

LIFE INCORPORATED

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

We are FLYING high over an endless forest of trees. There are no birds but if there were they'd be singing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There's an old joke -- How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Just one. But the bulb really has to wanna change.

We spot a small town in the distance and FLY TOWARDS it.

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

Now think about what you just did. Light bulbs can't actually "want" yet you attributed consciousness anyway, didn't you? You left reality behind to grasp greater meaning.

We see the town is actually a corporate campus surrounded by residential neighborhoods nestled in the middle of nowhere.

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

I'm going to ask you to do that again now. On a larger scale.

We ZOOM INTO the campus and its stone buildings. We begin to make out EMPLOYEES crisscrossing the manicured grounds.

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

You see, this isn't a regular corporate campus. And these employees? They're not here to design better mousetraps.

Continuing to ZOOM IN, we see that some of the employees are wearing suits, others lab coats, others casual attire.

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

They're here to design better mice. And better dolphins. Inside these buildings they create and revise the genetic code for all the mammals of the animal kingdom. You heard correctly -- their actual, original genetic code.

We FIND our hero, EBO TUCK (28) walking on a path between buildings. He's wearing a runner (messenger) uniform.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 You see, we're not in the real world anymore. We're somewhere else. Somewhere far away.

Ebo climbs the broad stone steps into an impressive building.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Welcome to the Design Labs of Evolution.

A NONDESCRIP T MAN secretly eyes Ebo as he passes.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Now, I know what you're thinking -- Suspending reality for a short joke was one thing, but doing it for an entire story? A mental adjustment like that is gonna be tough.

Ebo enters the building.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 You're right. But hey, nobody ever said change comes easy.

HOLD ON "Primates" etched above the entrance.

INT. PRIMATE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ebo holds his KEY CARD up to a reader at the security checkpoint. It BEEPS approvingly and he continues past into..

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

MANY EMPLOYEES scamper into and out of a half-dozen hallways marked with names like "Tarsiiformes" and "Lemuriformes."

Ebo looks around to get his bearings. He spots the hallway marked "Hominidae" and heads towards it.

INT. HOMININAE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ebo walks past the entrance to "Gorilla beringei"...

..past a POSTER showing a mastodon: "Mammut furlongi -- Coming Soon!"...

..past the entrance to "Pan paniscus"...

..and finds his door - Pan troglodytes. He pauses to consider abandoning the mission but gets up his nerve and heads in.

INT. CHIMPANZEE DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A sign reads "Chimpanzee Department". A female RECEPTIONIST (early 20s) sees Ebo's runner uniform.

RECEPTIONIST  
Someone called in a pickup this early?

EBO  
No, no, I'm not on the clock yet. I was hoping to talk to Mr. Jaster.

RECEPTIONIST  
(eyeing his runner uniform)  
Want to talk to the Head of the entire Hominids Division?  
(playing along)  
Name?

She picks up the phone and dials an extension.

EBO  
See, that's the thing. Don't call. I don't have an appointment--

RECEPTIONIST  
(into phone)  
Someone's here for him. A Mister...

Ebo knows this is useless but...

EBO  
Ebo. Ebo Tuck. Tell them I've been trying to contact him--

RECEPTIONIST  
Tuck... Okay.  
(hanging up)  
You don't have an appointment.

EBO  
Look, I really need to talk to him. I figured out a way to raise the enzyme levels in Chimpanzees.  
(off her blank stare)  
That'd be, like, a *huge* breakthrough in Simian biology-- You don't care, do you?

It's clear she doesn't. Ebo eyes the doorway to the offices..

RECEPTIONIST  
(knowing)  
Security'd be on you in 20 seconds.