



SOMA

The Meme Dump

Written for screen by
Jesse Yules

Edited by Chris Eaton, Todd Julie and the
Soft Spot for the Universe.

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Summary

An intercity loser suffers an identity crisis after becoming famous on the Internet.

Characters (in order of appearance)

Levon Monk: A homeless drug dealer, recently heartbroken.

MemeTrade: A fully automated computer program used to organize patent deals between companies and exploit fads.

Nick Steib: An alpha male patent-troll employed by MemeTrade.

Leo-Nard: Nick Steib's computerized assistant, generated by the MemeTrade servers.

Soma: An oddly robust crossbreed of the Psilocybin mushroom (*psilocybe cubensis*) and the Great Oregon Mushroom (*armillaria solidipes*) which, when eaten, induces mild psychedelic effects.

Sarah Vervain: The owner of a low rent dog-walking agency, operated out of a university frat house.

Iso: One of MemeTrade's unpaid interns. She aspires to be an actress.

The Cleaner: An overqualified MemeTrade employee with multiple university degrees.

Jeremy Windsor Buckets: A popular Toronto musician whose eccentric musical experiments have made him a hermit and a psychoactive medication addict.

June Vervain: A wealthy entrepreneur in the recycling business. Her charismatic leadership has lead to a cult-like following among her employees.

The Mycelium (Act 1)

Characters: LEVON, NICK. **Extras:** Middle-aged Asian woman

with silver teeth.

Props: *Dog pack, longboard, magic mushrooms, a sack full of cans, portable toilets, a slingshot.*

1. Exterior. Leslie Street Spit, Toronto. A quiet industrial road. Late afternoon. Summer.

Levon Monk, a haggard and scruffy twenty-something rides a longboard through the streets of Toronto, pulled enthusiastically by six dogs on leashes. A laminated badge clipped to Levon's shirt reads *DogJogger.com*.

Levon steers the dog pack with one hand while poking at his smartphone with the other. On screen is an image of beautiful woman dressed in coveralls and posing in front of a garbage incinerator. The caption reads “*JUNE VERVAIN: President, Renew.us Corp.*”

Levon stares at the photo slack-jawed, ignoring the dogs and the road traffic. He presses a button marked “*message*” and pecks out the word “*hey*” before quickly deleting it again.

Levon pokes the phone again. A recorded conversation begins looping over and over in his earbuds.

LEVON
What's goin' on?

JUNE
Oh, this and that.

LEVON
Comin' by tonight?

JUNE
What do you want to do?

LEVON

Oh, I don't know. Chill...

JUNE

Smoke weed and watch wrestling?

LEVON

Pssh. Are you mad or something?

JUNE

I'm sorry, Levon. I didn't get much sleep last night. Can we hang another time?

LEVON

Sure.

JUNE

Cool, sorry, my mind's in a million places today.

LEVON

So I guess...

JUNE

We'll talk soon.

LEVON

Okay, bye.

Levon and the dog pack stop at a rundown inner-city residence. Levon ties up the dogs. A faded sign in the window of the house reads "*Herbal Remedies Cambodian Take-Out.*"

Levon scans the area suspiciously. He crouches down among the dogs. When he rises, he is palming a small bundle of magic mushrooms sealed in a condom. Levon approaches the front door and is met by an elderly Asian woman, smiling widely with a mouthful of silver-plated teeth. She is carrying a large shopping bag filled with empty beer cans. She greets Levon in broken English,

nodding her head vigorously.

SILVER-TOOTHED WOMAN

Hi! You making money?

LEVON

Pssh. I never stop hustlin'.

Levon exchanges the mushrooms for a handful of loonies and toonies in a sandwich bag.

SILVER-TOOTHED WOMAN

How much for the dog?

LEVON

They're not mine, Mrs Tam.

SILVER-TOOTHED WOMAN

How much for the fat one?

She gestures towards an English bulldog within the pack.

LEVON

Pssh!

Levon departs. As the dog pack pulls away, he pokes and stares at the photo again.

Levon rides down an empty service road bordered by vacant industrial parks. He is startled when the dogs pull him off road.

LEVON

Woah! Woaaaaah! Frig!

The longboard skids through the gravel shoulder. Levon steps off it and pulls on the leashes. His rotting sneakers tear apart as his feet are pulled through the rocks.

LEVON
Stop! Deltoid! Kona!

They stop in the shadow of a billboard that has been erected on the side of the road. It's an advertisement for a new condo development. Levon looks up at the ad.

LEVON
The fuck...

The ad features a photo of a Border Collie with angel wings soaring through the air. It reads:

BE THE HERO: Hero Condominiums. Breaking ground next spring! Pet-friendly! Proud sponsor of DOG DAY

One of the dogs squats in the shadow of the advertisement and begins to defecate.

LEVON
No, Simon! Too soon, boy!

A four-inch condom filled with magic mushrooms emerges from the dog's anus, followed by a handful of well-formed droppings. Levon's eyes dart around, checking for approaching cars. He slips a plastic bag over his hand and scoops up the mess deftly. He tosses the suppository and the droppings into his backpack.

Levon and the pack walk into the field. The animals seem to know the route well. They pass through a stand of birch trees that hides a derelict portable toilet, enveloped by weeds.

Levon ties the dogs to the trees, throws down kibble dishes. As the dogs eat, Levon removes two more condom suppositories from the animals. He pats their hindquarters appreciatively. The dogs are oblivious.

Levon heads over to the portable toilet and opens it. The latrine has been hollowed out and converted into a mushroom nursery. Wooden growbeds are stacked neatly from floor to ceiling. The beds are overflowing with clusters of dazzling red mushrooms.

Levon photographs himself posing with the tray of mushrooms. He considers sending the picture to June, but he shies away. He picks the largest mushroom clusters and uses the front of his baggy t-shirt as a basket.

Levon pokes his phone again. A recording of American ethnobotanist Terence McKenna begins to play in Levon's headphones. McKenna is describing the relationship between psychedelic mushrooms and human evolution: his so-called "Stoned Ape Theory."

TERENCE McKENNA

People without plants are in a state of potential neurosis, a state of existential wanting. Part of the Western dilemma is the sense of abandonment that has followed the termination of our symbiotic relationship with plants.

Levon carries his mushrooms away from the farm, towards the blue vastness of Lake Ontario.

TERENCE McKENNA

I think what evolutionary biologists have missed in looking at the emergence of humans out of the primate Phylum is, generally speaking, the mutagenic influence of foods. The fact that, due to a spreading dryness in the environment, a fruit-eating arboreal primate evolved into a pack-hunting creature of the grasslands with an omnivorous diet... Clearly some unique factor had to be present in the evolutionary situation that was capable of kindling this transformation.

Levon approaches a second portable toilet. It is lying on the lakeshore amid the thistle and buckthorn like a piece of storm debris. He opens it. It's been converted into a multi-wrack dehydrator. Levon lays out the red mushrooms on a rack and labels them "*SOMA*" in balloon lettering. As an added flourish, he draws cartoon lightning bolts flying out from the word in all directions.

TERENCE McKENNA

I suggest this factor was the presence of psychoactive plants in the environment, specifically psychoactive plants in the environment in which human pastoralism evolved. The plant must have been African. The plant must have been extraordinarily noticeable in the environment. The only plant that fits this description is a mushroom of the Psilocybin containing variety.

Levon scoops a handful of dry mushrooms from a separate rack. He chews them into a fine cud.

TERENCE McKENNA

Low doses of Psilocybin increase visual acuity. Medium doses of psilocybin produce an increased interest in erotic activity. But slightly higher doses produce a Jungian state of the *numinosum*, an experience of the divine, a mystery in the human psyche that is no less mysterious to us today than it was to our ancestors when the last glacier retreated over Canada.

Levon lies in the grass chewing mushrooms and staring at the soft line dividing the blue sky and the big blue lake. He pokes his phone and looks at the photo of June once more. Her image begins to vibrate with a psychedelic intensity. He pokes his phone again. Terence McKenna's lecture ends, and the break-up conversation is replayed.

LEVON
Comin' by tonight?

JUNE
What do you want to do?

LEVON
Oh, I don't know chill...

JUNE
Smoke weed and watch wrestling?

Levon pauses the track. He jangles the bag of coins from the Asian woman and begins talking to himself.

LEVON
Naw, June. I don't have time for that. I want to get your feedback on a business idea. Still developing my product, but I think I'm close to a breakthrough...

Levon relaxes as the waves of psilocybin roll over him.

2.Interior. Luxury automobile.

A black Tesla Roadster speeds down the empty service road toward Levon's farm. The driver is playing thunderous death metal on his stereo. A small computerized voice says "Arriving at destination." The vehicle fishtails as it stops in the shadow of the condo billboard. The stranger's knuckles crack as he grips the steering wheel.

STRANGER
Leo-Nard? Doublecheck target location...

A small digital voice responds.

LEO-NARD

Confirmed. Latitude : 43.620583 | Longitude : -79.338155

3. Exterior. Leslie Spit.

As the drugs take hold, Levon has an out-of-body experience. His consciousness slowly floats up into the air. He sees the camp shrinking below him. The dog pack barks at the sky as if they can see his soul floating into space.

Levon's mind is transported to a two-dimensional universe built entirely out of triangles. He finds himself in a triangular body. He is one of thousands of triangular people interlocked into a great world-wide mosaic. The new Triangle Levon can hear a faint voice speaking to him from back on Earth. It is the voice of his body, lying in the Toronto field. A conversation begins between the two.

LEVON'S EARTHLY REMAINS

Is this my breakthrough? Is this the answer?

The wall of triangles respond in unison.

TRIANGLE LEVON

The answer is triangles. The world is triangles, from top to bottom. We are all equilateral triangles. Ultimate life satisfaction is achieved by having perfect 60 degree corners.

LEVON'S EARTHLY REMAINS

I feel nauseous. Did I take too much?

TRIANGLE LEVON

Symmetry must be maintained. Organization is the great ideal.

LEVON'S EARTHLY REMAINS

Levon, you still have a body, somewhere. Keep breathing. Don't shit yourself.

TRIANGLE LEVON

The following is perfect music...

The triangular mosaic begins to sing in one-note unison, like a Gregorian choir.

LEVON'S EARTHLY REMAINS

Is June here somewhere?

As if summoned, June's face appears in the mosaic.

LEVON'S EARTHLY REMAINS

Oh, June!

Levon and June are soon interconnected like an Escher tessellation. Each geometric version of Levon fits into the negative space that June's body creates.

LEVON

June! It's amazing you're here. So much has changed! I started a business. You'll never believe what I've discovered.

JUNE

Woof! Woof! Woof!

Levon sees the mosaic change into a wall of interconnected dogs, all barking at him. Levon's mind is abruptly pulled back to earth. His body spasms in the grass. His loonies and toonies are spilled around him.

Near the farm, the dog pack is barking at a car that has pulled over on the road. A muscular man exits the car. He grabs his leather man-bag from the car and slowly walks into field.

STRANGER

Levon Monk?

Levon is startled. He stays hidden in the grass. Through the haze of mushroom-induced lens flares, he sees a shadowy giant, lumbering toward the camp like a Sasquatch. Levon panics. He crawls on his belly back to the dog pack. He unleashes a large bloodhound.

LEVON

Oh, man. Oh, frig! Oh, fuck. Sick 'em, Jethroe!

The bloodhound dashes towards the intruder.

Levon digs in his backpack. He removes a slingshot and a bag of ball bearings.

As the bloodhound closes in on the stranger, the man stands his ground. Sensing his confidence, the hound stops and excitedly sniffs at the man's shoes. The stranger leans over and scratches the dog behind the ear.

STRANGER

Eh, boy? Where's your master?

Levon rolls on his back and loads a ball bearing into the sling shot. He pops up from grass and fires recklessly. The metal ball streaks through the air, hits the stranger in the thigh. The stranger squeals with pain and collapses awkwardly to the ground.

Levon jumps up and fires again. Dust is kicked up by the shot a few inches from the stranger's head. The stranger rolls into the fetal position, shielding his face. He points his legs and buttox in the direction of the sniper.

STRANGER

Ah, fuck! Hold your fire! I'm a civilian, bro! Cool out! You'll hit your dog!

Levon sobers up a bit. He stands up. In the distance, the stranger looks like a downed buffalo quivering in the grass.

STRANGER
COOL OUT!

The stranger sees Levon emerge from trees disguised in sun glasses and a bandanna. Realizing Levon does not have a firearm, he relaxes slightly, pulls out his phone, and begins taking pictures. Levon stops a few meters away.

STRANGER
Nice shirt...

LEVON
Huh?

STRANGER
Who's that on your shirt?

LEVON
Pssh.

STRANGER
No, for real.

LEVON
Killer Kowalski...

The stranger raises his phone and whispers into it.

STRANGER
Killer Kowalski, Leo-Nard. Killer Kowalski T-Shirt.

LEVON
What's your deal?

STRANGER

I'm Nick Steib.

LEVON
Eh?

Levon pulls back on the slingshot. Nick lowers his phone.

STRANGER
I'm your client! You walk my dog, LB!

LEVON
Oh.

NICK
Deltoid, the English bulldog. Yes?

LEVON
Oh, man...

NICK
Yeah.

LEVON
You're Deltoid's dad?

NICK
Yeah.

Levon points with the slingshot.

LEVON
What's with the muscles?

NICK
I lift.

LEVON
You a security guard?

Nick rubs his throbbing leg.

NICK
No.

LEVON
A narc? Those look like narc muscles.

NICK
I'm just a patent trader. A corporate patent trader. I lift because it's desk work, and desk-work-people get soft and die.

LEVON
The muscles are your hobby?

NICK
Not dying is my hobby...

LEVON
You look like a bouncer or something...

Levon stretches and releases the band of his slingshot as he thinks.

NICK
Can you put the weapon away please?

LEVON
Sorry. Sorry. Peace.

Levon drops his ball bearings in the dirt and puts the sling shot into the waistband of his pants.

NICK
You on edge there, buddy?

LEVON
People don't want me walking dogs here. I thought you might be one

of the condo guys, come to kick me out...

The dog pack barks in the distance. Nick stands up. He's a much larger man than Levon. The dog walker backs away. Nick kicks at the ball bearings and scatters them. He leans over and looks at his injured leg.

NICK

Fuck. I'm bleeding a bit. You're a crack shot, LB.

Nick rubs the blood between his fingers as if he's never seen the substance before.

LEVON

I just meant to scare you. Those muscles are just for show?

NICK

Search my name if you're still suspicious. I'm Internet-famous.

The muscular man pecks at his phone. An on-screen message reads, "*Auto upload recent images?*" Nick punches the "Yes" key and swipes the menu away. He hands Levon the phone.

Levon sees Nick's personal website. He thumbs through photos of Nick posing happily with politicians, celebrities and his English bulldog, Deltoid. Last is an image of Nick performing at an amateur wrestling event. He is centre ring, flexing his muscles, naked save for a Black fedora, bikini briefs and a sequined Michael Jackson glove. Steib is painted head to toe in spray-on tanner.

LEVON

Holy shit! You're, orange!

NICK

That was a charity event my company put together.

LEVON

You're a wrestler?

NICK
For a day.

LEVON
Wow! Why are you orange?

NICK
It's spray tan. Pale people look a like ghosts under the lights.

LEVON
That must be a valuable leg if you're a wrestler.

NICK
I guess so. Fuck. I've never bled from my leg before.
The bloodhound sniffs at Nick's leg. Levon takes it by the collar.

LEVON
Did you follow me here?

NICK
Sarah gave me the address.

LEVON
Sarah who?

NICK
Sarah? At the dog-walking agency?

LEVON
Oh, Sarah! Sweet. Yeah...

NICK
I didn't realize you were taking the dogs so far east. Aren't there coyotes out here?

LEVON

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