

THE DREAM SURVEILLANCE ACT.

ACT ONE.

Scene 1.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE – BEDROOM (STAGE LEFT);

INT. DREAM-WORLD – THE BEACH (CENTER STAGE to STAGE RIGHT)

At STAGE LEFT lies a bed, inside an indoor bedroom. A square image over the wall represents a window to the outside, with a bright, full moon visible in the sky. The lights are blue in the bedroom, like outdoor moonlight. Here, Henry Norton is laying in bed, under the covers, fast asleep.

At CENTER STAGE exists an outdoor area. A backdrop here depicts the bright blue daytime sky; white clouds; the sandy beach; a skyline of buildings in the distance. Separating the outdoor place from the bedroom at STAGE LEFT is nothing but a partially-torn wall.

At STAGE RIGHT, over half a dozen people walk around at the beach, most talking on their cell phones. They continue to yell into their phones, all wrapped up in different conversations at once.

Photographic images are displayed to the audience.

1: A village in Italy. A long brick walking path, surrounded by tall buildings.

2: A big, empty swamp, of green and brown ground.

3: Brooklyn, New York: a ground-level sight of the streets where people walk.

4: An image of an outdoor baseball game.

5: Bright white stars in outer space.

All the lights across STAGE RIGHT and CENTER STAGE now FADE OUT.

Scene 2.

INT. HENRY'S HOUSE – BEDROOM

Now we are left with nothing but Henry lying in bed at STAGE LEFT. The blue light becomes white. He opens his eyes. He jolts, and shakes, as though somebody had just grabbed him. But, giving it a second look, there's nobody there.

He sighs, now fully awake. All the activity of his dreams has died down to nothing. He climbs out of bed, and starts to walk around the room. But he's wearing a metal hat on his head. He takes this metal hat off, setting it down on the bed.

Then he takes a small remote control from on top of his dresser.

HENRY: Now let's just see what I was just dreaming!

He presses a button on the remote. His big TV screen displays the images of his dreams. First: a still image of the beach.

Then: an image of the interior of the Italian village.

Then: the image of the swamp.

The image of the streets of Brooklyn.

The image of the outdoor baseball game.

The image of stars in space.

HENRY: . . . Jesus Christ. That was my dream?

He looks around, feeling awed. Then he looks back at the TV screen.

HENRY: I . . . halfway remember that now.

He nods his head. His wife, Jillian, enters at STAGE LEFT.

JILLIAN: Who are you talking to, babe?

HENRY: Uhh . . . myself, I guess.

(as he points toward the TV screen) Look. That was my dream last night.

JILLIAN: That was your dream? Outer space?

Henry nods his head, and aims the remote at the TV screen again to flip back through earlier dreams. The image of the baseball game returns.

HENRY: See, here? Baseball game. Yep! A baseball game. Who would have known that that's what I'd be dreaming about? Look. I dreamed about a baseball game!

The image changes to Brooklyn.

HENRY: Inner streets of Brooklyn. Or maybe it's the Bronx. I don't know. It's a place I've never lived; a life I've never had. Sort of interesting, huh? That this was my dream?

The image returns to the swamp.

HENRY: And, see. Now, where did I get *that* from?

JILLIAN: Ohhh, wow! There's so much detail in your dreams . . . in . . . in your mind's images. Do you see what I'm saying, now, about the minds-eye?

HENRY: Hmm?

JILLIAN: Your eyes are closed, there's nothing but black, but your minds-eye produces all these wonderful images.

The TV's image returns to the Italian village.

JILLIAN: Oh, honey, you dreamed up *this*? This is beautiful!

HENRY: I just can't believe it. I could have sworn I was reliving my childhood when I had this dream. Like I was really *there*, there. But I'm not. And I only remember this right now because I'm watching it again.

JILLIAN: Well, now you get to see what it's like to have your dreams on a TV screen. Isn't it just wonderful?

HENRY: Yeah, it's a real missing piece, all right. I'd otherwise not know about these dreams.

Henry uses the remote to turn the TV off, before he sets it down on the dresser. He exits the scene at STAGE LEFT.

HENRY: Makes me wonder what *you* dream about.

JILLIAN: I don't dream.

Scene 3.

INT. STUDIO BUILDING – TALK SHOW SET

At STAGE RIGHT, the lights FADE ON to reveal the set of a talk show. Henry is a guest on the show, while Trixie is the hostess. The name TRIXIE is hung up on the wall in giant letters behind them.

TRIXIE: And now we're back from that commercial break. It is my absolute delight to introduce to you Dr. Henry Norton – a man with a Ph. D and a dream-like claim to fame.
(*turning toward Henry*) So, Dr. Norton . . . mind if I call you Henry?

HENRY: Sure.

TRIXIE: All of us have dreams, including you, and myself, *that* camera-person, and generally every person here in the audience right now. But *you* don't just *have* dreams . . . you *record* them onto video! You own a dream-recording machine!

HENRY: Yes, that is true. I mean, how many of us, back in, ohhh, 4th grade, 5th grade, dreamed about this? How, if only there was some kind of machine that could *record* your dreams, like recording a TV show onto a tape, so that you could see your own dreams on a TV screen, and keep it on tape. Well, look, now we're coming close to the 2020's, and now this technology is coming to the light of day.

TRIXIE: You built this whole entire machine yourself.

HENRY: Well, no. That would be an extreme oversimplification, and a lie. There was a whole crew of men and women working on this machine, for years, many years. At least one decade. Technically, two.

TRIXIE: “Technically, two”? Then, what was your job?

HENRY: Making sure the red, the blue, and the green images all fused together into *one*, to make all the shades of color you see on the glass screen.

TRIXIE: Gotcha.

HENRY: You see, about 10 years ago, Dosan Laboratories perfected what they called the virtual dream-state. That is: you're sitting in a chair, your head's plugged into a helmet, you go unconscious, and your dream gets into the digital zone of virtual reality. They were able to record the virtual reality part onto video, 10 years ago. That, itself, had taken them a good decade to build. Then, they thought: why not go further? Why settle for recording just virtual reality? Why not record the video of a person's bare dreams?

TRIXIE: I am so lost by everything you just said.

HENRY: Yeah. Well, it took countless stress, countless work, countless labor, and an awful lot of frustration, to get this machine to work, taking people's dreams and recording them onto video, but, rest assured, it does work, with zero side effects seen yet.

TRIXIE: How do you know? How do you know it's not gonna be harmful to people that try to use this machine? Do you care?

HENRY: Of course I care. *I'm* the one using the machine. *I'm* the one placing myself at risk, every time I put it on, if there are any bad side effects. Of course I want to make sure the thing is safe. Safe for me, safe for my wife, safe for anybody.

TRIXIE: Good answer.

HENRY: Bottom line is: the machine that records dreams, it is real, it *does* exist, and I've got one in my bedroom.

TRIXIE: The flying cars are only *days* away.

HENRY: Well . . . hmm. That's the funny thing. Flying cars, the actual technology of it, has been around for a long time already. It's been possible for a while to build and use them. It's just that nobody wants to make the flying car available all over.

TRIXIE: Because?

HENRY: Safety concerns. Could everyone do it right? Could everyone afford one? How much more expensive would one flying car be, compared to one regular car? And look how long it took for the world to transition from the bicycle to the car. How long would it take to transition again? Plenty of time.

TRIXIE: Now, what about the potential for misuse, with this dream-recording machine?

HENRY: What misuse? People record their own dreams. They decide to stop, they can stop any time. I don't see any potential for misuse.

TRIXIE: But, what if somebody uses the machine on someone else, without permission?

HENRY: Well, that would be pretty weird. That would not be right. But, that would be countable as spying on someone. Well, I don't know. There really aren't that many *laws* about dreaming.

TRIXIE: Now, when it gets released to the public, how much will one unit cost?

HENRY: Starting price, once this thing is released publicly, will be \$12,000.

TRIXIE: What??

HENRY: At first. Give it a little time.

TRIXIE: Why *that* much money?

HENRY: There's an awful lot of tech involved!

TRIXIE: So, not everyone can afford one, then. Only the rich, and wealthy. Who knows. Someone must be kind enough to share it.

HENRY: Well, just give it time. They may eventually build cheaper models.

TRIXIE: But you have one. So, I'd really like to know. What is it like, when you turn on the TV, and you see your own dreams? What kinds of things do you see?

HENRY: Well . . . hmmm. It's kind of like going back in time about 8 hours, and seeing those visions and images, that whole sequence, all over again. It's like, oh yeah! I remember that now! I'm re-connected! I end up feeling really re-connected to myself. I can't wait for the day when more people can afford to buy these things.

TRIXIE: Now, I understand you wish to share some of these dreams.

HENRY: Yes. Take a look here. Still images, extracted from the dream-video footage.

On the electronic screen, we see the Italy village. Henry and Trixie turn their heads toward the screen.

HENRY: And here is me dreaming of a village in Italy. My wife loved this one.
And this is the outdoor baseball game, somewhere in Brooklyn, I think.

TRIXIE: Absolutely exciting. Just fascinating.

HENRY: Yeah. Thanks.

The APPLAUSE sign flashes, to signal the audience to start clapping and cheering. Trixie continues to smile. Meanwhile, one of the cameramen is aiming the camera at the audience itself, aiming the camera from right to left to slowly capture the whole audience in a pan shot. Soon, the lights all FADE OUT.

Scene 4.

INT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD – EVENING

Henry and Jillian arrive at STAGE RIGHT, bundled up for cold weather, walking toward STAGE LEFT while talking.

HENRY: So, I've got this big, amazing secret. I actually own the dream-recording machine in my house. Ahhh. Now I'm finally happy and fulfilled.

JILLIAN: Big, amazing secret? You went on Trixie's talk show and talked about it to millions of people, Henry!

HENRY: Yeah. Now I finally got to announce this great big knowledge. I finally told the world that I've got this machine. I guess I regret it, then, a little bit.

JILLIAN: Why, exactly?

HENRY: Because now everyone and their mother will try to break into the house to steal the machine. I can't believe I did that – publicized it.

JILLIAN: Are we going to have to move?

HENRY: Well – I don't know. If anything does happen – any windows get broken, or anything – then let's move.

JILLIAN: Oh, Henry! It's not like we live in a bad neighborhood.

HENRY: I know. But . . . you never know. Us having this machine, and me talking about it on TV, might just disrupt things.

JILLIAN: Well, I'll stay on-guard. Ready to call the police. What are gonna be the consequences of us keeping this machine?

HENRY: Theft of the machine itself is all I'm worried about.

JILLIAN: How do you know it's safe to use?

HENRY: Oh, it's extremely safe to use.

JILLIAN: How do you know that?

HENRY: About 10 years ago, Dosan Laboratories finished the Dream Machine chair and helmet. In 10 years, so far, nobody has complained of any side effects. The Dream-Corder is made from technology originally built upon the Dream Machine's tech.

JILLIAN: If you can read someone's dreams when they're asleep, what about when they're awake?

HENRY: Not the same. It *loses signal* every time a person wakes up.

JILLIAN: Really?

HENRY: They'll work on that, for the future, the machine that scans your mind while you're awake. Give it, oh, another 10, 15 years. Maybe even 20.

JILLIAN: Whoa, whoa, slow down. Slow down. It's already a bit much to process that you're recording dreams onto video.

HENRY: Each machine costs \$12,000. It's way too much. I'm sure that, in the future, their goal will be to make the thing smaller and smaller. More compact. More affordable.

JILLIAN: No, let's just make it bigger. More expensive.

HENRY: Oh. Well. Hmm. So now what? Wanna go to the dog park?

JILLIAN: Not until later.

The lights all FADE OUT.

Scene 5.

INT. HENRY'S HOME

At STAGE LEFT, Henry and Jillian are both asleep in bed. Henry wakes up, sits up a little bit, looks around, and rises. Within moments, he locates the remote control, then presses it to turn on the TV screen.

JILLIAN: Hmm? What's happening?

Soon, she sees that Henry is holding a remote. She sees that the remote is aiming at the TV. So she sees that he's watching his dream-footage again.

JILLIAN: Watching last night's dreams, eh?

The electronic screen displays video footage of Henry's POV, as he holds a basketball, aiming it at the basketball hoop. (Perhaps the video footage is filmed with a cameraman holding the camera to capture Henry's viewpoint, as he uses both hands to hold the orange ball.) He throws the ball.

HENRY: Hmm. Yeah. This was it.

JILLIAN: Mm.

She lays back down on the pillow, and is soon passed out asleep.

Henry looks around.

He thinks about it.

Soon enough, he's slowly taking the metal hat and placing it softly over her head.

On the TV screen, we see a single red dot. It's recording. Henry smiles. Then he climbs back into bed and lays a few feet away from her. She's facing away from him, but she's wearing the helmet. So he lays down and starts to doze off.

At CENTER STAGE and STAGE RIGHT, light shines to reveal:

INT. JILLIAN'S DREAM-WORLD

A shower curtain of an all-ocean design is hung, to display some of her dream images. Many extras walk around at once, all facing away from the audience. Everybody seems to be talking a bunch of nonsense. Heavy metal music starts playing. Then, after 7 seconds, it abruptly stops.

OVERHEAD SPEAKERS: Passengers, please. Passengers, please. May I please have your attention. Will seating rows A through B please report to the flight deck immediately. Will seating rows A through B please report to the flight deck immediately.

CROWD PEOPLE: Get out of my way! Move it! Come on! I've got a place to be! My husband's a doctor.

Although Jillian is asleep at STAGE LEFT, a similar copy of her appears at STAGE RIGHT, dressed in white pajamas and a white 1905-era sleeping hat. She starts moon-jumping from one foot to another, then resumes walking normally.

JILLIAN: I don't know *what* my seating row is! Would somebody please help me? Hey!

People bump into her, pushing into her.

JILLIAN: Hey! Stop that! No!

She hides down a little, avoiding people.

JILLIAN: No! Get away from me!!

She darts on ahead, and takes off the sleeping cap.

At STAGE LEFT, Jillian begins to thrash a little. Henry sits up, in bed.

HENRY: All you all right? Are you all right? Jillian.

At STAGE LEFT, he starts to shake her.

JILLIAN: UNNN!!

The lights all FADE OUT at CENTER STAGE and STAGE RIGHT. The dream-world is cut off. Meanwhile, the electronic image, displaying the single red dot, goes back to black, as we hear an electronic sound to imply that it's done recording.

Henry quickly grabs the metal hat and pulls it off her head.

Then he gets to work stuffing it by his side.

JILLIAN: It's not even the right one. No.

HENRY: What? What's happening?

Jillian finally sits up.

JILLIAN: Hmm?

HENRY: You were only asleep for about 10 seconds. If even that much.

JILLIAN: Really?

She stands up.

JILLIAN: Well, I don't feel like sleeping anymore. I'm not sure why. I think it's time to just get up.

HENRY: Hmm.

JILLIAN: What is that? The helmet?

HENRY: Yeah. I . . . yeah.

JILLIAN: Oh well. At least it's wireless!

HENRY: Yeah. That's a major thing.

They both get up, rising to their feet.

Soon enough, Jillian leaves the room. But Henry stays behind. Then he takes his remote control, and turns on his TV, to see the images of Jillian's dreams.

First, he sees the ocean-themed shower curtain.

HENRY: Hmm.

Then, several strangers fade into view, seen from the back.

HENRY: This is . . . interesting.

VOICE: Will seating rows A through B please report to the flight deck immediately.
Get out of my way! Move it! Come on!

HENRY: Wow. What is this?

JILLIAN'S VOICE: Hey! Stop that! No! . . . No! Get away from me!!

HENRY'S VOICE: All you all right? Are you all right? Jillian.

JILLIAN'S VOICE: Mmmmmmm!

Then the screen FADES TO BLACK. The signal was lost when she woke up.

Henry nods his head.

HENRY: I can't believe it.

JILLIAN: Can't believe what?

Jillian enters the bedroom again, at STAGE LEFT.

HENRY: (*gasp*) Spying on me?! Listening in on my words?!

JILLIAN: What can't you believe? You just said you can't believe it. What is it that you can't believe, hmm?

HENRY: Oh. Well, look at this.

He aims the remote at the TV, re-playing all its footage again.

HENRY: At the end of this dream . . . you can hear my voice. You can hear me saying, "Are you all right? Are you all right? Jillian." And you can hear *my* voice, but I was saying it when I was awake!

JILLIAN: Gaaaaaasp!! You did NOT!

HENRY: What?

JILLIAN: YOU RECORDED MY DREAMS!

HENRY: On-only for a minute.

JILLIAN: HOW LONG have you been doing this??

HENRY: J-just this once.

JILLIAN: You recorded my dreams?!!

HENRY: Listen. Look. Your dream is just . . . it just showed me something important! Okay? You could hear my voice –

JILLIAN: That is not okay, to look into my dreams without even telling me!!

HENRY: But I did tell you. I'm telling you now.

JILLIAN: That's not the point and you know it!!

She storms out of the room, mad, leaving Henry alone, to contemplate his actions.

Henry starts to pace around, while holding a cell phone aimed at himself.

HENRY: Video log. New theory. I'm wondering exactly how it works, how someone who's asleep can hear the words of someone who's awake. I'm noticing now that my words, to my wife, did show up in the dream.

He paces around a little more. He looks back at the TV screen, currently displaying one still image from the dreams.

HENRY: I guess I talk, and she hears it, she processes it from body to mind, from mind to dream, and from dream to video. Therefore, how far can I take this? Could I play a song, and hear it recorded in her dream? If so, I can test exactly how *time* works, between real life and dreams – I may end up proving or disproving a lot of things.

The lights all FADE OUT.

This is all I've got so far of a 60-page play. Here's the rest of what will happen, from now to page 60.

Henry will learn that they are indeed building newer and better models of the Dream-Corder, but not to be smaller. They are built and positioned in underground rooms, in the sewer systems, and aimed to the ceiling. As a result, a lot of people in the city are having their dreams scanned and recorded without their knowledge, and the dreams are instantly sent to the Headquarters of the FBI, who, from there, shares the dreams with various other agencies. Soon, the Dream Surveillance Act will require that all people have all their dreams recorded at all times.

Men sit in a room all day and analyze video footage of people's dreams. The dreams are dated, and kept in a vault forever. One man dreams of firing a gun at someone else. Now the FBI decides to probe further into the man who had that dream. They watch the dream repeatedly. They analyze the gunshot. They analyze the yellow glow, and what it may mean. They analyze who it is being shot. Then they decide it's time to investigate his past week of dreams.

After investigating the entire week of dreams, they wonder what exactly is normal, and what's not. They find that a lot of people seem to dream about kissing. After noticing the same basic themes in enough people's different dreams, they conclude that some dreams are not too bad to have after all.

But the police officers are having their dreams scanned, too. When they dream of firing guns at people, it must be analyzed as much as anybody else's dreams. Does the gunshot represent a memory of the past, or a vision of the future, or a clue as to the present and his future intentions? The police officer is confronted about his gunshot dream. He remembers no such thing. He had no dreams last night. But he is sat down and shown a video of his dreams. Indeed, he did dream of the violence. Now he has no answer for it, except to say that it's just some dream, and it means nothing.

Men and women sit in a room all day, watching dream video footage. They notice that a man dreams of kissing a different girl, and sneaking around, while his wife is dreaming of an affair with another guy. 10 people discuss what this means as to where their relationship is headed, going into the future. Maybe it says something about their state in the present.

Big news: the exact same natural disasters that have been happening around the globe lately were seen in visions in people's dreams. The proof is in the video footage. People did, indeed, definitely dream about events that soon after happened. Then, those are the people to keep an eye on, for their dreams may be used to predict terrible events. On the other hand, watching from a great distance, it may be hard to tell what's a silly dream and what's a serious clue.

The Dream Surveillance Act requires that all dreams be recorded. It's like a security camera system, which is built and then continues to exist permanently. But the consequences are the discomfort and panic that it causes on a major scale.