

# Piper Keys Exhibitions

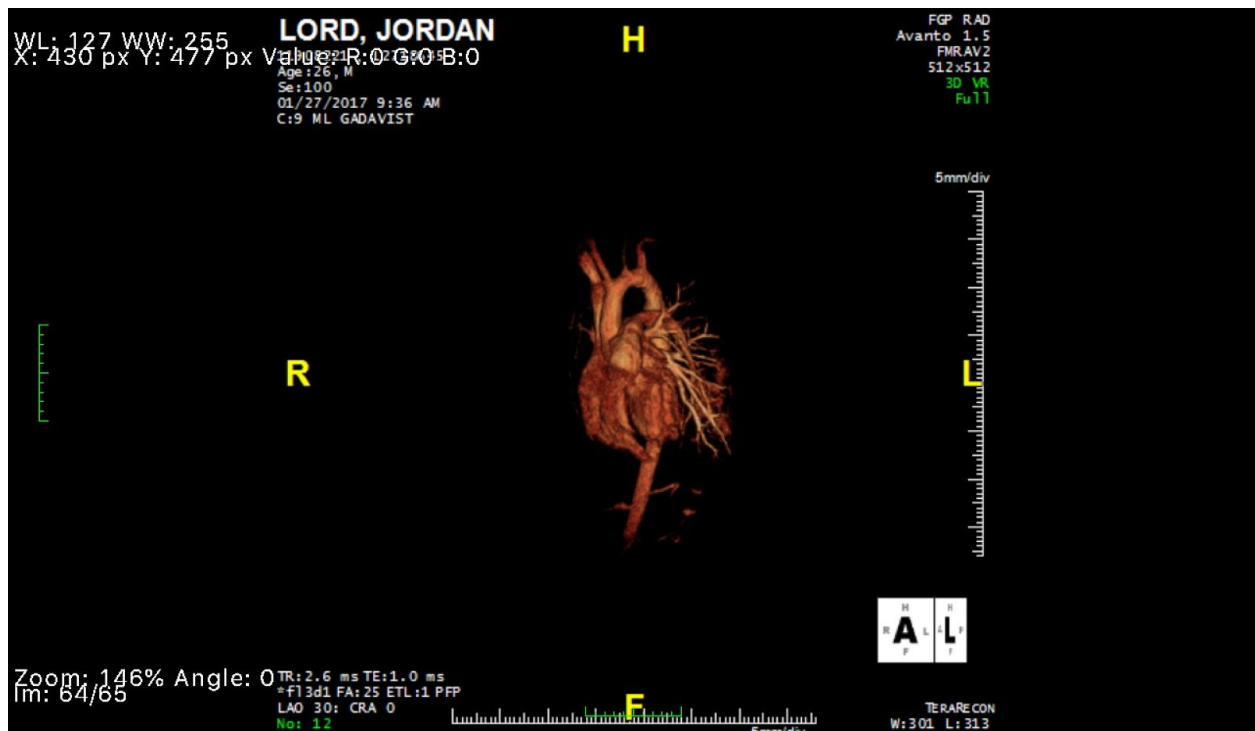
Jordan Lord  
After... After...

6th to 8th September

Opening view: Friday 6th September, 6 to 9pm.

Performance at 8pm

Audio files of exhibition texts available [here](#).



Piper Keys presents a weekend of new and recent film work by Jordan Lord. Three films will run continuously on

a showreel from 12 to 6pm, Friday 6th to Sunday 8th. During Friday evening the artist will provide a live narration of one of these films, *After...After... (Access)*.

Lord's films are documentary in approach, combining still shots, audio description and voiceovers, which follow events in the lives of the artist and the artist's family. The setting for many of these events is suburban Mississippi where their parents live.

Shots of the family home and its landscaped neighbourhood are overlaid with the voices of Lord, their Mum and Dad. Lord's mum describes hearing her mother singing a gospel song. Friends discuss an MRI and upcoming operation. Within the social interactions that the films record, Lord introduces several recurring subjects: access, authorship and debt.

The showreel at Piper Keys comprises three films: *Shared Resources (Partial View)*, *I Can Hear My Mother's Voice* and *After...After...(Access)*. *Shared Resources*, made over the course of the last four years, and presented here as the first iteration of an ongoing work, documents Lord's parents facing bankruptcy and their efforts to pay off their debt. For its presentation at Piper Keys, Lord showed their parents and sister recent footage from the project and

invited them to both describe and respond to the images they viewed. Their family members' verbal reactions slip between description, reflection and memory and provide the spoken word narrative to the film. This combination of audio description and reaction is also used in *I Can Hear My Mother's Voice*, which documents the artist's mother learning how to use Lord's film camera which is the same camera documenting the wake of their parents' bankruptcy.

The third work presented at Piper Keys, *After...After... (Access)*, takes the form of an essay film that confronts questions of accessibility through an attempt to record Lord's recent open-heart surgery. The film follows the artist as they prepare for the surgery, with many friends and family operating the camera at different points. The film's narrator considers the relationship between showing and telling and how access is frequently considered only after the threat of liability, in the context of both filmmaking and disability.

Along with these three films, a text will be made available: a proposal for a contract that redistributes the risk between documentary filmmakers and the people who appear in their films.

Jordan Lord's films installed at Piper Keys seek to connect the relationships between access and risk with the entanglements between Lord and the people who appear in their films; and furthermore between the films, the physical space of the gallery, and various audiences' access to them; and how all of these relationships involve debt and entanglement. The works in this show are inseparable from and are about the inseparability from the people and relationships to whom Lord explains 'I am in debt, to whom I owe everything'.

**Accessibility:**

Exhibited films are open captioned and include audio description in English. *After...After...* (Access) contains a stroboscopic effect at around 8 minutes. Exhibition texts and transcripts of the films will be made available in large format text both on the Piper Keys website and at the gallery.

Wheelchair accessible entrance and toilet facilities available on request.

For access requests or further information email [info@piperkeys.com](mailto:info@piperkeys.com).

**Gallery information:**

Piper Keys is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England

Gallery opening hours 12noon to 6pm, Friday to Sunday  
Entrance through 58a Artillery Lane

Piper Keys  
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[info@piperkeys.com](mailto:info@piperkeys.com)  
[www.piperkeys.com](http://www.piperkeys.com)

## PERSONAL APPEARANCE CATCH AGREEMENT

### **Preamble:**

Appearance releases and personal rights agreements are key instruments in the economics of documentary filmmaking and distribution. These two kinds of documents are often seen as inseparable and frequently combined, at least in examples offered to film students and new filmmakers. Despite the fact that there are key differences between the two, they both use the contract form as a means of distributing risk in a film production. And they play a central role in how the economy of documentary filmmaking intersects with the law.

Releases of claim / indemnity seek to exempt the filmmaker and a film's investors / distributors from liability for any risks or damages incurred by someone's appearance in a film and any ill effects it might have on them personally after it circulates in the world. As this description of the "Elements of an Appearance Release" on the website CreativeFuture.org writes, the release of claim / indemnity is

“essentially the heart of the whole release. It's the language that says the participant will not sue the production company. Specifically, the release of claims releases the production company and any other released parties from any and all claims, demands, actions, and liabilities in connection with

the appearance. The participant also agrees to help defend the production company if the participant breaches any of its promises made in the appearance release.”

For instance, a sample appearance release states,

“Performer and Performer’s heirs and assigns shall have no right to bring legal action Against Producer for any use of the pictures or recordings, regardless of whether such use is claimed to be defamatory or censorable in nature. [...]

Performer agrees to hold Producer and any third parties harmless from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses or damages that may arise from the use of Performer’s voice or image in the Production. Performer understands that in proceeding with the Production, Producer will be relying upon the foregoing consent, permission and indemnity.”

Grant of rights is the other side of the appearance release and is necessary in order to make the release of claims legally valid. Grant of rights are necessary because a person living in the United States has rights of privacy and publicity, which protect them from their private life being captured and distributed in a film and from their likeness being used to sell a film in a commercial context. Without formally giving over these rights to the filmmaker(s) or distributor(s), the person who appears in the film always has a right not to appear in it. The rights agreement, which is usually part of an appearance release, asks the person who is

going to be filmed or who has already been filmed to give up these rights. For instance, in this sample agreement,

“For valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I hereby give Productions, LLC, including its assignees or licensees, or anyone associated with the Picture (collectively “Company”) the absolute, irrevocable right and permission, forever and throughout the world, in connection with the motion picture tentatively entitled “The Picture” (the “Picture”), the following:

1. The perpetual and universal right to photograph and rephotograph me (still and moving) and to record and rerecord, double, and dub my voice and performances, by any methods or means, and to use and authorize others to use my name, voice, and likeness for and in connection with the Picture. Copyright for all such work shall vest exclusively in Company as a work made for hire of an audiovisual work. If such vesting of copyright is deemed invalid, then I hereby assign any copyright to Company. “

There are several key consistencies among both the release of claims and the grant of rights:

- A) The irrevocability of the agreement;
- B) An assignment of limits on the future at the very moment that the future is acknowledged to be unknowable;
- C) A reliance on the legal concept of a capacity to consent and for the act of consent to form the basis of this agreement;



D) The framing of rights as property that can be given over to the filmmaker or distributor;

E) The granting of the right to use or exploit this property.

At the core of this arrangement are contradictions, including but not limited to the fact that the filmmaker(s) are exempted from responsibility for the effects of their film at the very moment they are, in fact, responsible: the moment of entering into a relationship with a person who has agreed to have their life recorded on film.

Unbarring best intentions, this relationship is riddled with problems of consent and contract: relationships and decisions change over time, but because consent is underwritten by the contract as irrevocable—which is to say, a means of determining an outcome before one can be known—consent can easily be used against an injured party as a means of preventing them from seeking redress should abuse occur. Further, consent itself is based on a framework of capacity that produces a double bind for many, in which they are determined to lack the capacity to consent, just as they are determined to not have the capacity to contest this determination and, thus, of course, do not consent to it. Films turn out differently from how they are conceived; films have a life in the world that can't be predicted; one can be informed but not prepared for the risks one might incur from appearing in a film.

Further, these practices are built on a fiction of value that is replete with the moral and ethical problems of capitalism. In the

grant of rights, the monetary and time investments of the filmmakers and their investors supercede the lived reality of the people without whom their film would not exist. The grant of rights creates a situation, where in order to document and share documentation of others' realities, one must agree to the consensus reality that a life or life story is currency that can be ceded as a property another person can own or use as a means of generating capital, cultural or otherwise.

The ongoing effects of this arrangement in the history of documentary filmmaking cannot be fully accounted because these practices are enshrined into Law and are usually only called into question when the agreement appears to have been entered under false pretenses and / or when the person appearing in a film seeks legal action against the production. This already limited and scarcely told history does not include all those who might never have sought legal advice because a contract precludes them from doing so, those who feel negatively impacted by their appearance in a film but have not thought to seek legal recourse at all, or those who might fall somewhere in between.

The purpose of this alternative contract is to

- A) Interrogate the ethics of appearance releases, which exempt filmmakers, investors, and distributors from liability for the effects that their films have on the people who appear in them;
- B) Unwork the giving over of rights as a means of enshrining a property relation;

- C) Acknowledge that the process of documentary filmmaking complicates notions of privacy, property, and individuality;
- D) Recast the creative relationship between documentary filmmakers and the people who appear in documentary films as one of collaboration, in which there can be distinctions in terms of labor but not clear separations between individuals and the act of making;
- E) Use the contract form not to manage or defer risk from one party to another but rather as a means of sharing risk among all parties involved—or, in other words, to deny the contract a form of one-sided release and standard operating procedure of separation but rather a multiplication of bond and inseparability.

## **Agreement**

For invaluable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, this contract is an indefinitely revocable agreement between \_\_\_\_\_ (FILMMAKER) and \_\_\_\_\_ (FILMMAKER), hereafter referred to as the “FILMMAKERS” or “COLLABORATORS”, as of \_\_\_\_\_ (Month) , \_\_\_ (Day), \_\_\_\_\_ (Year).

These collaborators define and set the terms of their agreement as follows:

1. The director(s), cinematographer(s), editor(s), producer(s), and all other “creative” personnel on the film entitled \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Film”) share all risks and liabilities

associated with appearing in the Film with all those who appear in front of the camera.

2. All of the aforementioned parties will be acknowledged in this contract as collaborators and filmmakers of this Film and will be credited and compensated according to all of the roles they have fulfilled in the process of making the film.
  - a. These roles are subject to revision throughout the process of filmmaking to account for more, less, or different contributions than expected at the outset of the relationship among collaborators.
  - b. A separate agreement should be entered into to define this relationship as it unfolds and to set the terms of crediting and compensation.
  - c. The indiscriminate use of the term collaborators or filmmakers within this Agreement refers to the basic condition that, though contributions may vary and have key differences, collaborators on this or any film cannot be separated into individual roles but are, rather, entangled in the process of making a collaborative work.
3. The right to photograph, re-photograph, record, and re-record all those whose images or voices appear in the film is contingent on the specific use of this material and is subject to the approval of all those who make an appearance in the Film before screening or distribution of this material.
  - a. All collaborators must be notified of the use of this material and given the opportunity to screen the edited material in the form in which it is intended to be shown.

- b. All collaborators must be notified of the use of this material before it is shown in a different form (for instance, trailers or alternative edits of the materials shown publicly including but not limited to sequels, prequels, or other works based on this material), in a different medium now known or hereafter devised (film, video, VR/AR, radio, etc.), on a new distribution platform (such as a film festival, gallery or museum, television, free internet streaming, subscription-based web platform, theatrical release) with at least two weeks notice.
  - i. If the film is shown in a theatrical setting (meaning any screening where the work is meant to be viewed by a general public in a specific location), all collaborators should also be notified of the location with at least two weeks notice in person with a witness, by email, or in writing.
- c. If there is a disagreement about the way this material is used among collaborators, the director(s), producer(s), and editor(s) must respond to all collaborators' concerns about uses of material in which they appear or to which they have directly contributed.
  - i. If after best efforts, the collaborators cannot reach an agreement about the use of the material, this material must not be included in the film or exhibited publicly.
  - ii. All collaborators reserve the right to object to the use of the material to which they have contributed

or in which they appear at any time—before, during, or after the completion of the Film.

4. The collaborators maintain all rights to make claims against the filmmakers or any of the Film's assignees or licensees, or anyone associated with the Film, including (a) infringement of rights of publicity or misappropriation (such as any allegedly improper or unauthorized use of collaborators' name or likeness or image) (b) intrusion (such as any allegedly offensive behavior or questioning or any invasion of privacy), (c) false light (such as any allegedly false or misleading portrayal of those appearing in the film), (d) infliction of emotional distress (whether allegedly intentional or negligent), or (e) defamation (such as allegedly false statements made on the Picture).
  - a. Collaborators must first make their concerns known to fellow collaborators before seeking legal action.
  - b. If a mutual resolution cannot be reached, collaborators are encouraged to seek neutral third party mediation (performed by someone who does not have a personal or financial investment in the outcome of the film) before taking legal action.
  - c. If neutral third party mediation fails to achieve a mutual resolution, collaborators maintain their rights to file a claim in court.
  - d. Any financial losses experienced as a result of appearing in the film will be directly deducted from any potential profit the production might earn.
5. The filmmakers are under no obligation to produce the

Film hereunder nor use the material in which collaborators appear or to which they have contributed; however, the decision not to use material in which collaborators appear or to which they have contributed must be communicated to collaborators at least two weeks notice before the Film is shown publicly.

6. This Agreement shall constitute the collaborators' current understanding subject to amendment or revision. The signatories shall have the opportunity to revise the contract at regular \_\_\_\_ (number) \_\_\_\_ (unit of time) intervals or upon the event of any change in status of the film in terms of its format, medium, or distribution platform. Collaborators likewise bear the right to petition to reopen the contract for renegotiation at any time within a 2-week period in one of the aforementioned forms. If there is a disagreement about whether to reopen the contract for renegotiation outside the predetermined windows, it is recommended that the parties involved seek neutral third party mediation.
7. Collaborators may list any persons, entities, or forces affecting the conditions upon which this Agreement is entered into here:

*The background of this contract is informed by work by Angela Mitropoulos, Constantina Zavitsanos, Park McArthur, and Amalle Dublon.*

## *Shared Resources (Partial View)*

### Credits

#### **Featuring (in alphabetical order)**

Annette Carter

Albert Lord

Deborah Lord

Jordan Lord

Max

Ashley Schlafly

Finn Schlafly

Thomas Schlafly

Angelique White

Christian White

Darren White

Hannah White

#### **Directed, edited, and shot by**

Jordan Lord

#### **Special Thanks**

Arias Abbruzzi Davis

Amalle Dublon

Emma Hedditch

Jason Hirata

Park McArthur

Shelly Silver

Sandra Wazaz

Constantina Zavitsanos



*I Can Hear My Mother's Voice*

Credits

**Filmed by**

Deborah Lord

**Voiceover by**

Deborah Lord

**Edited and Directed by**

Jordan Lord

**Special Thanks**

Albert Lord

## *After... After... (Access)*

### Transcript

Please note: there is a stroboscopic effect about eight minutes into this video.

After Mom After Dad After Ashley After Angelique After Mimi After Carolyn After Tina After Amalle After Park After Jason After Melanie After Tom After Orion

Many more names fill the screen. Each follows the word "After."

"Access."

There's a neck; the top of a bluish collar, as well as part of a beard.

A pulse beats in the neck. You can see my heart beating.

Some things that happen inside the body are accessible from the outside.

My friend Jay shot this footage the day I found out I had to have open-heart surgery.

Jay zooms out a little; his hand isn't in the frame, but the camera moves.

This movement traces things that were going on inside his body—his breath, the tension in his muscles, his heartbeats, his reactions.

Tina: Which one is your heart?

Jordan: This whole--

Tina: The whole thing?!

Johanna: That's *just* your heart?

Jordan: I don't *really* know.

Tina: I don't think so...

Johanna: Like is this your...

Tina: No, that's like your.

Johanna: That's your spine?

Tina: This is like cross-sections of you...like your shoulders

Narrator: MRI images of my heart play on a computer screen.

Hands enter the frame to point out various aspects of the images.

The first image initially looks more like a brain than a heart.

White fluid spreads across the sides and forms the shape of shoulders and ribs is if they were seen from above, on a body without a head.

The images loop like a gif. A hand selects a new image.

In this image you can see my heart, but mostly you see my spine.

A fluid seems to push against it.

This image seems to show something about my spine, but I only know what the doctors told me—that this image is about my heart.

In learning to make a film, students are taught to show rather than tell.

This conventional wisdom that filmmaking is an art of showing underestimates the performative capacity of telling.

My family often tells me I'm a bleeding heart.

These images show that my heart was in fact bleeding.

My surgeon told me my heart is huge.

Images, metaphors, and my heart itself all seem determined to demonstrate how things open up when they no longer have the capacity to contain.

Jordan: Yeah, okay, so this is my heart.

Tina: What?! (gasps) Oh my...*what*?!

Jordan: And what they've found is that, when the heart--when the blood is coming into the heart, the blood is also coming back out.

Narrator: In this image, a chamber of the heart squeezes out liquid. The liquid seems to diffuse and the move backward into the chamber.

Because the image is on repeat, it's hard to tell which direction the liquid is moving.

Jordan: So I am not sure...I think

Tina: Jordan, this...your heart is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

[laughs]

Narrator: My belly moves up and down lit by the sun.

My pulse makes it jump in between breaths.

I found out my heart was leaking a few weeks after Trump was elected president.

At the time I was in love with Orion, who I think loved me.

The frame is filled by a blanket that moves up and down with my heartbeat.

Orion used to go with me to the doctor.

After the election neither of us knew how to make the other feel better.

When we broke up, he wrote me that he could hear my heart beating as I slept.

Orion: Do you know what the recovery is going to be like?

Jordan: I don't...I mean, I know it's going to be a month...about a month...but I don't know, like, what I'm gonna feel like really...

I didn't really ask, like, "Am I gonna be in a lot of pain?"

Orion: Yeah.

Jordan: Cuz I was like, I kinda don't wanna know.

Orion: I know.

Jordan: And then there's, like, this other part of me that's like really fucked up that's like, "if I'm not in a lot of pain, then like I don't deserve to have all of these people caring about me."

Orion: Nooo.

Narrator: Orion and I put a bag over a mattress.

He is black. I am white.

We work together to lean the mattress against the wall.

We moved this bed to my friend's apartment so that my mom would have a place to sleep when she came to New York to care for me after my surgery.

My mom never met her Orion.

My hand tugs on one of the many wooden slats that hold the bed together.

Orion pulls out one of the slats.

Orion: Got one.

Narrator: Orion takes a screw out for the metal bed frame.

The camera pans and focuses on my hands unscrewing the other side.

Jordan: Orion, thank you so much for helping.

Orion: Of course!

Jordan: I'm really really grateful.

Orion: I'm actually super glad I got to help.

Jordan: Oh good.

Orion: Umm...cuz I, y'know, think about you and...worry about you and...

Narrator: The camera pans up to Orion.

Orion: And want you to do well, and I'm...I'm not nervous at all for your surgery because I know it's gonna go fine.

Jordan: Yeah.

Orion: I just like, y'know...want you to be comfortable.

Narrator: Both of us look down.

Jordan: Yeah...

Orion: And it's good to see you.



Jordan: Yeah, it's good to see you, too.

Narrator: I look up at him.

I hold a screwdriver. My arm covers the frame, as I reach for one of the wooden slats.

There are screws on the floor. A beam of the bed frame wobbles.

Orion: Where's that bag? We should collect these before they get lost.

Jordan: Oh yeah.

Narrator: Orion collects the screws in his hand. The camera follows him. I'm out of focus but in the frame. His shoulder is in focus.

His face comes into focus, as he leaves the frame. My back is now to the camera.

In a new apartment, Orion, my friend Tom, and I reassemble the bed.

Behind the bed is a large shelf filled with books.

Tom uses a power tool to attach one of the bed supports. Orion bends down, and the drill lights up.

Orion and I turn the bed frame around, as Tom moves a sheet off the floor.

Jordan: It really doesn't seem that big when it's in this room.

Narrator: We set the mattress on the frame.

These shots are static. The camera doesn't move like it did in the previous shots.

Orion: Ooo.

Jordan: Nice.

Narrator: Orion and I hug. Our bodies are in the frame, but not our faces.

Orion: Let me know if you need anything else.

Jordan: I will.

Orion: And no stress for, y'know, while your mom is here.

Jordan: No, I want you to be able to come.

Narrator: I sit in my friends' dining room, watching an open heart surgery on YouTube.

My back and the captions block part of the computer screen.

My friend Lizzie tried to help me get access to filming my care in the hospital.

The media department was hard to reach.

After a few weeks of trying, they told us we had to fill out a questionnaire.

It asked questions like: how will the hospital be represented?

We consulted with various contacts Lizzie had who were familiar with this process.

They said I should stress that I'm a millennial and that recording things on my phone is part of how I process my reality.

We waited several more weeks. Lizzie followed up with the hospital.

She wrote emails and made calls.

The hospital denied us access

They said we would have needed a 2-5 million dollar insurance policy.

Pink gloved hands reach into my mouth holding a pair of dental instruments. A light strobes over my face like Venetian blinds.

This work of facilitating access is similar to the work my sister Ashley did so that my mom and I would be able to eat and get around after the surgery.

A dentist looks into my mouth wearing magnifying glasses on top of glasses.

The camera pans back down to my mouth.

Ashley set up a GoFundMe, and we raised \$2,745. This money does not include the cost of friends' homes where I stayed rent-free, meals that were made or delivered, care packages, and other donations.

I don't have footage of most of this.

I can't show it to you, but it's in anything you might see.

The screen is black. Only the captions are on the screen.

The next shot begins as my mom sees me, picking her up from the airport.

Jordan: You didn't recognize me?!

Mom: Oh my gosh, I didn't recognize you!

Jordan: How?!

(Mom laughs)

Narrator: The camera pans down to the floor as we hug.

Jordan: Hi! Oh...welcome!

Mom: Oh my goodness!

Jordan: Oh, I'm so happy to see you!

Narrator: I hold my mom's hand on top of my leg. Her watch is on her wrist.

[cab driver speaking on the phone]

Narrator: A view across an inlet of water. A train enters the frame. Snow is scattered among marsh grass.

[plane passing overhead; distant talking]

[bus passing]

Narrator: My mom turns from the view to look at the camera.

Mom: Ohooohoo.

Narrator: She smiles and looks down trying not to look at the camera.

She turns a grimace into a smile.

Mom: I think by week 3 we will be able to walk down here.

[Mom clicks tongue]

Jordan: That's great.

Deborah: You may have to pull me back up the hill.

[both laugh]

Deborah: I don't know if you can pull me back up the hill, but you'll probably make it to the top of the hill before I do.

[Mom laughs]

Narrator: A still photo of my mom and my aunt Angelique each looking at their phones.

My sister Ashley took this photo.

She and Angelique arrived the day before my surgery.

Ashley also filmed the next shot. The camera zooms in, as my mom speaks.

Ashley breathes behind the camera.

Mom: Just as Jesus said on the cross, y'know, "Let this cup pass from me." [voice breaks] And I know we can't, and I know we have to go through it. And I love you so. And, as your mother, if I could take it and have me do it, instead of you, I would *gladly* be the person to be undergoing the surgery tomorrow.

But my *faith* tells me that you're going to be okay. My *tears* are just because I don't want you to have to go through it.

Ashley: You'd prefer not to have this discussion?

[TV commercial playing [singing]: *What a wonderful world...*]

Narrator: A hospital waiting room. The camera zooms, as I stand at a desk. A receptionist puts down the phone. I flip through papers.

The waiting room is sparsely populated. There's a red dress near the wall.

A still photo of me on a stretcher wearing a hospital gown. I no longer have a beard. I'm holding a phone to my ear.

[wheels of stretcher rolling]

The lower half of my body is beneath blankets as I'm wheeled down a long hallway.

Access not only refers to permission to make a documentary in a given space but also to the ability to enter that space or experience a film

The camera attempts to correct for the light.

The fluorescent bulbs appear to flicker

In the 14th century, the word “access” meant a sudden illness or attack.

Access described a threat, a contagious or invasive force.

Then it described its means of entry or breach.

A hospital worker crosses the hall. The stretcher turns to the elevator.

[elevator beeps; elevator rings]

The elevator door opens; a worker walks out.

Nurse: Jordan, you can't do that.

Narrator: A technician cleans medical equipment, framed by a doorway.

In the foreground, my heart beats under a blanket, underscoring my position as the looker.



Access now refers to the ability to enter or touch.

There's a shift in perspective but not necessarily in dynamic.

In being held to account for their inaccessibility, institutions have not made all their doors easy to open nor turned their stairs into ramps.

Many assess the need for access in terms of liability.

The liability is smallest when the opening can be managed, by including it within the institution structure.

Access is almost always a confrontation with a structure that is closed in some way that might be opened.

The screen is black.

I think about what I would like to show you but don't have the footage or don't have the time.

I think about how inaccessible thoughts and feelings can be. How deep inside we go when we don't know where to go.

And at the same time what is accessible through touch.

I gave the hospital permission to go inside my body, even though they wouldn't give me permission to film it happened after.

I did anyway or, rather, many different people did: my mom, Angelique, my classmates my friends and one of my nurses.

My friends made a care calendar. I had visitors almost every day.

And my mom was there for a whole month.

Much like attempting to enumerate acts of care, this attempt at access leaves out as much as it lets in.

The descriptions are partial and insufficient; the captions show the smallest part.

A film could just as easily have been a list of credits.

### **Camera**

Jay Chieh-Chun Lee

Jason Hirata

Jordan Lord

Ashley Schlafly

### **Featuring**

Jordan Lord

Constantina Zavitsanos (voice)

Johanna Hedva (voice)

Orion Jenkins

Tom Ackers

Deborah Lord  
Angelique White

**Produced by**  
Lizzie Warren

**Written and directed by**  
Jordan Lord

**Voiceover recorded at**  
Grand Street Recording by  
Jake Lummus

## *I Can Hear My Mother's Voice*

### Transcript

**Mom:** The screen is dark, and there's a sofa with a puppy laying on it.

The screen is dark again. There's nothing in the frame at all. Total darkness.

And there's a flash, and the room is dark, and then it goes to a beautiful lake with water and sparkling, shimmering light that's reflecting off of the lake.

The reflection is—it's this beautiful, bright, starlike vision that's dancing across the blue water. It's like stars sparkling through it. Like they're dancing on the water. Oh, wow. That's beautiful. That's really beautiful. [Voice Breaks] That really is pretty. Mmm I like it.

Oh, there you go, there's one of my favorites. You and the dog running. There you go left. And there you go right. Look at him. Mm. He's a frisky little guy. There he goes. Oh my goodness, I love that.

And it's just so striking because it's a solitary look and the wind is blowing the water.

And then there's a shot of my husband's sink that is filled with prescription bottles. Bottles of every size and shape.

And now he's peeling potatoes. There's a closeup of a potato. A potato that he has cut a huge gouge of potato out when he was trying to just cut the peeling off.

He is a older man with graying temples and he's bald and with glasses. And when I look at shots of him, it's the man I married 42 years ago. And the camera's going up and down because my hands are tired from holding it on the back of that chair. 'Cause he does like to talk. He loves the camera.

It's three women that favor each other. You can tell they're sisters. They're singing. They have on beautiful jewelry that sparkles, sitting. Two of the sisters dress alike all the time. They both have on leopard and they probably did not coordinate that. Two of them are blonde and one of them has put no color in her hair, and so she is now totally gray against a beautiful pink suit that she has on.

Aunt Marilyn's forgot the words. I don't even have to hear it and I know she forgot the words. Mama... Mama's trying to mouth the words to Aunt Marilyn's ear.

You know what's so weird, I can't hear a word, but I can see what they're saying. They're enunciating their words so well you can read it in their lips. Huh. [Voice Breaks] My mother's voice rings in my ears. I can still hear her. Even though it's on silent. I could harmonize with her right now.

Mm. I can't believe I can hear her singing. I wonder if I'll still be able to hear her.

**Three women singing:** ♪ In the valley ♪ ♪ In the valley ♪ ♪ He restoreth ♪ ♪ My soul ♪

## *Shared Resources (Partial View)*

### Transcript

- [Jordan] My dad, mom, and I sit in my parents' dimly lit living room. The blinds of the windows are closed, showing only gridded patterns of blue light. A lamp is in the center of the frame that casts the rest of the image in a gold hue, lighting a curtain behind it. My parents sit in brown leather recliners. I sit on the floor next to my mom at the far edge of the frame, almost not visible at times. My dad's hands rest on his belly. My mom fidgets with her right hand. On the table between my parents, a pair of headphones and a recorder are visible. On the screen, what's being said appears in a yellow open caption on top of a black bar. Throughout the film, yellow text designates someone speaking off-camera, white text designates someone speaking on-camera. The ticking sound you may be hearing in the background is the sound of my mechanical heart valve beating too close to the microphone that's making this recording.

Dad: Well, I felt very weak. Very vulnerable through most of the footage that you did, and I didn't just dislike it, I loathe it. Hated it. Despised it.

Jordan: You loathe it because it shows you as weak?

Dad: Yes.

Mom: Even when it's showing you after you've been from the hospital?

Dad: Yes.

Mom: But that's, that is what you were.

Dad: People don't know about, I don't want them to say, well, Albert Lord, you know, was this sick, you know, weak.

Mom: But you were weak at that moment.

Dad: I don't care, but that's all the moment they're seeing of my life.

Mom: Right, but that's--

Jordan: And that's, I mean--

Dad: I hated it.

Jordan: That's the point of this commentary.



Dad: You wanted a reaction, that's my reaction.

Jordan: I understand that's your reaction.

Mom: Oh, this is you and I decorating our front door for my favorite holiday. Alrighty. I decided to do the mailbox. Isn't that pretty? I just have to put some ribbon on it. We are, you're putting lights on trees, and I'm putting lights on beautiful, evergreen garland.

Jordan: A placid lake appears amid green grass. The branches of a tree in the foreground. Across the lake are an assortment of one story houses, whose roofs are made up of wide triangles. In the following image, orange clay is visible beneath the water. Back to the lake's surface, which reflects the blue gray sky and ripples gently.

[TV plays]

Mom: I'm sitting at a table. I did not know that the video camera is on, and I don't really know what I'm doing. I'm just sitting at a table. And I obviously have not dressed for the day, except, 'cause my hair is not done, its all a mess.

Jordan: A chair rests against the table where my mom sits, obscuring part of her face. She is a white woman with blonde hair. On one edge of the frame is a doorway, on the other, a portable microphone is visible.

Mom: It's a painting that sits over our television of a beautiful tree with a lake behind it.

Jordan: The painting is reflected inside a mirror. Their gold-colored frames interlock.

Mom: Pictures of my children. My favorite picture of our daughter. My son and his graduation from Columbia. A beautiful shot of greenery with a rainstorm. Rain is just pouring. There's a for sale sign. This is the house next door to us with a car coming down the street, pulling into the house across the street from us with the owner running to his front door.

Jordan: The neighbor runs inside a one-story house with a two-car garage.

Mom: Albert is watching the news and he's standing to watch the news.

Jordan: My dad's back is to the camera. He has one hand on his hip. John Bolton is speaking on Fox News. My dad is a bald white man with graying hair. He is wearing a lavender polo shirt.

Dad: I did not want to file bankrupt. It was very difficult because of what I did for a living, to file bankruptcy, it's an acknowledgement of failure. Acknowledgement of failure.

Jordan: For over 30 years, my dad worked as a debt collector. After we lost our house in Hurricane Katrina, my parents accrued a tremendous amount of debt.

Mom: I'm glad it's over.

Jordan: My mom turns her back to her reflection in the bathroom mirror, brushing her hair with one hand, while holding up a handheld mirror with the other.

Mom: It was very painful to watch your dad, as strong a man as he is, have to come to the realization that, you know something that he had always done, you know, he was going to have to face those same obstacles. Because he'd dealt with it with his customers but not had to deal with it for himself. It was very, very daunting to watch him go through that process and not be able to do anything

about it. Not be able to help him. You know, 'cause it was something he had to reason out himself.

Jordan: Sure.

Mom: The screen is a reflection. Oh, it's the house across the lake. Wow, this is you from the exterior of the house before you turned your bedroom over to Mimi. We were getting it ready.

Jordan: It's nighttime. I'm shown seated behind a glass door that's slightly hazy. I stare at the camera, sitting in front of a dark red wall.

Four years before Katrina, my dad promised me that if I got into an Ivy League school, he would figure out a way to pay for it.

Mom: There's your dad. He's sleeping. His back hurts, so he sleeps in the recliner when he can't sleep in the bed.

Jordan: My dad is barely lit by the TV. His mouth is open. The camera zooms in on his face.

Despite losing our house and everything he had saved in the storm, when I got into Columbia, my dad still kept his promise. He liquidated his retirement to pay for me to go.

Mom: I'm sweeping out the garage. Sweeping, trying to get all the dust out because it gets tracked into the house so badly.

Jordan: My mom walks off-camera. There are Christmas decorations stacked on top of shelves. She walks back into the frame, briefly looking at the camera before going back to sweeping. After my dad lost his job, my mom told me that I owe it to her and my dad to be successful.

Dad: I'm in the chair too much. I do have a life other than just sitting in the recliner. Your mother has life other than just cleaning the house. That's not my life.

Jordan: I understand that's not your life.

Dad: Well, people that'd watch that don't know me. They're gonna think, "That's a lazy piece of garbage over there."

Jordan: Let's talk about it.

Dad: "All he does is lay in the chair, while his wife's out working, doing housework."

Jordan: A reddish-pink frame fills the screen, pulsing from dark to bright and back again. This footage was shot with my finger over the lens of my camera. Some things are too close to be shown.

Mom: I didn't do any housework except fold clothes!

Dad: The whole beginning you were doing housework.

Mom: Okay.

Dad: Think about the film, okay?

Jordan: We can put this voiceover of your reaction over the footage so that it's not just what people are seeing.

I'm shown again seated on the floor next to my mom, who sits next to my dad in a recliner in their living room. I adjust my posture as I look at my dad.

Dad: The voiceover will not overdo the visual part of it.

Jordan: It will--

Dad: Humans are visual. Humans are visual.

Mom: Okay, but by them listening to what you're saying, it's going to, it's going to show that that isn't how you are in an everyday life. That was an excerpt of your life.

Jordan: A pink gradient fills the screen again.

There's a lot I want to show you that I can't, because of the risks involved.

My dad calls what he used to do as a debt collector risk management.

A good lender knows how to defer the risk of a loan onto the borrower. The spreadsheet that represents a debt only shows the borrower's half, not the fact that the lender owes the borrower their livelihood.

Documentary filmmakers also manage risk, generally deferring the risk of making a film onto those who appear in it. Before the film is ever made, the people on camera are asked to release the filmmaker from liability over the risk of making the film.

But risk covers over debt, framing the shared bond between multiple parties as a potential loss that one of them must eventually bear sole responsibility for. My family and I do not agree on everything shown here. My parents do not share my take on debt. But whatever debt we're in, whatever risks, we're in together.

The title of the film appears onscreen: Shared Resources.

Jordan: My mom passes through the frame before exiting it. An array of porcelain Christmas decorations, including a teapot shaped like Santa Claus, set on a wood countertop beneath framed photos and porcelain representations of houses in New Orleans.

Mom: You realize we'll be in our house ten years on December the 23rd.

Jordan: Mm.

Mom: Ten years.

(Amy Grant, "Grown-Up Christmas List" plays)

♪ Human soul ♪

♪ No more lives torn apart ♪

[Mom sings along]



Jordan: My mom straightens a long piece of ribbon hanging next to the kitchen window. There's a wreath filled with pieces of fruit that are encrusted in glitter.

Mom: There's a beautiful lamp, showing my Christmas decorations, with a Santa. We have a new grandson, so we're bringing in Santa.

Jordan: Our small fluffy dog Max looks at someone offscreen and starts to move away.

Mom: Get out of my face.

Jordan: He skitters behind the kitchen table, as my mom enters with a mop and hurries into her bedroom. Max goes to look at what she's doing. He walks away with his head lowered, as my mom mops in the background.

My dad stands in the foyer looking out the window and walks slowly out of the frame, looking at the floor. On the wood counter, the Christmas decorations have been set up with even more Santa Clauses.

Mom: The television is showing the Macy's Day Parade, and the camera's moving across the room and comes to

me with greenery that I have put around the doorway that I'm washing because the dog has peed on it, and so I'm washing it. I've put it back in place, making sure that it's laying correctly, getting the towel and the water up off the floor.

Jordan: Mom, do you want me to get on the floor and do that?

Mom: No, I got it.

Jordan: You shouldn't be on your knees.

Mom: No, it's all right. Thank you. Now, we have family coming in because its Thanksgiving.

Angelique: Hello!

Mom: Happy thanksgiving!

Mom: We're letting them in. We're hugging each other. We're big huggers.

Angelique: That's the ham.

Mom: HOT!

Jordan: My family sits in our dining room around a circular table. In the background is an ornate framed picture of a gold-colored chair flanked on either side by gold and white Christmas trees wrapped in ribbon and displayed on pedestals.

Angelique: You gonna live?

Darren: I'm waiting to see.

Mom: Yeah, but anyway, yes--

Darren: Tune in tomorrow.

Mom: You're right, I'm not going to stay--

Hannah: If he doesn't die from, you know, accidentally choking, he could still go get hit by a car and...  
dismemberment.

Darren: Yeah, drag me--

Angelique: Dismemberment!

Darren: Yeah, throw me under.

Angelique: Hannah says the other day, she says "Mom," she says, "If dad lost all of his limbs and lived for a little bit and then died"--

Hannah: By accident!

Angelique: By accident, would we get--

Mimi: Hannah!

Angelique: Would we get double indemnity on both policies?

Mom: You're horrible! That's horrible!

Hannah: I was like, this is an important question we need to ask.

Angelique: So we did!

Mimi: Y'all have trained this girl up to be so sarcastic!

Mom: Oh my gosh, that's terrible!

Angelique: We did.

Dad: So is she training to be a nurse or lawyer?

Mom: Wow! That's terrible!

Hannah: It's great.

Angelique: He said that we couldn't recoup double indemnity on both, so I was like, "Okay, then, accidental death is fine."

Mom: That's terrible, y'all. If something happened to him, y'all would be going, "Oh my God, we had that conversation."

Darren: It'll be fine.

Angelique: Mom's asked me to put freakin' pink glitter in her ashes when she dies.

Mom: I know!

Mimi: Put what?

Hannah: So she can sparkle--

Angelique: I wanna sparkle into, into eternity. I want hot pink glitter in my ashes.

Mimi: Honey, trust me, you won't sparkle into eternity, you'll just go!

Angelique: Well, my ashes will be sparkling.

Hannah: I'll put black in....

Jordan: As the scene continues, I'm sitting with my hand crossed between my legs. I'm sitting next to my cousin, Hannah, who has red hair and wears sunglasses on top of her head. She's sitting next to her dad, Darren. He's eating. Next to him is my aunt, Angelique, who sits at the center of the frame. She has red hair and is holding one finger over her lips. She looks across the table at my Mimi, who shakes her head. Mimi has short blonde hair and is wearing a denim jacket. My mom turns to Angelique and starts to speak before being interrupted. Her mouth hangs open as she rubs her hands and looks back to Mimi. My dad sits between my mom and Mimi. His hands are folded, resting against his mouth. He has a distant look. Everyone seated at the table is white.

Mom: Jackie's mother was 10,000, but it was because they rented the church.

Angelique: Ah. What's the point of that?

Mom: Because they had so many people. I mean they had--

Darren: Well, see the other thing they'll try to talk you into though is casket.

Mom: Yeah, they rented the casket. They had to pay \$1000 to rent the casket because they brought her, they--

Angelique: So they did a funeral and then they had her cremated afterwards?

Mom: Correct.

Angelique: Oh, well that's fine.

Darren: Then they had to pay for embalming.

Mom: Right, right.

Darren: And all that, nuh-uh. Stick me in the oven.

Mimi: And you have to embalm them?

Darren: God no!

Darren: But you're not gonna have a viewing.

Angelique: Say again?

Mimi: I asked if they have to embalm you, if you--

Darren: If you're gonna have a viewing.

Angelique: Not if you're going straight to cremation. If you're gonna have a viewing, you have to be embalmed.

Mom: Yeah.

Mimi: Whoa.

Mom: I've been to, Charyl--

Mimi: I just can't bring myself to think about my body being burned. I can't.

Mom: Charyl's mother--



Mimi: I think that is one of the most horrible, horrendous things to do.

Darren: After you're dead, you're not gonna care.

Mimi: I don't care, Darren.

Mom: Your spirit's not there, Mama.

Mimi: Honey, I know that! But it just, oh God, that makes me cringe! And I know that God said that "Every body will be resurrected. Even the sea will give up the dead." But I cannot tell y'all that it does not bother me. Because He's gonna, He will resurrect the dead bodies from the graves. But to, I mean, I mean, cremation, I mean--

Darren: He also says you'll have a new body.

Mimi: I know He does, but He, the body that we have will be, Paul says that, it's clear. We'll be resurrected.

Darren: Well there's gonna be a whole bunch of rotted back the dirt people, then.

Mimi: Well, there will be! But he, you know they say, the graves will burst open. That's what happened when Jesus was crucified.

Jordan: But Mimi, bodies deteriorate, so I mean ancient bodies, there wouldn't be anything left in the same way.

Mimi: I know that, honey.

Darren: Whether it's ash or whether it's dirt, it's still gonna have to be put back together.

Mimi: Well, anyway.

Angelique: My question is, if you have your ashes spread over a large area, does your leg get resurrected, and then starts hopping around looking for the other one, and then they get put together and then it hops around 'til it finds your torso?

Darren: Hey, you remember, hey, like *The Iron Giant*, where all the pieces are going di-di-di-di trying to find one another.

Mimi: Trying to find one another!

Angelique: Is that how it works or?

Mom: Albert is gonna be spread all over the Smokies, so.

Dad: It's what I want.

Angelique: Who's gonna bring him up there?

Dad: You are!

Angelique: Not to Chimney Tops I'm not!

Dad: Yeah, you are! You and Darren!

Angelique: I don't think so!

Mom: Yeah, well Angelique said, just her luck, you would--

Dad: I want you to pour me down the chimney.

Mom: A big wind would blow.

Angelique: Yeah, yeah, a big wind would blow right when we got ready to pour your ashes out--

Darren: You leave it up to--

Angelique: And then you'd be right in our face.

Darren: You leave it up to, you leave it up to me, I'll toss you out the window going across Cumberland Gap.

Angelique: "Albert! Get ready!"

Darren: "Love you, buddy!"

Mom: This is my sister and I having a very select moment by ourselves, sitting at the dining room table. I am chewing a piece of ice, because I am an ice chewer. Got my hands in front of my face, because my sister doesn't like chewing ice.

Christian: Jesus Christ, dad!

Angelique: This little girl comes and they--  
(Another conversation continues in background)

Angelique: They were packed! Deborah, she price checked that Santa, and they just assigned a price to it. They sold me that Santa for \$20.

Mom: Wow!

Angelique: It's bigger than the one you bought. He's got porcelain face, porcelain hands.

Mom: Wowwww!

Angelique: And they sold it to me for \$20.

Mom: Was he the one with the big long coat on?

Angelique: Yes.

Mom: Oh, you dog!

Angelique: The burlap coat with the fur. Well, with the like sheep's, the sheep's--

Mom: Like Saint Nicholas instead of Santa Claus.

Angelique: Yeah, yeah. 'Cause it had no tag on it at all. And I told Darren when I first got home, I said, "I feel so guilty".

Mom: Yeah.

Angelique: I feel...because I know this should cost more than this. And he said, "it's not your," he said "you didn't take the tag off, its not your, it's their problem!"

Jordan: My mom, Angelique, and Mimi sit next to each other on the living room sofa. My mom talks to Darren who is off-camera, and Angelique and Mimi have their own conversation. A very large photo of my nephew Finn hangs on the wall behind them, his face as large as everyone else in the frame.

Mom: I had, I got--

Mimi: He's gotta learn.

Mom: I got a message from--  
(Another conversation takes place in background)

Mom: Or a devotion from...Rick Renner, and it was about...I really took, I really got excited when I read it because it was talking about how to handle money—riches—rich people handling their money.

Darren: Right.

Mom: And you know, it was talking about in Timothy, when Timothy started the Church of Ephesus, when Paul left him, and you know, they imprisoned Paul, and he was writing to Timothy. And he was telling Timothy, you know, Timothy, you've taken on this huge church, you know, and you've got some rich people, but you have got to charge those rich people and let them know that they cannot lord their money over people, you know, they can't do this. And you know as I read, it was like...and he went on to explain, you know, the attitude that you should have when you have money and so I said, Lord, I said, I could do this!

Darren: Oh yeah!

Mom: I could have this attitude, Lord!

Darren: Give me the opportunity to show you!

Mom: That's it, I told him. I said, "Lord, I could do this." I said, "I could have the humility. I could meet the needs of the people that I see that have needs. I could do this, Lord." I could send the money to people like Rick Renner, if that's who he's charged me to send it to, or people on the street, like, you know, Mother has stopped and given, you know, people money. "I could do that, Lord", you know? "Just give me the opportunity!"

Jordan: An image from earlier in the film replays of a painting of trees reflected in a mirror.

Dad: My first reaction was looking at the beginning in the house, I was thinking if I were a stranger, "Look how nice these people's house is, "look at the furnishings. They're bankrupt? Come on, what's wrong with this?"

Jordan: A lavender sofa is shown with decorative pillows in slight disarray. Behind the sofa, a painting of a lush private garden hangs on a magenta wall. The painting is flanked by two pedestals, which display porcelain figures of a furry animal, dressed as eighteenth century aristocrat.

Mom: This is the living room with furniture that has been given to us from other family members. Every piece of furniture in that room was given to us after Katrina. Every lamp, every figurine. Pillows. The sofa was my mother's, and she gave it to my sister, and my sister gave it to us. This is a reflection of a print of an antebellum home in the mirror from the foyer.

Dad: We listed *everything* on our bankruptcy. Every piece of income, every piece of debt.



Jordan: The camera has panned from the print to the corner of a gold curtain.

My dad, mom, and I are shown again sitting in the living room, the same setup as the first scene.

Dad: And after filing, after the 341, after the payments were established, we got more income through my VA benefits. We disclosed that; nobody found that. We voluntarily disclosed that because we wanted to be as fair as we could with the people that had faith in us and gave us credit.

Mom: This is a video of your Dad talking to you. Your dad is such a composed man. Look at him, just sitting there with his hands folded. He's not intimidated. His body language is so strong.

Jordan: My dad and I face each other. We appear to be the same height and are wearing different shades of blue shirts. I'm a white person with buzzed hair and a beard. My dad wears glasses. There's a reflection of my dad's face in the window behind us. My eyebrows are slightly furrowed.

Dad: You know, I was proud of what I did in collections, you know why? I was in a very unique position to help people. You know, I was their last resort many times.

I can't tell you how many times people sent letters to the bank, cards to the bank, *thanking* either the chairman or the president, the way that they were treated by my department. That's important, and I'll say it again, I said it earlier today. My philosophy is if I could pick you up when you're down, rather than kick you in the teeth when you're down, that'd build a loyalty that's still there at my former employer long now that I'm retired.

For years, they won't remember my name. They won't remember my staff's name, but what they will remember is that that financial institution helped them when they needed it the most.

That's what I was saying about the predatory practices of some of the creditors that I had out there. And for those creditors I had, I have, I don't feel any obligation to them. I really don't.

But I can tell you, with my hand before God—before I die—anyone that worked with me, will get paid. I don't

have to pay them but I will, 'cause I feel its my moral obligation to do that.

Mom: There's your dad. Look at that little wisp of hair on the back of his neck. He needs a haircut. And I'm counting out my coin. I try to save coin in the case I run out of money at the end of the month, so I am counting coins and putting it in envelopes.

Jordan: My dad walks toward a bank wearing a bright pink polo and a white baseball cap. The bank's facade looks like it's made of gray concrete. A security camera hangs on its exterior. Far from the camera, a black woman wearing a bucket hat and shorts walks toward the entrance, and a black man wearing a red T-shirt holds the door open for her, as he goes into the bank, and a white man wearing a baseball cap exits.

Mom: Yeah, I've wanted him to change banks, so they don't know our business.

Jordan: The door closes behind my dad as he enters the building. This footage was shot at the bank that fired him. He still banks there.

Mom: Here's your dad 'cause he also saves coin, so that if he runs short by the end of the month, he has a little bit of extra cash. And he is putting it in one of the coin machines at the bank.

Jordan: My dad dumps the rest of his coins into the machine. The camera zooms out from a closeup of his hand pushing in the coins, showing a sign taped to the machine that says "You must have an account in good standing to use the coin machine." The fur on the microphone's windscreen becomes visible at the top right corner of the frame. My dad looks down at the slot, where he continues to push in more coins.

Rather than deciding how much they owe, the bankruptcy decides how much of my parents income they are allowed to keep. Any money above that amount is deemed disposable and is absorbed into their monthly payments. This includes my dad's disability benefits for chronic illnesses caused by Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam, my mom's settlement after she was hit by a car on the interstate. If either of my parents went back to work since my mom retired, and my dad was forced into retirement, their entire salaries would go directly to their creditors, and the court's trustee, who keeps 18% of whatever my parents pay on their debts.

Dad: It may sound silly to some people--we tried to be as honorable as we could.

Jordan: But the thing with the VA benefits--

Dad: In fact we're paying twice what we had to pay in the bankruptcy. We've already spent \$46,000, and we'll be spending a whole lot more thousand before it's over, trying to do the right thing.

Jordan: My dad, mom, and I are shown again, talking in the living room. I think it's unfair that you have to pay your Veteran's benefits that are for a disability that was caused by you being exposed to a chemical that you should never have been exposed to during the war. You don't think that's unfair?

Mom: Yes, we do think it's unfair.

Jordan: Well, I'm asking Dad!

Dad: No.

Jordan: You don't think so?

Mom: I do.

Dad: No.

Jordan: You think you should have to pay them the disability benefits?

Dad: No. I think we should have to pay what we should have to pay.

Jordan: A nurse inserts an IV line into my dad's arm.

Nurse: Okay, little stick.

Jordan: She has brown skin. Only her arm and part of her torso are shown.

Nurse: Feels okay?

Dad: Mm-hmm.

Jordan: My dad's chin rests inside a machine that produces a computerized image of the inside of his eye.

Nurse: Okay good, stay just like that.

Jordan: As the nurse moves the machine, an image on the computer behind him corresponds to the movements.

Nurse: Okay, stay one more time.

Jordan: A series of veins begin to turn bright white on the screen.

Doctor: Chin all the way forward. Grab the little handlebars.

Jordan: The eye doctor moves my dad's hands onto a pair of handlebars on a machine that my dad rests his face into, as a light shines into his eye. The doctor is a white man with black hair. The doctor adjusts a piece of the machine around my dad's eye. The light in the room switches off, singling out a circular light shining into my dad's eye.

Doctor: I'm looking all the way in now, look down.

Jordan: My dad's disability benefits are assigned a monetary value, where certain body parts are more valuable than others based on a percentage of disablement. Because he's not totally blind, he gets 60% of the total benefits.

My dad is now in a reclined position, as the doctor uses a sharp instrument to lift material off of my dad's eyes. This is what the doctor told us.

Doctor: The retina is a light-sensitive membrane in the back of the eye, so if you go ahead and that retina starts—it's like film in a camera. If the film is wet, the picture's not gonna be good, okay, and that's your problem. But it's more than just diabetes itself. Diabetes basically trashes the blood vessels and causes them to leak. It's why you get fluid inside the retina, amongst other things. So obviously the thing that you have to do, okay, is to control the sugars as tight and right as possible. That's the biggest thing you can do. I can put a band-aid on your finger and try to fix this thing, but if you keep hitting your finger with a sledgehammer, not only are you gonna go blind, but you'll end up on dialysis with amputations and heart attacks and strokes and all this other stuff. So that's the, you know, and I know it sounds, you know, intuitive, but you know, the Government has spent millions of dollars on studies that bear this out—The better you take care of yourself, the better chance you're gonna to see.

Jordan: Western medicine treats the body not unlike a bank account. In banking, an account is created to hold



the debtor accountable for what they've borrowed. But the account generally fails to record who or what is responsible for the debt, the needs that produce the debt, or the circumstances that might make it impossible to get out of debt. Likewise, medicine generally emphasizes the patient's individual responsibility for their own well-being.

Mom: One, two, three.

Jordan: My sister Ashley and her husband Tom pose for a photo in front of my mom's Christmas decorations.

Mom: Color's gonna be off on the other ones, I didn't know the setting was off.

Tom: Fix that in Photoshop, you're good at that, or Jordan can.

Jordan: My mom shows my sister the photo on the camera. My mom smiles nervously over Ashley's shoulder.

Ashley: Oh my God. All the ones of us anyway as a family are horrendous.

Mom: There we go, here we go.

Mom: It's Finn putting a little Santa hat on. This is, he's about a year old. Almost a year old, and I'm putting the hat on his head. He doesn't wanna wear it. And he keeps pulling it off, yep, there it goes.

Jordan: I film my sister Ashley from below in a closeup, as she sits in a recliner. My hand is shaky as I hold the camera. She looks up emphatically. I pan up to her husband Tom, a tall white man wearing an argyle sweater, before panning back to Ashley. She's a white woman with blonde hair, wearing red lipstick.

Ashley: Yes, I mean, it's a better grocery store! Like I'm making the point to Mom that like, I think there is a reason why Mom and Dad, like when Mom cooks, that Mom cooks like 50% either flash frozen or canned goods. And I think it's because they, even if she wanted, you know with Dad's health issues, with his diabetes, with his everything...everything Dad's got going on, I mean, Dad, I think, would benefit from having a freshly prepared diet.

Jordan: I've turned the camera to our dad, who smirks sarcastically.

Ashley: I don't know why you're laughing!

Dad: 'Cause my diabetes is under control.

Ashley: Your diabetes is not—Dad, if your diabetes was under control, your blood sugar wouldn't be bouncing back and forth like a game of Pong.

Dad: It's not a game of Pong.

Ashley: Deborah Lord, is his diabetes under control?

Mom: No.

Dad: Yes.

Ashley: Exactly. Aren't you still bleeding behind your eye? Don't you still have to have shots in your eye?

Dad: Yes.

Ashley: Okay, then your diabetes is not under control.

Dad: Under control.

Ashley: And I know you don't like to talk about that, but that's just the case, and I am sorry, but we have a brand

new son that's only 10 months old, and I would like for him to be much older before you die!

Dad: I plan on that.

Ashley: You plan on what?

Dad: Him being older. I'm going for 11 months.

Ashley: You know, I don't know why you make jokes about stuff like that, I mean, it's not funny!

Dad: Okay, I'll go 12.

Ashley: I mean, Dad, last night--

Dad: First birthday.

(Tom laughs)

Ashley: Last night you were feeling so badly.

Dad: Thank you, Tom.

Ashley: Last night you were feeling so badly you went to bed!

Dad: It's my head! Nothing to do with diabetes.

Ashley: You're telling me your head is not exacerbated by your diabetes?

Dad: Unh-uh.

Tom: His head's been hurting him since the day you were born, that's what you told me.

Dad: Yeah, 33 years.

Mom: Not since the day—oh since the day she was born.

Dad: Yeah, her.

Ashley: Who did you think he was talking about?

Mom: It started the day she was born.

Dad: Now you know what my problem is. First nosebleed.

Mom: No, first nosebleed was in Disney World.

Dad: Right, right after she was born.

Jordan: I move the camera back to Ashley, who has an impatient smirk on her face.

Ashley: My point is that I think the stress you are under exacerbates your head.

Dad: I'm not under any stress.

Jordan: Ashley scrunches up her face and leans forward incredulously, and shoots a look at our dad. I cut to Tom.

Tom: The stress when he was working, I could see the stress.

Dad: Mr. Cool.

Ashley: Yeah, you're Mr. Cool.

Jordan: Tom has a serious look, looking back and forth from Ashley to my dad.

Tom: The job is stressful.

Dad: Go to Houston when I want.

Ashley: But you know, I mean, Dad, nothing is more stressful than money trouble.

Jordan: I move the camera back to Ashley.

Ashley: There's a reason why people in low income, like in low income neighborhoods have a shorter life expectancy than people in more affluent neighborhoods. There's a reason why Tom's family lives into their late nineties, because they don't ever have to worry about money. Ever. His aunt Eleanor who is a angry person is surviving and holding on out of sheer will because she has no, she literally has no health problems because she has never had to worry about money. Money stress kills you.

Jordan: I move the camera to my dad, whose neck and face muscles contract and release.

Whether bank or medical records or documentary stories, accounts don't just record the past or present, but are used to determine a person's future. From the account, other calculations will be made.

A person's story in a documentary is generally outlined and cut, before the story is over.

Likewise, insurance companies frame a person's life by certain risk factors that determine when and how they'll die, assigning their life value accordingly.

Under this logic, disability is a kind of debt, but one only recorded as an expense rather than a bond.

Ashley: It is scientifically proven that stress shortens your life, and nothing is more stressful than money.

Dad: To quote, to quote the president, move the camera back. To quote the president, it's a huge part of that, Ashley. Huge!

Ashley: I find nothing funny about Donald Trump being president.

Dad: I think it's huge.

Mom: This is Ashley exhausted on the sofa. The dog is exhausted.

Jordan: Ashley is asleep in the living room. Our dog Max is splayed on the green ottoman. Finn is asleep on a yellow blanket on the floor. A large picture of him hangs on the wall behind Ashley. There's a closeup of my mom's



Christmas tree filled with Santas and glittery ornaments. Below the tree are the tops of presents. Six Christmas stockings sewn with plush figures and the names of each person in my immediate family hang on the mantle.

Dad: The reason he's angry with Clinton, she challenged his last election.

Mom: I am in the kitchen cooking. I must be making vegetable soup because that's a can of potatoes. There's a box, a tomato sauce box in the foreground. I am definitely making soup!

Dad: It was the truth! Their own emails is what sunk her. She's a piece of trash.

Jordan: The camera starts to move down askew. The shot falls below my mom's head and then slowly starts to get lower and lower.

Dad: Nooo, no way!

(crashing as camera falls)

Mom: Oh my God, Jordan!

Dad: What?!

Mom: It's Christmas time. Presents are under the tree. I'm covered in a robe.

Jordan: So they were able to save his tooth?

Mom: Jordan comes into the frame. They can't get the permanent tooth until mid-January, but they were able to save it.

Jordan: So, what do they do now?

Mom: Coughing. Coughing, I covering my mouth.

Mom: It just has a temporary on it, and so he has to eat something soft. Can you turn that light out? And turn the, plug the lights in for the garland?

Ashley: It's gonna be okay.

Christian: Ashley, just--

Ashley: It's so scary, why did I buy this? It's so scary.

Mom: This is Ashley and Jordan and Christian playing Pie in Your Face.

Jordan: Just close, I think close your eyes, maybe that's better.

Christian: Just close your eyes.

Ashley: I feel like I'm gonna go get my shots again, when I was a kid.

Christian: Just close your eyes.

Jordan: Ashley puts her face into a face shaped hole and turns two knobs attached to a plastic lever that's blocked by a can of whipped cream.

Christian: That's two!

Ashley: I don't wanna do it anymore!

Christian: Two. You gotta do three more! Three. Oh God, she's gonna get pied!

Ashley: This is horrible!

Christian: Three. Four.

(lever releases)

Ashley: Can you give kisses to Hannah?

Jordan: In the background of the image in the kitchen, Ashley holds Finn and brings him to kiss our cousin Hannah and then me.

In the foreground in the living room, my dad closes his eyes.

Ashley: I'll see you in a couple of hours.

Jordan: Sitting in the recliner with a blanket draped over his torso and legs. It's difficult to see, but he's wearing a hospital bracelet.

My mom and Mimi are sitting at the kitchen table, which is decorated with pumpkins.

Ashley brings Finn into my parents' bedroom. Mimi gets up to leave the kitchen. My dad's head is slumped to one side. There's a glass of milk on the table next to him.

Hannah looks briefly at the camera; I do, too. Mimi glances at my dad on her way out of the living room. S

he briefly blocks the view of the rest of the room with her body as she leaves the room.

My mom looks away and and brushes her hair out of her face. She looks down with her mouth clenched. My back is to the camera as I look at her, and she looks up at me.

Mom: Oh, I didn't even know the camera was on.

Jordan: Oh.

Mom: Oh.

Dad: Worry about money didn't put me in the chair.  
Worrying about money didn't put me crazy.

Jordan: And I wanna tell you, I mean--

Dad: 'Cause by the time that was filmed, we were, we've never missed a payment, not one. In fact, I brought a payment in and asked them a question, the girl at the register said wow.

Mom: But Albert, the initial reaction.

Dad: They don't have people that pay that way.

Mom: The initial reaction when we were in the hospital was, I can't do this because we don't have, this is costing us money.

Jordan: In the same set up as the first scene, I look at my mom as she speaks emphatically to my dad. He maintains a stoic expression.

Mom: Is because a big hospital bill would be a big dent in our lifestyle at this stage, and the reason that you look weak is because you were weak. We didn't know, we did not, I mean, you seem to not realize how serious we were feeling about what happened to you. It was as though you had had a stroke, which they determined you did not. It was as though you were not gonna recover because you were out, you were talking crazy. You were, you know, loopy, loopy, and you were not on any medication.

Dad: But there's more to me than--

Mom: Yeah, of course there is, but at that stage--

Dad: They're not gonna know that.

Jordan: But dad, I do show you as more than just that.

Dad: They're not gonna know that.

Mom: I mean of course in the beginning of the film he shows you talking like, talking about--

Dad: Yeah, laying in the chair again.

Mom: No!

Mom: I'm on the phone red-faced with... I am exhausted. My hair is sticking to my head because I've been sweating. My makeup is almost all gone. I'm trying to get someone on the phone.

Mom: You know what, I wonder if they're closed today because it's Columbus Day?

Jordan: My mom looks up at me behind the camera, as I adjust the frame.

Mom: 'Cause it, that's a national holiday, isn't it?

Jordan: Yeah.

Mom: That's why she's not answering. It's a national holiday. I have to call tomorrow.

Jordan: Hot pink light fills the screen again. This is what's visible on the outside of the blood inside my finger.

When a body gets too close to a camera, it becomes a shutter over the image so that all you can see is that it blocks from view.

What follows is not shown. The shot of my finger covers it.

Mom: I'm sitting on the sofa watching him. Trying to stay calm.

Mom: Hey, babe. You need to drink some more of that milk, darling.

Dad: What milk?

Mom: The milk you asked me to get for you. You need to drink! You've been home almost three hours.



Ashley: Dad, we're gonna put you back in the hospital if you don't--

Mom: You haven't finished that glass of milk, and she didn't give you a full glass. She only gave you about three quarters of a glass. Can you please drink a little bit for me?

Dad: Sure.

Mom: All right, well grab it.

Dad: Sure.

Ashley: Dad, do you want us to grab it for you?

Jordan: Maybe he should drink some water?

Mom: Well, he just needs, I mean, he said, hydrate. I've tried to call the VA babe, and they're closed because it's Columbus Day.

Dad: Right.

Ashley: National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Mom: Yeah. So can you grab? You want water or you want the milk?

Dad: The milk.

Mom: Okay, well, it's right there by you.

Dad: I'm gonna get it.

Mom: Okay.

Ashley: I don't really feel like you're getting it.

Dad: Maybe that's 'cause--

Ashley: Watch, watch me. Follow me. Lift. Come on. Liiift.  
Thank you, that's very graceful. Match my grace here.  
Liiift.

Mom: Lift lift lift.

Ashley: Dad! Lift. Dad is just sitting with his eyes closed.

Mom: I hope he's not just putting it on.

Ashley: He's talking, but it's not, he's not moving his mouth much, so he's obviously not saying much. And I am, the camera's now on me, and I'm clearly responding to him, and I'm constantly looking at mom when I'm talking to him.

Dad just looks like he's gonna fall over, and Mom is looking annoyed slash incredulous with whatever it is that Dad's saying, and now she's looking at me as we're talking, so it's clear that she's also looking for that validation.

Mom: This is your Dad sitting in the chair. His eyes closed. He is offering—he's asking for help. You come into the frame. You take the blanket off of him. And now you are trying to help him stand up from the recliner. You're struggling because he has no ability to help himself at this particular moment. And you're still struggling. He's asking you to wait. He's trying to get himself together where he can actually get himself up. You reach back. You try to pull him.

Jordan: The image now shows what's described. I stand in front of my dad with my back to the camera. Only his arm and the side of his body is visible, as I try to help him stand up from the recliner. His face is covered by my

body. We stand up together. My mom sits on the sofa laughing.

Ashley (laughing): Jordan was trying to just like make him raise to stand.

Dad: We're going that way.

Mom: Okay, well he can go by himself.

Dad: You don't know that.

Mom: Yes.

Ashley: Follow him, follow him.

Jordan: The screen is covered again by my finger. The color turns almost gray at times.

Mom: You know all of this is being recorded so we have documentation.

Jordan: Ashley and my mom sit on the sofa with their feet on an ottoman. Both covered by blankets. My mom holds her phone. Ashley looks at Mimi, who speaks from offscreen.

Mimi: I couldn't hardly feel my feet.

Ashley: Mom, you okay?

Mom: Hmm?

Ashley: Are you okay?

Mom: Mhmm.

Mimi: He put so many shots in my feet, honey.

Ashley: Mom.

Mom: What?

Ashley: Are you really ok?

Mom: Yeah, fine. I'm okay.

Mimi: Yeah, but honey, they give you one—two shots is all they ever give you, and I had six!

Hannah: Did you still feel it after two shots?

Mimi: No, every time he'd pass me he'd give me another shot, the nurse was putting them in her—one of those tables, like they do.

Ashley: Mimi, why would you panic? What did you think was gonna happen?

Mimi: He passed by, give me a shot.

Jordan: My mom gets up from the sofa.

Ashley: Mom, where you goin? Deborah?

Mimi: She's checking on him.

Mom: Albert?

Mimi: There's something wrong with him, Ashley. I don't care what anybody says. I've observed him.

Mom: Why is the door locked?

Ashley (laughs): Why is the door locked?

Mimi: I've observed him. There's something wrong with him. There's lack of a blood flowing somehow.

Jordan: The screen now shows the dark red light through my finger.

Ashley: I know, so go take your insulin so we can watch it.

All right, so let's talk about what--

Dad: Give me a hand, Jordan.

Jordan: Okay.

Dad: Give me a hand.

Ashley: I had Tom convinced that he was frozen. He was going, "Okay, love you," I said, "Okay, love you". He said, "Okay, love you," I said "Tom, I love you". She goes, can you not hear me? "Baby, I love you!"

Dad: I love you!

Ashley: I said Tom, are you frozen? I'm frozen! I'm frozen! And so he started trying to move. He's like hello! And he's lifting him up.

Mom: Now we've got to watch it.

Jordan: Without the sound.

Mom: Without the sound, and we have to describe what we're seeing.

Dad: Be honest with you, I really don't wanna do that.

Jordan: Okay. So you don't have to.

Dad: No. That's how much I disliked what I saw.

Jordan: Okay.

Mom: Okay, well then I'll do it and I'll explain so that I can make sure that his opinion is--

Jordan: I mean, you've explained your opinion.

Mom: Okay, so you'll use this--

Dad: I already explained.

Jordan: I mean is there anything else you want to say, Dad, that will go in there?

Dad: No, not that I can think of, no.



Mom: I think that it's important, from my perspective, to be able to show how vulnerable I feel, I felt, and now I'm feeling less vulnerable.

Jordan: My dad's back is to the camera as he moves slowly into the kitchen. He's wearing pajamas. My mom has opened the refrigerator door in the background.

Mom: Because up until today, you have negated all of that.

Dad: I've forgotten that particular fall.

Jordan: My sister's also in the background in the kitchen. My dad's no longer in the frame. I run into the frame pushing a tiny shopping cart. Finn follows behind me wobbling and smiling.

Mom: You know when you have been so upset with me in the last year, when I have said please go over everything we owe. Please go over how you pay the bills.

Dad: Well we're not gonna owe much when we're done with the bankruptcy.

Mom: I know but, “please tell me what you pay and how you pay it,” and one of the reasons that I have had that--

Dad: And I have done that, have I not?

Mom: You have. Finally! You did.

Dad: I did it people.

Mom: You did, you sat down with me and you went over every detail, and told me when it was due and how you paid it, out of which check you paid it. What I would do if I lost that income, because if something happens to you, God forbid. I mean when this was filmed, I didn't know any of that.

Jordan: Finn has walked back into the frame. He trips.

Back to the first set up. My dad, mom, and I are shown in the living room.

I mean you are—I've said—you are, you do take care of me. You take care of our household. I mean those are things that I appreciate as my husband, is that you do take care of those things. But what I didn't know at that time was how am I gonna take care of you, because I didn't

know how to take care of you, because you've always taken care of me. And so now I'm feeling much—I go over that piece of paper. I go over that piece of paper at least once every two months.

Dad: I don't know why.

Mom: Well because I worry, just to make sure in my head I know what I'm doing if something happens, just to be prepared.

Dad: Life is simpler now than it used to be.

Mom: But I still do it. I do it because of what I went through on that video footage.

Ashley: So anyway, so I, I should be out of here by about 11, which should put me home around, I don't know, five or six. I, well no actually, I need to leave by 10, because of traffic. So, hopefully between four and five I'll be home.

Mom: Jordan, the way that you see me here. I can't imagine. There's so much stress on my face. I don't know. You've got a close up. I've got my mouth covered because I don't want anyone to see me crying, and you've got the frame right on my face. And my eyes are filled with tears,

and my lip is chewing on my phone because I'm trying not to cry. I, I mean, I don't know if you felt any pain when you zoomed in on my face, but the stress is all over me. I mean it's—I'm exhausted, I'm exhaling, and I'm praying. I'm whispering to myself. I mean this shot is, my breathing is so heavy. My chest going up and down. My eyes, flitting from picture to another.

Ashley: Dad, you need help?

Dad: Nope, I don't. Just trying to think of how many more bottles of water I should drink tonight.

(Mom sighs)

Ashley: Y'all, I'm exhausted. (Yawning) Let's all go to bed.

Dad: Do what?

(Ashley snickers)

Mom: You going to bed, babe?

Dad: I'm going to use the bathroom.

Mom: I was talking to Ashley.

Dad: I don't think she wants to stay up.  
(Dad burping)

Mom: If you need to go to bed honey, go to bed.

Dad: I think you ought to go to bed.

Ashley: Y'all, I'm not gonna see y'all.

Mom: Well. Going to bed is important, darling, you need some sleep.

Ashley (laughing): Going to bed is important.

Dad: Especially when you have a long trip tomorrow.

Mom: I'm trying. I'm smiling for, trying to fight back tears. Trying to, my face is, I mean it's telling the whole story. It's telling the story of the stress of how I'm so afraid. There's fear all over my face.

The recliner is going back and forth...because of the anticipation of what's going on in my home, with my husband that I love so...that I depend on so.

I truly am in a place where I've never been before.

You capture that, I mean you see it. I felt it, but you see it.

Ashley: Who was screaming?

Jordan: Everyone.

Dad: That felt good.

Ashley: We were screaming?

Jordan: You were talking very loudly.

Dad: What? What was loudly?

Mom: Nobody was being quiet.

Jordan Finn was screaming, but everybody else was talking very loudly.

Dad: When?

Jordan: So I did not get back to sleep last night.

Dad: Yeah, what's all that keeping me up noise?

K, here I go.

Jordan: Going to bed around seven, and then he saw me and I screamed by accident.

Ashley: Oh my God, you scared me so badly.

Jordan: I'm sorry. I hate that.

(loud farting)

(everyone laughing)

Jordan: That is, I mean, it's just a shot of you, but.

(laughing)

Mom: Yeah, I have realized that you captured all of this on video.

(Mom laughing loudly)

Jordan: Well he loves making fart jokes.

Mom: Oh my goodness, I am so embarrassed. I'm rocking back and forth just laughing. Rocking, rocking, just covering my face with my hands. Wiping my eyes because I am now crying.

Ashley: It was really...

(Mom laughing; Ashley sniffles)

Mom: Oh my stomach hurts.

(Mom on TV): Like they're dancing on the water.

Mom: This is our family watching proudly, your first installment in your video series.

- [Jordan] Finn walks up to the camera, sucking on a sippy cup. Finn looks into the camera, and puts his hand over the lens.

- [Mom] And then we pan to the beautiful lake, because the Lord has answered, and he does get better. Life is back to normal, I can look out and gaze on the beautiful lake and not be worried that he's not gonna recuperate, that he's gonna be his old self. That your dad is gonna be normal, back to normal. Thank you God. That is a



beautiful representation of our hope. The beautiful water, as you fade out from the beautiful trees that are glistening on the lake. The sky, the red sky. (Sniffles) And life is gonna be back.

Jordan: The camera lens is fogged, almost completely obscuring the view of the lake behind my parents house.

My dad makes a distinction between dreams and visions. He says a vision is a warning, a surety. In between visions, projections, and their interpretation is prophecy.

My dad poses for the camera, making a funny smile and showing one of his front teeth missing.

Debt is a kind of prophecy. My mother told me I owe it to her and my father to be successful.

My dad poses and smiles for the camera again, showing the replacement tooth. He moves out of the frame, and the camera moves down as he smiles as Finn who's off screen.

A prophetic organization runs from "I owe you" to "I will always love you", which continuously runs back to "I will always I owe you".

The light through my finger pulses over the lens from dark to bright red.

This circuit between "I and you" can't be closed because "I and you" are never and can't stay the same.

This difference can't be framed. It can only be missed. In missing it, it can only be felt.

A feeling that can't be denied.

Through each other.