

SCRIPT: Life through the Lens of the 'Almost' Dead  
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This audio documentary tackles a guy's death encounter experience through coma, that later shapes his view of life, death and immortality, questioning the 'goodness' and the 'evilness' of each of them as abstract concepts.

NATURAL SOUND (NAT): Abdoul's speech exercise

You might have assumed that this was the wrong version of an audio piece or maybe someone playing around with the microphone. But the story is much deeper than that. (0-4 seconds)

*MUSIC FADE IN: Soul Food- Purple Planet (05-16 seconds)*

*NAT: Abdoul's speech exercise (16-18 seconds)*

Abdoul, was doing this speech exercise to activate his muscles before our conversation.

*MUSIC FADE IN: The Orphanage- Purple Planet (20-45 seconds)*

*AbdoulRahman Ihab (AI), "I am AboudlRahman Ihab Mahmoud known as Abdoul." (19-23 seconds)*

It is one exercise of the many others he's been doing lately to fully recover after what we can call his near-death experience.

*AI: "They doctors were about to disconnect me from everything which is AKA kill me." (38-44 seconds)*

Yes, as you heard it, a year ago he was literally a button away from death.

But luckily, the popular social media comedian made it after two-months into the coma.

*MUSIC FADE IN: Snap- Purple Planet. (60- 1:20)*

So there you have it, a guy coming out from a coma, recalling to us how his death encounter had been and how it shaped his view of immortality afterwards.

*AI: "We are talking about death here!!"(1:05 -1:10)*

Warning: this documentary is not meant to tackle a gloomy or a dramatic take on the philosophy of death, it will only explore diverse ways of thinking about it.

*MUSIC FADE IN: Bella's lullaby from twilight. (1:19- 1:25)*

I have always remembered the well-known sequel Twilight. There was this vampire guy who fell in love with a normal human being. The girl then was stuck on making a decision on whether to turn into an immortal vampire like her lover or just leave him and live a normal mortal life.

Not only was I, as a teenager convinced that I, too might meet my own vampire soon, but worse, I was actually trying to make the decision of whether a mortal or an immortal life is better. Thank God I have grown out of this vampire thing now, but the life choice..Well that's still a problem.

*MUSIC FADE IN: Turning to you- Blue Dot Sessions. (1:54- 2:24)*

A problem that only someone like Abdoul can solve since the living have not experienced death and it is physically impossible to talk to the already dead. He is our closest option.

*AI: "I have the advantage that you all do not have which is, I am the comparison." (2:08- 2:15)*

He is the only one who can compare between his life before and after his near death encounter.

*AI: "I don't know. I cannot remember." (20-23)*

*MUSIC FADE IN: Closing- Blue Dot Sessions. (2:23- 2:57)*

This was Abdoul's response when I asked him about the accident, but he later expanded on what he knows.

*AI: "I had something that the doctors medically call selective amnesia which is something happens and you tend to forget this thing the whole day. I forgot the whole day. I toppled upside down and went to the other lane. And then all hell broke loose."(3:08- 3:24)*

*MUSIC FADE IN: Genesis of Dream- Free Music Archive*

You would think that the only logical thing bystanders in Egypt should do is go ask for help, but what Abdoul had was a bit of a different story.

*MUSIC FADE IN: The UFO Files- The purple planet .(3- 3:24)*

*AI, "Some people stopped and stole the laptop, the headphones and the bag. I keep on asking how did he open the boot? Did he remove my leg as I was lying unconscious and then opened the boot?" (3:05- 3:24)*

Anyways, we'll pretend they called the ambulance and then stole the car.

*MUSIC FADE IN: Squirreling- Purple Planet. (3:25- 3:43)*

*AI: "The coma was really good. We had very big gold fields and Olympic pools." (3:29- 3:35)*

Of course this was not true. Being a sarcastic comedian, Abdoul tricked me into these kind of answers a couple of times until he finally told me how the coma really felt.

*MUSIC FADE IN: Turning to you- Purple Planet. (3:45 -5:45)*

*AI: "It felt like a second. It wasn't even a second, it was like 'trok', this sound I am making is so long." (3:45 -3:55)*

Weirdly enough, when he woke up, he didn't ask about anything and presumed his life normally, but his doctor had an explanation for that.

*AI: "My doctor said when I was in coma he urged my family to speak to me. He thought I would be aware or my subconscious mind was writing comments." (4:04- 4:15)*

So it might be these notes that helped him understand his situation unconsciously but technically remembers nothing consciously.

Although Abdoul only mentioned his physical struggles after the accident, Alexandra Gazis, a clinical psychologist at the American University in Cairo (AUC)'s counseling center, shed the light on the psychological assistance which people similar to Abdoul's case need.

*Alexandra Gazis (AG), "They have to go through counselling. A counselor will assess their fears, their grief, their worries, their cognitive schemas about death." (4:40- 4:49)*

You would think someone coming out from an almost death would rather prefer living forever, at least for now

*AI: "Immortal? No, because death gives life its meaning giving life a purpose. Or not." (4:55- 5:00)*

On the other hand, Robert McIntyre, a professor at the philosophy department at AUC did not think immortality threatens this purpose of life.

*RM: "I guess it never really worried me that I might get bored at some point in time because it seems like there is always something new to learn, something new to discover and I just do not understand how I can run out of these things, even in the infinite future." (5:14- 5:27)*

However, the Clinical psychologist at AUC's counselling center, Alexandra Gazis agreed with Abdoul on his views upon the vitality of death as an abstract concept.)

*AG: "There are a lot of cultures actually that put this as the base of you do what you do in life because you're awaiting death. You gain a lot of things in life to make you have a better death experience." (5:37 -5:47)*

Unfortunately, this positive attitude towards death is not really common.

VOX-POP, “Death? Scary, sadness, the deadline for life, it is a sad theme.” (5:53- 5:55)

*MUSIC FADE IN: Coven Churchy- Free Music Archive (5:54- 6:24)*

We have always feared death, but whether this fear is rational or the unknown is necessarily bad is a different story.

*RM: “Perhaps our fear of death is not rational because we are operating in a kind of information vacuum as far as the afterlife for example goes right. So for all we know I guess, death might not be all that bad. Of course I can say that right now not facing the prospect of my immediate death at the moment.” (6:04- 6:24)*

*MUSIC FADE IN: Death March, Blue Dot Session (6:23- 7:00)*

According to an article I have recently read, the struggle between death and immortality had been a myth in different cultures historically.

For instance, in North America, they used to believe death was a result of a quarrel between two human-beings or animals in which one favors death and the other immortality but eventually death won.

Others in old Australia believed that people naturally had the ability to transform into scarier beings which they abandoned for mandating death.

While more familiar beliefs in Africa thought a supreme being will make people younger again to live in heaven which is almost what most of the Religions today believe.

*MUSIC FADES IN: Soul Food, Purple Planet. (7:05- 7:20)*

Although Abdoul couldn’t tell if death would necessarily be a state similar to his coma, he showed us how a simple death reminder changed his entire life perception.

*AI: “When I had the accident some things got taken away from me so only then I started to experience what did I have that was missing.” (7:14- 7:24)*

*MUSIC FADES IN: Celebration, Blue Dot Session. (7:25-7:45)*

Why else would we really value the people, things and experiences we have if we did not know they were to be taken away someday?

This audio documentary was produced by Jaidaa Taha for the Audio Production Course taught by Professor Kim Fox in Fall 2017.

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