

DISORDER

an original script  
by Daniel G. Robinson

contact: 12821 NE 68th Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
(425) 576-9882

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, DAY

SUSAN CHANDLER awakes in bed with a bandaged head. She looks disoriented. She has a restraining strap across her chest. The bed is surrounded by curtained hospital-style panels. There are framed drawings on the panels. There are no windows. It is bright from the fluorescent lights. Susan is about 32, and average looking. Her foot is in a trapeze and there is an IV attached to her arm.

There is a sound of the TV that builds. She turns to watch the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

The TV PREACHER is on his set. He looks like a hipper Dr. Gene Scott. The set is a dais with a pulpit, but the TV Preacher is sitting in front of it in a director's chair. A three camera setup shows him from different angles. <<Intercuts with Susan as she struggles awake.>>

TV PREACHER

...But, we are all God's children and are all worthy of redemption. Pride of self is what gets in the way of seeing ourselves as God sees us. Most of the Bible is about justice but what God is about is Love. Now, most people get hung up on that justice stuff, and then forget the Love. Jesus said that we may not get justice in this world but that we could get Love, God's Love. And we get that love through redemption. But first, we must make that step that shows that we are ready for redemption. We must make the first step.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, DAY

JORD steps between the panels. He is dressed in a shirt, slacks and a white lab coat. Susan turns to face him. He is youngish looking, but has a confident air. He turns the TV sound down.

JORD

Well, I'm glad to see that you're awake. You were out for quite a while.

SUSAN

(woozy) Where am I? Who're you?

JORD  
I'm Jord. You're in the ICU at  
Cameron Hospital.

Jord approaches the bed and holds her wrist while watching  
his watch.

JORD (CONT'D)  
Hmmm, yes you're doing fine.

SUSAN  
What happened? How did I get here?

JORD  
You were mugged near your home last  
night. You suffered severe head  
trauma. We'll have a counselor up  
here in a little bit.

Susan seems shy as she tries to get her bearings. She tries  
to move her leg.

SUSAN  
My head hurts and my leg hurts. Are  
you a doctor? What's wrong with my  
leg?

JORD  
No, I'm the ICU RN. You have a broken  
ankle. We elevated it to reduce  
swelling. Do you want to see a  
doctor?

SUSAN  
Yes, I think so.

Susan looks around. She seems ill and unsteady.

JORD  
Okay, just take it easy. I'll get a  
doctor.

Jord opens up the restraining strap a little.

JORD (CONT'D)  
That is just a little safety  
precaution. How do you feel?

SUSAN  
Bad..

Jord uses a light to check her eye dilation.

JORD  
Good, looks good. Do you think you  
can remember your office phone number?  
All we have is your name.

SUSAN

Yeah, I, ah, think so. 867 - 5309.

JORD

Do you have a doctor?

SUSAN

No, I go to a clinic.

JORD

Do you have any known allergies?

SUSAN

Not that I know.

JORD

Good. I'll get doctor for you.  
Just lie back and try to sleep.

Jord adjusts the drip rate of the IV and turns up the TV volume, turns to Susan and grins.

JORD (CONT'D)

It's okay if you fall asleep. The  
doctor will be right here.

Jord turns to exit between the curtains.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE, NIGHT

The bed is a bright island in the middle of the room. All around are the residue of a defunct manufacturing business.

Jord steps from between the curtains and into the deserted manufacturing floor. Jord has an smug smile. His shoes squeak on the tile floor as he walks away.

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

The TV studio has that wide angle, three camera look with PBS lighting. On the left is JOHN HIGGINS, TV commentator. On the right is TIM BURNSIDE.

HIGGINS

Well, Tim, this has been a good break  
for you.

TIM

I know what you mean, John. I've  
been on several daytime shows, but  
this is the first part that has really  
worked with the audience.

HIGGINS

Can you tell us something about your character and why there has been such a response?

TIM

Well, I play Lance Whitcomb, someone who is suffering from schizophrenia.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BED

Susan is trying feebly to turn the TV off. She puts the remote down and presses her bell.

TIM (V.O.)

No, Lance was engaged to be married and was laid off from his job. He dropped out of society. He just hit the road to get away from it all.

HIGGINS (V.O.)

For the benefit of those who are not regular viewers, what happened next?

JORD (VO ON SPEAKER)

Yes, Susan, may I help you?

HIGGINS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Was he always that way?

SUSAN

I can't turn this TV off.

JORD (VO ON SPEAKER)

I can do it from my station here. Just a minute.

CUT TO:

INT. JORD'S LAB

Jord's lab has a number of computers and TV monitors, some chemistry lab gear and some art supplies. The computer gear has inventory tags that say "Jordan Manufacturing". One wall has a window labeled "Environmental Testing Chamber". It is black behind the window.

Jord is in his lab watching Susan on a surveillance monitor. He reaches up and turns a knob on a panel.

JORD

How's that?

SUSAN (VO ON SPEAKER)  
That just turned it down, not off.

JORD  
Okay, I'll be over in a minute to  
take a look at it. Sorry.

SUSAN  
It's okay, I just want to rest a  
little.

Jord turns to the window of the environmental testing chamber  
and addresses his reflection.

JORD  
Well, Dad, I think she likes me.  
She is a woman...

Jord turns an easel around and starts working on a drawing.

JORD (CONT'D)  
See, Dad, that's what you never  
understood. I see things for what  
they are, not what other people want  
them to be.

Jord looks back at the surveillance monitor of Susan.

JORD (CONT'D)  
I got a girlfriend, Dad, just like  
you wouldn't let me have. She is  
pretty. Well, Dad, what do you think?

Jord turns the canvas toward the blackened window. It is a  
disc intercut radially with streaks of white.

JORD (CONT'D)  
How do you like the sunrise, Dad?

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

HIGGINS  
So, Lance remembered who he was and  
was reunited with his family. Did  
this role take a lot of preparation?

TIM  
I read up a lot about this when the  
writers told me where my character  
was going.

HIGGINS  
Can we see what it looked like?

TIM  
Well, I brought some footage from  
yesterday's show...

HIGGINS  
Let's look at it!

They both turn to watch a monitor off stage right.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

Tim is in a hospital bed in a very soap operaeay looking room with curtains all around. He is sitting up and he delivers a monologue to an offscreen actress who asks a few questions.

TIM  
I don't know what's wrong with me.  
The doctor says that I'm  
schizophrenic, but that it is  
treatable. All I want is to get off  
this crazy train.

OFFSCREEN ACTRESS (V.O.)  
I don't understand! What does you  
mean about a crazy train?

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S DREAM, VIDEO INSERT

Susan dreams that she is on the stage with Jord in place of Higgins. There are cuts back and forth between Jord and Higgins.

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

The soap opera continues.

TIM  
I sometimes feel like I live in my  
own world, separated from everyone  
else. I have been that way all my  
life and I want it to end.

OFFSCREEN ACTRESS (V.O.)  
Do you know when you'll be better?

INT. SUSAN'S DREAM, VIDEO INSERT

Susan remembers her kidnapping: a stranger approaches her in a stairwell, a prick in the back after he passes, and then nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S BED

Susan wakes up and stares at the TV, startled. She slumps back and sees that there is a camera above her head. She rolls, blocking the camera's view of her arm and removes the IV needle.

CUT TO:

TIM (V.O.)

I don't know, the doctor didn't know.

OFFSCREEN ACTRESS (V.O.)

I love you Lance, and I want to know if you'll love me too after this is over.

TIM (V.O.)

Your love is what is guiding my life right now.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

SOUND FX: AUDIENCE NOISE AND APPLAUSE

Higgins is leading the applause for Tim.

HIGGINS

Well, that was very interesting.  
Was that hard to play?

TIM

No, like most actors, I've had some therapy (laughs, joined by Higgins) but I just went with the energy on the set and it was great.

SOUND FX: AUDIENCE NOISE AND APPLAUSE

HIGGINS

Well, thank you Tim Burnside. "Lance" on "Our Guiding Doctors"

Higgins starts applause, joined by audience.

Extreme closeup of Tim shows him triumphantly.

CUT TO:

INT. JORD'S LAB

Jord looks is drawing at an easel.

JORD

Well, Dad, you wanted me to be a doctor. I wanted to be an artist. What you got was an artist who is a doctor.

Susan's bell rings.

JORD (INTO MIC) (CONT'D)

Yes?

SUSAN (V.O.)

Can you come here and help me a minute?

JORD

I'll be right there.

Jord picks up a couple of drawings.

JORD (CONT'D)

(to himself) I wonder if she would like these.

Jord stops in front of the blackened window and looks at his reflection.

JORD (CONT'D)

Well, I think she'll like my art. What do you think?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BED

Jord steps between the screens carrying a couple of his drawings.

JORD

Your wish is my command.

Susan eyes him warily.

SUSAN

I want you to take me to the bathroom.

JORD

Sorry, the doctor said that he wanted to see you before we authorized movement. He should here be any time.

SUSAN

I gotta go to the bathroom.

Jord pulls a bed pan out from under the bed.

JORD

I'll just step outside so you can use this now, and I'll take care of it.

Jord gestures to a drawing on the curtain.

JORD (CONT'D)

By the way, what do you think of this drawing? I draw in my free time here.

Susan ignores the bed pan.

SUSAN

My hip is sore from laying this way. Can you take my foot down?

Jord pauses, unsure of the path this will take.

JORD

I'm not allowed to, but I can help you shift over.

Jord goes to shift her weight by reaching under her hip. She tenses up, but Jord doesn't notice. He is blissfully lost in the moment.

JORD (CONT'D)

There, that ought to do it.

Jord holds up a drawing to show to Susan.

JORD (CONT'D)

What do you think?

Susan is taken aback.

SUSAN

About what?

JORD

I really feel the need to draw, to express myself. I can get lost in it. Have you ever said "I just love it!" about a painting?

Susan looks confused.

SUSAN

I don't know. When will the doctor be here?

Jord still seems lost in reverie.

JORD  
 Drawing gives me vision. (jerked  
 back) The doctor? Ah, soon.

Jord seems to hang on a thread.

SUSAN  
 I'm tired. Please leave, I'd like  
 to be alone.

The thread breaks.

JORD  
 Okay.

Jord leaves, but the rejection is evident on his face.

INT. JORD'S LAB

Jord is cooking something in a flask with a Bunsen burner.

JORD  
 Well, Dad, you would have been proud  
 of me. I didn't even touch her once.  
 Not like before. (stage grins)  
 Oops, I'm not supposed to talk about  
 that, am I.

One of the monitors shows Jord with someone else in the  
 hospital bed.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BED SURVEILLANCE, VIDEO INSERT

Jord is at the side of Tim's bed. Tim is secured to the bed  
 rails by cable ties at the wrist and ankle.

JORD  
 You gave people the wrong impression  
 about mental illness. You, all pretty  
 up on TV. People think that is what  
 it's like.

TIM  
 I didn't know. I never tried to  
 hurt anyone. It was just a job, it  
 didn't really mean anything to me.

JORD  
 But it isn't a job to me. Here, let  
 me show you something.

Jord shows him a drawing that is a maelstrom of patterns and  
 textures.

JORD (CONT'D)

See, this is what it is like to be  
inside the storm when it breaks over  
you.

Jord looks at the drawing and back at Tim. Jord gets a  
syringe from his pocket

JORD (CONT'D)

You don't know what it's like. Let  
me show you...

Jord injects Tim's arm. Tim screams and fights his  
restraints.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO, VIDEO INSERT

On the left is JOHN HIGGINS. On the right is SUSAN.

HIGGINS

Welcome to our show, Susan. This  
has been quite an experience for  
you. Best selling book, talk shows,  
I'm dying to ask: how did all of  
this start for you?

SUSAN

Well, I guess it when I decided to  
write the book about autism.

HIGGINS

But that isn't where it started.

SUSAN

No, I was diagnosed as autistic when  
I was ten years old.

HIGGINS

Do you think of that as the beginning?

SUSAN

Not really. The beginning was really  
when I realized that the world that  
I lived in was not the same as the  
world that others lived in and that  
I wanted them to be the same.

HIGGINS

You mean, that you wanted the worlds  
to not be separated?

SUSAN

No.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

My world was sufficiently different from the "Other" world that I was very unhappy, and I wanted to be happy. I wanted the other world.

HIGGINS

Is that the way it seemed, that it was another world from you?

SUSAN

Yes. I had a logical order in my world but it continued to break down when ever it came in contact with the world of everyone else.

HIGGINS

Do you think that the rest of us share a common world?

SUSAN

No, I have realized since then that the cognitive space inhabited by each person varies from the common space to some degree, but you must realize that the space that I inhabited was very much different from that common space.

HIGGINS

So, you were diagnosed as autistic: you had few verbal skills?

Susan nods.

HIGGINS (CONT'D)

You had motor skill problems?

Susan nods.

HIGGINS (CONT'D)

You had other problems, but you overcame them and sit here, an articulate young woman. You are amazing!!!

Susan dips her head in embarrassment at the accolades.

HIGGINS (CONT'D)

Now you have written a book about your experiences, "Through the World Gates". That is an interesting title. What does the title mean?

SUSAN

When I was trapped in my world, I had the feeling that there were gates to the other, or common, world. I tried to hold onto them when I encountered them, but I never knew if the person, who I considered a gate, knew what they meant to me.

HIGGINS

Can you give us an example?

SUSAN

I had a grandfather who was the kindest, dearest man in the world. Whenever I was around him, I used to sit in his lap and play with his shirt buttons, as if they were the keys to that gate. I would open them and close them repeatedly as he talked to me.

HIGGINS

What did he say?

SUSAN

I don't remember. I just remember being safe there.

HIGGINS

What happened to him?

SUSAN

He died when I was eight, and I snapped back into my world with a vengeance. I was almost lost to it for good when I was finally seen and diagnosed by a psychologist.

HIGGINS

Was there something that caused that opening up for you?

SUSAN

The psychologist reminded me of my grandfather. I had flashes of him in my memory when I talked to my doctor, and I guess the doctor saw me in my world and helped pull me back.

HIGGINS

Were you happy to leave your world?

SUSAN

No!

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It was a very self centered world and that is the most addictive thing there is. But the only source of love there is there, is from yourself, not a reliable source.

HIGGINS

So, it was a need for outside love that pulled you back.

SUSAN

Yes, and for those of you that have it now, you can't imagine what not having it is like.

HIGGINS

What happened after your diagnosis?

SUSAN

I saw a number of people who tried to really connect with me, but I didn't comply with them.

HIGGINS

Well, what did work?

SUSAN

I was interviewed by a young male doctor and he was like an older brother to me. I idolized him and would do anything for him. I wanted to please him.

HIGGINS

And how old were you, and how long did you work with him?

SUSAN

I was fifteen, and I saw him for the next three years.

HIGGINS

During which time, your verbal skills increased and you were able to pass a GED type exam. Was there any one thing that really cemented your place in this world?

SUSAN

Yes, it was poetry. I learned to love the way the words sound, the pictures that they made in my head. I sometimes fear that I will slip away sometimes when I read an exquisite poem, but I know who and where I am now.

HIGGINS

So you went to a community college, then got a degree and continued on to where you are now, a high school English teacher. Why did you write the book?

SUSAN

A lot of people heard about me and I was asked repeatedly to tell my story. I started to write it and a book vendor asked me to submit it and it just snowballed.

HIGGINS

What did you hope to achieve with this book? Fame, stardom, a TV movie of the week?

SUSAN

(laughing) No, I'll let you have that! I wanted people to understand what my experience was, what a possible experience is for someone who has come back through the gates.

HIGGINS

And we're glad you did. You are a **fascinating** woman. We'll be right back with audience questions for Susan Chandler, author of "Through the World Gates", right after this.

CUT TO:

INT. JORD'S LAB, VIDEO INSERT

An extreme closeup of a man talking to the camera. He is in white face, with a clown's black eye make up. The man speaks belaboredly.

MAN

Jord, it wasn't like that.

Jord rebuts him from off camera (not on tape)

JORD (V.O.)

Oh, yes it was.

MAN

I wanted you to live like everyone else.

JORD (V.O.)

You wanted me to be like you.

MAN

I didn't want to send you away. I  
didn't know what to do.

JORD (V.O.)

Do you know what that place was like?

MAN

It was supposed to be a nice place,  
and we wanted the best care for you.

The close up pulls back and the details of a bed sheet can  
be made out.

JORD (V.O.)

Out of sight out of mind.

MAN

We talked about you every day. I  
wanted to bring you closer to home,  
but your mother... (screams)

JORD (V.O.)

I told you to leave Mom out of this...

The camera pulls back enough to show that it is a middle  
aged man on a hospital bed.

MAN

Oh, God! What have you done to me?  
(more slowly) Jord, why did you...

JORD (V.O.)

It's a synthetic heroin. If you  
cook it just right, it's great. If  
you don't, (shrugs) oh well...

Jord's father is drooling and twitching spasmodically. The  
aperture shows a hand with a syringe pulling back from the  
bed.

JORD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Back to the kitchen... (laughs)

CUT TO:

INT JORD'S LAB

Jord turns away from the monitor and turns back to his  
drawing.

JORD

One of these days, Dad, I'm going to  
be a great artist. Because I can  
see things that other people don't  
see.

He picks up a drawing from an artist correspondence school magazine advert and waves it at the environmental chamber.

JORD (CONT'D)

Do you remember this? I knew then that I could draw, but you wouldn't listen.

Jord puts aside the drawing and looks into his chemical brewing. He performs a test on the brew.

JORD (CONT'D)

Well, Dad, I guess sending me to MIT was a good idea. You wanted me to study chemistry so I could become a doctor. Well, I am one!

Jord laughs wildly as he crosses to the wall with the window and hits a light switch.

JORD (CONT'D)

Well, Dad, don't I look like a doctor?

An older man is hanging in the chamber, frozen and ice encrusted.

JORD (CONT'D)

Well, Dad, you trained me and gave me a place to practice my art.

There is an attenuated crash sound. Jord turns to look at the monitor that displays Susan. Susan is glaring up at the camera.

JORD (CONT'D)

(more distant) You are my best creation....

Jord turns out the light and goes control panel and zooms the surveillance camera in on Susan. The IV stand is on the floor.

Jord goes to the flask and fills a syringe with the chemical. He puts a protector on the needle and puts it in his pocket.

Jord walks to the environmental chamber window. It is black and reflects his image.

JORD (CONT'D)

Well, Dad, do I look like a doctor? Looking the part is being the part.

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BED

Susan is laying in bed and Jord enters.

JORD  
Well, how are you feeling?

SUSAN  
Who are you? You're not a doctor.

JORD  
I'm not as good as a doctor? If you want pain killers, I can get them for you.

Jord crosses to the bed and reaches out to touch Susan. She recoils from him. Jord is shocked.

SUSAN  
Don't touch me.

JORD  
Why not? I'm a nurse.

SUSAN  
You're not a nurse, and this isn't a hospital.

Jord looks busted.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Who are you? Why did you do this?

JORD  
I saw you on TV and thought that you could help me.

SUSAN  
I'm not a psychologist. I can barely help myself. You must let me go.

Jord has a little boy's look on his face.

JORD  
I can't let you go. You just don't understand. I wanted to get away from these pictures in my head

SUSAN  
This isn't the way to do it. There are people who can help you. You just need to find the right one.

JORD  
But you're the right one for me. If you loved me, you would understand.

SUSAN

LOVE?!? How can you think about love when you do this to me?

JORD

I was hoping you would see me for who I am and learn to love me.

SUSAN

Love is voluntary, not demanded. I can't love you now.

JORD

Why not? I need you to care for me and help me.

SUSAN

How can I care for you after what you did to me? And what did you do to my ankle?

JORD

I just put a cast on it. I learned that in the hospital. I wanted you to not move around, and then you could learn to love me.

SUSAN

Then there's nothing wrong with my ankle?

JORD

(quietly) No.

SUSAN

I'm leaving. You should leave too.

JORD

I can't do that. Please don't leave me. My Dad was rich. I can buy us anything.

Jord approaches Susan and reaches out to touch her.

SUSAN

Don't touch me.

Jord reacts bitterly.

JORD

You're just like all the rest. Well, I've got something for you.

Susan starts to get out of the bed.

Jord jumps into action when she tries to get up, springing to the head of the bed.

JORD (CONT'D)

I loved you Susan, but I can't let you go.

Jord pulls her shoulders back. She struggles, but she is no match for him as he whips the restraining strap across her upper arms and pins her down.

SUSAN

You sick son of a bitch!! Let me go!!

Susan struggles against the strap, vainly it seems.

JORD

I'll let you go, but not the way you think.

Jord takes the syringe from his pocket. The needle has a protector over it.

JORD (CONT'D)

I wanted you to be different. Good bye.

Jord steps toward the bed Susan manages to get one hand free from the belt.

She has the bed pan from under the covers where she hid it.

She hits him in the head.

The syringe is knocked away and rolls under the bed.

JORD (CONT'D)

Goddamn you bitch, I'll get you for that. (to himself) gotta remember the cable ties next time.

Susan is struggling, trying to get her foot out of the trapeze.

She is pulling her foot free of the trapeze...

Her hands are free.

She is clawing at the restraining strap...

Jord comes out from under bed on his knees with the syringe and slips the protector off.

JORD (CONT'D)

Good, it's not broken.

Jord looks up in time to see Susan's cast coming off the trapeze.

He dodges, too late.

Susan's cast hits the syringe, it's in his arm...

Jord tries to talk, lips work, no sound...

Susan looks terrified as Jord falls sideways.

Jord lays on the floor, mouth agape, drooling.

Susan slides off the other side of the bed, walks unsteadily around the end of the bed holding the bed pan as her only defense and looks at Jord from a safe distance.

Susan struggles to say something but can't get anything out. Susan throws the bed pan at him, pushes through the curtains and sees the empty floor.

Susan pushes back through the screens.

SUSAN

Fuck you, and your art!

Jord is fading as Susan pushes through the screens and walks unsteadily away, peg-leg.

FADE OUT: