

By Ivan Vyrpaev

## **New Constructive Ethics RESEARCH STUDY**

A Play Based on a Research Study

*A man is not born a citizen of his country; he is not born a subject  
of a national culture or even a speaker of a particular language.  
Above all, a man is born free.*

*- Honora Bfasa, human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize  
laureate from Kenya*

### **CHARACTERS:**

**Monica Borowska**, 40, psychologist

**Rachel Donelan**, 26, biologist

**Morgan Smith**, 62, neuroscientist

**Male Voice**

**Female Voice**

### **1. Scene**

MALE VOICE. Good evening. This study was commissioned by New World Security's Center for International Biological Research and conducted in 2019 by Global Construction, an international research organization. This theatrical play is based on the transcripts of three interviews provided to us by New World Security. The idea to create a play based on the study belongs to the founding partners of New Constructive Ethics and its director, Ms. Lene Sorensen.

FEMALE VOICE. A total of 150 people of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and citizenships were interviewed for this study, primarily scientists, medical doctors, psychologists, virologists, politicians, and artists. Each participant was asked a series of questions pertaining to their professional and personal life. With the client's permission, we present transcripts of three interviews with research participants. Their names and places of employment are, of course, fictitious. The decision to make these interviews public was a joint decision between the founding partners of New Constructive Ethics and the executive board of New World Security, the legal owner of the data transmission rights.

### **2. Scene**

*An interview room. The ambiance (colors, walls, furniture, style, etc.) is relaxed, welcoming, and conducive to a pleasant conversation. Perhaps there is a window, but the blinds are drawn. Or, at the director's discretion, it might be a dark room with a shaft of light coming from above.*

*Professor Monica Borowska is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

*The voices of a male and female interviewer are heard over a speaker, but nobody can see them.*

FEMALE VOICE. Hello, professor. We'd like to thank you once again for agreeing to take part in our study. Your academic expertise and qualifications as well as your talent and intuition could make an invaluable contribution to solving some of the critical issues facing modern civilization. On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to express our appreciation and respect for your work. MONICA. Thank you. I'm happy to help.

FEMALE VOICE. Our organization develops long-term strategies across various areas of human endeavor. We work with both civilian and military organizations. Our clients include NASA and the World Health Organization. The only reason you can't see us is that the format of this conversation is designed to keep the spotlight on you while a focus group performs an independent expert analysis of your answers.

MONICA. Yes, it was explained to me when I signed the contract. It's all good.

FEMALE VOICE. Let's begin then. As mentioned before, we will be asking you a series of questions within your area of expertise, but we'll touch on your views of other topics as well. Try to keep your answers short and as precise as possible.

MONICA. I'll do my best.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. Please state your name, job title, and today's date.

MONICA. Monica Borowska. Psychologist. Professor at Columbia University in the City of New York. Today is Wednesday, May 15, 2019.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. In addition to being a professor at Columbia, you also see patients at your private practice in Manhattan. Your website says you specialize in integral psychology. What does "integral" mean?

MONICA. It's a field of contemporary philosophy developed by, among others, the influential American philosopher and psychologist, Ken Wilber. Integral philosophy is the sum of all the knowledge we've acquired over the entire span of human development. Religion, science, mysticism, spiritual practices, and, of course, traditional medicine, biology, and psychoanalysis. This knowledge is integrated into one framework of understanding, a method, or an approach if you like. The integral approach utilizes a very broad view of human evolutionary development. Integral psychology in this context means that in my work, I use a wider set of skills and

knowledge from areas of human development like mediation, yoga, shamanism, altered states of consciousness and so on in conjunction with the more traditional methods of psychology.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Have you ever tried LSD?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Ayahuasca?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Holotropic breathing?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Do you practice yoga and meditation regularly?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Do you recommend all the above to your students?

MONICA. Yoga and meditation only.

MALE VOICE. And altered states of consciousness?

MONICA. Absolutely not.

MALE VOICE. Why?

MONICA. It's pretty dangerous. Altered state practices require careful preparation and a stable mind.

MALE VOICE. But you engage in them yourself?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Does it help you in your work?

MONICA. Yes, quite a bit.

MALE VOICE. And in your personal development?

MONICA. Absolutely.

MALE VOICE. If it's so beneficial, why wouldn't you recommend it to your students?

MONICA. As I said, it could be dangerous.

MALE VOICE. But you still do it?

MONICA. It's an informed personal decision.

MALE VOICE. Did someone recommend it to you?

MONICA. Yes, of course.

MALE VOICE. Who, if I may ask?

MONICA. I don't think I'll answer that question.

FEMALE VOICE. All right. You were born and went to school in Poland, correct?

MONICA. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. And you left Poland when you were 19?

MONICA. Yes, I got into Columbia University, where I now teach.

FEMALE VOICE. How were you able to pull that off?

MONICA. I really wanted to go there and put a lot of effort into the process.

FEMALE VOICE. According to Forbes Poland, your father is one of the five wealthiest people in the country. Did he help you financially?

MONICA. Of course. He paid my tuition. But money alone won't get you into Columbia. So I had to spend all my free time preparing. While my girlfriends were hanging out at nightclubs and

parties in Warsaw, I stayed home preparing for college. I also had private classes with tutors my father hired. I didn't have much of a life from 17 to 19.

MALE VOICE. Do you regret it?

MONICA. Absolutely not.

MALE VOICE. Why would you? You're forty years old. You're a professor at Columbia University. You have your own office in Manhattan. And I suppose these days you let yourself have some fun, right?

MONICA (*laughing*) Oh yes! I've made up for everything I had to sacrifice when I was young. I love to have fun.

MALE VOICE. What kind of fun?

MONICA. All kinds.

MALE VOICE. Vacationing in warm countries? Hiking in the mountains? Yoga and meditation retreats? Trips to Peru? Alcohol? Recreational drugs? Dance parties?

MONICA. Out of everything you just mentioned, I don't drink alcohol or use any drugs at all.

MALE VOICE. How about magic mushrooms?

MONICA. Those are not drugs.

MALE VOICE. I see. Is there a lot of sex in your life?

MONICA. Enough.

MALE VOICE. And not necessarily just with your husband?

MONICA. That's a personal question.

MALE VOICE. Your husband will never find out what answers you give us. The study's information is confidential and will not be accessible to anyone who's not conducting the research. It's part of the contract.

MONICA. Still, the question is too personal.

MALE VOICE. You aren't going to answer?

MONICA. No.

MALE VOICE. But you enjoy sex?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. And not necessarily just with men?

*Pause.*

MONICA. Correct.

FEMALE VOICE. You've been living in the United States for over 20 years. Do you think people in Poland are different than people in the U.S.?

MONICA. People are different, but not because they are American, Polish, or, say, Russian. Naturally, there are different cultural traditions or national traits, but the main difference between people regardless of their nationality is their level of development. That is to say, their level of perception and awareness. Poles are not different from Americans. Less aware people are different from more aware people. More open-minded people are different from more close-minded people. The more mentally stable from the less mentally stable. Closed conservative systems are different from more modern living systems.

FEMALE VOICE. How is a Muslim who kills a Western European for drawing a cartoon of the Prophet different from your husband, a world-renowned neuroscientist?

MONICA. First of all, it's not a Muslim who's killing someone. Because in reality people are not Muslims, Christians, or material atheists. If someone kills someone or – the opposite – loves someone very much, it's a person who's doing the killing or the loving. People hate, commiserate, judge, help, cheat, rescue, etc. People do it. Not Muslims, not conservatives, not democrats, communists, or Nazis. People. Do you understand what I mean?

FEMALE VOICE. So, according to you, all those terrible things that happened in the World War II concentration camps in your native Poland were done by people, not by German Nazis?

MALE VOICE. Who is doing all these terrible things – pedophilia, totalitarianism, torture, terrorism, etc.? If it isn't pedophiles, Nazis, or terrorists, but "people" as you just said, who are these people?

MONICA. These people are us—you and me.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you kill and rape people, Monica?

MONICA. I have some of that in me.

FEMALE VOICE. But why do some people go ahead and do it while others don't?

MONICA. Putting cases of mental illness aside, it's all about achieving a certain level of development.

MALE VOICE. What do you mean by "development"?

MONICA. A person who kills for a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad is at a particular stage of evolutionary development. At this stage, most conflicts are resolved through physical force. "An eye for an eye," "survival of the fittest," "death to the infidels" – this is a stage of evolutionary development. A human being at a higher stage of development is incapable of physically harming another human being because of an idea, a thought, a word, or an insult to their God, country, or even their mother. At a certain stage one comes to an understanding that conflict should not be resolved through violence. It's more effective, faster, and therefore more profitable to resolve disputes through dialog and communication. But you have to reach a certain level of evolutionary development to understand this strategy.

FEMALE VOICE. How important a role does an individual's upbringing play in this development?

MONICA. Regrettably, we have to admit that the role of upbringing is infinitesimally small. We see well-mannered and educated Harvard graduates, heirs to the throne of a Middle Eastern country, ordering the most heinous crimes to be committed. And your example with German Nazis is another case in point. Well-educated German aristocrats brought up on great European philosophy and incredible art committed unspeakable atrocities.

FEMALE VOICE. By upbringing we don't mean good manners but rather cultivating human qualities such as compassion, love, kindness, the ability to forgive... Is it possible that a person who murders because of a cartoon about the Prophet simply lacks kindness and the ability to forgive?

MONICA. A person who kills over some cartoons is probably not a bad person, maybe not even an evil one. He's most likely capable of love and compassion. It's just that on his current level of evolutionary development, an insult to his most sacred deity, like the Prophet, or God, throws his psyche out of balance. Other people lose their sanity when they perceive an offense to their country's flag. Or war veterans. Or the national anthem or other symbols they identify with. These religious or patriotic symbols have become part of the person so criticizing them or, heaven forbid, offending these symbols is such a mortal insult to the person who believes in them that the only possible response from his point of development is to respond with death. A

person's upbringing and environment are very important, but emotional maturation is still part of the evolutionary process. And I'm not talking about the absence of conflict. Conflicts happen with everyone. It's a matter of what tools a person uses to resolve those conflicts. You mentioned my husband. If you burn an American flag in front of him or draw a penis on the Statue of Liberty, if you say something offensive about the U.S. Constitution or even slander his academic reputation while cursing the memory of his mother, who he loved very much, I can assure you he's not going to call for physical violence against you much less demand your death. No way.

FEMALE VOICE. Maybe he just doesn't have this option?

MONICA. No, that's not it. His level of evolutionary development tells him that physical force should only be used when it's truly the only way to save a life, whether your own or someone else's. In other words, at his level this is the last resort. The evolutionary development of Jesus Christ, on the other hand, implied no violence could ever be used, even against someone who's attacking you. Do you remember these verses, "if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" and "love your enemies"? What's interesting is that most Christians believe resisting an enemy is quite a Christian thing to do, which obviously contradicts the teachings of their Messiah. How did this happen? Jesus spoke from a very high level of development, while those in the church who interpreted those teachings came at it from their own level, which was much lower. Unlike Christ, my husband believes that taking another person's life might be necessary in self-defense. I have to admit he's still below Jesus in his evolutionary development.

MALE VOICE. A year ago, your mother euthanized herself. She had cancer...

MONICA. How do you know that?!

MALE VOICE. Your father is a well-known public figure. It was in the media. As far as we understand, everybody in your family agreed with your mother's decision and were at her side in the Swiss clinic as it happened.

MONICA. And?!

MALE VOICE. Do you think suicide is also evidence of a certain level of development?

MONICA. What does that have to do with what happened with my mother?

MALE VOICE. We'd like to know what you think about suicide.

MONICA. But you're asking about my mother?!

FEMALE VOICE. Because it's part of your life. Something you've experienced. And we're interested in what you think about this issue.

MONICA. Look. When an adolescent who's unable to manage their depression or psychosis steps out of a window, that's one thing. But it's a completely different situation when it's an informed decision made by an adult with stage 4 cancer. The former is a psychiatric disorder, and the latter is a conscious, reasoned choice.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think a person has the right to take their own life?

MONICA. I think I'd approach this question from a different direction. Who has the right to deprive a person of their right to control their own life?

MALE VOICE. Even minors?

MONICA. No, of course not. Again, there's a big difference between a mental disorder and a conscious decision. Why are you even bringing this up?

FEMALE VOICE. Why are you so surprised?

MONICA. What I'm surprised about is how much attention you've devoted to my personal life.

FEMALE VOICE. Not that much, actually.

MONICA. I'm also surprised you're paying me so much to participate in your study. I typically get paid much less for such interviews. Do you pay everyone that much?

FEMALE VOICE. In a sense, we see you as a consultant. And that's not a very high fee for a consultant of your level, wouldn't you agree?

MONICA. I didn't think of it as a consultation. I thought I was participating in a research study because...

MALE VOICE. Sorry, professor, we got off track a bit.

FEMALE VOICE. Let's get back to our questions, Monica.

*Pause.*

MONICA. Okay. Well, I hope we ARE doing something good.

FEMALE VOICE. Believe me, we are. And your participation is invaluable, professor.

MONICA. Fine.

MALE VOICE. You talk about evolutionary development. But humans have been killing each other ever since there were other humans to kill. Nothing has changed. Even in developed countries like the U.S., the death penalty is still enforced in some states. In your opinion, is murder a step in the process of evolution?

MONICA. Of course. It's true, people have been killing each other forever, but today it's recognized as a terrible evil and prosecuted by law. There's much less killing today than in the past. And the more developed the country, the fewer killings there are. This applies not only to killing people but to killing animals as well.

FEMALE VOICE. So murder represents a lack of evolutionary development?

MONICA. For humans, yes. In the animal world, obviously it's the norm.

FEMALE VOICE. Aren't human beings animals?

MONICA. Highly evolved animals. So I think killing should become a thing of the past. I'll go even farther: today, wanting to kill someone is a sign of a mental disorder.

FEMALE VOICE. An illness?

MONICA. Yes. A person who kills another person for money or power or God is probably not mentally healthy. We keep talking about evolutionary development while forgetting that it could just be mental illness. Under no circumstances would a sane, mentally stable person cut somebody else's head off, no matter what the insult.

MALE VOICE. What should we do with people who commit murder? Treat them?

MONICA. If it's a possibility, yes.

FEMALE VOICE. And if it isn't?

MONICA. True, chances are it won't be. (*ironically*) You can't cure that many people by force.

FEMALE VOICE. So what should we do with them?

MONICA. That's like asking, what do you do with the people who lag in evolutionary development behind the more advanced segment of humanity.

MALE VOICE. And what do you do with them?

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. What would you do with the less evolved people who pose a danger to the more evolved ones?

*Pause.*

MONICA. What can you do with them? It's a strange question...

*Pause.*

Fadeout.

### **3. Scene**

*Same room. Rachel Donelan is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

FEMALE VOICE. Rachel, the format of our study, or rather the format of the current stage of the study, is that there's a focus group closely observing this interview. Such unbiased observation will allow us to achieve better results in our research.

RACHEL. Yes, I've been told. Even though I still don't understand why you can't be sitting here with me.

MALE VOICE. That's the design of the study, Rachel.

FEMALE VOICE. Ready to proceed when you are.

RACHEL. Yes, please, I'm ready.

FEMALE VOICE. Please state your name, job title, and today's date.

RACHEL. Rachel Donelan. Biologist. Member of the Vatican Bioethics Commission. Today is Tuesday, April 16, 2019.

MALE VOICE. How did a 26-year-old American woman from Texas end up at the Vatican?

RACHEL. My first scientific paper was titled: Artificial Termination of Pregnancy: Ethics, Forensics, and Spirituality. After it was published, I was fired from a research institute in Oklahoma, where I had begun working straight out of college. I only lasted a week. After my paper, or rather some quotes from it, leaked online, I was asked to leave. Within a week of my dismissal, which had gone viral on social media, I got a call from the Vatican and was invited for an interview. I didn't waste any time and flew to Rome. Two months later I had a new job.

MALE VOICE. Do you like your job at the Vatican?

RACHEL. A lot.

MALE VOICE. You don't find it boring?

RACHEL. Not in the least.

MALE VOICE. Really? Religion. Conservatism. Catholic morality.

RACHEL. You just don't know what you're talking about. I now have access to the latest technology in medicine, genetic engineering, bioinformatics, and pretty much anything else I want in science and medicine. The Pope's name opens doors that are rarely opened, even to the world's top scientists.

MALE VOICE. Have you met the Pope?



RACHEL. Yes, twice.

MALE VOICE. What's he like?

RACHEL. He's super cool.

MALE VOICE. Have you used LSD?

RACHEL. Whoa!

FEMALE VOICE. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential. It's part of the contract.

MALE VOICE. Have you used LSD?

RACHEL. Not anymore.

MALE VOICE. Magic mushrooms?

RACHEL. I've tried them.

MALE VOICE. Ayahuasca?

RACHEL. No.

MALE VOICE. Is there a lot of sex in your life?

RACHEL. What does that have to do with anything?

MALE VOICE. It's a question we have.

RACHEL. It's my private life. How is this relevant to your research?

FEMALE VOICE. Rachel, we need to have a psychological profile of each participant. You've read the contract – all information about you will be encrypted, and nobody will be able to read it.

MALE VOICE. Even if somebody wanted to, Rachel, it's just impossible.

FEMALE VOICE. The study we're conducting is part of some very important international research. Your participation and answers to these questions will literally help save this planet.

RACHEL. Is that so? Okay then, let's move on.

MALE VOICE. Have you had sex with married men?

RACHEL. I still don't understand how questions about my private life are relevant to the research. What are you studying? Me?!

MALE VOICE. We study people.

FEMALE VOICE. Have you ever had sex with a married man?

RACHEL. For the sake of argument, let's just say yes.

FEMALE VOICE. Did it bother you that he was cheating on his wife with you?

RACHEL. No.

FEMALE VOICE. Why?

RACHEL. I don't have any remorse because, as a biologist, I know that human beings are not monogamous creatures—especially males who are biologically programmed to impregnate as many females as possible.

MALE VOICE. In the paper that got you fired from the research institute in Oklahoma, you wrote, "Western civilization should stop being afraid of words and language. Abortion is the deliberate termination of human life. The stage of pregnancy doesn't matter because as soon as sperm fertilizes an egg, the end result is the creation of a new life, and any intentional act to terminate that life just a second later is, in a certain sense, murder." That's a partial quote from your paper.

RACHEL. Exactly. It's been taken out of context.

FEMALE VOICE. We had to shorten some phrases; otherwise, it would have taken too long to read. But the gist of it is correct?

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. And that's what got you fired?

RACHEL. I think so.

FEMALE VOICE. Because the institute's progressive directors saw your paper as denigrating women's rights, particularly the right to an abortion.

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. But you think they misunderstood you?

RACHEL. I think they didn't fully understand me.

FEMALE VOICE. Why do you think you got invited to the Vatican?

RACHEL. (*ironically*) Because I'm talented.

FEMALE VOICE. Why else?

RACHEL. Because as a scientist, I'm talking about critical ethical issues while, at the same time, science is being silenced by political correctness.

MALE VOICE. And that's only possible because at the Vatican, they didn't fully understand you either, correct?

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. They didn't fully grasp your idea, did they, Rachel? Otherwise they wouldn't have invited you.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Am I right, Rachel?

RACHEL. I think so, yes.

MALE VOICE. In your paper, you suggest calling abortion a deliberate termination of life, or, in other words, a murder, because a violent termination of life is murder. But you have also said that any living being on the planet has a right to kill, because killing is as much an organic part of evolutionary development as sex is.

RACHEL. That's right.

MALE VOICE. In other words, you're not against abortions because you're not against killing?

RACHEL. Yes, but this concept requires some clarification. The consensus in medicine and biology is that up to 22 weeks, a fetus is not yet aware of pain. So when the pregnancy is terminated, it's not harmed. Well, except for the fact that its life is terminated. All I did in my paper was point out that no matter the reason for terminating a pregnancy, even if the fetus is not able to survive and will definitely be stillborn, abortion is still a deliberate termination of life. It's one thing for a baby to be born dead, but it's another thing for you to stop its life. This is what I wrote about.

FEMALE VOICE. Why did you write that, Rachel? You had to know it would cause you problems.

RACHEL. No, I didn't. Our dean taught us that science should be impartial.

FEMALE VOICE. But you don't deny a mother the right to terminate a life inside her?

RACHEL. It's everyone's personal choice. The mother's and the doctor's. But to make a choice, you should know all the options you have to choose from. That's the actual definition of freedom of choice.

FEMALE VOICE. And neither the Oklahoma institute nor the Vatican understood this idea of yours, and that's why you got fired from one place and got accepted in the other. Would you agree?

RACHEL. It's possible.

MALE VOICE. Now let me ask you a question, Rachel. How did both these places fail to notice your idea that a human being has a right to kill? When it is the final conclusion you draw in your paper.

*Pause.*

RACHEL. Because when a liberal feminist hears that abortion at any stage is murder, a certain defense mechanism instantly engages in her mind after the word "murder," blocking any further information from getting in. So the chairwoman of the institute who, to my knowledge, is not a vegetarian but is an ardent feminist, reacted very emotionally. Add all the napalm being dropped in my direction on Facebook and Twitter and I think she never had a chance to grasp what I said, especially because it looks like she never even read the paper with her own eyes.

MALE VOICE. Are you a vegetarian, Rachel?

RACHEL. No.

MALE VOICE. Is killing an animal the same as killing a person?

RACHEL. No, of course not.

MALE VOICE. So killing animals is okay, but killing people isn't?

RACHEL. In some situations it's necessary to kill people, too.

MALE VOICE. Are you in favor of the death penalty?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Do you approve of the United States military action in Iraq and Syria?

RACHEL. Don't get me wrong, I'm against people killing each other. I'm against war. But the application of physical force is absolutely necessary in the world we live in. Regrettably, it cannot yet be avoided.

MALE VOICE. Like abortion?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. When a mother's life is in danger?

RACHEL. Of course.

MALE VOICE. Or when a fetus has an untreatable condition?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. What if a woman just doesn't want a baby? Do you support the right to an abortion when a woman just wants one?

RACHEL. Yes, I do, up to 22 weeks.

MALE VOICE. Are you giving a woman this right?

RACHEL. What do you mean, am I giving her this right? It's a right that a woman already has.

MALE VOICE. A right to kill?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Is abortion murder?

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. But why use the word “murder”? When you do that, your scientific message becomes too radical, and that brings immediate protest from your colleagues.

RACHEL. I don’t like it when liberals try to camouflage their biologically programmed instincts with tolerance and political correctness. A lion kills an antelope. People kill cows. And people kill people. It’s a natural process.

FEMALE VOICE. Is murder natural?

RACHEL. In some cases, it is. And in some cases, it isn’t.

*Pause.*

RACHEL. Well? Why aren’t you asking me when it is and when it isn’t?

MALE VOICE. How did the Vatican miss your views on murder? The Catholic Church believes abortion is a great sin precisely because it equates it with murder, and murder is a deadly sin.

RACHEL. I’ve certainly thought about it.

MALE VOICE. And?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. I think a number of factors came into play. First, the Vatican bioethics commission needed a young professional to do certain work. Second, my paper got a lot of attention on social media and the gist of the story was of a young biologist who speaks against abortion and calls it murder. Third, I had a recommendation from one of the commission’s consultants, who’s a prominent American neuroscientist.

FEMALE VOICE. Did you grow up in Texas, Rachel?

RACHEL. Yes. Denton, Texas.

FEMALE VOICE. How were you able to get into Columbia University?

RACHEL. I really wanted to go there and put a lot of effort into the process.

FEMALE VOICE. Why Columbia?

RACHEL. My parents didn’t get along with each other. My father, who died recently, pretended to believe in God, and my alcoholic mother kept talking about science just to spite him. Biology, specifically. Her parents, my grandma and grandpa, put their house in her name. When they died, she sold the house and gave me the money to use for college. But her condition was that I study biology in New York. The rest is history.

MALE VOICE. Do you believe in God?

RACHEL. To me, God is the universe. And the whole manifested world.

FEMALE VOICE. And killing each other is okay, the way a lion hunts an antelope or a man kills cows and pigs for food?

RACHEL. Yes, but I’m against killing people.

FEMALE VOICE. But is killing still permissible in extreme situations?

RACHEL. Yes. But I repeat, I’m against violence and murder.

MALE VOICE. Have you ever had sex with a woman?

RACHEL. Here we go again with the personal questions.

FEMALE VOICE. Can you please answer, Rachel? It’s very important.

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you have sexual relationships with women?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Have you had sex with a woman who was married to a man?

RACHEL. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Do you support open marriage?

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think a person has a right to take their own life?

RACHEL. That's a weird question. Who can prohibit them?

FEMALE VOICE. So you're not against suicide?

RACHEL. What do you mean, not against? It's not like I'm out there encouraging it.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you support legalizing euthanasia?

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. Can you explain why?

RACHEL. A person has the right to control their own life. That's it.

MALE VOICE. Are you interested in politics?

RACHEL. I'm as interested in politics as any responsible citizen should be.

MALE VOICE. Are you a responsible citizen?

RACHEL. I hope I am.

MALE VOICE. Did you vote for Donald Trump?

RACHEL. How do you know that?

MALE VOICE. It was a random question.

RACHEL. Yes. But I'd never admit it to anyone.

MALE VOICE. Do you like him?

RACHEL. No.

MALE VOICE. What do you like about his politics?

RACHEL. Almost nothing.

MALE VOICE. Why did you vote for him then?

RACHEL. He's a douchebag, but he's an easy to understand douchebag. In comparison, all the Democratic candidates are kind of slippery and sneaky and, in my opinion, very dangerous.

FEMALE VOICE. If you obtained credible scientific proof that the vast majority of people in the world, let's say 7 out of the 8 billion, by virtue of their evolutionary underdevelopment and mental inferiority, threatened the survival of the remaining evolved, healthy people and life on the planet, would you agree to terminate the lives of those 7 billion? Be honest.

RACHEL. Of course not.

FEMALE VOICE. Why not?

RACHEL. Because there are a lot more than just 1 billion good people on the planet.

MALE VOICE. But in general, would you support the idea of artificially reducing the planet's population?

RACHEL. Huh?

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. Rachel?

*Fadeout.*

#### **4. Scene**

*Same room. Morgan Smith is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

MORGAN. Morgan Smith. Neuroscientist. Professor at Columbia University. Head of Spectrum Neuroclinic, a research and medical center in New York.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. Also, can you state today's date, month, and year please.

MORGAN. Today is Tuesday if I'm not mistaken.

FEMALE VOICE. That's correct. Tuesday, March 19.

MORGAN. Do I need to repeat it?

FEMALE VOICE. Yes, please.

MORGAN. Today is Tuesday, March 19, 2019.

MALE VOICE. Your recent speeches and publications create an impression that you believe in God. Is that true?

MORGAN. Why wouldn't I?

MALE VOICE. How can a neuroscientist believe in God? Isn't the human brain the neuroscientist's god?

MORGAN. Everything in the universe has its cause. That adds up to billions of causes, right? One thing always leads to another. The brain is a unique computer sitting inside the human head. But the computer didn't create itself, and to function, it needs to be powered by energy and receive external impulses. As a physical object, the brain has to be the logical successor to something else, right? Are you following me so far?

MALE VOICE. Keep going.

MORGAN. Everything in the universe evolves out of something else and then evolves into something else again. Everything has a cause, and each cause has its own cause. One causes the other and so on. Well, you understand. That's why there must be an original cause, the first and only cause that is the cause of everything and of itself. Okay?

MALE VOICE. And that original cause is God?

MORGAN. It's the Absolute. The cause of itself. Causa sui. Something that never appeared and shall never disappear. Something that is beyond eternity, beyond time and space. The cause of all other things. Hinduism offers a very precise definition, *Tat Tvam Asi* – Thou art that.

FEMALE VOICE. Why do most neuroscientists think that the source of all spirituality for man is his brain? Why don't they believe in God?

MORGAN. You know my wife, who's a psychologist, also does research on evolution theory. She taught me something very important, and understanding this idea really helped me in both my life and my work. The idea is that there are no integral psychologists, no politicians, no communists, no republicans, no democrats, and so on ad infinitum. There are just people. It's a very deep thought if you really get into it. No imams, rabbis, priests, Buddhists, material atheists. Still with me? There's just a person professing an idea or a worldview or having a

certain job title. But no matter what religion they practice or what party they belong to, they are, above all else, a person. A kind, evil, jealous, greedy, or cruel person.

MALE VOICE. But in your book *A Brain Goes to the Polls*, you argue the exact opposite. You wrote that even a person's political preferences or their party affiliation are actually programmed into their brain from birth.

MORGAN. That's exactly right. Being liberal or conservative is, first and foremost, indicative of a person's state of mind; it's a biological trait, like freckles or curly hair. Their operating system if you will.

MALE VOICE. Are you saying that being a liberal or a conservative is genetic?

MORGAN. People can be born with a number of traits that will later manifest themselves as "closed-mindedness", or "fears", or "excessive control". Adapting to one's upbringing and environment can either exacerbate or ease these qualities slightly, so they wind up developing into staunch conservatism, or despotism, or liberal conservatism. But it will still be conservatism. So yes, roughly speaking, a person is born with a predilection to be either conservative or liberal. But I'm speaking in very broad terms here.

MALE VOICE. Your position is that politicians are "born that way?"

MORGAN. Remember the idea I just described. A politician is, first of all, a person. An evil, lying person can become a politician. A kind, honest person can also become a politician. Or they can become actors. Even neuroscientists. In any case, before there was a job title, there was a person. And the person is the brain. Everything – our fears, our complexes, our sexual orientation – is hard-wired into our brain. And this is where most of my neuroscience colleagues stop. But not all of them. Some of us go further. There are only a few of us, but we do exist. I don't believe the brain is the first cause of homo Sapiens because I think the cause for the brain is Consciousness, which is common to all living beings. Buddhists call it emptiness, but I have nothing against the word God. Simply put, a politician is a person. A person is the brain. And the brain is God.

FEMALE VOICE. When you meet with the Pope do you discuss this idea?

MORGAN. I haven't attended any meetings with the Pope. That's an exaggeration. I occasionally consult with the Vatican Bioethics Commission. I delivered a presentation to the commission just the other day, but I've never met His Holiness personally.

MALE VOICE. What was the topic of your presentation?

MORGAN. I spoke about homosexuality. The Pope is very interested in the issue. The stance of the Catholic Church toward homosexuality is a very hot topic right now.

FEMALE VOICE. Did you try to convince him to accept it?

MORGAN. That was not the goal of my presentation. I laid out the science behind how behaviors such as homosexuality are hard-wired into some people's brains, so condemning someone for being gay is the same as judging them for having brown or green eyes.

MALE VOICE. Have you ever taken LSD?

MORGAN. Wow, that came out of nowhere.

MALE VOICE. LSD, magic mushrooms, ayahuasca. Which of these have you tried?

MORGAN. As far as I know, all the substances you mentioned are illegal.

FEMALE VOICE. Pursuant to our contract, everything you say here will not be disclosed outside this study.

MORGAN. It doesn't matter. I took part in three ceremonies with shamans where we drank ayahuasca. But since the plant is considered a Schedule I drug I prefer not to broadcast it.

FEMALE VOICE. Don't worry, this study is completely confidential.

MORGAN. I'm not worrying. And by the way, I meant to ask if I can tell my wife about participating in this experiment.

FEMALE VOICE. Certainly. You haven't discussed it with her yet?

MORGAN. I wanted to see what it was going to be like first. To have something to tell her. But I can already see that you definitely need to speak with my wife. She's an extraordinary person.

MALE VOICE. Have you ever cheated on your wife with another woman?

MORGAN. Hold on. Do you really think I'm going to answer questions like that?

FEMALE VOICE. If you had never done it, you would have just said no.

MORGAN. How is that relevant? Let's go back to neuroscience and God.

MALE VOICE. Have you ever had sex with a man?

MORGAN. No. As I've already said, homosexuality is wired into the human brain from birth, and my brain is wired for heterosexuality only. So I'm stuck with women, or maybe I should say that women are stuck with me.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think humans are monogamous?

MORGAN. No, and that's a scientific fact. Humans are not monogamous. Humans have had to accept the condition that "a strong man has to take care of a weak woman and for that she practically becomes his servant" because it was a prerequisite for the survival of our species. But thanks to technological progress and evolutionary development, that formula is no longer necessary, at least in developed countries. Men and women are now equal, and sex is not just for procreation anymore. In fact, sex is a type of communication. And you may communicate this way with various people.

MALE VOICE. Are you in favor of open marriage?

MORGAN. I don't think it should be a general rule. It's up to each couple to decide.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you allow your wife to have sex with other people?

MORGAN. What do you mean do I allow her? I'm not my wife's master. Obviously, I wouldn't mind if she wanted to, but I think my wife has very conservative views on this subject and I doubt she would have an extramarital relationship. This pattern of behavior has also been wired into her brain.

MALE VOICE. In one of your books, you wrote that 80% of a person is determined by their brain, which is programmed before birth. This is their "nature" so to speak, and only 20% comes from the circumstances of their life, which is what we call the "nurture". Where does God fit into this equation?

MORGAN. The thing is, that IS God. You see, when I say I believe in God, I don't mean I believe in some kind of creature that created this life. For me, God is the Condition, the key condition of anything and everything. For anything to happen, for a flower to bloom or a human being to be born, certain conditions need to exist. Certain things arise under certain conditions. Life on this planet is the condition for life itself to appear. Humans first appeared because certain conditions were present. But those conditions arose only because there had been conditions for them to arise. And so on and so forth until we get all the way back to the original condition, which is the Condition for Itself. And that is what I, and many other people on this planet, call God. God is the cause of all causes, including God. And it's the only Condition for the life of the



entire Universe. God is life itself. The human brain can't be the condition for mankind to appear, because the human brain itself only appeared as the result of an evolutionary condition.

MALE VOICE. You believe that God is evolution?

MORGAN. Not quite. Evolution is just a tool for God to use. God is beginningless and endless. It's important that I make this very clear to you. God is the beginningless and endless Cause of all things, and out of that Cause came evolution and the entire manifested world. God is reality, and in this reality, things will always appear and disappear – worlds, planets, and universes. But the God that makes everything possible has no beginning and no end. God has no time or even space. God is That which has never appeared and thus will never disappear. It is God. If the word God bothers you, you can use a different word. For example, Absolute Reality.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Do you think mankind has a chance to save this planet from environmental catastrophe?

MORGAN. As a scientist, I have to tell you the truth: I don't think so.

FEMALE VOICE. What do you think is the main problem?

MORGAN. The problem is that psychologically, people are evolving much slower than the technology that's killing them. There's only one thing that can save the planet and life on it: open cooperation between countries, people, governments, businesses, etc. There has to be a high-quality, effective system of communication. Countries must begin to communicate with each other. And the interaction between people from different countries must be very honest, friendly, positive, and open. This is the only way to resolve our issues with the environment – and this is our main problem, because life on this planet is dying out at an enormous rate. But I'll say it again, this should have happened yesterday. However, it doesn't even look like it will happen tomorrow because people are divided by their worldviews and value systems. Again, value systems are nothing but levels of evolutionary development. Do you understand, our values are indicative of our level of development. Because the majority of the people in this world are at a fairly low level of development and their evolution is progressing very slowly, we're going to run out of time to save the planet. One needs to understand that things such as homophobia, nationalism, racism, sexism, etc., directly get in the way of us tackling the problem of carbon dioxide emissions. Countries where homophobia is rampant typically have massive problems with the environment because these things are interconnected. Homophobia and, say, racism, are caused by two things: first, a lack of education and ignorance of scientific facts, and second, a low level of evolutionary development, meaning being closed to the outside world. These two factors prevent people in authoritarian regimes from realizing the true scale of their environmental problems. An authoritarian system in any country today is a killer of the entire planet because it hampers our ability to interact with each other. Once again, we will not survive if it's each to its own. Only together and in close, open cooperation do we stand a chance. Regrettably, this is not happening and will not happen anytime soon. Too many people would need to change. There's no time for that, so we're done for. Gays, homophobes, terrorists, religious extremists, left-wing liberals, communists, fascists, they'll all die from

climate change. Unless, of course, a virus wipes out most of humanity within the next few years.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Why wouldn't your God create the conditions necessary for people to be happy?

MORGAN. You know, I'm not religious at all. But there's one religious idea called Shaivism that I can identify with. It's a Hindu tradition. You know who the Shaivites are, right? They believe that the God Shiva creates the universe with the sole purpose of destroying it. So the universe is nothing but a game for God. If we're comparing the human brain to a computer, then man is a computer game. Turns out that man is nothing more than God's PlayStation.

FEMALE VOICE. If you were to find out that your wife is having sex with a woman, what would you think?

MORGAN. I think I know my wife fairly well and I believe her brain is wired for heterosexuality, just like mine.

FEMALE VOICE. You don't think your wife could be hiding it from you?

MORGAN. No, I don't.

FEMALE VOICE. Could you be hiding a sexual relationship with someone else from your wife?

MORGAN. That question is too personal.

FEMALE VOICE. Does that mean you could be?

MORGAN. Hold on a sec...!

FEMALE VOICE. Are you prone to lying?

MORGAN. What does this have to do with anything?

FEMALE VOICE. It's important for us to have a psychological profile of each participant in the study.

MORGAN. Is that why you're paying so much? I've never seen such a fee paid for participating in an interview before. But I'm not here to make money or confess to any sins. I'm here to help science.

FEMALE VOICE. You are, professor.

MALE VOICE. Professor, you just said that homophobia, racism, nationalism, etc., are caused by a low level of human development. But in your books, you always point out that all of the above, as well as paranoia, anger, aggression, manic states, kindness, openness, and compassion are all programmed into our genes and therefore are in our brains from birth. Is it your contention that if you're born with the brain of a villain, no amount of education or nurturing can help?

MORGAN. I wouldn't say that. Education and nurturing a young mind can play a very important role, too. Please understand, I am by no means diminishing the importance of environmental influences. Environment and upbringing play a critical role in shaping the brain. So does education. Knowing that all people are distant relatives of one another who share genes is very important. For example, Jews in Israel and Arabs in Palestine share genes. Don't you think knowing this would affect a person's worldview, their tolerance and acceptance of others? Of course it would! But it wouldn't affect everyone, only those who are ready to accept this knowledge.

FEMALE VOICE. If Adolf Hitler had been born into a family of kind, intelligent, open-minded people, if he had grown up in a loving household, would he still have become the person we are all familiar with?

MORGAN. You see, Hitler could not have been born into such a family, because the person we know as Adolf Hitler is 80% his family and all his distant relatives. In other words, his genes. And a person born into a family of truly kind and cultured parents is unlikely to become someone like Hitler. Unless a disease intervenes from the outside.

MALE VOICE. If, with the push of a button, you could instantly and painlessly exterminate 7 billion evolutionarily undeveloped people while at the same time leaving 1 billion open, tolerant, intelligent, and developed people completely unaffected, would you press such a button?

MORGAN. Are you serious?

FEMALE VOICE. Sorry, you might think the question is naïve, but could you answer it as if *your* life depended on it, please?

*Pause.*

MORGAN. Of course I wouldn't push this button.

FEMALE VOICE. But there really are too many people.

MORGAN. The problem is not quantity but quality. The problem, as I have already said, is the low level of evolutionary development.

MALE VOICE. So you don't think there are too many people?

MORGAN. There may be too many people but you won't solve the problem by exterminating them.

MALE VOICE. Then how would you solve it?

MORGAN. Hmm.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. Professor?

*Fadeout.*

## **5. Scene**

*Professor Monica Borowska is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room*

*Pause.*

MONICA. Frankly speaking, it's not a serious question. Do you understand?

FEMALE VOICE. But we're asking it.

MONICA. Yes, I hear you. I wish I could see you. Oh well. There are two major problems in the world today. Two problems. Well, there are many more problems, but I would focus on two. By solving them, we'll solve all the others. Actually, let me rephrase. If we don't solve these two

problems, none of the other problems will matter because civilization will come to an end anyway. What are these two problems? First, the environment. The vast majority of people, including the well-educated and world leaders, don't understand that in just 50 years life on this planet will become simply untenable, and in 70 years civilization will collapse. It's a scientific fact. It's the reality. If today, or preferably yesterday, decision makers – world leaders, scientists, influential public figures – and in general as many people as possible, don't begin to take significant measures, and they have to be active measures, not just endless speeches and seminars, to mitigate the climate situation, then our children will live in a completely different world. And believe me, it will be similar to how the people of Eastern Europe lived during World War II. I'm not exaggerating. When the average daily temperature in Africa and the Middle East rises above 60 degrees Celsius, which will happen in the next 40 or 50 years, roughly a billion people will start to move to cooler areas in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and China. Europeans may somehow accept these people, although it would still be a disaster for them, a true crisis. Russia and China, on the other hand, are not going to put up with any of that nonsense. As I'm sure you can imagine, those countries are unlikely to let 300-400 million refugees from Africa and Asia in. They'll put weapons along their borders and start shooting. A war will break out. And that, indeed, is an impending reality. That is problem number one. I hope you understand that I'm not exaggerating.

MALE VOICE. You said there were two main problems. Tell us about the second one.

MONICA. The second problem is called cruelty, violence. The human species is inherently cruel. I'm not talking about the kind of violence when a lion hunts an antelope or a hawk kills a mouse. There's no cruelty in the animal world, just a natural process of survival. But the human world harbors a special kind of cruelty. People enjoy inflicting suffering. Today, wealthy people don't go hunting for food, but simply for pleasure. People raise millions of cows and pigs to idiotically slaughter and eat them as if they couldn't do without meat. People in general do horrible things. They sexually abuse each other. They subject others to torture. They kill in the name of their God. They beat, humiliate and kill other people over a different sexual orientation, or skin color, or language. They kill for political views, for business, for territory. They insult and humiliate those who are physically weaker than them. People pay a lot of money to watch one person beat another one to death. Boxing, bare-knuckle fighting, MMA and the like are a creepy and stupid spectacle that generates billions of dollars in revenue. Why is this insane, trivial violence taking place? Why do humans feel the need for such spectacles? The amount of cruelty a person is prone to inflict is a matter of evolutionary development. The more evolved a person is, the less violent and cruel they are. Do you understand? The fact that there are still castes, mafias, or private armies where people kill other people for money, the fact that racism is still an actual problem – all this is a kind of cruelty which is coded into our genes and institutionalized in our culture. My husband writes about it in his books on neuroscience. Cruelty is hereditary, while the process of evolutionary development is, unfortunately, very slow. So, we have two major problems: the environment and cruelty. Although, in fact there is really only one problem.

MALE VOICE. The environment?

MONICA. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. What do you think is preventing us from seriously addressing the issue of climate change?

MONICA. A lack of understanding! The absolute majority of people on the planet, including those who make important political decisions, don't understand the gravity of the situation. They don't understand that things are truly bad, and we've long run out of time to save anything. This total lack of understanding is the key problem preventing action.

FEMALE VOICE. But there are countries that are actively addressing the problem.

MONICA. We need everyone to be involved. All countries on all continents. Over half of the countries in the world are ruled by authoritarian regimes, so active involvement by a few progressive countries doesn't have sufficient impact.

MALE VOICE. Do you think that totalitarian regimes stand in the way of saving the planet?

MONICA. Of course they do. Those who torture and kill gays for being gay. Those who kill black people for the color of their skin. Or those who have subjugated and oppressed an entire people. Such regimes cannot get down to properly addressing the issue of climate change. It's obvious! Totalitarianism is one of the major obstacles to solving climate change. The authoritarian political systems in China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and similar countries aren't ready to begin saving the planet, and we need to start doing it immediately. Yesterday.

FEMALE VOICE. Are you saying it's all because of authoritarian regimes?

MONICA. It's not just that. We see that the U.S. is not doing its best on the issue either, and Donald Trump's conduct is further evidence of that. A man with his level of thinking immediately proceeds to build a monstrous wall on the Mexican border and withdraws the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. That's the road to nowhere.

FEMALE VOICE. There's no way out?

MONICA. I'm not a person who's going to suggest giving up ahead of time. I'll keep trying all the way to the end.

MALE VOICE. What's to be done?

*Pause.*

MONICA. Maybe we need to talk about it. Loud and clear. From every rooftop.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think that will work?

MONICA. I don't know. Maybe not. But we still have to do it. Our lives depend on it.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Do you lie often, Monica?

MONICA. I try not to. I don't like lying. But I do it.

FEMALE VOICE. To your husband?

MONICA. Yes...

FEMALE VOICE. Do you lie to him often?

MONICA. Of course not! I'm only lying to him about one thing. I'm not telling him about a relationship I'm having with a young woman that I like a lot. What's happening between me and Rachel – the woman's name is Rachel – I can't describe it in words.

MALE VOICE. Your husband is a very smart man, an acclaimed neuroscientist. Why haven't you told him? Surely he'll understand.

MONICA. No, I don't think he will.

MALE VOICE. Why not?

MONICA. Well... Now we've really gone too far... this is personal territory.

MALE VOICE. Have you ever tried speaking to your husband about it?

MONICA. Do I have to answer?

MALE VOICE. Of course not.

FEMALE VOICE. Monica, do you think your husband has ever cheated on you with another woman?

MONICA. I don't think so. I think he has pretty conservative views on that kind of thing.

FEMALE VOICE. Why are you so sure?

MONICA. Well... He wouldn't lie to me. Morgan is a very honest person. He doesn't know how to lie. And as a psychologist, if there was something bothering him I would notice immediately.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. You didn't want to tell your husband about your relationship with a woman because you were afraid he would be cruel in response, right? And then your attitude toward him would change, too?

MONICA. Yes.

MALE VOICE. Monica, why don't you have children?

MONICA. I never wanted to get pregnant, but I've always wanted to adopt a child. There are too many people on the planet as it is. Why have more when there are so many unfortunate kids without parents? I believe we all share responsibility for all the children of the world.

MALE VOICE. And your husband?

MONICA. He's a neuroscientist, so he knows an adopted child will have completely different genes and he's afraid the child might turn out to be a stranger to us, not amenable to teaching. I don't agree with this point of view but that's how we ended up with no kids.

MALE VOICE. Do you regret it?

MONICA. Yes.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. Don't you think, professor, that the primary environmental problem is humans? Not regimes or countries, but humans as a species?

MONICA. In a certain sense, yes, of course.

MALE VOICE. Which means that if we want to save this planet, we need to save it from people. Do you agree?

MONICA. Hmm. I don't think so.

MALE VOICE. Why not?

MONICA. Because I still think human life is the most precious thing on earth.

FEMALE VOICE. But humans are not the only living species on the planet.

MALE VOICE. People make up 0.1% of all living beings on earth. 0.1%! 0.1% that is killing life on the planet and the planet itself. In reality, aren't humans nothing more than the worst virus on the planet?

MONICA. What are you suggesting?

MALE VOICE. What would YOU suggest?

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Monica?

MONICA. I don't know.

*Pause.*

*Fadeout.*

## 6. Scene

*Rachel Donelan is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

FEMALE VOICE. You said you had a sexual encounter with a woman. Was it a one-off or have these encounters continued?

RACHEL. Huh? I don't think I want to discuss my sex life with you. *(sarcastically)* On the other hand, you're paying me so much for this interview... But still, let's go back to scientific topics.

FEMALE VOICE. It is a scientific topic. Are you embarrassed about your bisexuality?

RACHEL. I'm not embarrassed. But I work at the Vatican, you know?

FEMALE VOICE. But the current Pontiff seems to have a more lenient view of homosexuality, does he not?

RACHEL. I don't work with the Pope. I have my own bosses, and, well ... Anyway, I consider this a very personal subject. I just don't need to be trending on Twitter right now. I found what I was looking for – an opportunity. I found an opportunity, you know? An opportunity to do something interesting, to learn, to have access to information, to meet amazing people. That's very cool! And I make money. That's very important too. It's not like they're paying me a lot but I make enough to travel, have some fun, and not worry about paying the rent. In other words, I don't want to lose my job.

FEMALE VOICE. Could you have a relationship with a married woman?

RACHEL. Is that a question?

FEMALE VOICE. Yes.

RACHEL. Why are you asking?

FEMALE VOICE. We want to know your views on social connections. It's a purely theoretical question, Rachel.

RACHEL. Yes, I could have a relationship with a married woman. Theoretically.

FEMALE VOICE. And with a married man?

RACHEL. Yes.

FEMALE VOICE. So you don't have any moral or ethical dilemmas in that regard?

RACHEL. No, I don't. It's their choice. I'm not forcing them to do anything.

FEMALE VOICE. But each of them is lying to their spouse. It doesn't bother you that there are lies in your relationships?

RACHEL. I don't agree with how you characterize the nature of the lie. The reason for the lie is a function of how our society is structured, where sexual relationships are based on the rights of

one person over another, as if they're private property you obtain after marriage. If you change this attitude toward sex and family there will be no need for lying.

MALE VOICE. Do you think people are ready for that?

RACHEL. Of course not. But what am I supposed to do? Life is short.

MALE VOICE. Do you ever want to have a family, kids?

RACHEL. The way families are right now, no. But I'm still young. Maybe I'll think about it later on. I might even adopt.

MALE VOICE. Don't you want to get pregnant and have your own baby?

RACHEL. I don't know. I don't think so. There are too many people in the world as it is. And a lot of abandoned kids. Why have new babies when there are already so many unwanted children?

MALE VOICE. Do you believe there's still time to solve the climate change problem?

RACHEL. According to the scientific data I work with, it doesn't look that way.

MALE VOICE. Does that scare you?

RACHEL. As I said, the real nightmare on the planet will start in about 50-60 years. I might be dead by then.

MALE VOICE. What about other people?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. Do you know what death is?

MALE VOICE. What?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. Death is when there are no more questions, no more worries, no more problems, no more fear, no more desire, no more desperately clinging to life. And most importantly, there's no pain of others and no pain FOR others, because there are no others.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. You don't think there's anything after death?

RACHEL. Well, maybe after the body dies some kind of energy will merge with the energy of the universe, but that won't be me anymore. It's nobody and nothing. And nobody and nothing has no problems.

MALE VOICE. What would you say is the meaning of life?

RACHEL. Live very-very beautifully and happily.

FEMALE VOICE. Could you elaborate on that please, in more concrete terms?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. One summer I was in the mountains when suddenly it started snowing. Have you ever seen it snow in the summer? That's the meaning of life for me – when it snows in the summer. Or when I'm sitting on my balcony and singing. I'll tell you what, I'm dying to stop clinging to life. Clinging to every step I take, to every thought I think. I want to stop having to think about



every word I write on Facebook so I don't offend anyone or trample on somebody's right to whatever. Every second of your life is controlled. But when it snows in the summer or when I'm sitting on my balcony singing, I'm free. Free from fake morality. When I know I can open the window and jump any time, this choice is the snow that suddenly falls in the mountains in the summer. Life is free. I am life. I'm inherently free. At least, that's how I'd like to live.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. And are you able to live like this, Rachel?

RACHEL. No.

MALE VOICE. Why not?

RACHEL. Well... several reasons. For example, I have a hard time dealing with people.

MALE VOICE. You don't like people?

RACHEL. Not much.

FEMALE VOICE. Why?

RACHEL. How do I put this? People do terrible things. They always have. Concentration camps. Violence. Torture. Throughout time, from Ancient Rome to the likes of Stalin, Hitler, and Pinochet. And it's not different these days either. China has created a system of internment camps that hold a million and a half Uighurs, who are a minority ethnic group in Central Asia. Several women were able to escape and tell their stories for the rest of the world to hear. Men and women are subjected to horrendous mass rape and torture. One woman said that the Chinese guards don't just rape the women, they also gnaw on their bodies, biting off chunks of flesh like animals. I can't even think about it. It's the 21st century and here we have people who are raping other people and gnawing on their bodies. How can all these American corporations have their gadgets and computers assembled in that country?! How does that happen? Because people put their own profit above everything else, and that goes for people everywhere. People are like a bad fungus. We've spread over the entire planet and are slowly eating it. We're corroding it like rust, not letting it breathe. We burn it and we pollute it. We rape and kill each other. We lie, we put ourselves first at all times, and we hardly know how to love. We just forbid and forbid everything, thinking that prohibitions will save us from chaos. But the more we prohibit, the more chaos we create – it's obvious. So, long story short, I don't feel all that good about people.

MALE VOICE. As one of those people, how do you feel about yourself?

RACHEL. I'm not super ecstatic about me either.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think there's any way out of the situation we, as a species, are in?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. I don't know. It's not my purview. I'm a biologist, but as a biologist I can say with a degree of certainty that the planet is bound to react to our behavior. As a living organism, it will attempt to cleanse itself of the human virus, unless, of course, we do something urgently...and since it doesn't look like we will, I'd say it looks like soon we'll just disappear forever.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Are you ready to disappear forever, Rachel?

RACHEL. Hm. It's a good question.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. And what's your answer?

RACHEL. I don't know.

*Pause.*

*Fadeout.*

## **7. Scene**

*Morgan Smith is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

MALE VOICE. How would you answer the question, what is it that makes a person?

MORGAN. Hmm. Do you know how I decided I was going to become a doctor? My father was a pathologist. One day he took me with him to the morgue, specifically to introduce me to death. He was a bit of a strange man, my father. Not quite well maybe. You know, dealing with dead bodies all day every day is not an easy job. Anyway, he took me to the morgue and showed me the body of a boy about my age. He did it to get me to understand that death is always waiting. I was about 8 years old at the time, and the dead boy was about the same age. So there I was standing in the middle of a cold room looking at the dead bluish boy, and I distinctly remember that at that moment a very specific question popped into my head: what really happened to that boy? I knew he was dead, but what happened to him? I mean, what is death? And where is this boy now? Where is that which until very recently was alive? Where is that life? I'm not sure taking children to the morgue is the right thing to do, but again, my father was a strange man. And this idea of his was very strange, too. But for me, it worked. Not only did I study to be a doctor, but I also consciously chose to become a clinical neuroscientist, because I really wanted to find out what happened to that boy. What happened to him? In a global sense?! Do you follow me?

MALE VOICE. So what did happen to him?

MORGAN. His brain died. Death is the moment your brain dies completely. Because the brain is the person. The person is in the brain.

MALE VOICE. But you seem to believe there's more to it than that.

MORGAN. In my opinion there is. There's something that turns the brain on and something that turns it off. First, there's life that fills the brain, then that life leaves and the brain is dead. There is life that creates a person, but a person is the brain. Our entire civilization, everything you see around you, is the brain. Buildings, fashion, politics, movies, banks and loans, political slogans, all your beliefs, joys and sorrows, everything created by man – cities, hotels, culture – are the brain. Then one day life leaves your brain and that civilization and culture disappear for you. When there's no brain, there's nothing.

FEMALE VOICE. But there's life?

MORGAN. Yes, there's life.

MALE VOICE. Then whose life is it?

MORGAN. Nobody's. Everybody's. It's just life. Let me try to explain it again. Here's life. It produces a brain. Life fills the brain. But when the brain dies, life doesn't. Life was before the brain and life remains after the brain is dead. Life does not appear or disappear; it's always there.

MALE VOICE. And this life is God?

MORGAN. In fact, it has no name or label. We could call it infinite Life, but the word Life is not a precise term because to us, life has to be something manifested, but we're talking about something that may or may not be manifested. It's the life that's there before your life and mine came into existence. That's why, as I said before, I like to use the word "God" to spite my father, a rabid atheist who brought me to the morgue to knock any hope out of my little head that there is anything beyond the threshold of death.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. Professor, we'd like to ask you a very personal question, and we hope you'll approach the answer as a scientist. Believe us when we say we're not just asking out of curiosity.

MORGAN. Okay, let's hear it.

FEMALE VOICE. You have a relationship with a woman outside of your marriage, don't you?

MORGAN. Huh? I don't understand how that would be relevant for your study.

FEMALE VOICE. We're creating your psychological profile. It's very important. As a scientist, you should understand.

MALE VOICE. We assure you that anything you say will not be disclosed outside of this study. All the information we gather is strictly confidential. The recordings of our conversation are encrypted and nobody will ever get the keys to decipher it. You have nothing to worry about.

MORGAN. Why do you need to know about my love life?

MALE VOICE. We want to understand why you're not telling your wife about it if, as you insist, you both support a sexually open marriage?

*Pause.*

MORGAN. I'm 62 and I'm seeing a 26-year-old. My wife is 40. She might think I'm seeing a young woman because I think she's gotten old and I want someone younger. But that's not true! I'm seeing this woman because I like her a lot, because people are not monogamous, and because having a relationship with one woman doesn't mean there can't be a relationship with another. I appreciate my wife and love her dearly. But why couldn't I be seeing somebody else for something else? For a new set of feelings and experiences. It's not insulting or humiliating to anyone, you see?

FEMALE VOICE. But why didn't you try to discuss it with your wife if, as you put it, she's your friend?

MORGAN. I already told you why. I was afraid she'd misunderstand me and take it personally. My wife is a woman of traditional views. She's open to new things but sex has always played a very small part in her life... You see, sex is... A human being is definitely not monogamous. Nature designed us for a variety of relationships. But we're prisoners of our culture, you know? Life is too short, and I don't think I'd have enough time to change my wife's viewpoint. And why would I? By seeing Rachel – the woman's name is Rachel – I'm not doing anything wrong. If she was ready, I would absolutely tell my wife.

FEMALE VOICE. What if she is ready?

MORGAN. I don't believe it.

*Pause.*

FEMALE VOICE. What's the main problem facing the human race?

MORGAN. Thinking. Our ability to think is what brought this planet to the brink of disaster. Humans listen to their own thoughts. But even good thoughts obscure objective reality. We create this entire imaginary world in our heads because we believe our own thoughts.

FEMALE VOICE. Do you think this world is fictional, Professor?

MORGAN. The biological world is real. But the world of the mind is like a computer game. The emotions are real, but the reality is simulated.

FEMALE VOICE. Then what do you think is the meaning of life?

*Pause.*

MORGAN. Joy. To experience joy and bring it to others is, in my opinion, the only privilege available to us.

FEMALE VOICE. But it's not available to everyone. Many people live lives that are mostly suffering.

MORGAN. Yes, that's true. And it makes me very sad to think about. But if you were lucky enough to be born in the right place at the right time to the right parents and you have the energy to help others, the pleasure of life is a thing that's both good to have and good to share. You can derive immense satisfaction from taking care of others and helping this world become a slightly better place.

MALE VOICE. Would you agree that drastic measures are needed to save us from impending doom, because persuasion and appeals to conscience are clearly not working?

*Pause.*

MORGAN. *(exhaling)* I don't know.

*Fadeout.*

## **8. Scene**

*Monica Borowska is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

FEMALE VOICE. In your opinion, what is the most important quality a person should have?

MONICA. A human being's main quality should definitely be mindfulness.

FEMALE VOICE. How would you define mindfulness?

MONICA. Perceiving yourself in the present moment. My presence in what is happening right now. Seeing and understanding what is happening with my body, with my entire existence, my thoughts, my feelings and my surroundings, all at once, right here and now. Being aware of yourself and your actions, not judging what you're doing in the moment. Understanding what you're doing, but it's not about control or focus, it's more a relaxed presence. And being in contact with everything around you. A clear state of mind, where you feel the other person, feel their fear and their pain. You don't want to impose your point of view on them, you don't want to convince them you're right, you don't want them to be like you, act like you, love like you, believe in the same things you do. No. Here and now, your attention and love. You understand that together you're part of this life. We're different in our manifestations, views, principles, skin color, sexual orientation, religion, but we're all part of the same whole. I'm here, I breathe, I walk, I do something. I exist. That is mindfulness.

*Pause.*

MALE VOICE. What percentage of people do you think have this kind of awareness?

MONICA. I don't know, maybe 4% of the world's population.

MALE VOICE. If that's true, then the human race can't be saved.

MONICA. Unfortunately not.

MALE VOICE. So there's no hope?

MONICA. No.

MALE VOICE. What are we to do then?

MONICA (*ironically*). Well, what can we do? As they say, stay tuned for world disaster news. The planet is likely to try to get rid of its killers – the human civilization.

FEMALE VOICE. We appreciate your candor today, Monica. We're done. Have a nice evening.

MALE VOICE. Thank you very much, Professor. Goodbye.

*Fadeout.*

## **9. Scene**

*Rachel Donelan is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

MALE VOICE. In your opinion, what is the most important quality a person should have?

*Pause.*

RACHEL. Determination and a belief in oneself. Because I see all these good folks on Facebook and Twitter talking about love, tolerance and non-violence, and yet the world is being changed by people who are giving everything they have to give, who are sacrificing their lives to the fight, who are languishing in prisons and dying in wars and revolutions. People can't sit by and do nothing and allow evil to take over the world under the guise of pacifism and some yoga theories. So I think people today need to be more determined in the fight for freedom and human rights. Against tyranny and violence. For saving the planet from ecological disaster and evil.

FEMALE VOICE. But violence begets violence, does it not? Isn't dialog a better way to resolve conflict?

RACHEL. I don't know, maybe it's because I'm from Texas and we approach things a little differently down there. I'll tell you what I think: fuck dialog! The world is full of violent assholes governing entire countries where good, innocent people are being raped, killed, and oppressed. There's a group of frigging assholes holding entire nations hostage. I believe we need to fight back against all of these fuckers. Enough with letting all this evil destroy our planet and all the good things on it. I don't want wars, I don't want murder, I don't want violence, but I want the Light to eventually defeat the Darkness, just the way it happens in all those Hollywood blockbusters. Maybe I watched the Star Wars franchise too many times but I believe the Force will be with those who fight for Freedom. This is the way.

FEMALE VOICE. We appreciate your candor today, Rachel. We're done. Have a nice evening.

MALE VOICE. Thank you very much, Rachel. Goodbye.

*Fadeout.*

## **10. Scene**

*Morgan Smith is sitting on a chair in the middle of the room.*

FEMALE VOICE. In your opinion, what is the most important quality a person should have?

*Pause.*

MORGAN. Well, I don't believe it's possible to single out one primary quality. A person is a set of qualities. A person is a system. Our society, I mean human society, the entirety of people on the planet, is also a system. It's a system we all share but we live as if we're all disconnected. Hence the horrible mess we've created on earth.

MALE VOICE. Which leads you to what conclusion?

MORGAN. I wish I could tell you that everything is going to be okay, but I have no facts to support that.

MALE VOICE. So what do we do?

MORGAN. You asked me to be as honest as possible, so I'll give you a very honest answer. You have to prepare your children for a difficult future and possibly a painful death. If I had kids, that's what I would do.

FEMALE VOICE. We appreciate your candor today, Morgan. We're done. Have a nice evening.

MALE VOICE. Thank you very much, Professor. Goodbye.

*Fadeout.*

## **11. Scene**

FEMALE VOICE. On December 30, 2019, the international organization New Constructive Ethics announced it was going out of business following its Board of Shareholders' decision to dissolve the company.

MALE VOICE. On December 31, 2019, New Constructive Ethics Director Lene Sorensen announced the organization's closure and wished everyone a Happy New Year 2020.

FEMALE VOICE. Best wishes for 2020.

MALE VOICE. All the best. Goodbye.

THE END

*Poland, Owl Mountains,  
Warsaw April 8, 2021*