYDICE: On a burning grapevine.

ORPHEUS (LOOKING): Same network but different program.

POKES HEAD INTO LIGHT

How did you know Bobbie Kennedy was killed?

EURYDICE: I was listening to the primary returns on the radio.

ORPHEUS (POKING HEAD INTO LIGHT): Oswald, the '68 convention, Kennedy, King, Kennedy, Kent State, Cambodia, KKK, killing. You saw and heard it all, live.

EURYDICE: What about you?

ORPHEUS: I don't know. I watched, listened, over and over many times and still don't know what happened. Nobody does. I heard the world shatter and when I turned around to look there was a television glowing the dark.

- CP

(ORPHEUS JOINS EURYDICE BEHIND SCRIM)

EURYDICE: What did you expect to find?

ORPHEUS: Disillusionment maybe. Instead, illusionment.

EURYDICE: And what's the alternative? At least it's real. Unlike...

ORPHEUS: Unlike what?. Give me an example. What's not real?

EURYDICE: Your father, for one thing.

ORPHEUS: My real father or the one my mother gave me?

EURYDICE: Exactly.

ORPHEUS: Exactly what?

EURYDICE: You've taken him out. No Dad, no you. It's biological.

ORPHEUS: Biology isn't logical. I know. I got in A in logic but I flunked biology.

EURYDICE: No you didn't. I'm pregnant.

ORPHEUS: I didn't know.

EURYDICE: You should have.

ORPHEUS: I was aware of the preliminary steps, just not the results.

EURYDICE: But you did the editing. Now you've got me pregnant right here in aisle three of Shop-Rite. You've put me between the scotch tape and the dental floss.

ORPHEUS: It's not Shop-Rite. It's Salkin's Woods.

START TAPE # 6

SFX: CONSTRUCTION SOUNDS

ORPHEUS (OVER FADE AFTER RIVETING): What's happening?

EURYDICE: You don't know? They made Salkin's Wood into a shopping center.

TURN SCREEN SIDEWAYS (ORPHEUS CROUCHES, RISES WITH PLANE SOUND & SPIRALS TWICE. + CF WITH PLANE, X RF WITH REAR SPIRAL, X CF THEN X CP WITH 2ND REAR SPIRAL. HERMES PLACES TOY SOLDIERS IN IMAGE DURING FOLLOWING)

EURYDICE: He wasn't in the Vietnam war. He watched it on television. Over and over, many times. And he still has no idea what happened. According to him, no one does. By 1969, he claimed reality had been edited out of existence. He chose existence, I chose reality. I told our son he died in the war. In reality, he did.

STOP TAPE # 6 WHEN BACKGROUND FADES UNDER ABOVE

ORPHEUS: You want to know what really happened? She died in Vietnam. Let me edit that. She didn't die in Vietnam, the place, she died in Vietnam, the war.

In reality, you see, I've been going through hell without her.

OK, I'll let you decide who died in the war.

EURYDICE ONLY BEHIND SCRIM

EURYDICE: How can you prove you're not afraid of being patriotic?

ORPHEUS: I could make a lot of money.

EURYDICE: How can you prove you're not afraid of killing?

ORPHEUS: I could commit murder.

EURYDICE: How can you prove you're not afraid of dying?

ORPHEUS: I could commit suicide.

EURYDICE: How can you prove you're not afraid of living?

ORPHEUS: I could turn off the television.

EURYDICE: How can you prove you're not afraid of being yourself?

ORPHEUS: By loving you.

EURYDICE (live): Are you afraid of loving me?

ORPHEUS: I'm afraid of losing you.

EURYDICE: Do you have any idea who I am?

HE PULLS SCREEN BACK, SHE CURLS INTO "DEATH LOOK", HE TAKES HER PICTURE

- SL WITH FLASH

SHE STRAIGHTENS INTO "DEATH ARCH", HE TAKES SECOND PICTURE

START TAPE # 7 WITH 2ND FLASH

+ CP INTO AFTERGLOW, SLOW FADE UP

MEMORY SET DOWN BAG, PULLS OUT CLOTHES IN SLIDE.

VO: Wanted: mature, experienced, enthusiastic young woman for part-time position as file clerk in voice mail room. CP X LP/RP

LP/RP X CP Wanted: open-minded weather forecaster with clear outlook. Fashion experience preferred. CP X LP/RP

LP/RP X CP Wanted: desk jockey to run rat race. Track record required. CP X LP/RP

LP/RP X CP Wanted: entry-level social climber for high rise coop conversions. Must have own money. CP X LP/RP

LP/RP X FL WITH MUSIC FADE

STOP TAPE # 7 WHEN MUSIC FADES

(ORPHEUS ENTERS WITH MOTH-EATEN SWEATER)

She gave me this for Christmas in 1968. Or maybe I gave it to her. Anyway, I kept it around in case she ever came back.

(TOSSES SWEATER AWAY)

But what I had to do was go on living without her.

(EURYDICE PICKS UP SWEATER AND PUTS IT BACK IN HIS HANDS)

That's the essence of art--getting rid of stuff.

(TOSSES SWEATER AWAY AGAIN. SHE PICKS IT UP AND PUTS IT ON)

The real key is getting oneself out of the way.

(PAUSE, PONDERING THIS)

which is hard to do when the subject is one's own life.

(ORPHEUS WRAPS TAPE AROUND HIS NECK AND TIES IT LIKE A TIE, PACING WHILE TALKS):

But the subject is not my life. My life is the form. The subject is reality. The object is Eurydice. But if the subject, reality, is not real, then what happens to the object, Eurydice? She only exists in reality, which isn't really objective. Therefore, the only way to edit her in...

is to edit myself... out.

(PULLS TAPE AS IF HANGING HIMSELF AND FALLS OVER)

FL X CP

Start Tape # 8

DEATH MASK FRACTURED INTO 'GREEK CHORUS' WITH CRYSTAL

(WHILE BACKLIT, EURYDICE DRAGS ORPHEUS USC)

CP X SL AS MUSIC FADES

STOP TAPE # 8 WHEN MUSIC FADES OUT

(ORPHEUS, IN FRONT, SITS UP WEARING MASK. EURYDICE REMOVES IT)

I have another dream. I'm lying there on my back staring up at a night sky. The stars turn into a mask, only I'm looking at this mask from the inside. It's very far away...

(EURYDICE HOLDS OUT MASK TO DEMONSTRATE)

but it's coming toward me. I know that when it reaches me and covers my face I'll suffocate and stop breathing. It's not that I'm afraid of dying; just that I might not be living in the first place. Like my father, like Eurydice.

(EURYDICE PUTS MASK OVER HIS FACE AS HE LIES DOWN)

(SITS BACK UP AND TAKES OFF MASK)

I had four choices: go to Vietnam, go to Canada, go shopping, or watch television. If I chose either Vietnam or Canada, I'd lose her. But if I stayed with her and went shopping or watched television, I'd lose myself.

I did the only thing I could. I went to the Colombian Andes.

(EURYDICE PUTS MASK BACK OVER HIS FACE AS HE LIES BACK)

EURYDICE: You were in the Colombian Andes just one step away from the outer edge of civilization. You were with some people who wanted to smuggle out ancient kitchenware so they could donate it to a college in exchange for a tax deduction that would offset excess profits on their orange grove. Your guide and buyer was...uh...

(ORPHEUS PUSHES AWAY MASK AND SITS UP)

ORPHEUS: Speedy Gonzales, a Columbian bank president who also happened to be an amateur archeologist.

EURYDICE REPLACES MASK, HE LIES BACK

EURYDICE: And Speedy brought along some friends who were cadets at West Point....

(ORPHEUS PUSHES AWAY MASK AND SITS UP)

ORPHEUS: Navel Academy, actually. But they're not relevant.

(EURYDICE REPLACES MASK, HE LIES BACK)

EURYDICE: After a perilous 3-day journey in which your jeep barely clung to the edge of mile-high cliffs you wound up in a place where elephants guarded graveyards. That's when you decided to sacrifice me.

(ORPHEUS PUSHES AWAY MASK AND SITS UP)

+ LP, X CP, X RP DURING FOLLOWING

ORPHEUS: Stone statues guarded graves. The pre-classic statues were full of life but badly needed editing. The classic statues were perfect, eternal. The post-classic statues were lifeless imitations. Each statue had an alter-ego peering over its head. One of the alter-egos was an elephant, which is strange since they're aren't elephants in South America.

(EURYDICE PLACES NEWSPAPER OVER HIS FACE, DEPARTS)

START TAPE # 9

FRONT OF SCREEN DANCE--MEMORY

RP X CP WITH VOICE

ORPHEUS, VO: I was lying on this stone slab the priests used to cut off people's heads. My throat was right there where they had this kind of gutter carved out for draining blood and my head was propped up so it wouldn't roll away and all I could see were my feet outlined against the clear blue mountain sky. I suddenly realized that if someone cut off my head I would still feel attached to those feet. And that's exactly what they were up to. By splitting body and soul, the priests could play with reality like a bloody yo-yo dripping from their hands. Half the people lined up to be the first on the block to have their head chopped off while the other half lined up to buy tickets. What could they do? Go to Canada?

PAUSE TAPE # 9

- CP

(MEMORY EXITS, ORPHEUS SITS UP AND TAKES OFF NEWSPAPER)

And then I understood. It's simple really--her head had been chopped off. Heart and mind...

HE TEARS PAGE IN HALF.

separated.

(EURYDICE WHEELS SCRIM IN FRONT OF HIM. ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE BEHIND SCRIM, EACH READING HALF COLUMNS--VERTICALLY-SPLIT--OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE).

ORPHEUS (GRABBING PAGE FROM HER): Why did you tell him I died in the war?

EURYDICE: It says you did, right there.

ORPHEUS: That's just media, not reality.

EURYDICE: Did you know he's living in Salkin's woods now?

ORPHEUS: Who? Our son? My father?

EURYDICE: Richard Nixon.

ORPHEUS: What's Nixon got to with reality?

RE START TAPE # 9

SL X FL AS PHONE RINGS

(EURYDICE ANSWERS ON THIRD RING, HANDS PHONE AROUND BEHIND SCRIM TO ORPHEUS)

VO: ORPHEUS, IT'S DAD. IT'S 1993 AND YOU STILL HAVEN'T CALLED BACK.

STOP TAPE # 9

(ORPHEUS COMES OUT FROM BEHIND SCRIM HOLDING PHONE, LOOKING AT IT, PUZZLED)

(EURYDICE TAKES PHONE, REPLACES IT WITH PIECE OF PAPER)

Look, you write a letter to someone about a very urgent matter-- "Hi Dad, who are you?", for instance.

(PLACES PAPER OFF TO SIDE, THEN PACES AROUND IMPATIENTLY)

Until they reply, you're stuck in limbo... a piece of dust floating around in space. After six months, you give up and decide to assert your existence.

(PICKS UP ANOTHER PIECE OF PAPER AND ANGRILY SETS IT BY THE FIRST)

You send off a self-righteously nasty letter. But the moment you put it in the mail, out of your hands, irretrievable, you get a letter from him.

(EURYDICE HANDS HIM ANOTHER PIECE OF PAPER)

His letter is kind, warm, informative. He's sorry he took so long getting back to you. He was keeping vigil over a dying child or fending off the onslaughts of bankruptcy or tracking down a long-lost relative in the far fingertips of the Columbian Andes. The whole time, your petty concerns remained foremost on his mind. But if you hadn't mailed your own burning bridge, his message would not have arrived. The timing has no relationship to what we call "reality" whatsoever.

(ORPHEUS TOSSED PAPER AWAY, CASUALLY, FLOATING)

It's just like nobody that you actually want to speak with ever calls until you take a shower or go out to buy a paper. If it's someone you don't want to hear from--one of those calls that begins with a voice reading: "how are you today, Mr. Orpheus?"-- then the phone is sure to ring right when you've got one foot balanced on the top step of the ladder as your shaking hand reaches for the burned-out overhead light bulb...

(IMITATING ABOVE, ORPHEUS REACHES OUT, THEN FOLLOWS HAND OFF INTO A DISTANT THOUGHT. DURING FOLLOWING, EURYDICE GETS UP AND, LIKE A BREEZE, GOES BEHIND SCRIM

or perhaps you've just felt a breeze whisper the true meaning of life and you're trying to very hard to hear it in your mind... total enlightenment just one moment of silence away...

(STARES OFF IN SPACE FOR A MOMENT)

FL X SL

(EURYDICE VISIBLE BEHIND SCRIM FOR A FEW SECONDS), *He turns*

START TAPE # 10 (PHONE RINGS)

- FL (BLACKOUT)

(ORPHEUS GOES BEHIND SCRIM)

ANSWERPHONE VO: This is Orpheus. I'm contemplating reality and can't come to the phone right now. If you happen to know the truth, please tell me after the beep.

HERMES VO: DAD, MOM AND I ARE IN A MOVIE. SHE WANTS TO KNOW WHEN YOU'RE PLANNING TO GET DOWN FROM THAT LADDER AND JOIN US.

✓ PAUSE TAPE # 9 *10*

+ FF

(DURING BELOW, ORPHEUS WHEELS SCRIM OFF, MASKED FROM BEHIND)

Have you noticed how everytime I look back, she vanishes? I think the problem here--you've probably noticed this already--is that I have no media identity. There's only one way. Fatal perhaps, but there's no choice. It's not a matter of editing her out but of editing myself in.

RE-START TAPE # 10

FF X RF

BROADCAST STYLE VO:

Salkin's Woods, January 1, 1993. For immediate release. Orpheus has declared his intention to, at last, comply. With careful editing, he will date his compliance all the way back to 1968. Balancing on the very edge of reality, he will rescue Eurydice from the unworld and return her to life in Salkin's Woods. If necessary, he will, like his father, die in the same war that killed her and play virtual existence games with his son.

RF X CF (REVEALING HERMES, LARGE)

ORPHEUS: I came for Eurydice.

(DROPS TAPE, HERMES PICKS IT UP)

Go ahead, check. I've got it all edited.

HERMES (LOOKING AT TAPE): But she's not here.

ORPHEUS: That's really the heart of the matter. I mean, how do you go on loving someone who's no longer a part of life? My father had the same problem. He edited himself into the father my mother gave me and wound up dying in the war. If I edit myself into the father Eurydice gave my son, then I'll have died in the war. Since she died in the war, that would put us together. The problem is, how do I get her out?

(HERMES AND ORPHEUS TOSS GLOBE BACK AND FORTH)

HERMES: Hmmmm... This is a very interesting case. You realize, of course, the danger is in looking back.

ORPHEUS: Then what happens?

HERMES: Eurydice remains and you have to go on without her.

ORPHEUS: Remains where?

HERMES: With your father.

didn't
ORPHEUS: Suppose I tried editing myself into my father and then my son into myself?

HERMES: But then you'd have made Eurydice into your mother. Oedipus tried that ~~and it don't~~ really work out very well. See, that's what I mean about looking back. Raises all kinds of problems. My advice would be to put back those 20 years you've taken out.

ORPHEUS: How do I do that without looking back?

HERMES: Just try to remember--your father's the light, not the sun.

ORPHEUS: But to my father, I'm the son.

HERMES: To your son, I'm the father.

ORPHEUS: The real one or the one Eurydice gave him?

HERMES: You have to keep playing the liar to find the truth.

CF X LF/RF (HERMES VANISHES)

LONG SCREEN SECTION WANDERING THROUGH THE MEDIAWORLD. INCLUDES ALL SCREEN LIGHTS--CP LAYERED WITH FRESNELS, LP & RP ISOLATED EXCEPT FOR SOME OVERLAP WITH CP. MUSIC WOVEN WITH FRAGMENTS OF OBSERVATIONS SPOKEN BY DIFFERENT VOICES (FIRST AND LAST IN ORDER, OTHERS MIGHT NOT BE):

I saw a very tall African-American placing three boxes of brand

new sneakers in the trunk of equally-new white jaguar double-parked on Broadway in the village. I assumed an NBA player and looked around to see if anyone would ask him for his autograph.

I was on an airplane and picked up a copy of Time Magazine that a departed passenger had left lying on the seat next to me. It had a mailing label on it, addressed to me.

"It looks like you're in a better mood today," she said, commenting on my state-of-being as if giving a weather report.

News is, by definition, an abnormal event.

It's hard enough keeping track of what you do know, much less what you don't.

The city was so pleasant it ruined my departure for vacation.

The Kaypro computer-therapy group will meet tonight at the General Theological Seminary.

X CF ON "KAYPRO" (HERMES IN PLACE)

(ORPHEUS ENTERS FRONT OF SCREEN, BACKLIT. ON SEMINARY, LONG

CF X FF

(ORPHEUS APPROACHES FF)

My father, I was told, died in the war. WWII. That was my father's war. Everyone has to have one. A war, that is. Well, a father too. Everyone has to have a father. So my mother got me a new one.

SFX TAPE REWINDING, ORPHEUS GOES BACK US TO SCREEN, WALKS TOWARD FF WITH:

My son was told I died in the war. Vietnam. That was my war. Everyone has to have one. A war, that is. Well, a father too. Everyone has to have a father. So Eurydice got him a new one.

SFX TAPE REWINDING, ORPHEUS GOES BACK US TO SCREEN, WALKS TOWARD FF WITH:

My son died in the war. Everyone has to have one. A war, that is. Well, a lover too. No lover no light, no light no son, no son no father.

FF X CF (HERMES APPEARS)

ORPHEUS: I was conceived the moment the bomb dropped on Hiroshimo and was born in 1946. Then, on my 46th birthday, the bomb stopped reverberating.

Suddenly I had become...

+ FL

- CF

STOP TAPE # 10

ORPHEUS PICKS UP WORDS LIVE

mortal. It's the kind of thing that makes you look back on your life. What I saw was a glow-in-the-dark civilization with a plastic fantastic past that, somehow, I had never lived through.

(EURYDICE ENTERS, CALLS FOR ORPHEUS. HE GOES TO HER BUT SHE DOESN'T REACT TO HIS PRESENCE, CONTINUING TO LOOK FOR, BUT RIGHT THROUGH, HIM. HE GETS GUITAR AND BEGINS PLAYING IT.

SHE SINGS PHRASE OF SONG: "All the world has gone by..."

HE STOPS PLAYING AND LOOKS AT HER, PUZZLED: I thought your eyes were green.

SHE SINGS: "all the wind has gone by..."

HE HANDS HER GUITAR: No, I've got it. The dress was green.

SHE SINGS, PUTTING GUITAR BACK: "Now you and I are going by..."

HE HANDS HER AN ITEM FROM PILE: I've got it, your eyes were...are, brown. Aunt Ethyl has nothing to do with it.

SHE SINGS, PUTTING ITEM BACK: "For hope is the flower of childhood, and memory a sister to silence, and tears are the anguish of truth."

HE HANDS HER ANOTHER ITEM: We were going to change things, remember?

SHE SINGS, PUTTING ITEM BACK: "all the world has gone by..."

ORPHEUS: OK, everything has changed.

SHE SINGS: "all the wind has gone by..."

ORPHEUS: But we were going to stay the same.

SHE SINGS: "now you and I are going by."

ORPHEUS: Not the same, but always...in touch.

SHE SINGS: "For fear is the masking of reason, and freedom is false without honor..."

ORPHEUS: Eurydice, please...you're just repeating lines. Things you've heard somewhere.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM: And what should I do? Remain silent instead?

THEY HOLD THE LOOK FOR A FEW SECONDS, THEN

- FL (BLACKOUT)