MELT

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FADE IN:

EXT. WHITEHAVEN MENTAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A large, ominous and utilitarian building lurks amidst the sickly yellow light cast from street-lamps.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

TOM, a lumbering, thirty year old, Psychiatric Nurse seemingly assigned by genetics to handle difficult patients, escorts a spindly, middle-aged man in a white patient's uniform down the eerie hallway.

They enter a door on the right. It bears a plaque: DOCTOR EDWARD MARSH, PSYCHIATRIST.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC OFFICE - NIGHT

The poorly lit office displays the meagre trappings of an overworked state facility. Shelves sag with psychiatry books while dusty filing cabinets overflow with dark secrets.

Behind a desk stacked with case files, sits DOCTOR EDWARD MARSH, a man for whom the ideals of youth have long turned to a resigned, retirement age, resentment.

Tom shepherds the patient to a wooden chair in front of the Doctor's desk.

The Doctor picks up a file. There's a photograph of the man in front of him paper-clipped to the corner of the page. Next to it a name: PROFESSOR FRANCIS MOORHEAD.

A paragraph details his diagnosis. Some words stand out: Delusions...Psychosis...Persistent, irrational fear of inanimate objects.

The Doctor looks up from the file.

DOCTOR MARSH

...I'm Doctor Marsh. I've been asked to ascertain whether you are mentally fit for release. How are you feeling?

FRANCIS

...Better.

Doctor Marsh turns a page in the file. We catch sight of the words: POLICE REPORT.

DOCTOR MARSH Can you tell me what happened?

Francis's eyes flicker as he remembers...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT.CYBERFUTURES LABORATORY- NIGHT

A synergy of state of the art computer equipment and workshop engineering. Professor Moorhead, TWO ENGINEERS and THREE TECHNICIANS work at various consoles before a twenty foot by ten foot glass tank, filled a third of the way with liquid of shifting colour and the consistency of mercury.

ENGINEER

Begin Quantum scan.

A Laser scans a small, Alsatian Bobble-headed figurine, that sits on a platform in front of the tank. The liquid inside contracts into the exact shape, size and colour of the doll.

Next, a laptop. It's replicated perfectly.

TECHNICIAN

Scans indicate a perfect match.

FRANCIS

Let's try a direct mental imprint.

Professor Francis wears a helmet-like contraption with wires stretching across the floor and connecting to the top of the tank. A dome shape rises in the centre of the liquid. A head. Then a body. A perfect replica of Moorhead.

Francis concentrates and moves his body in various ways. The replica mimics his actions.

ENGINEER TWO

We've done it! This is going to change everything.

The replica liquidises in the tank and roils chaotically.

FRANCIS

Something's wrong.

It forms more definite shapes. A YOUNG BOY, crying. The liquid shifts again: A replica of Professor Moorhead and A WOMAN in wedding clothes.

ENGINEER

What is this?

FRANCIS

...Transference. My memories, my subconscious...repressed emotions. Turn it off.

Another change. The couple argue violently.

The liquid reforms yet again into a bathtub and inside the bathtub, the woman we just saw, slitting her wrists with a kitchen knife.

Another replica of Professor Moorhead forms and sinks to his knees in anguish next to his dead wife. Then it turns and sees the science team and then it sees Francis and screams in anguish and fury.

THE NODDER

You drove her to it. You ignored her. You...You killed her. All of you!

FRANCIS

Turn it off!

The team rush to their consoles to comply.

Francis rips off the helmet and watches as his replica smashes it's face repeatedly against the tank, as the glass starts to crack, as the first hole appears and the thing oozes out and as it rises from the floor a hideous, misshapen cross between himself and the Alsatian bobble headed doll...

Francis backs away towards the exit. The scientists try to flee, but THE NODDER with its bulbous, bobbing head is upon them, its limbs extending to prodigious lengths, and in place of hands, huge kitchen knives.

Francis watches in horror as a huge blade tears through the First Engineer's back and ruptures his chest and the second Engineer is decapitated.

The three technicians run. The Nodder snatches two of them by their necks, the knives now elongated fingers. It lifts them high in the air and smashes their heads together into bloody pulp.

Francis charges to the exit and slams a button marked: Containment. The last technician makes it to the door as it slams shut. He beats uselessly at the plexi-glass. The Nodder, with one huge blade-like arm splits the technician in two and the body halves peel away from each other leaving Francis's view of Nodder unobstructed.

The Nodder comes to stand mere inches from Francis, separated only by the blood-spattered glass of the containment door. It screeches in frustration as its blows rain upon the reinforced door.

It retreats to the centre of the room, smashing everything in its path, its head nodding madly in frustration and torment.

It lets out one last anguished screech and shrinks and and condenses itself into its previous form of the Bobble Headed Doll. Its head still nodding continuously, up and down, up and down...

END FLASHBACK

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Francis closes his eyes to block out the memory.

DOCTOR

You told the Police a shape shifting substance killed your colleagues and that you saw it turn into a "Bobble Headed Doll", as you escaped...

FRANCIS

It...It was an accident. I was delusional. I see that now.

DOCTOR MARSH

I'm glad.

Doctor Marsh opens a drawer in his desk. Inside is the same type of Alsatian Bobble Headed Doll from the Laboratory. The Doctor places it on the desk in front of Francis.

FRANCIS

Where did you get that?

DOCTOR MARSH

Ebay. Why, does it worry you?

FRANCIS

...Of course not.

DOCTOR

Good. OK Francis, I think we've had enough for today. Do you think you can make your own way to your room?

FRANCIS

... Yes, of course. When will I be allowed to leave?

DOCTOR

Soon, soon, I hope.

Francis leaves the room.

DOCTOR

Tom, just one more thing...

He tosses the Bobble Headed doll to Tom.

DOCTOR

...Put that in with him. Despite what I said, that's one of the dolls from the scene of the accident. Exposure therapy. He's still holding out on us. Once he gets through the night with that in his room, and I tell him what it is, he'll see for himself that it's all truly been a delusion.

Tom nods and takes the Doll with him.

INT. FRANCIS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Francis rests on his bed at the back of the room. The padded door opens and Tom enters. He sets the Bobble Head on a table near the end of the bed. Francis springs from the bed to stop Tom leaving, but the door closes.

FRANCIS

Wait, no....no, you don't understand.

He turns to look at the Doll as it's head bobs up and down. Francis climbs on his bed and curls up against the wall. He stares at the Doll. The head bobs and nods and nods...

FRANCIS

It's just a test. It's just a test. Even if it was from the Laboratory, there's a fifty-fifty chance it's an actual Doll. Those are good odds.

The doll nods and nods...and then it stops.

Francis SCREAMS as it starts to MELT into its liquid form...

FADE OUT