

What Little Remains

Full story - Second Draft

Jonathan Cabeen 7/15/2022

Streets. Ext. Night.

Fade from black. Shots of cars going by at night are shown over jazzy music and The Detective's opening monologue.

Detective (voiceover)

2012. Downtown Cerebus. Once a strenuous metropolis, now a quiet and hollow city where many decide to reside indoors after dark.

Most would rather hook up to the Electric Dream Network, the latest form of escapism that allows users to go into a euphoric dream-like state, experiencing their own imaginations at it's full potential. These experiences can even be shared with others. It can range from casual entertainment, to a new-found high level of personal intimacy.

Show a shot of someone in front of a green screen hooking into the EDN, then closing their eyes and showing a sense of relief and relaxation on their face. In the background is a trippy swirl of colors.

Detective (voiceover con't)

I had never participated in the hurry to get home. Never needed an EDN unit of my own; I spend enough time with them at work, but lately this town has me rethinking things.

The Detective is seen sitting down at a cafe.

Detective (voiceover con't)

You're looking at the last detective in Cerebus to specialize in both Electric Dream and reality investigations, and I'm starting to believe that chasing criminals is all there is left to do in this town...

The server is seen pouring the Detective a cup of coffee into a mug. Cut to a close-up of the mug being filled and the pour can be heard. Cut to black.

Detective (voiceover con't)

At least you can still find a good cup of coffee...

Title card is shown

**WHAT
LITTLE
REMAINS**

Night club. Int. Night.

Open with a shot of the nightclub singer singing *Beautiful Ohio* into a microphone. She is wearing a red dress.

Cut to the audience side of the nightclub. The detective is seen in focus, sitting alone. At first, he does not look in the direction of the singer, but eventually turns his attention to her. Cut to the detective walking alone outside.

Night club / streets. Ext. Night.

The detective walks towards the camera in the foreground. The camera is moving away from him. In the background, the singer, now wearing a coat over her red dress, approaches, yelling for him.

The Singer (Yelling)
Detective!

The detective's stride slows, but he doesn't turn around yet. The singer catches up to him.

The Singer
Detective, you have to help, it's my husband!

The detective turns around and gives her his attention. The singer takes out a piece of paper from her jacket and unfolds it. Cut to a close-up of the unfolded paper. A missing sign of a man named Richard Deckard is seen. The detective takes the sign and examines it. The singer continues to beg,

The Singer
I know he's alive, my girlfriends have told me that he's been seen online in the dream network, almost every moment of every day, but no one knows where he really is.

Detective (voiceover)
This was not the best of times for a fresh case. Typically, I'd tell someone like this to call my office first thing in the morning, but this case particularly resonated with me.

The detective looks up from the paper and makes eye contact with the singer.

Detective

This will be my last case.

Detective's office. Int. Night.

The detective takes a seat behind his desk, pulling his seat in. The singer sits across from him. He is taking notes while asking her questions.

Detective

You don't suspect a kidnapping.

Singer

I know for a fact he was at the house a week ago today. There were two opened packages addressed to him on the kitchen table.

Detective

The EDN hardware?

Singer

Yes. We had never owned any before.

Detective

And the other box?

Singer

I'm unsure what was in it, it was sent from a company called Eternal Industries.

The detective takes a deep breath. His hand loosens and he drops his pencil onto his desk. Several shots from different angles are shown of him during his voiceover to express his dismay for the situation.

Detective (voiceover)

That name shook me to my core. Nothing good ever came from Eternal. They profit exclusively off of the rich, the desperate, the evil, or all of the above.

The detective regains his strength and looks back up at the singer. He takes a deep breath and holds his arms out to signal his revelation.

Detective

... we have a lead.

The garage. Ext. Night.

The detective and the singer walk side by side through the back yard that leads to the garage door. He is explaining to her.

Detective

Eternal only installs their hardware on their client's property, so if it's what I think it is, he's never left.

The detective and singer stop in front of the garage. Show a close-up of the lock and chain holding the two doors shut, then back to the two characters.

Detective

No disrespect, but you never thought to look in here?

Singer

I peeked in and saw nothing. It's just storage anyway... Plus, I don't have my own key.

The detective takes his gun out from the holster beneath his coat.

Detective

I got one.

He points the gun at the lock and blasts it off.

The singer backs up and throws her arms around out of shock and stress.

Singer (Screaming, distressed)

AAAHHHH WHAT THE FUCK???

Garage. Int. Day.

The detective peeks into the garage and gags at the smell. He covers his face, enters the garage and closes the door behind him before taking a look around. The detective gasps and close-ups of his shocked face are seen moments before revealing the jar with Richard's brain in it with a green glow, it's hooked to a high-end EDN unit. A loud, synthetic music cue is heard at the beginning of the shot. Shots around the storage room, the detective, and the jar are seen over the detective's monologue.

Detective (voiceover)

I knew it... I had only seen this technology one other time. It was typically reserved for those who lost their bodies in tragic accidents and wanted to continue dreaming, but this

was a choice. The bastard didn't even take the opportunity to say goodbye to his wife before shedding his physical body.

Garage. Ext. Night.

The detective bolts out of the garage, disturbed, coughing the smell and taste of the room out of his throat and nostrils.

Singer (desperately)
Is my husband in there?

The detective fights the need to vomit, looking to the ground and holding himself up with his arm against the wall. He shakes his head and can't make eye contact with her at this moment.

Detective (disgusted)
... Nothing resembling your husband is left in that garage....

He stands up straight, removes his hat and holds it to his chest. He looks the singer in her eyes.

Detective
Only what little remains of Richard Deckard...

A reaction shot of the singer is seen and dramatic music begins to play. She is shocked. She looks over towards the garage doors and the shot ends.

Streets. Ext. Night. The detective is walking back to the office.

Detective (voiceover)
I didn't plan on retiring this early... but there's nothing left. Things just haven't been the same since the automobile wreck. Wasn't all my fault, but I could've done things a little differently. 'Tired' has never been an excuse until now. This city has officially run out of ways to surprise me.

Detective's office. Int. Night.

A close-up is seen of the detective hanging up his hat on the coat hanger. He turns on a light and his partners come into focus across the room with a present on a chair between where they stand.

Partners (synchronized, enthusiastic)
Happy retirement!

The detective musters up a surprised look and a flattered smile. He approaches the gift and looks up to his partners.

Partner 1

We scraped together everything we could to get you something we know you'll get plenty of use out of.

Detective

About time you boys spend your paychecks wisely.

The detective looks down at his present and removes the lid. He peers into the box and a stunned look comes across his face.

Detective's shitty apartment. Ext. Night.

The detective approaches his apartment holding his present. A package outside his door is seen. A close-up is seen of him unlocking his front door with a key and pushing the door open.

Shitty apartment. Int. Night.

The detective is lying on his bed. A green glow is seen emitting from the corner of the room. Coat off, shoes kicked off, and tie untied. He is reading instructions. Shots of the EDN unit and the other package that lied outside his door are seen over his monologue.

Detective (voiceover)

An EDN unit... I never owned one of my own. Spent enough time with these things at work. This was never my plan but I'm all out of options... I guess the boys knew I needed two of them.

Detective looks over at a bookshelf against his wall. On the shelf, a brain in a jar from Eternal, next to a picture of him and his wife together. The brain is not yet hooked up to the EDN, as he could not afford the required model to hook it up, it simply sat there in a sleep-like state, waiting for the day he could afford to connect it to the Electric Dream Network.

Detective (voiceover)

My darling... we can finally spend our retirement together...