

I had, HAVE, a Dream

Written by

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*Based on my own incredible true story.*

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by Lawrence Whitener

FADE IN:

**EXT. AERIAL OF DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY - 2022**

**MONTAGE:** Shots of Disney, Warner Bros, Paramount, Sony, Fox, and Universal Studios. EMPLOYEES scurry about their lots. I-110 traffic is stopped. Motorcycles white-line between its cars. Ends on the thousands of shared-housing near U.S.C.

**INT. LOS ANGELES SHARED-LIVING BEDROOM - SAME**

8' x 8' room with a 3' x 5' bathroom that was originally the room's closet. Twin bed, recliner, TV on a plastic egg-crate, and Mac on a student desk. A vintage sash-window behind the computer overlooks a back parking lot for shabby apartments.

A live Mariachi Band begins *playing* badly outside in the parking lot. Its Hispanic PARTYGOERS begin *singing* cumpleaños off-key. Neighbor's Dog joins in all the nerve fraying fray *howling*. All their noises set off car *alarms* parked at the curbs. It's a true cacophony of calls of the wild...streets.

LAWRENCE, Caucasian, 70s, very long red hair and a full Santa beard, obese, is wearing black shorts and a t-shirt having white lettering printed "Homeless-Hippy Mountain-Man Biker-Viking Santa." He is *typing* away on his Mac as usual.

LAWRENCE

Imagine being told everyday as a child that you are stupid, ugly, and will always be a failure.

An LAPD police *siren* wails by. Even more car *alarms* go off. Lawrence puts on sound suppressor earmuffs and keeps typing.

LAWRENCE

Now imagine that's your own mother speaking. Add a childhood speech impediment-*t*, and you strive to be an obedient son by living down to her lowest expectations forever scrawled upon your blank desiderata by later getting fired from job after job after college. You marry late in life and for three decades harbor a dream you can't sail into any significant sunset because your significantly obtuse other doesn't "get" or like...The Movies.

LAPD helicopter *flies* low overhead. He waits for it to pass, pulls away one cup, listens, takes off mufflers, and types.

LAWRENCE

Until that day you get the only disease no school system wants their students to see, a teacher fall over like a mad cow. You are unceremoniously herded far out in the partial retirement pasture on early medical leave losing your full pay. Okay, so what do you do when your well-planned retirement becomes an unplanned nightmare? Follow your dream of course.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. ANTIQUE COURTHOUSE AS A MOVIE SET - A DECADE AGO**

Vintage courtroom with all types of movie equipment set up.

EXTRAS, in 1930's costumes, sit in pews *chatting*. Its Jury Box is in front of the Judge's Bench with ACTORS in proper dress sitting and primping. PRINCIPALS sit at Defense and Prosecution tables with HAIR and MAKE-UP doing *Last Looks*.

Standing against the wall near the Judge's Bench is Lawrence, now **60**, with long hair and beard half as in L.A. He wears a 1930 Sheriff's costume with real .38 pistol and billy club.

African-American Hollywood Director DARNELL MARTIN is talking to her CREW, then *claps*. Crew rush to their stations.

MARTIN

Camera's Up! --Background!

Extras begin pantomime-talking silent in their pews.

MARTIN

Action!

JOSH LUCAS stands from behind his lawyer's table and hooks both thumbs in his suit-vest's pockets. EVERYONE freezes.

LAWRENCE

The year is 2012 and the film "Wish You Well" is shooting in the historic Courtroom located in Giles County, Virginia. Here is when I finally understood why it took a year of self-training to learn how to live with an odd illness I was convinced was God's retribution for squandering a mediocre life.

Lawrence walks to the Jury box and leans on its railing. He points to the clean-cut young man now playing JURY FOREMAN.

LAWRENCE

That's me. Or rather, that's the part "me" was cast for. "We find for Southern Valley!" That's it. One Line. Hired as what is called Featured Background. No SAG-Aftra Waiver, no Day Actor pay, no Screen Credit. Just another low-flying wanna-be aiming for the stars. Then I show up to Set and their Wardrobe Department hands me this.

(models his uniform)

"This is wrong," I say. "I'm Jury Foreman, not Fred the Bailiff." Department Head quips, "Foreman, Bailiff, what's the difference?" Of course the young man wearing "my" tweed suit is half my size. Oh my, once the gravity of their mistake weighed in, all wanted to rocket far away from Mother Earth.

(walks to witness stand)

I had to "show-and-tell" Darnell.

(grabs a booster-seat)

With my long hair and beard, she could have "re-cast" me. That's Show Biz speak for "You're fired" leading to my career's quick and not-so-happy ending. But to her credit and mine, she said it was their fault, not mine, annnnd --

Set now comes alive with "Action." Lawrence sets his booster-seat on the witness chair and lifts Mackenzie Foy, 12, in a period country dress, up onto it, swears her in, then goes back to his *Position One* against the wall. Josh Lucas begins questioning cutie-pie soon-to-be-a-Disney-star Mackenzie.

#### INT. JURY ROOM IN SAME COURTHOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

Jury Room has been converted into a Production Office with several monitors playing what was previously recorded.

Lawrence reads a paperback book in one of the twelve chairs.

LAWRENCE

The "Wish You Well" book by David Baldacci. Iconic and ironic, all at the same time.

DAVID BALDACCI, its author, 51, Caucasian, wearing a color-coordinated tennis outfit enters. He is impeccably tan.

Baldacci and Lawrence make eye-contact. Lawrence looks at his book's back cover. Its *Author Picture* is of Baldacci posed elbow-on-knee wearing the exact same outfit.

LAWRENCE

Thank you for writing this.

BALDACCI

Thank you for being in this. I've seen the Dailies, you're selling the scene. Been doing it long?

LAWRENCE

I just got back from Pittsburgh auditioning for Bennett Miller's "Foxcatcher."

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)

*No one outside of college wrestling knows what that title means, so imagine my surprise when ...*

BALDACCI

You wrestled in college?!

LAWRENCE

Virginia Commonwealth University.

BALDACCI

No?! Who was your coach?

LAWRENCE

Tommy Legge.

BALDACCI

(little boy excited)

I wrestled for Tommy!

LAWRENCE

No?! What was your Major?

BALDACCI

Political Science.

Lawrence jumps up little boy excited.

LAWRENCE

I was in their first Poli-Sci class!

They shake hands like long lost Frat Brothers.

BALDACCI

I then went to U.V.A. to study law.

LAWRENCE

Noooo --?! Me, too. What field?

BALDACCI

Corporate.

LAWRENCE

Constitutional!

They go to high-five each other, but miss on purpose.

LAWRENCE

Where do you live now?

BALDACCI

(stalker-wary)

Near --*Saratoga Animal Hospital?*

LAWRENCE

No way! I've been taking all our pound-dogs there for thirty years.

BALDACCI

Me, too!

They grab-to-hold each other's triceps like Roman warriors.

Lawrence's face drops in self-realization as he blurts out.

LAWRENCE

"Well shit David, if you can do it!" --Oh, sorry. I always wanted to be a writer.

BALDACCI

Me, too. What happened?

LAWRENCE

Life. Rejection letters don't pay bills. So like a lot of day dreamers, I woke up a day laborer.

BALDACCI

What brought you here?

LAWRENCE

There. Job didn't pay enough, so I went to work in the school system.

BALDACCI

I meant, what brought you to film?

LAWRENCE

Oh. Meniere's Disease.

BALDACCI

Vertigo? Like in Hitchcock?

LAWRENCE

(rolls eyes)

Jimmy Stewart had acrophobia. It took a year before a neurologist taught me "a hard stare" because one of its symptoms is your eyes actually vibrate which causes the awful trademark nausea.

BALDACCI

So if you just stare "hard" enough at something long enough, you force your eyes to focus and settle down?

LAWRENCE

Sounds simple, but it isn't. I had to retrain my body. I can't bend to pick something up, turn around fast, look straight up, or fly in a plane due to my "dry" crystals.

BALDACCI

"Crystals?"

LAWRENCE

Microscopic. They're supposed to remain separated in a gel in the inner ear and only touch to send equilibrium messages to your brain.

BALDACCI

Jesus.

LAWRENCE

Tried that, too. Growing up, I had an uncle who was an actor. He would call saying what show I could watch him on. Put the acting bug in me I guess. He plays the blacksmith in *The Rifleman* series then *The Dodge Sheriff* in the 1970's Chrysler car commercials. He died last year. So to honor his memory, I decided to be in "just one movie." And now look, my uniform matches his.

BALDACCI

Full circle. What kind of writing?

LAWRENCE

Short stories, articles, novels,  
novelettes, *not very novel*.

BALDACCI

Description, dialogue, and action,  
are all different medium methods.  
What are you passionate about?

He and Baldacci look at a monitor playing the recent scene of  
Lawrence lifting little Mackenzie, then back to each other.

LAWRENCE/BALDACCI

Screenwriting!

**INT. A MARYLAND CONDO'S COMMUNITY ROOM - MONTHS LATER**

Large open meeting room with long tables and folding chairs.

A teaching seminar just ended by Yale Screenwriting PROFESSOR  
MARC LAPADULA, 40s, tall, distinguished, in a tweed smoker  
with long unkept curly hair. He stands at the front of the  
room talking to all-ages STUDENTS who are buying Xeroxed  
copies of different feature scripts from him before exiting.

Professor goes to Lawrence, **60**, and hands him a copy of the  
program, *Final Draft 9*. Lawrence hands Professor a check.

PROFESSOR

Seen you here before.

LAWRENCE

Third time's a charm.

PROFESSOR

Why do you come "here?"

LAWRENCE

Because I can't afford to go there,  
to Yale.

PROFESSOR

No. What brings you to  
screenwriting?

LAWRENCE

Oh. David Baldacci. We talked on  
the set of his last film and he  
motivated me to follow my dream of  
becoming a one.

PROFESSOR

Where do you live now?



LAWRENCE

Just outside D.C.

PROFESSOR

I'm a pretty good judge of talent,  
and for some reason, I see it in  
you. I teach a small private class  
on Sundays. Interested?

LAWRENCE

I can't drive to Connecticut?!

PROFESSOR

Can you drive --"just outside D.C?"

LAWRENCE

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)

Now exactly how many planets had to  
align for me to, 1) get the only  
malady that retires me out early so  
2) my dead uncle's spirit can  
channel me to become a Principal  
through a wardrobe mistake whose  
3) Reverse Shot allows the game-  
changing conversation with my  
apparent Corsican-twin who 4)  
motivates me to follow my dream of  
becoming a writer so 5) fate can  
have me hook-up with the only  
Hollywood screenwriting professor,  
who just happens to live twenty  
minutes from my house?

Lawrence holds up five outstretched fingers, then rotates his  
hand front-to-back like a referee making the call.

**INT. A VIRGINIA CONDOMINIUM'S PARTY ROOM - MONTHS LATER**

Large entertainment room having a kitchen with high counter.

Lawrence, still **60**, and TEN OLDER-AGE STUDENTS sit in lounge  
chairs facing Professor. All are holding ten script pages.

ANNABELLE, 70, a retired federal employee, small but feisty,  
talks like *Harvey Fierstein*.

ANNABELLE

Moving, absolutely moving.

DORIS, 65, a retired school librarian, takes off her reading  
glasses and lets them drop on their lanyard around her neck.

DORIS

Yes, and very powerful.

SETH, 50, Jewish, who never talks about himself so no one knows what he really does, chews on his glasses's earpiece.

SETH

I found it --touching.

PROFESSOR

(to Lawrence)

Tell them why you wrote it.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. A NORTHERN VIRGINIA RESTAURANT - 24 HOURS EARLIER**

Typical large diner with booths, tables, and a FEW CUSTOMERS.

Lawrence, 60s, in jeans and t-shirt, sits at a table in back.

His brother, ROBERT, 68, stooped over, anorexic-thin, balding grey hair, dressed in a shirt and tie enters. Lawrence stands concerned. They shake hands and sit across from each other.

LAWRENCE

Are you okay?

ROBERT

What are you working on?

LAWRENCE

"On" or in?

ROBERT

What's the difference?

LAWRENCE

"In" is someone else's project.

"On" is my own.

ROBERT

Really into this shit aren't you?

LAWRENCE

"This shit" being the film industry? Uh, yeah?

**MONTAGE:** They order, chit-chat, food is brought. The two brothers eat, *laugh*, eat, and *laugh* till it "hurts good." Both try to catch their breath from all the guffawing.

LAWRENCE

*Oh my God --I forgot --why you're --  
my favorite brother.*

ROBERT

*I'm --your only --brother.*

WAITRESS brings their check. Lawrence reaches for his wallet.  
Robert hands her his credit card. She takes it and leaves.

ROBERT

Thanks, I needed this.

LAWRENCE

When can we do "this" again?

ROBERT

"We" can't.

Something about the way he said it.

LAWRENCE

You called last night saying we  
"had to meet." You're always  
traveling so our get togethers have  
to be planned well in advance.  
Looks like there's something going  
on with you physically? What is it?

ROBERT

Can you say thirteen syllables? I  
can't. I have cancer of the bone  
marrow. Incurable, so don't have  
long. One of its symptoms is you  
lose your mind, like Alzheimers.

LAWRENCE

I'm so, I don't, what can I ...?

ROBERT

Keep your promise.

LAWRENCE

What, "promise?"

ROBERT

That you won't visit.

LAWRENCE

What, who, you?! You can't ask ...!

ROBERT

Sure I can, that's why I asked.

LAWRENCE

That doesn't make any, don't visit you?! Ever? And your wife agrees?

ROBERT

My wife doesn't need to know. This is between you and me.

LAWRENCE

I, but, what, no! Why would you --?

ROBERT

Because I won't know who you are and I don't want "you" to remember me as a drooling vegetable.

Waitress brings Robert his card and bill, then exits. He adds a tip, signs the receipt, and stands resolute.

ROBERT

I am sorry, for never being there to protect you.

LAWRENCE

From what?

ROBERT

You know.  
(holds out a hand)  
Deal?

Lawrence stands discombobulated and they shake. Robert's big brother smile says "good-bye" as he *slaps* Lawrence hard on the back and exits strong like an actor's last curtain call.

Lawrence stands there sad with his hand still held out.

LAWRENCE

*House always wins.*

RETURN TO.

**INT. SAME VIRGINIA CONDOMINIUM ROOM - YALE CLASS CONTINUES**

The Ten Older-Age Students sit waiting for Lawrence's answer.

LAWRENCE

To honor my dying brother.

DORIS

You're dedicating this to him?

LAWRENCE  
And its short film.

ANNABELLE  
You're shooting this?!

LAWRENCE  
Based on your reactions, yes.

SETH  
Will it have your "House always  
wins" Line?

LAWRENCE  
And his "thirteen syllables." You  
can't write better than Life.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S NORTHERN VIRGINIA HOME - ONE YEAR LATER**

Finished basement with an entertainment center built around a bookcase-wall full of DVDs. An L-shaped glass computer desk across from it sits in front of the basement's only bay window. Lawrence sits there typing on his Mac. Beside him is a DVD case titled "RevelationZ" on a display stand.

Desk office-phone beside him *rings*. Lawrence, now **61**, still looking same, checks phone-screen's readout screen, gets a worried look, *clears* throat, pulls a set of car keys out of his pants pocket, then hits the speaker-button.

LAWRENCE  
I can be there in twenty minutes.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
Don't bother.

LAWRENCE  
"Don't --?" Then why, how's he ...?

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
"He" died.

LAWRENCE  
(drops head sad)  
When's the funeral?

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
Monday.

Something about the way she said it.

LAWRENCE  
Wait? This past "Monday?"

Brother's Wife starts *screaming* and never stops.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
What do you care?!

LAWRENCE  
I never stopped.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
"Never stopped" by you mean!

LAWRENCE  
Because he ...

ROBERT'S BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
"He" kept waiting for you!

LAWRENCE  
"I" kept waiting for your call?

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
And why did you send us that awful,  
*whatever*?! He didn't understand it,  
or why you dedicated "it" to him?!

LAWRENCE  
"Whatever?!" It has twenty freakin'  
awards and is streaming on Amazon  
with his dedication! If film is  
forever, now my brother is, too.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)  
Well, you're not welcome in his  
family forever! And good luck with  
your --  
(venom-dripping sarcasm)  
*movie career.*

Sound of her receiver *slamming*. Lawrence stares at the phone  
until its dial tone comes on, then stares out the window.

LAWRENCE  
One definition of "coward is a  
person who lacks the courage to  
endure unpleasant things." Was I a  
coward --a second time?

Lawrence drops his keys on the desk and turns numb in his  
chair. A Time-Life commercial plays muted on the big screen  
about the "Best Of Robin Williams" DVDs. He leans in intent.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. RICHMOND VIRGINIA VINTAGE THEATRE - SEPTEMBER, 2021**

The Byrd Theater in Richmond, Virginia was built in 1928. Its antique calliope organ is being played by ORGANIST in a long-tail tuxedo as both are lowered by a platform-elevator under the stage. A trap-door closes over them. Music *fades*.

ATTENDEES are wearing masks because of the ongoing Pandemic.

Festival's SHOWRUNNER, tall blonde female, 40s, in a skirt-suit, carries a hand-microphone and walks onto the stage.

SHOWRUNNER (FILTERED)

Thank you for coming to the 2021  
Richmond International Film  
Festival! Let's bring all our  
winners to the front for Q & A.

VARIOUS FILMMAKERS, all ages and ethnics, walk to the front and line up with their backs against the raised stage. Lawrence, now **70**, so his hair and beard is long as in L.A., limps to the front using a medical cane and joins at the end.

**MONTAGE:** One by one, Filmmakers answer AUDIENCE questions. Lawrence is last to answer and leans forward off the stage.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1

Why did you make "Saving Robin  
Williams?"

LAWRENCE

Because I didn't understand why he  
killed himself and realized others  
wondered same.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2

Why did Robin commit suicide?

LAWRENCE

As our film shows, and his last  
wife believes, because Robin didn't  
want you, his fans, "to remember  
him as a drooling vegetable."

SHOWRUNNER

Your future plans?

LAWRENCE

I literally drive from here  
straight through to Los Angeles.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 3

To be --?

LAWRENCE

"Or not."

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. BROOKLYN, NEW YORK - DAY - 2013**

A NYC CREW is set up for filming in a parking lot outside an abandoned fast-food restaurant.

A fake police Cruiser has its doors and hood off laying on the pavement with fake smoke coming from under its engine.

BACKGROUND ACTORS in police officer costumes or biker gear all lay strewn about "bullet-ridden" with faces fake-bloody.

Actor DELROY LINDO uses a flame-thrower to burn the police cruiser as actor ED HARRIS *fires* an AK-47 with blanks at it.

A squib roll *explodes* across the Cruiser's windshield. POLICE OFFICER EXTRAS inside the car jerk about as if shot.

Director MICHAEL ALMEREYDA, short, huge mane of white hair, stands arms-folded under a canopy watching with a dead-pan stare all of the Action on his big-screen monitor. He nods to his female FIRST A.D. who never needs a megaphone.

FIRST A.D.

Cut! Circle Print! Strike Set!

NYC Crew rush in. SOME remove smoke-blocks from under the cruiser while OTHERS use fire extinguishers on them. MORE use portable tools to bolt its missing doors and hood on laying around the asphalt. They work like a massive NASCAR Pit Crew.

A glass-repair truck pulls up and TWO GLASS REPAIR GUYS begin replacing cruiser's damaged front windshield with a new one.

ARMORERS take the gun from Harris and try to take the flame-thrower from Lindo who doesn't want to give it up quite yet.

ALL Bloody Background Actors stand up high-fiving each other.

Across the street, REAL NYC POLICE OFFICERS hold back a crowd of NYC SPECTATORS who stand *cheering*.

NYC SPECTATORS

"We love you, Ed!"

Ed gives his trademark deadpan response with a half-wave.

ED HARRIS

"Yeah, yeah, yeah."



Behind Director Almereyda stands Lawrence, again **61**, so his hair and beard are half as in L.A.. He is dressed as a Biker wearing full leathers with all types and sizes of knives.

Standing next to Lawrence is actor ETHAN HAWKE with *bruised* make-up and one arm in a sling having fake blood on it. He turns to Lawrence with a huge boyish grin.

ETHAN HAWKE

"I love doing this shit!"

Ethan runs little-boy excited to congratulate fellow Leads.

LAWRENCE

The year is now 2013 on the set of the movie "Cymbeline" in Brooklyn. It is my second film and second time as a Principal thanks to "Wish You Well" --which obviously did.

Almereyda now sits in his director's chair in the shade reading a book, not his own script. Lawrence smiles at him.

LAWRENCE

For my audition, I wore my own biker gear and private collection of knives. Michael asked me, "What's your name?" I smiled back, "Whatever you wanna call me." He pointed to me announcing, "Knifey."

The now fully repaired Cruiser drives off up the street.

Armorers pack all the guns and flame-thrower in their truck.

FIRST A.D.

Lunch!

NYC Crew goes to a Craft Services van parked on the street.

Harris goes to lay under some shade by himself with hands behind his head. First A.D. brings him a plate of fruit.

Bearded actor, MAURICIO OVALLE, 30s, also dressed as a Biker, walks past Lawrence to the food truck and "thumbs-up" at him.

LAWRENCE

That's "Fu Manchu," Ed Harris's consigliere. Nice guy, good actor. He's moving to L.A. to follow his dream. You'll meet him again later.

Lawrence walks into the abandoned restaurant Interior Set.

**INT. ABANDONED RESTAURANT SET - CONTINUOUS**

Food machinery and stainless-steel tables were left behind.

Talking on his cell is actor JOHN LEGUIZAMO, also dressed as a biker. Leguizamo ends his call and nods to Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

Do you remember the first time you  
let yourself believe you might  
actually make it in this Business?

Leguizamo breaks into a wonderful ear-to-ear grin. Lawrence points at own chest, then to the ground. Lawrence gets out a flip-phone. Leguizamo steps beside him for a selfie. *Click.*

**STILL CUT:** Lawrence has a "mean" look holding his Bowie knife menacing while Leguizamo threw up a two-finger peace-sign.

DISSOLVE TO.

**INT. A LOS ANGELES VEGAN RESTAURANT - NOW 2022 AGAIN**

One of the many all-vegetarian small restaurants in L.A.

Lawrence enters with Mauricio Ovalle, now 9 years older with longer hair and a full black beard having whispers of grey. Both wear surgical-masks and sit in a booth. They take off their masks to peruse two menus.

MAURICIO

Vegetarian, huh? Don't know if I  
could do that full-time.

WAITRESS steps to take their order wearing a mask. Mauricio points on the menu. Lawrence points. Waitress exits.

LAWRENCE

Pain is a great motivator. Two  
years ago my feet swole up like a  
circus clown', so ...

MAURICIO

"So" you can't eat meat at all?

LAWRENCE

Sure I can. If I don't want to  
walk, sleep, act, or write.

Waitress brings their plates and exits. Both meals are very colorful. They dig in. Mauricio smiles.

MAURICIO  
Hey, this is pretty good.  
(eats more, wonders)  
Does fish count?

LAWRENCE  
Anything with eyes.

MAURICIO  
Potatoes have "eyes."

LAWRENCE  
Don't quit your waiter job.

MAURICIO  
Married?

LAWRENCE  
(puts down fork somber)  
The person I was married to for  
three and a half decades, died six  
years --before we divorced.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. "THEIR" VIRGINIA HOME OF THIRTY YEARS - SIX YEARS AGO**

Door opens and Lawrence, now **64**, so hair and beard is much shorter, wears gym-shorts and a t-shirt saying "*I Do My Own Stunts*." He hobbles in on crutches, then down bedroom-hall.

Younger wife of 30 years, DEZI, 56, long solid brunette hair, is over-weight and frumpy. She enters carrying a hospital bag and throws it angry watching Lawrence go into his bedroom.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Bureau, dresser, and king-size bed take up most of the room.

Lawrence enters, stands crutches against wall, then gets into bed. He gets a puzzled look, reaches under t-shirt, and pulls off two *EKG* electrode self-stick pads to toss in a trashcan.

LAWRENCE  
They always forget at least two.

Dezi enters fuming without his hospital bag and grabs both his crutches like *Cinderella's* "Evil Stepsister."

DEZI  
"I'm tired of you getting old and  
always having surgeries!"

Dezi unplugs and takes the phone off his nightstand, then exits with both crutches and phone *slamming* the door.

DEZI

"I have my own problems! I'm never taking care of you again!"

Her door *slams*. Lawrence stares at his closed door puzzled.

LAWRENCE

And I love you, too!

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Lawrence awakes, tries to get out of bed, but can't.

LAWRENCE

What the --? I'm paralyzed?!  
(panics, remembers)  
Okay, easy, surgeon said my back muscles could spasm since it's the second time in the same disc.

Lawrence has to fight to turn on his night-stand lamp. He lays there recovering, then gets a wide-eyed worried look.

LAWRENCE

Hey, Honey?! Would you bring me the hospital bag, please?!  
(no response, desperate)  
I can't get up and need to go to the bathroom!

He waits. No response. He gets a panicked-look, rolls onto other side, bunches bedspread in a pile, and urinates into it. He rolls onto his back exhausted and passes out again.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - THREE DAYS AFTER SURGERY**

Lawrence, still on his back with hair and beard now unkempt, is miserable. His t-shirt is wrinkled and filthy. He's lost weight. The earlier bunched bedspread now looks saturated.

LAWRENCE

Three days. Three?! No food, no water, no phone. No sense.

Lawrence rolls carefully out of his bed knees-first down onto the carpeted floor still wearing his shorts which look damp.

LAWRENCE

No time, to figure her shit out.

He lays down, crawls on side to the door, fights to reach up turning its knob, then crawls on his side down the hall.

**EXT. MCDONALD'S DRIVE-THRU LANE - LATER SAME MORNING**

Lawrence sits same in his car waiting at a drive-thru window.

LAWRENCE

Her bedroom door is locked. She  
doesn't answer, but I can hear her  
moving around inside. What the heck  
happened to my real wife?

ATTENDANT, female Hispanic teenager with acne, hands out a large cup of orange juice. Lawrence gulps it down like a desert survivor hand-circling, *Another*. Attendant disappears.

LAWRENCE

So I crawled out to my car, still  
fragile, but now at least mo-bile,  
and drove straight here. When I get  
home, I'll scoot down the stairs,  
go on-line and get a maid service  
to come out and change my bed.

Attendant re-appears and hands down a bag with another juice.

Lawrence rips open the bag and one wrapping like *Tom Hank's* "Castaway" to cram half its *McMuffin* into his mouth. His eyes close as he chews cheeks bulging. He smiles as if having an orgasm, then opens them glassy-eyed to Window Attendant.

LAWRENCE

Best "all fluff and no real  
substance" --I ever had.

Attendant slides her glass window-door closed concerned.

RETURN TO.

**INT. SAME LOS ANGELES VEGAN RESTAURANT - STILL IN 2022**

Mauricio sits shocked with his mouth open, then closes it.

MAURICIO

Sorry for your loss, man.

LAWRENCE

So was I --twice.

Lawrence takes another big bite, chews, and rolls his eyes.

MAURICIO

You're really into this shit.

LAWRENCE

If by "this shit" you mean giving up everyone and everything known and comfortable to follow some unknown dream, yes. It's all about choices you know, so --

(*Indiana Jones, Knight*)

"Choose wisely."

(back to regular voice)

Which I didn't most of my life.

Which is why I got here so late.

MAURICIO

How did you get --"here?"

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. VIRGINIA ITALIAN RESTAURANT - ELECTION NIGHT, 2016**

Typical small neighborhood restaurant with lots of red-checked tablecloths packed with AMERICAN PATRONS.

Lawrence, now **64**, holds door open for Dezi, **56**, not as big, but just as dour. He wears a suit and she a muumuu dress as she is now always self-conscious about her girth.

Lawrence pulls out a chair for Dezi. She sits herself in a different one. He furrows his brow, then sits himself in it.

ITALIAN WAITER brings them two glasses of iced water.

ITALIAN WAITER

Usual, sir?

Lawrence rubs palms together fast-nodding. Waiter leaves.

Lawrence looks up at a *muted* wall-mounted T.V. with running captions showing the day's Presidential election tallies.

**CAPTION ROLLS ACROSS SCREEN:** *The Beginning...of the End...*

LAWRENCE

I can't believe he believes he can say such outrageous, rude, nasty, and untrue things --and expect to get away with all those lies.

DEZI

That's because they're not true.  
It's all Fake News.

LAWRENCE

It's what?! How? They C.G.I. him?  
(looks around joking)  
Where's my real wife?

DEZI

Your realistic wife is here. I  
really listened and he spoke to me.

LAWRENCE

As what, the pied piper of poison?

Dezi looks at the T.V. with orange-stars in her eyes.

LAWRENCE

Oh my God, he is "The Pied Pooper."

DEZI

She should go to prison.

LAWRENCE

What? Who? Wait. Does this mean --?

DEZI

Yes. I couldn't vote for a liar.

LAWRENCE

Which one?! But we talked about  
this, we've always voted the same?

DEZI

He's our country's savior.

LAWRENCE

He's the frickin' Anti-Christ!

DEZI

He'll "drain the swamp."

LAWRENCE

He is the swamp!

Dezi *slams* both fists hard on the table shaking it as their meal arrives. Dezi digs-in regurgitating the Country's new-45's false embellishments. Lawrence pushes his plate away.

A *Michael & Son* commercial comes on the T.V. In it, Lawrence in bib-overalls scratches his butt, then works on a faucet.

FEMALE DINER, 50s, at nearby table, sees it, and leans over.

FEMALE DINER

Excuse me, but are you "The  
Plumber, I don't want?"

Lawrence nods smiling and hands her his actor business card.  
And just like that, any love Dezi once had, changes to hate.

DEZI  
*He's the husband, I don't want.*

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BASEMENT OFFICE - NEXT MORNING**

Lawrence sits in a bathrobe at his Mac-keyboard typing.

Dezi walks down the stairs one step at a time like to a coronation. Her sour soul soars as her taunts auger in.

DEZI  
I was right, see, huh, see?! Bet  
you change sides now, right?

LAWRENCE  
Wrong. And I won't be watching his  
fake news, for the next four years.

Dezi folds her arms like a kid ready to tantrum.

DEZI  
How long have we been married?

LAWRENCE  
Three *wonderful* decades.

DEZI  
And you still want to go to L.A.?

LAWRENCE  
Don't "want" to, need to, just for  
a year. You know my professor says  
it's the only way to sell a script.

DEZI  
If you go, you won't come back.

LAWRENCE  
What? When? Why would you think  
that, let alone say that?

BROTHER'S WIFE  
Because I know you.

LAWRENCE  
Apparently not.

BROTHER'S WIFE  
They'll corrupt you.



LAWRENCE

Who? What will --? *Excuse me?*

DEZI

No, I won't, ever. "Hollywood is evil and I forbid you to go!"

Lawrence stops typing to look mouthing, "*Excuse me?*"

DEZI

Stop asking, 'cause you won't get it. You can't go and that's final!

Dezi storms back up the stairs angry *slamming* its door. He stares at it, detaches confused, then goes back to typing.

LAWRENCE

She'll come around.  
(stops typing sad)  
But you already know the answer to that. Don't you?

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. CHURCH NOW AS A MOVIE SET - ONE YEAR LATER**

MOURNER ACTORS, mature men and women dressed all-in-black, mill about the church courtyard as a t-shirted "NETFLIX CREW" sets up a tracking dolly with its track while a BACKGROUND MILITARY BAND *practices* in the parking lot.

Lawrence, again **65** so hair and beard half as in L.A., stands wearing a black suit with a military black beret having a *U.S. Army Ranger* flash on it. He looks around, then speaks like "Sergeant Friday" from the television series, *Dragnet*.

LAWRENCE

It's August, 2017. It's hot, damn hot. I'm playing a Vet, a Vietnam Vet. I carry a card.  
(holds up SAG-Aftra card)  
A union card. My partner is Kevin Spacey. We're working the "House of Cards" day shift out of Baltimore.  
(back to regular voice)  
This is the sixth time I've been on this series, but the first time --  
(sings as *Marilyn Monroe*)  
"Mis-ter Pres-i-dent" --  
(back to regular voice)  
kept us all waiting for six hours.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, 20's male, holds a finger to one ear.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Arriving!

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

Camera's Up! Rolling, Rolling!  
Background, annnnd Action!

A presidential limousine pulls up to the curb and stops.

BACKGROUND MARINE CORPS snap to attention. ACTOR SECRET SERVICE gets out of front passenger door to open back door.

KEVIN SPACEY, 58, grey pinstripe suit, presidential lapel pin, exits. Something is different about Spacey this time. Is he drunk with power or just drunk, or both?

Lawrence snaps to attention holding a perfect salute.

H.O.C. D.P.'s camera tracks Spacey as he walks to, then stops directly in front of Lawrence with his back to the camera.

Lawrence smiles inside because he knows he's now "On Camera" and looks over Spacey's shoulder. *Never Stare At The Talent.*

Something catches his eye and Lawrence glances at Spacey who is eyeing him up and down like some creepy pedophile uncle.

Spacey meets his gaze, then winks, but not friendly, sexual.

Some of Lawrence's brain cells actually explode, *WTF?*

Spacey smiles back sexy-evil, then moves on.

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

CUT! Back to One!

SPACEY

"Let's skip back!"

Lawrence is deer-in-the-headlights. *Never Touch The Talent.*

Spacey shrugs, then skips back to his limousine and gets in.

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

Stand By! Going Again!

H.O.C. DP runs to stand behind a fixed camera in a corner for an over-the-shoulder shot of Spacey so still on Lawrence.

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

Camera's Up! Rolling, Rolling!  
Background, annnnd Action!

Background Marine Corps snap to attention. Actor Secret Service Agent gets out car's front seat to open back door.

H.O.C. D.P.'s camera tracks Spacey as he walks to stop in front of Lawrence again with his back slightly to the camera.

Lawrence doesn't have to Snap-To, he's never been *At Ease*. He tries not to, then has to, glance at Spacey, who plays his best *Caligula* with tongue repeatedly wetting both lips. Any healthy brain-cells left in Lawrence now go terminal as he *Eww-eww-ewwwww's* at Spacey's shiny snaky-tongue. Spacey's smile goes beyond chilling as he struts away a very powerful man in Show Business. Untouchable, so he believes.

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

And, Cut! Lunch!

Cast and Crew cross the parking lot to a Craft Services tent.

Lawrence remains at his Post, boots in *bête noire*.

ACTRESS ONE walks past Lawrence *whispering* aside.

ACTRESS ONE

*"If Kevin's assistant asks if you  
want to go to a private party later  
--don't go."*

Actress One proceeds on nonchalantly to Craft Services.

ACTRESS TWO sees Lawrence's distress, and stops in front of him talking to, but not at him, like in a spy movie.

ACTRESS TWO

*"You didn't know?"*

Lawrence stares straight ahead still holding his salute.

LAWRENCE

*Know what?*

ACTRESS TWO

*"Kevin trolls during the show."*

Actress Two now exits across to the Craft Services tent.

Lawrence's bushy eyebrows move like two fuzzy caterpillars as the only person left On Set comes to him.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

You don't remember me do you?

(no response, explains)

You were Lead in my student film.

Memory snaps Lawrence out of his stupor who *snaps* fingers.

LAWRENCE

"Red Pill Radio" Towson University.  
You're on Crew here? Congrats.

They shake hands.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Yeah, pretty sweet gig, except --  
(looks down ashamed)  
*he does that to everyone.*

LAWRENCE

And "everyone" looks away?

Production Assistant looks away.

LAWRENCE

Would you mind getting the Set  
Medic, please? I am literally, sick  
to my stomach.

Production Assistant exits. Lawrence *sighs* remembering.

LAWRENCE

I signed the Union's Sick Report  
and walked off Set. For two months,  
I refused all auditions thinking  
maybe I should just quit the  
Business if this kind of behavior  
is enabled by cast and crew. Then  
*Harvey Weinstein* hit, and two weeks  
later, *Spacey's* past caught up with  
him. I was afraid to tell anyone  
that it happened because he was so  
powerful. It's all about control  
you know. But then the "*Me Too*"  
movement took off so "me too" could  
finally post about it on Facebook.  
Every female actor friend sent me  
condolences saying, "Sorry you had  
to go through that." Male actors  
emailed back jokes --bad ones. If  
you watch our scene, it Jump Cuts  
when he's standing in front of me.

Lawrence removes his beret, wrings it in his hands, and walks  
away from the food tent sad.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BASEMENT NOW AS A SET - IN 2018**

Fake walls with matching paint were built to close-in and cover the DVD bookcases making the room look like an efficiency. The bottom of the stairs has been closed-off with a matching piece of painted drywall with fake door. Commercial carpeting pieces now cover the floor's linoleum. This Set has a bed, table, refrigerator, and a microwave.

Lawrence, still **65**, sits in a wheelchair wearing a t-shirt saying *"To Quote Hamlet, Act III, Scene III - NO."*

LAWRENCE

Cut! That's a Wrap.

MALE ACTOR and FEMALE ACTOR hug. His INDIE CREW high-five.

CINEMATOGRAPHER, 50, going bald, breaks down his 4X-camera.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

How's the back?

LAWRENCE

Still back there.

CINEMATOGRAPHER

I'll upload video and audio files to a hard-drive and drop it off tomorrow. Need help Striking Set?

LAWRENCE

Nah, I'm already sitting down.

All pack up then exit the basement's outside door.

Lawrence breaks-down the fake walls with a hammer and pulls them down to him while rolling his wheelchair backwards.

DEZI

"You're just wasting your time and money. No one's ever going to buy any of your short films or produce one of your scripts."

Dezi came in through the basement door and stands hands-on-hips wearing a *MAGA* hat. Her face contorts in pure loathing.

LAWRENCE

It's like acting. If you're in it for the money --do something else.

DEZI

It's not a job!

Lawrence pulls on a fake-wall and it falls towards him. He catches it *oof-laughing* while his chair rolls backwards.

LAWRENCE

Sure? Sure feels like one.

DEZI

I don't understand you?

LAWRENCE

Obviously. Look, the first time you walk off a Set, you already know if you're walking on a second one. You either love it, or you don't.

DEZI

I, don't.

LAWRENCE

And I get that. But I also appreciate you letting me do this.

DEZI

Do what, waste your life?

LAWRENCE

At least I get paid to waste it.

DEZI

Half, half-wit! You were supposed to retire with full pay then take care of me.

LAWRENCE

Now that, would be a waste.

Dezi spins angry and *rips* the drywall fake-cover off the stairwell entrance, then *stomps* up, one stair at a time.

Lawrence rolls up the floor's carpet pieces with his feet.

LAWRENCE

*Thank you, for your support.*

Door now *slams*. Lawrence slaps both hands over his mouth.

RETURN TO.

**INT. SAME LOS ANGELES VEGAN RESTAURANT - STILL IN 2022**

Mauricio and Lawrence finished their meal. Waitress appears. Lawrence reaches for his wallet. Mauricio holds up a hand.

MAURICIO

I got this. If you finish your  
Odyssey, Odysseus.

LAWRENCE

Ulysses. Homer versus Tennyson, who  
described Ulysses as "an old man."

MAURICIO

Now I understand why your "old  
lady" threw you out.

This is the first time we see Lawrence's emotions, he's mad.

Mauricio makes the circling hand-gesture, *Continue*.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - AFTER HIS BACK SURGERY**

Lawrence, **65** again, is recovered from surgery and asleep near  
one edge of his king mattress breathing on a *CPAP* machine.

His closed door is thrown open and overhead light snaps on.

He sits up, but is yanked back by his air-hose. He tries to  
talk, but negative air pressure sucks his words back in. His  
eyes adjust to see Dezi standing above him wearing sweats.

DEZI

"Take me to the hospital."

**INT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA FAIRFAX HOSPITAL - LATER SAME NIGHT**

Emergency Room waiting area has red lights rotating outside  
its huge wall of glass as a new ambulance arrives.

Lawrence sits watching and studying everyone and everything  
as an actor. *Observe, observe, always observe.*

DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIST, female, 40s, in lab coat, approaches.

Lawrence fights to get out of his too too-low chair.

DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIST

She had passive-aggressive urges.

LAWRENCE

She wanted --to hurt herself?

DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIST

Has she been under a lot stress?

LAWRENCE

Her parents died recently leaving her a large inheritance. Her small office workplace has a "Three's a crowd" interplay. I've been trying to get her to quit, but says she can't, "the money's too good."

DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIST

I admitted her. Go home. We'll call when things change.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Lawrence is asleep wearing his CPAP mask. Phone *rings*. He grabs its receiver yanking his mask off with other hand. Machine's air-flow *hisses* as he clears his throat *coughing*.

LAWRENCE

*Hell --Hello?*

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)

Visiting hours are 5 to 7. Bring proper I.D.

LAWRENCE

Huh? What? She's not coming home?

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)

No. She wants clean clothes and her laptop. But first, I need to ask you a personal question.

LAWRENCE

Shoot.

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)

Do you own a gun?

LAWRENCE

Uh, yes, a small automatic?

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)

Can you give it to someone, or at least hide it really well?

LAWRENCE

She wanted to --? Yes of course!

The phone *disconnects*. He doesn't hang up staring at it.



**INT. DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIC WING CHECK-IN - THAT NIGHT**

Elevator doors *ding*, then open. Lawrence exits carrying a floral overnight bag. There is a line of VISITORS looking like airport boarding. Lawrence waits last in line at a Security Desk with uniformed SECURITY guard. One-by-one, a Visitor is escorted through the secure door by a VOLUNTEER.

Lawrence waits his turn, then hands over driver's license.

SECURITY

Bag on table.

LAWRENCE

(mimics same timber)

Not, yet.

Lawrence smiles. Security does not. Lawrence *coughs* and puts "bag on table." Security goes through it, then hands back license to Lawrence while handing the bag to Dezi's Nurse.

DEZI'S NURSE

Walk this way.

Dezi's Nurse uses a key-card to open secure door. It *buzzes* open. Both walk through it. Lawrence imitates Nurse's walk. Door *slams* shut behind them like a jail-cell.

**INT. DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIC WING - CONTINUOUS**

Lawrence follows Dezi's Nurse who leads him down long halls.

As they pass rooms, Lawrence looks inside their open doors to see PATIENTS who appear drugged, detached, and desolate.

Both arrive at a closed door. Dezi's Nurse enters announcing.

DEZI'S NURSE

It's here.

LAWRENCE

(follows pantomiming)

"It's --here?"

**INT. DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Dezi's Nurse sets overnight bag on a tall dresser and exits.

Dezi sits in a regular double-bed blank-staring, sedated.

Lawrence looks around the room to see full drapes, a bureau, large paintings, and a big-screen TV mounted on far wall.

LAWRENCE

Wow, looks like a fancy hotel room.  
Know when you're coming home?

DEZI

"I am --home."

Lawrence steps back shocked, then closes his eyes tight.

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. HOSPITAL'S ORIGINAL STAND-ALONE PSYCHIATRIC WING - DAY**

Brick building with tall rectangular windows. No parking lot, only a u-shaped driveway with park benches within its grass.

**CAPTION:** *Northern Virginia Mental Health Center, 1977*

**INT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - MOMENTS LATER**

Exam room looks more like an office with freshly painted cinderblock walls, exam table, and a desk in the middle.

Lawrence, before his legal name change, was born **LARRY**. He's **25** with a five o'clock reddish-beard shadow and short messy strawberry-blond hair. His face is pallor and his expensive business suit hangs off mere skin and bones at 90 pounds.

His brother Robert, now **33**, is tall, strong, vibrant, a bear of a man. He sits beside Larry *tapping* a foot nervous.

LARRY'S PSYCHIATRIST, 40s female, enters wearing a lab coat and sits at the clean empty desk. She opens Larry's file.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Your brother co-signed our papers,  
but you must also sign them. If you  
do, you give up all legal right to  
leave this facility until both  
doctors and staff certify you as  
Cleared. Do you understand?

She slides the forms across her desk. Larry answers robotic.

LARRY

Must, come, back.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Where?

LARRY

Any "where" --  
(signs without looking)  
but here.

RETURN TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA HOME - AFTER DEZI'S HOSPITAL RELEASE**

Door opens and Lawrence, still **65**, enters carrying earlier overnight bag followed by Dezi, **58**, wearing different sweats.

LAWRENCE

How can I help you?

Dezi elbows hard past him and down the hall into her room *slamming* its door. Lawrence follows tilting his head.

**INT. DEZI'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Her room is beyond defiled. She's now a Hoarder. Pizza boxes with uneaten crusts and unopened Amazon boxes are literally everywhere. Double-bed has no sheets, just a dirty blanket. Room's only window has Amazon boxes stacked in front of it with clothes over them obscuring all outside view. (*true*)

Dezi lays flat on her back using a cell phone perched on her protruding belly as an arched-shelf playing on-line games.

Lawrence opens her door, then yanks his head away hit by the stench of her pigsty. He drops her bag holding his breath.

LAWRENCE

*"Had to bring an exterminator in,  
mice were living under your  
carpet."*

(has to breathe, *coughs*.)

"You wouldn't let me clean up while you were away. But now that you're back, may I at least throw out all your old garbage? I have to hold my breath when I walk by your room."

DEZI

"Stop exaggerating!"

LAWRENCE

I'm not. And you're not going back to your hostile workplace that caused all this because I went to your office and told your boss you were not coming back!

He waits for some sign of gratitude. None coming. He *sighs*.

LAWRENCE

I told him he could have prevented this so he is responsible for your medical insurance through the end of the year and your salary through the end of this month. I made an offer, I wouldn't let him refuse.

She looks up with eyes dilated on major drugs. She has the same exact zombie-stare Larry had forty years ago.

DEZI

Shut the door on your way out.

LAWRENCE

You've been shutting the world and me out for years. We need to talk about the fact you're a hoarder and on-line shopaholic. You completely changed when you got your Parent's inheritance check.

She keeps playing her game not paying attention to him.

DEZI

"I don't need you anymore."

Lawrence steps back in shock, then grins at her "joke."

LAWRENCE

Yeah, right. Didn't know you were supposed to "need" me, thought you were supposed to "want" me.

DEZI

"I can afford to hire anyone I want to do anything to my house now."

LAWRENCE

"Our" house. Look, you locked yourself in here years ago and locked me out. We never talk anymore. You know I know what you're going through. I also know, you've been sick a long time, so it will take a much longer time, for you to get well. If, you want to. Do you?

(no response, points)

I went to Social Security and got you their Disability forms. Fill them out and I'll sign as Witness.

She ignores him. Lawrence drops the envelope on her bed and exits closing the door. She yells from inside.

DEZI  
"I'm not a hoarder!"

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT**

He's asleep on his CPAP machine. Its *breathing* is rhythmic.

Door *bursts* open and overhead light snaps on.

Lawrence sits upright then yanked back by his air-hose. He pulls his mask off shielding his eyes as hose's air *hisses*.

Dezi stands in the open doorway backlit, an imposing sight.

DEZI  
"YOU NEED TO MOVE OUT!"

Dezi exits *slamming* the door while leaving overhead light on, then sound of her own bedroom door *slamming*.

Lawrence puts CPAP machine on pause, turns off light, and gets back in bed. Sound of snoring, then he chokes *coughing*.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - 1977 CONT'D**

Larry, 25 again, put on healthy weight and is clean shaven.

He's sitting across from His Psychiatrist and is *choking*.

LARRY  
*Can't, breathe.*

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
You can breathe. Memory recall is trapped in your muscles. Breathe.

Larry pushes back in his chair and grabs at throat. No air, still can't breathe. He jumps-up *knocking* his chair over.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
It's okay, you're okay. What did you remember?

LARRY  
(picks up chair, sits)  
She --was choking me.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
"She?" Your mother. Why?

LARRY  
The day after my dad died ...

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
When you were eighteen.

LARRY  
She yelled I was the cause of all  
the trouble in their relationship.  
My own mother choked me screaming,  
(hands imitate strangling)  
"I wish you were never born!"

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
Did you fight back?

LARRY  
Man's not supposed to hit a woman,  
let alone his mother?

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
How long did your abuse last?

LARRY  
Forever.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST  
Your dad was your protector. With  
him gone, you became --vulnerable.

RETURN TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BASEMENT - AFTER DEZI'S RELEASE**

Lawrence, **65**, sits staring at his Mac's screen remembering  
Dezi bursting into his bedroom screaming the night before. He  
becomes aware of being watched and looks up the stairs.

Dezi stands in the open doorway, hands-on-hips, backlit.

LAWRENCE  
May I --*help* you?

DEZI  
Just making sure you're still  
alive.

LAWRENCE  
Wishful thinking?

DEZI

No. "Same as when I come into your bedroom at night watching you to check if you're still breathing."

LAWRENCE

You come into my bedroom, while I'm asleep, to stand over me, watching?  
(no response, shudders)  
Want to talk about last night?

DEZI

What about "last night?"

LAWRENCE

When you came into my room ...

DEZI

"I never came into your room!"

LAWRENCE

Screaming, "You need to move out?"

DEZI

"Why would you lie like that?"

Dezi stomps up the stairs angry *slamming* its door closed.

Lawrence stares at it wondering if he's going crazy, again.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Asleep on his CPAP machine, its *breathing* is rhythmic.

Door *bursts* open and overhead light snaps on.

Lawrence sits upright being yanked back by air-hose. He pulls his mask off shielding his eyes. Its air *hisses*.

Dezi stands in his doorway backlit, now a terrifying sight.

DEZI

"YOU'RE NOT GIVING ME WHAT I NEED!"

LAWRENCE

*Huh, what?* What do you need?

DEZI

"For you to tell me I'm right, even when you know I'm wrong!"

LAWRENCE

Any idea how crazy that sounds?

DEZI

"THIS ISN'T WORKING OUT! YOU NEED  
TO FIND ANOTHER PLACE TO LIVE!"

Dezi exits *slamming* his door but leaving overhead light on,  
then sound of her own bedroom door *slamming*.

Lawrence puts CPAP machine on pause, stealths to his door,  
silently turns its lock, *click*, then turns off the light.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. NORTHERN VIRGINIA MENTAL HEALTH CENTER - 1977 CONT'D**

Larry, 25 again, and His Psychiatrist sit same. He tears-up.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Do these memories still scare you?

LARRY

Do "memories" my own mother hated  
me, physically abused me, scared me  
all the time, still scare me? She-  
it, that'd scare anybody.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Free-floating anxiety is stressful.  
That's why people assign their  
unknown fears to almost anything.

LARRY

Yeah? Well, least I didn't attach  
mine to plumbing or compulsive hand-  
washing, just eating.  
(snort-laugh)  
What could go wrong with that?

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

D.M.V. suggests P.A.'s were caused  
by P.T.S.D. which led to O.C.D.

LARRY

You get paid by the initial?

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Every time your subconscious wanted  
to remember overwhelming memories,  
your conscious sought to escape  
them. Hence, your panic attacks  
leading to false reasoning. People  
can become bodybuilders to feel  
strong enough to physically protect  
themselves. Is that what you did?



LARRY

And take Karate? Sure, makes sense.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Mountain climbing, motorcycle racing, SCUBA diving, skydiving. Did you have a death wish?

LARRY

Life wish. Didn't think I'd make it past thirty. Every time I felt good about myself, I'd hear Mom's voice yelling not to. So I'd screw up on purpose, and boy did I, a lot.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Do you know why we kept you in here this long?

LARRY

Because my roommate killed himself. He told me this was his third time in, said he felt safe here, said it was his "home." It's many things, but should never become that.

His Psychiatrist writes in his file, then looks up.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

I believe your passive-aggressive conflict is where you can cope with it now. You've done well.

LARRY

Thanks. But no one could go through this much crap alone. I had help.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

It's unfortunate your brother's wife wouldn't let him visit you. Does your girlfriend still visit?

LARRY

Just, friend. And yes, everyday.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Do you love her?

LARRY

I don't know what that word means.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Do you have feelings for her?

LARRY

How can you not have feelings for  
someone who stands by you while  
other so-called friends run away?

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

(closes his file)

I believe you're ready to leave us,  
but not ready to stay by yourself.

LARRY

I'll discuss options with her.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

You're lucky to have her. How did  
you two meet?

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. WATERGATE HOTEL PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT**

Penthouse overlooking the Potomac River and Kennedy Center.

**CAPTION:** *Watergate Hotel, Washington DC, 1977*

Larry, **25**, is a beefcake bodybuilder wearing a smoking jacket  
with ascot. He looks like a strawberry-blonde *Robert Redford*.  
He leans on the railing lost in thought holding a wine glass.

Inside the apartment, PARTYGOERS, 20s-50s, in 1977 evening  
wear, men in leisure suits, women in *Jackie O* dresses, hold  
crystal-stemware and *laugh*. One of them, looks out of place.

PAULA SANTANA, Hispanic, 24, skinny, childhood-acne pock-  
marked face, has a huge nose holding up big glasses. She  
wears a simple floral summer dress. She draws a deep breath,  
slides door open, then walks out and up behind Larry foxing.

PAULA

Don't fall!

Larry spins surprised *sloshing* his drink onto her dress.  
Awkward silence, then their eyes meet and both *laugh*.

LARRY

You first.

Larry pulls a stylish silk handkerchief out of breast-pocket  
and begins blotting her dress. Paula looks down surprised. He  
looks down to see he is blotting her breasts. He *coughs*.

LARRY

Sorry.

PAULA

I'm not.

Paula sticks out her tongue playfully. Larry notices the tip of her tongue is not rounded or smooth, but squared with large bumps all over its top surface.

PAULA

Going to our Convention?

Larry is still distracted by Paula's misshapen tongue.

LARRY

In Miami? Hadn't planned on it.

PAULA

Our Whip just cancelled. Would your job let you take off this sudden?

CAROL MARCUS, Caucasian, 24, long blonde hair, green eyes, buxomly in a low-cut evening dress, lets a long leg enter first out of the sliding door. She's a "10" and knows it.

CAROL

Who are you hiding from me?

PAULA

Recruiting. The Club's newest member to be our Convention Whip.

Carol extends a hand. She and Larry shake professional, but she drags her fingers across his palm sexy as they break.

CAROL

We're booked two to a room to keep costs down, so if you liked living in a college dorm --?

LARRY

Sure, sounds like fun. When?

CAROL

I'll go change the reservations.

Carol exits back inside sashaying exaggerated. Larry watches her buttocks move back and forth like an automaton.

PAULA

How will you get there?

LARRY

Huh, where? Oh, uh --drive?

PAULA

Want help paying for gas tomorrow?

LARRY

Sure, sounds like fun.  
(snaps back to reality)  
Wait! Tomorrow-tomorrow?

PAULA

Pick me up at five.

LARRY

"Five?" In the morning!  
(points to floor)  
This morning?

**EXT. INTERSTATE 95 IN THE DEEP SOUTH - NEXT MORNING**

Perfect driving day, beautiful blue sky and billowy clouds.

A 1975 Porsche 914 speeds along with a CB-radio antennae on its engine lid and luggage strapped to rear lid's trunk-rack.

**INT. LARRY'S PORSCHE - MOMENTS LATER**

Larry drives in jeans and a *Star Wars* t-shirt wearing white leather driving gloves and *Easy Rider* yellow-tint sunglasses. He drives one-handed reaching his free hand out to grab an imaginary throat. His voice imitates *James Earl Jones*.

LARRY

"If this is a consular ship, then  
where is the Ambassador?"

Paula sits sideways as passenger with huge purple sunglasses. She pulls her glasses down onto her nose-tip to look overtop.

Larry makes his free hand throw away empty air then turns his chest to proudly point at a blue starfield *Star Wars* promo-button on his t-shirt reading, "*May The Force Be With You.*"

LARRY

First 500 in D.C. to see it! Seen  
it eight times. Great movie.

Paula's not impressed. Larry smiles becoming *Peter Cushing*.

LARRY

"Now witness, the power of this  
fully operational battle station."

Larry downshifts and Porsche takes off. Paula holds on.

**EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF PORSCHE ON INTERSTATE 95 - CONTINUOUS**

Porsche weaves through traffic speeding like at NASCAR.

PAULA  
I'm not afraid.

LARRY  
(as a perfect Yoda)  
"You will be. --You, will, be."

**INT. LARRY'S MIAMI HOTEL ROOM - THEIR ARRIVAL NEXT MORNING**

Single large room of 1970's multi-color stripe-patterned foil wallpaper and thick orange swag carpet with two double beds.

Door opens. Larry enters carrying a heavy duffle bag with "SCUBA" printed on it. He's followed by a CUBAN VALET in a red vest with two suitcases who lays both on second double-bed. Larry hands a \$20.00 bill to Valet who smiles and exits.

Larry goes to the room's only tall narrow window and looks out, then straight down. His room is on the eighteenth floor. He smiles, then jumps back like tasered. Stunned, he peers out the window again then jumps back even further. He lays down on the empty bed, gets comfortable, and closes his eyes. He exhales tired, *snores*, then jumps up hyperventilating.

LARRY  
I Don't Want To Remember!

He steps right then left, can't decide, and freezes.

**TIME-LAPSE CLOCK:** Dial on nightstand's clock reads 10:00 a.m. Its big hand circles around twice to now show 12:00 noon.

Door re-opens and Carol enters with same Cuban Valet now carrying her two suitcases who lays both on the first bed. Carol tips Valet who exits. She *pops* open a suitcase.

CAROL  
Hey, roomie.

Larry step-falls forward like coming out of a trance.

LARRY  
We're sleeping --together?!

CAROL  
*Shhhhh*. Don't tell my husband.

LARRY  
Your husband, The County Chair?!

CAROL

Tell me something, I don't want to know. He was our Whip, now you are. All the other rooms are booked. Don't worry, I don't bite --  
(unbuttons blouse)  
*unless asked.*

Carol pulls off her shirt to a *Frederick's of Hollywood* bra, then opens her suitcase to take out fresh undies.

LARRY

You're undress--?! Wait! I, I'll wait outside till you're ...

Too late, Carol drops her slacks to reveal matching panties.

CAROL

What? Ready? I'm always ready. I need a shower. Wanna' join me?

Carol kicks off her shoes and skips into the bathroom with new undies in her hand closing its door.

CAROL (O.S.)

I meant for dinner!

Larry absentmindedly backs up near the window, glances out, and sets a new broad jump record. He recovers as *Rod Serling*.

LARRY

"That's the signpost up ahead. Your next stop, the Twilight Zone."

**INT. LARRY'S MIAMI HOTEL ROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Room is dark. Larry is asleep on his back in second bed, *snoring*. He stirs, *mumbles* happy, then smiles. Both eyes jolt open. He throws back covers to discover Carol is giving him a blowjob. He grabs her head, but she gets double wrist-control to hold his hands down while looking up smiling as best she can. She is a Pro. His eyes cross as he acquiesces to hormones, then slow-closes both eyes smiling again.

**INT. LARRY'S MIAMI HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING**

Larry opens his eyes, then throws back covers. No one.

LARRY

Best dream, I never had.

He tosses his t-shirt to stand in just pajama pants. He flexes all his muscles looking in a full-view wall mirror.

**MIRROR IMAGE:** What stares back at him is LITTLE LARRY, 8 years old with a crew-cut, no shirt, obese, having multiple fat rolls. Little Larry looks stressed and unhappy.

Adult Larry is disgusted and does Martial Arts Kata Forms angry. He finishes, coils down, then jumps up front-snap kicking the ceiling *denting* its drywall. He lands perspiring.

Door *bursts* open. Carol enters in a *Charlie's Angels* pantsuit winded and *slams* the door shut sliding its chain-lock on. She spins falling back against the door with a Vampire-look.

CAROL

I, want, more!

Carol pushes Larry back onto bed. She yanks down his pajamas then goes down like a cannibal who hasn't eaten in years. Larry is on his elbows watching her maniacal head-movements.

LARRY

Uh --morning?

RETURN TO.

**INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELOR OFFICE - AFTER DEZI'S RELEASE, 2020**

Small office with desk and a manager's leather chair. A long couch has two end tables each with its own box of *Kleenex*.

COUNSELOR, 60s, in business suit, granny glasses on a neck lanyard, sits at desk writing. She looks up at wall clock, drops her glasses, puts on a face mask, and opens the door.

Lawrence, **66**, with longer hair, and Dezi, **58**, now with a huge purple butterfly tattoo inside one forearm had her greying hair high-lighted purple. Both enter wearing surgical masks. Lawrence sits on one end of the couch. Dezi sits on opposite end. They lean away from each other. Body language speaks so.

Counselor sits in her chair with a legal pad and pen ready. Her wall clock *ticks* and *ticks* and *ticks*.

COUNSELOR

Pretty tattoo. "New beginnings?"

(no response)

You've been married for --?

LAWRENCE

After thirty years, she suddenly wants me to move out.

DEZI

"I only said it once!"

LAWRENCE

Actually --twice.

COUNSELOR

Where is he supposed to go?

DEZI

"He won't give me what I need!"

COUNSELOR

What do you need?

No response. Clock *ticks* waiting. Counselor *coughs*.

DEZI

"He Won't Kiss Me!"

LAWRENCE

Honey, you stopped taking showers and brushing your teeth. And then there's always --frickin' Covid!

COUNSELOR

What else caused the detachment?

DEZI

"I stayed late at my office after everyone left! It was the only time I could get any work done! When I finally got home, I was exhausted, so I crashed on week-ends!"

LAWRENCE

I don't drink or smoke, never hit you, or had an affair. I try not to curse and have always taken care of our house.

DEZI

But not me! Shopping relaxed me, I have the money! Then you started refusing my deliveries! I needed them!

COUNSELOR

Are you aware you are yelling?

(no response, clock *ticks*)

When your husband made this appointment, he said you've slept in separate bedrooms for years.



DEZI

Because he snores!

COUNSELOR

Has he been tested for sleep apnea  
and, or, been prescribed a CPAP?

DEZI

Yes, yes, and yes! But now he looks  
and sounds like a fighter pilot!

COUNSELOR

When was the last time you had sex?

Dezi starts *crying*. Lawrence hands her his *Kleenex* box but  
she grabs a tissue angry from her own box.

LAWRENCE

A decade.

DEZI

"Because I'm fat!"

LAWRENCE

It's more than that, honey. Plus  
the fact you cut off your boobs.

DEZI

"I had breast reduction, big deal!  
It cost more to sew my nipples back  
on! They wouldn't have any feeling  
anyway, so I left them off!

(to Counselor)

I saved money!"

COUNSELOR

And your husband agreed?

DEZI

"Didn't tell him, didn't need to!"

LAWRENCE

Her parents died and she had a  
strange personality change when she  
got their large inheritance check.

DEZI

"I'm not a failure!"

LAWRENCE

Her mother taught her wealth is the  
only sign of true happiness.

DEZI

"He is!"

COUNSELOR

What?

DEZI

"A failure! He spends all his retirement money on stupid movies!"

COUNSELOR

He buys them?

DEZI

"He makes them!"

LAWRENCE

I shoot short films to get my writings noticed by entering them into festivals to win awards.

COUNSELOR

How many Shorts have you made?

LAWRENCE

Eight.

COUNSELOR

How many awards?

LAWRENCE

(*coughs* embarrassed)  
*Two hundred.*

COUNSELOR

Aren't you proud of your husband?

DEZI

"Why, no one's going to buy one?!"

COUNSELOR

Have you seen one?

DEZI

Why?! No one's going to buy ...?!

COUNSELOR

Because he's your husband?

DEZI

"Who's supposed to take care of me by doing whatever I want whenever I need it however I say it!"

COUNSELOR

Is there any common ground you two could meet on?

DEZI

"Where?! He spends all day everyday working on his stupid screenplays!"

LAWRENCE

Writing is like breathing to me. I have to do it. And apparently, I do it very well.

DEZI

"Ask him how many awards his stupid scripts have earned, go on, ask! He'll tell you, he tells everyone!"

Counselor raises an eyebrow at Lawrence who mumbles.

LAWRENCE

*Two hundred more.*

DEZI

See?!

COUNSELOR

How many have you read?

DEZI

"I don't like how he writes."

LAWRENCE

How would you know?

DEZI

"They're all sinners!"

LAWRENCE

She believes Hollywood is evil.

DEZI

"Who should burn in Hell which is why they have those forest fires!"

LAWRENCE

Honey, you know my professor says I'm one of his best students and I need to go to L.A. even if only for one year. I'm that good. Don't you understand? The only thing I don't want on my epitaph when I'm gone is, "He never even tried."

COUNSELOR

Would you consider letting him  
visit Hollywood for just a month?

DEZI

"Absolutely Not!"

LAWRENCE

She believes I won't come back.

DEZI

He won't, because he'll have to  
drive there! He, Can't, Fly!

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. AIRLINE CABIN AT MIAMI AIRPORT - 1977 CONT'D**

Plane is full of DELEGATES from their Miami Convention.

Paula and Larry, **25**, walk down the plane's aisle. She sits by  
a window and he sits beside her smiling. He loves flying.

LARRY

Thanks for telling me about the  
Convention's weekend special. I've  
always wanted to go to the Bahamas.

STEWARDESS closes door to its mechanical *locking*-sound.

Larry snaps his head to her door as it *hisses* shut.

**FLASHBACK MEMORY:** A closet door *slams* shut in Little Larry's  
face. Crying, his tiny hands *beat* on it in the darkness.

Blind fear hits Adult Larry. He's trapped again. He looks  
left, right, then death-grips both armrests sweating profuse.

PAULA

Someone said you're a pilot?

LARRY

Huh, what? Oh, single-engine fixed-  
wing and glider, also a skydiver.

PAULA

Have a death wish?

Plane jolts forward taxiing. Larry goes ram-rod in his seat.

LARRY

*Do now.*

Cabin tilts back as their plane takes off.

Larry's hands go white-knuckle gripping his armrests.

LARRY

Talk. Talk to me. Say something,  
anything, nothing, everything --  
even about yourself. Just talk!

PAULA

About me? You sure?

Paula takes Larry's frantic nod as interest. He's not. Paula launches into a self-exposé. Larry barely hears her as his hands fatigue from gripping his arm-rests so tight.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LARRY'S MIAMI HOTEL ROOM - THAT MORNING**

Larry and Carol are dressed and ready to leave Miami.

Same Cuban Valet loads their luggage on a cart and exits.

CAROL

Sorry my hubby needs me back home  
for a political dinner. After a  
week in bed with you, I'd rather  
fly away to a Bahamas weekend.

Larry *slams* the door and spins to her angry.

LARRY

When?!

CAROL

Whenever you get back, silly.

Carol walks fingers up between his pecs. He *slaps* it away.

LARRY

You're not going to leave your  
husband are you?!

CAROL

Not that simple, beefcake.

LARRY

Yes, it is. I don't have affairs!

Larry yanks the door open and pushes Carol outside. He *slams* the door shut and nods satisfied, then goes to look out the window. He jumps clear across the room angry.

LARRY

Fuck You!

He exits. The door *thuds* closed behind him like a coffin lid.

RETURN TO.

**INT. LARRY'S PLANE FLIGHT TO THE BAHAMAS - 1977 CONT'D**

Plane's cabin speaker clicks on. Paula stops talking.

CAPTAIN (FILTERED)

"Folks, we picked up a tailwind and  
just set a new record, Miami to  
Freeport in fifteen minutes."

Passengers *applaud*. Larry looks straight up grateful.

LARRY

*Thank you.*

**EXT. FREEPORT RUNWAY, THEIR PLANE LANDS - CONTINUOUS**

Jet lowers to nape-of-the-earth flying in over the ocean.

Water is so clear, you can see its sand bottom with large  
exotic fish swimming. Jet flies in over its beach to land.

PAULA

You're welcome.

**EXT. XANADU HOTEL'S BEACH IN THE BAHAMAS - LATER SAME DAY**

Beautiful white sand behind the *Howard Hugh's* hotel has its  
own Cabana Bar. Miami Delegates, in various 1977 swimsuits,  
play along the beach both in and out of its ocean.

Two sand-chairs sit side-by-side on the beach. Larry sits in  
one wearing American-flag *Speedo* trunks and checking two sets  
of snorkeling gear. His morning workout left him pumped.

**SLOW MOTION:** Paula cross-ankle model-walks in an unbuttoned  
white linen beach shirt with a matching floppy sun-hat and  
white-framed sunglasses. An ocean breeze blows open her shirt  
to reveal a white low-cut bikini. She is thin, but curvy.

Larry looks up and his mouth falls open. He drops his gear.

PAULA

Like my outfit? I bought it in the  
hotel's gift shop.

She takes off her shirt to sit in the second chair. She put on suntan oil earlier so her dark skin glistens. Larry hands her a banana daiquiri. They *clink*-toast, then sip.

PAULA

Ahhh. Just what my doctor ordered.

LARRY

"Doctor?"

PAULA

He monitors my Thyroid condition.  
He said that's what gave me a bumpy tongue. It also gave me a lisp as a child. The kids made fun of me, so my school put me in speech class.

LARRY

(spit-takes)

Really?! That's so, I mean, I had a speech impediment! I couldn't say my R's, stuttered like Elmer Fudd. My mom made me talk in front of her friends so they could laugh at me. I spent five years in speech therapy every day for one hour after elementary school learning to pronounce each and every word in my head before I say them. I still do.

PAULA

Remember their tape recorders?

LARRY

They were huge! Remember the first time you heard your own voice?

PAULA

We don't sound like we think.

Larry's head snaps to jet engines going *full-thrust* take-off at the nearby airport. He shudders, then recovers, grabs his gear, and pulls Paula to the ocean. They run-in *laughing*.

Cabana Bar's radio plays the original *Magnum, P.I.* TV-theme.

**MUSIC MONTAGE:** Larry teaches Paula to use his gear. She floats face-down in mask and snorkel kicking fins with Larry supporting her abs. He looks at her butt. But unlike the T.V. version, he doesn't roll his eyes. An orange sun sets behind them as they run *laughing* into the hotel holding their gear.

**INT. LARRY'S BAHAMAS SUITE - MOMENTS LATER**

Footsteps out in the hallway. Fumbling of a metal key in the door until it opens. Larry and Paula enter and drop all their gear. Both are tipsy.

LARRY

Don't know why you wanted to see my room? They're all the same, right?

They stand in a small dining area with a separate full kitchen. Beyond it is a living room with a TV-Entertainment Center, bar, couch and two chairs. All opens onto a balcony.

PAULA

Mine sure ain't like this! Who's your assigned roommate, Mondale?

LARRY

Was supposed to be your National Chairman, but he got called back to his home state at the last moment.

PAULA

Probably for embezzlement.

An ocean breeze *blows* the balcony's curtains apart. Sun is setting with a reddish sky. Fluffy clouds float as ocean waves *crash*. Larry is drawn to them like a moth to flame.

**EXT. LARRY'S BAHAMA HOTEL BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER**

Balcony has its own mini-bar and radio. Larry enters out.

Paula enters behind him with her head down embarrassed.

PAULA

*Would you --be my --first kiss?*

LARRY

*(spins laughing)*

"First kiss?!" Yeah right, that's a good one. What are you --a virgin?

Paula nods sad. Larry tries to take it all back at once.

LARRY

No! I didn't mean to make fun of --

Paula looks up with kitten eyes.

Larry turns on mini-bar's radio. *Girl from Ipanema* music plays.



He moves in slow to cradle the back of Paula's head with one hand as he pulls her in close with his other. He smiles warm, kisses her gentle, long, and passionate, then steps back. Her eyes remain closed as she sways dreamy.

PAULA

*Just like in --my romance novels.*

*(eyes snap open)*

*Yeah, Baby!*

Paula grabs his head as she throws her legs up around his hips locking ankles. She smash-kisses. He stumbles backwards catching his balance while mumble-kissing resistance.

PAULA

*Shaaad appp.*

Larry swings her into his muscled-arms and carries Paula into the bedroom's separate sliding-door as both kiss frantic.

**INT. LARRY'S BAHAMA HOTEL BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Their hurricane hit. Beds are torn apart, nightstand lamp on floor, items knocked off bureau, pictures askew on walls.

Larry's head lies propped-up on pillows. Paula has her head on his chest stroking his pecs. Both are under a sheet.

PAULA

*My tongue-bumps aren't --gross?*

LARRY

*Sweetheart, when word gets out how good those feel down there, guys'll be lined-up twenty-four seven.*

Paula smiles disappearing under the covers. Larry goes cross-eyed. Knock at the front door. He leaps from the bed taking the sheet with him. Paula lies nude on her stomach watching him exit. She cradles her chin in a palm.

PAULA

*Men.*

**INT. LARRY'S BAHAMA LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Larry enters now wearing the bedsheet as a Toga and opens the front door. XANADU BELLBOY, older Islander, pushes in a serving cart with cloche-hat covered plates and a bottle of champagne. Larry signs his check. Xanadu Bellboy exits.

Larry lifts a dish-lid, sees its french fries, grabs one, and goes to put in his mouth.

**FLASHBACK MEMORY:** A wet bar of soap is shoved into Little Larry's mouth repeatedly. His hands fight it being choked.

Adult Larry spits french fry out and drops lid jumping back.

LARRY  
You don't have to remember!  
(snaps finger)  
Only eat, what I prepare.

Larry pushes the cart outside and locks the door.

PAULA (O.S.)  
Who are you talking to?

LARRY  
Wrong order, sent it back!

PAULA (O.S.)  
What am I supposed to munch on?!

Larry side-shuffle-dances into the bedroom smiling.

LARRY  
I'll think of something.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BASEMENT WORKSTATION - NOW 2021**

Lawrence, 70, looking like L.A., sits at his computer typing.

Dezi, 62, so obese her forearm butterfly-tattoo stretched, wears a dirty t-shirt and sweatpants. Her silvery hair is cut shorter with even brighter purple streaks added. She waddles down the stairs as her swollen feet hurt all the time now.

DEZI  
"What you do does not interest me."

And just like that, what love he had left for her is gone.

LAWRENCE  
"Oh you know that's going in a script."

DEZI  
I think we've gone as far as we can go. I want a grey divorce.

LAWRENCE

Too late, your hair's purple.

No response. Lawrence looks at Dezi. She's serious. He holds a key down. A string of "?????" stream across his screen.

LAWRENCE

What?! No you don't? You can't! I mean, after thirty-five years?

DEZI

I've thought about this a lot, and --I don't want you anymore.

LAWRENCE

But a divorce? Now? I mean, come on. Did I do something wrong? Did I not do something right?

DEZI

To the house, yes. To me, no.

LAWRENCE

Have you found someone else?

DEZI

Doesn't matter.

LAWRENCE

Does to me! Is it your money? I don't want it!

DEZI

I can't list specifics.

LAWRENCE

T-r-y!

DEZI

Don't want to.

LAWRENCE

Hey, I think I deserve, no, I believe you owe me, after this many pretty god damn good years of marriage, a solid reason!

DEZI

(pure revulsion)

Because when I see you eat, when I watch you sleep, when I look at you --I want to smash your face in!

LAWRENCE

Yeah?! Don't watch me sleep then!

Dezi stomps up the stairs one-at-a-time *slamming* the door.

LAWRENCE

It doesn't matter how nice I am to you, it's never enough! It feels like you believe I am the cause of all your problems! I Am Not!

**INT. LAWRENCE'S KITCHEN - FIRST DREAM FANTASY**

Lawrence rushes upstairs and grabs a butcher knife in the kitchen to stab, blade up, into Dezi's gut. He yanks up on it disemboweling her. Dezi glares pure hate and *spits* blood in his face. Lawrence pulls knife out to study its bloody blade.

LAWRENCE

I really did fantasize about murdering her. I always yelled after stabbing her, "I would rather die in prison, than live with you!" That is, until one day --.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S PRISON CELL - SECOND DREAM FANTASY**

Lawrence, now in orange *B.O.P.* uniform, sits in a jail cell smiling and typing on a vintage typewriter. A GUARD enters and takes his typewriter away. Lawrence is beyond crushed.

RETURN TO.

**INT. SAME LOS ANGELES VEGAN RESTAURANT - 2022 AGAIN**

Lawrence, 70, shudders. Mauricio stares at him.

MAURICIO

Did you love her?

LAWRENCE

Which one?

MAURICIO

Your Ex? Wait? Were you married more than once? Or just in love twice?

LAWRENCE

You can't love someone else until you love yourself first.

MAURICIO  
How did you propose?

LAWRENCE  
Which time?

MAURICIO  
To your, wait. You proposed twice?

LAWRENCE  
The second time was under a full moon in front of the Kennedy Center fountain overlooking the Potomac River. After dinner, in a limo with champagne, touring Washington.

MAURICIO  
Bet you got down on bended knee with a handkerchief.

LAWRENCE  
Both times.

Mauricio stops laughing, *What?*

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH ONCOLOGY WARD - 1977 CONT'D**

Stairwell's exit door is next to double elevators that open into a wide hallway. Stairwell and elevators are at hall's dead-end. Hallway curves away so opposite end cannot be seen.

Larry, still **25**, released months ago from NoVa Health Center, is healthier looking, but lost all his muscle mass never to recover it. He exits the stairwell severely *winded*.

Elevator doors *ding* and open. ELEVATOR RIDER, female, in a lab smock with hospital badge on, sees Larry and puts a hand on elevator door's seal to hold it open.

Larry shakes his head trying to catch his breath.

LARRY  
*Can't, ride, elevators.*

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. U.S. CAPITOL ELEVATOR - BEFORE HOSPITAL STAY IN 1977**

Muzak *plays* a mindless melody in the large modern elevator.

Larry, 25, in suit, muscle-bound as in Miami, stands holding an overflowing box of office supplies and *humming* happy.

Elevator doors *ding* and open.

DOMINO, African-American, early 20s, model-attractive, in a business suit, enters holding the same box of supplies. Doors close. Both put down their boxes to hug.

LARRY

Haven't seen you since Miami!

DOMINO

That was crazy fun in the Bahamas. Remember you running the 21-table at El Casino? How'd you do that?

LARRY

Card Counting. Read a book during the convention. Too much like work though, but did pay for my trip.

DOMINO

Can you believe this is our first day here. Who are you working for?

LARRY

Senator McCombs.

DOMINO

Heard he's a Task Master, brings in a new Aide each Session and burns them out running them all over.

LARRY

"Heard" that too, but he Chairs all the important Standing Committees. Great reference if I earn it. What are you doing here?

DOMINO

Carol got me a job as an Intern. How's Paula?

LARRY

(spins looking for her)  
Carol? Is she here?!

Elevator doors *ding* and open. Domino exits with her box.

DOMINO

Why would she? Great seeing you. Let's do lunch. Say hello to Paula. You two dating?

Elevator doors close before Larry can make-up a lie. He closes his eyes still a little boy lost.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LARRY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO**

Little Larry, 8, fell asleep with the overhead light on.

Mother, in nightgown, red hair beyond frizzed, yanks pillow out from under his tiny head and holds it over his face. He fights kicking with his little legs for the right to live.

MOTHER

Stop leaving your light on!

She throws the pillow on him and exits turning off the light.

Little Larry is frozen in fear, then sucks his thumb, hard.

RETURN TO:

**INT. U.S. CAPITOL ELEVATOR - 1977 CONT'D**

Elevator *jerk-stalls*. Larry's eyes snap open as he jumps back into a corner arms splayed. Elevator continues on. His heart beats faster. He can't breathe. A strange metal noise *bangs* outside in the elevator shaft. Larry spins 360° touching all four walls repeatedly, then tries to pry the doors open.

Doors *ding* and open. Larry jumps back. A FEMALE AIDE steps in carrying same box of supplies. Larry jumps out. Female Aide looks at his box on the floor, then at him. Doors close.

**INT. U.S. CAPITOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Larry falls against a wall holding both hands over his heart. It beats too hard. It hurts. He can't catch his breath. Second elevator *dings* and opens. Larry steps to enter, then jumps back further. Elevator doors close.

LARRY

Don't Succeed!

His brow furrows confused. He shrugs, closes both eyes, holds arms out to the side palms up, breathes in deep, turns both palms down, and lowers arms *exhaling* slow. He opens his eyes to see a sign marked "Stairs." He *snaps* his fingers smiling.

LARRY

Don't ride elevators. Simple.

He walks to sign's same door *whistling* and exits. Metal fire-door *bangs* closed sounding like a ship's hatch slamming shut.

RETURN TO.

**INT. N.I.H. ONCOLOGY FLOOR - AFTER LARRY'S RELEASE IN 1977**

Elevator Rider tilts her head at Larry, **25**, *breathing* hard.

ELEVATOR RIDER

You walked up, nineteen floors?

Elevator Rider shakes her head and elevator doors close.

Larry look downs the curved hallway but can't see its end.

LARRY

Can it get any worse?

He *sighs* exhausted, then baby-steps down the hall with one hand sliding along its curved wall for emotional support.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. MAURICIO'S CAR IN LOS ANGELES - 2022 AGAIN**

Older two-door with a "LYFT" sticker in corner of windshield.

Both doors open and Mauricio gets in as driver and Lawrence, **70**, long hair and beard, as passenger. They *slam* their doors and buckle up. Mauricio *starts* car. Lawrence *claps* his hands.

LAWRENCE

I married my mother!

MAURICIO

You did what?!

LAWRENCE

I mean, my Ex. She was, is, as fucked-up as my mom is, was. That's why I married her. Don't you see?

MAURICIO

I see, anyone can have an emotional relationship with someone other than their partner. You never stopped loving your first one.

LAWRENCE

"Never" stood a chance.



MAURICIO

Which one?

LAWRENCE

All three of us. --When we get to my place, I'll give you the DVDs of my short films we talked about.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Door opens and Lawrence enters followed by Mauricio who opens the bathroom door and is surprised at its down-sized.

MAURICIO

Do you have to turn sideways to get in and out of your shower stall?

LAWRENCE

Yes.

MAURICIO

(closes bathroom door)

How do you like having housemates?

Lawrence is going through a tall pile of labeled boxes.

LAWRENCE

Feels like I'm back in college.  
(freezes, *snaps* fingers)  
"Santa Goes To College!"

MAURICIO

Who the what?

Lawrence grabs a piece of printer paper and scribbles notes.

LAWRENCE

Old man loses everything in bitter divorce. He goes back to U.S.C. to finish his film degree, but has no money, so has to move into student living. He teaches his young roommates about life, and they teach him about living again.

MAURICIO

Oh, okay? --What's that?

Lawrence looks where Mauricio is pointing. A wrestling "*Thank You, Coach*" plaque has a photograph in it. In that picture, Lawrence, **50**, beginning of a paunch, short hair with mustache only, smiles wearing a suit. Dezi, twenty years slimmer, **42**, hair coiffed, attractive, wears a dress.

ADOPTED SON, African, 17, 103 lbs, in a high school letter jacket holds up a gold wrestling trophy with a huge smile.

LAWRENCE

My son.

MAURICIO

You have a kid?!

Mauricio steps closer to exam picture and is surprised.

MAURICIO

Wait, isn't he --? Did you adopt?

LAWRENCE

From my last high school team.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S COACHING CAR - TWO DECADES AGO**

Lawrence, now 50 as in the picture, wears a *Head Wrestling Coach* t-shirt and drives a huge vintage pink Cadillac.

Sitting beside him is his, not yet Son, 17.

LAWRENCE

I think you'll win Districts.

SON

Zii.

LAWRENCE

"Zii?" --Why not?

SON

All of us deported this Saturday.

They drive in silence. Lawrence's eyebrows move up and down. as forehead furrows. His head tilts back and forth like he's having a conversation. He shakes "no" twice, then *groans*.

LAWRENCE

Would you like to stay?

SON

Here? In America?! Who wouldn't. I always wanted to be a Champion at something, but now --?

Lawrence mumble-growls like a grizzly as he looks up through his front windshield with an "Are you kidding me?" stare.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Dezi, 42, overweight but still sexy and attractive, wears a robe while reading a book in a wing-chair.

Lawrence enters to sit in second wing-chair lost in thought.

DEZI

How was Practice, and the kids?

LAWRENCE

Huh? Oh, fine, fine. They're all fine. I'm not.

DEZI

How's that one kid doing?

LAWRENCE

Told him he'd win Districts.

DEZI

Was he excited?

LAWRENCE

"Zii."

DEZI

No?! Why the hell not?

LAWRENCE

Said he's being deported back.

DEZI

Back-back, to his home country? That's awful. He has potential.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I know. That's our problem.

DEZI

"Our?"

LAWRENCE

Uh, sweetie, this is kind of hard to explain, but I, you, we, uh -- we're supposed to take him in.

DEZI

Take who "in?" Wait, the one that keeps getting put in detention?!

LAWRENCE

He's lost, just not found.

DEZI

Have you lost your mind? But you said ...?

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I know, that ...

DEZI

That we could never have children of our own. That you were afraid!

(*slams book closed*)

Because of what your mother did to you! "Afraid" you might do the same to --that's what you said?!

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I know, but ...

DEZI

"But" what?! You suddenly have some kind of epiphany?

LAWRENCE

Well yeah, actually --my first.

DEZI

What? Wait. Are you serious?

LAWRENCE

Hey, I didn't ask for it. All I can tell you is, we were told to help.

DEZI

"Told to help?!" By whom?

Lawrence looks away, then slowly points straight up.

DEZI

Why are you point --? Oh, come on!

LAWRENCE

Hey, I'm not making this up.

DEZI

Gonna' build a baseball diamond?

LAWRENCE

Now you're just being mean.

DEZI

We hardly go to church, I don't --?

LAWRENCE

If I knew the answer, honey, I'd tell ya'. All I know is, I heard a voice, it was not my own, and we're "supposed to" do this. Okay?

DEZI

No, I'm not okay. --Are you?

Lawrence takes Dezi's hand and squeezes. She yanks it away.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. SON'S HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - END OF SCHOOL YEAR**

Hanging banner above stage reads, *1995 Winter Sports Awards.*

*News Channel 8* CAMERAMAN films the AUDIENCE of PARENTS and STUDENTS, all dressed-up, sitting in the packed seats.

Lawrence, **51**, and Son, now **18**, both wear shirts and ties. Dezi, **43**, wears a slinky dress. She "looks" like a happy mom, that's her secret. All Three sit with the Audience smiling.

Cameraman turns. His camera lights-up the stage.

School ADMINISTRATOR, in a suit, steps to podium. He *thunks* his microphone causing feedback. Audience *complains*.

ADMINISTRATOR (FILTERED)

Sorry. --Most of you know our star athlete who was both District and Regional wrestling champion while remaining on our Honor Roll.

Administrator beckons to Son who hops up onto the stage.

ADMINISTRATOR (FILTERED)

Our Booster Club has voted you,  
Most Valuable Player!

Administrator hands Son a plaque. They shake. Flash bulbs go off. Both wait for their Audience's *clapping* to die down.

ADMINISTRATOR (FILTERED)

And they will also be paying your --  
(like a *Game Show Host*)  
First semester college tuition!

Administrator hands Son a large ornamental check. They shake again. Flashes go off. Audience jumps to standing *ovation*.

Cameraman zooms-in on Son who has an ear-to-ear grin holding the plaque and check. Lawrence and Dezi step into the aisle. Son runs to them for a group hug. Cameraman zooms-in on them.

DISSOLVE TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES APARTMENT - IN 2022**

Lawrence, 70, long hair and beard, beams proud as any father.

LAWRENCE

First in his family line on both sides to ever graduate high school, then college. He's now a General Contractor, married with eight kids, owns a four-story home, and drives a Mercedes and a Porsche.

MAURICIO

Made a difference in his life, huh?

LAWRENCE

Gave him opportunity and support to succeed that all kids should have.

MAURICIO

How'd he take your divorce?

LAWRENCE

Moved to Egypt.

MAURICIO

Living in de-Nile, huh?

LAWRENCE

Believes we're, "taking a break."

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LAWRENCE'S L.A. APARTMENT - THAT MORNING IN 2022**

Lawrence is typing on his Mac as always. *FaceTime* goes off and a pop-up screen shows his Son is now a 27-year old with a *Dad Bod*, thirty pounds heavier. His head is shaved bald.

SON (FILTERED)

Hey, Dad.

Son is pushing a shopping cart in a store holding his cell.

LAWRENCE

Morning. Home Depot?

SON (FILTERED)  
Yeah. How's everything out there?

LAWRENCE  
All my Pitch Meetings end the same,  
"Great script! Hey, know what you  
should do? Make it yourself." Like  
they read it from a teleprompter.

SON (FILTERED)  
How are you and Mom doing?

LAWRENCE  
"Doing?" Uh --we don't?

SON (FILTERED)  
Thought you didn't believe in  
divorce?

LAWRENCE  
Don't. Her idea. All I wanted was  
to move to L.A. for one year.

SON (FILTERED)  
Takes two to screw up a  
relationship. Do you hate her?

LAWRENCE  
No. The true opposite of love is  
not hate, it's indifference.

SON (FILTERED)  
And me?

LAWRENCE  
Stop! Stop right there!

Son stops walking and brings his phone closer to his face.

LAWRENCE  
What you and I have goes beyond  
love, it's true respect. She lost  
that for me long ago. Got it?

Son nods reluctant and continues walking.

LAWRENCE  
So how are the kids?

SON (FILTERED)  
Oldest girl went out for  
cheerleading. The twins joined  
little league wrestling.

LAWRENCE  
Gonna help coach their team?

SON (FILTERED)  
Probably.

LAWRENCE  
And your wife?

SON (FILTERED)  
She started a home business.

LAWRENCE  
Helps to have your In-Laws live  
across the street for free  
babysitting, huh?

Son waves to an unseen employee.

SON (FILTERED)  
Hold a minute. Gotta go, Dad.

LAWRENCE  
Take care, love to the family.

Their FaceTime screen signs off. Lawrence smiles at it.

LAWRENCE  
You --made me a better man.

RETURN TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S L.A. APARTMENT WITH MAURICIO - THAT DAY**

MAURICIO  
What's that?

Mauricio now looks at an old yellowed map of Colorado framed and hanging with a red frayed shoulder-patch reading "C-Bar-T." He points to a red squiggled line drawn across the map.

LAWRENCE  
My first life changing event. We  
rode horseback five hundred miles  
from Denver to Grand Junction,  
Colorado for two months. Crossed  
the Continental Divide five times --  
lost a hat each time. We then  
became roommates in college.

MAURICIO  
"We?"



FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. C-BAR-T TRAIL RANCH - DAY - HALF A CENTURY AGO**

A pick-up truck and its trailer with "*C-Bar-T Trail Ranch*" painted on its side drives under *C-Bar-T* wood sign, then past a large horse corral with THIRTY-FIVE HORSES and TWO BURROWS.

**CAPTION:** *Ideldale Colorado, 1970*

Truck and trailer park by a single-story brick Rambler with a dirt yard in the middle of nowhere. Three large piedmont hills with birch trees are in its background. Two small storage buildings are at the foot of the center hill.

PHILONEUS ABLE, Caucasian, mid-40s, tall, rugged-fit, crew-cut with a craggy tan-weathered face, talks like the famous cartoon rooster character. He exits his truck's driver-side to unlock trailer's rear gate. It falls as a ramp, *boom*.

PHILONEUS

I say --tent, duffle, and sleepin'  
bag are yer only personals on this  
here walk-about, tenderfeets!

THIRTY RIDERS, 15-16, both sexes, all ethnics, looking like U.N. refugees, exit in just-bought denim *C-Bar-T* uniforms, wearing new straw cowboy hats and each carrying different types of "city" luggage. All Riders exit shading their eyes.

ADOLESCENT LARRY, 15, is obese with short bright red hair.

Philoneus puts a finger against one nostril and blows mucus out his other onto the ground.

JOHN BENNETT, Jewish, 15, thin, short black hair, Larry's childhood friend, talks like *Marvin the Depressed Robot*.

BENNETT

It's the people you meet in this  
world, that really get you down.

PHILONEUS

So go in the Tack Room and say good-  
bye to whatever you once thought  
you was. You're in my cavalry now.  
Stretch your legs, walk around my  
ranch, and go on top of that hill --  
(points to a hill)  
to pick you out a sleepin' patch.

LARRY

*You bring a C-Bar-T language guide?*

BENNETT

I'd give you advice, but you  
wouldn't listen. No one ever does.

LARRY

Welcome to my world. My dad loves  
all things cowboy, that's why he  
sent me here. I think he wants to  
relive his childhood through me.

BENNETT

You think you've got problems? No,  
don't answer that. I'm fifty times  
more intelligent than you, and even  
I don't know the answer.

**EXT. OUTSIDE C-BAR-T CORRAL - NEXT MORNING**

All Thirty Riders sit in their *C-Bar-T* Outfits of blue-jean  
shirts and matching pants with shoulder patches, on saddled  
horses having sleeping bags tied to saddle's back-housing.

KEVINA, Philoneus's daughter, 15, sits same wearing chaps, a  
thick vest, leather work gloves, and leads the FEMALE RIDERS.

DROVER ONE and DROVER TWO, 20s, sit same holding halters of  
Two Burrows now with cross-packs of water, food, supplies.

Philoneus sits on a black stallion, same, now in a brown  
leather slicker with a *Winchester* rifle in a saddle-sling. A  
bullwhip is coiled around the rifle. He *trots* to the truck.

DROVER THREE, thirties, drives the truck now without trailer.  
Thirty duffle-bags have Rider's names written on the outside  
and are tied in its bed along with two large Oat barrels.

PHILONEUS

Trails marked on your map. Meet us  
at sunset at the first red circle.  
If not there, double-back to the  
blue one. These greenhorns might  
not make it ten mile the first day.

Drover Three nods. Bennett overhears and *sighs*.

BENNETT

This will all end in tears, I just  
know it.

PHILONEUS

Move Out ya' bunch a' city sissies!

The Thirty Riders spur horses to follow Kevina and Philoneus.

At the rear, Drovers Two and Three pull the Two Pack-burrows.

Drover Three drives, then turns on truck's radio. It begins playing the 1970 hit "In The Summertime" by Mungo Jerry.

Riders and their horses sway in unison to the music as they ride over a hill while pick-up truck stays on its dirt road.

**EXT. ON THE TRAIL NOW IN TALL GRASS - DAYS LATER**

Riders single-file ride through a huge field of hip-high grass in the middle of nowhere to loud summer-insect sounds.

Bennett and Larry ride at the back with Drovers Two and Three who still pull-lead the Two Burrows.

PHILONEUS

Hold Up!

Same command is repeated down *The Line* as All Riders stop.

RIDERS

Hold up! ...Hold up! ...etc.

BENNETT

I think you ought to know, I'm  
feeling very depressed.

Philoneus looks through binoculars at a large black cloud approaching then gives the military overhead sign *Circle Up*.

Drovers Two and Three hand their burrow-leads to Bennett and Larry, then ride hard with Kevina to Philoneus. The Four talk, then turn and gallop back to the Riders. Philoneus talks to front group, Kevina to second, and Drover One to third group. Drover Two talks to the fourth group.

BENNETT

Black Death?

DROVER TWO

Close. Brown locust.

BENNETT

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)  
I only have to talk to somebody,  
and they begin to hate me.

DROVER TWO

Open your sleeping bags, drape them  
over your horse's head, then get  
under and hold on tight to both!

Organized chaos as everyone dismounts, open sleeping bags, and pull them over their horse's head to squat underneath.

**EXT. LARRY UNDER SLEEPING BAG WITH HORSE - MOMENTS LATER**

Larry is on his knees under his horse's head holding onto their draped sleeping bag and onto both reins tight.

All insect sounds outside stop, then a high *wind* approaches.

LARRY  
What'd ya' think?!

BENNETT (O.S.)  
I could calculate your chance of survival, but you won't like it!

LARRY  
Talk to your horse, keep her calm!

BENNETT (O.S.)  
Don't pretend you want to talk to me, I know you hate me!

Larry hears the frontline horses *whinny* as "The Swarm" hits, then his horse tries to bolt so he pulls down on its bridle.

LARRY  
Easy boy, easy.

Loud *hissing* sound. Larry can feel grasshoppers hit his back. Several grasshoppers get under and jump. He ignores them.

BENNETT (O.S.)  
Life, loath it or ignore it, but you can't like it!

LARRY  
Ignore them, talk to your horse!  
(talks soothing to his)  
Easy boy, you're doing fine. I'm not, you are.

Loud moments pass, then *hissing* fades until all is quiet.

PHILONEUS (O.S.)  
CLEAR!

Larry stands putting his forehead between horse's eyes.

LARRY  
Thanks --for your support.

Larry pulls the sleeping bag off them.

**EXT. ON THE TRAIL AFTER ARMAGEDDON - CONTINUOUS**

Field is now scalped down to grass-stubble in eerie silence.

LARRY

Sci-Fi shit.

Some Male Riders lost their horses and sit crying. Female Riders hold theirs. Drovers lost both Burrows. Stray horses *whinny* and Two Burrows *bray* as they run away in the distance.

Larry leads his horse over to Bennett whose horse ran away. Bennett's sleeping bag is draped over him like a small tent. Larry pulls it off. Bennett sits cross-legged, head in hands, elbows on knees. He stares into the distance nonplussed.

BENNETT

My capacity for happiness, you  
could fit in a matchbox, without  
taking out the matches.

LARRY

Come on, cheer up. Did you ever  
think we'd experience anything like  
this? It was fan-freakin-tastic!

BENNETT

It gives me a headache, just trying  
to think down to your level.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. ON THE TRAIL ON A MOUNTAINTOP - TWO MONTHS LATER**

Riders come up on a mountaintop. All stop amazed at the view. As far as the eye can see, is an endless sea of mountains.

Larry rides up over same crest pulling the First Burrow. He has lost thirty pounds and grown two inches with skin leather-tan. He lost his hat, so his red hair is now sun-bleached blonde. His biceps bulge from pulling Burrows for two months.

Bennett rides up pulling the Second Burrow with shirt tied around his waist. He's strong and tanned with sun-faded brownish hair. He sees nature's infinity ahead and sighs.

BENNETT

"Is there no end to this escalation  
of desire?"

PHILONEUS

Marya Mannes. A bit caustic, but  
insightful. Night's comin' on fast,  
so get out your fuzzy-warms ladies!  
We're sleepin' in High Country!

BENNETT

Funny how just when you think life  
can't possibly get any worse, it  
suddenly does.

PHILONEUS

That's why they call it "life" son.  
And if it's comin' straight at ya',  
you're in the wrong lane.

**EXT. CLEARING FURTHER DOWN THE MOUNTAIN - NOW SUNSET**

A large plateau part-way down the mountain is mostly grass.

A sheer wall rises on one side of it with a ledge dropping  
off its other. Higher mountains are all around it.

Their camp is set. A fire burns with a cast-iron pot cooking.  
Kevina stirs its contents with a huge wooden spoon.

Larry stands near edge of the clearing taking pictures. He  
sees something. His eyes open wide. He yells to his friend.

LARRY

Over here!

Bennett goes to him. Larry points up to a mountain cliff.

Snow-runoff pours out of a cave below the top of a mountain  
creating a long waterfall down its side. The falling water  
sparkles creating a rainbow gleaming kaleidoscope of colors.

LARRY

Only way to see that, is to be  
standing precisely here, at this  
exact time of day. Karma.

BENNETT

And in the beginning, the universe  
was created. It has been widely  
regarded as a bad move.

Sun sets behind mountain. Both watch the straight line of  
black night creep down mountain's wall to envelope them.

DISSOLVE TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES APARTMENT - 2022 AGAIN**

Mauricio is gone. Lawrence, 70, sits dressed same, typing.

LAWRENCE

Bennett and I became roommates in college, graduated together, and remained best friends until his death during The Pandemic. So here I sit, now in L.A. No a/c, no heat, no marriage, so no money. Hoping against hype, Hollywood and Life will notice me someday.

(imitates Bennett perfect)

"Life? Don't talk to me about Life."

**EXT. LAWRENCE AT A LOS ANGELES BISTRO - DAYS LATER**

Restaurant bar has an exterior terrace with picnic tables.

INTERESTING PEOPLE, mostly young adults, sit and stand in various garb, some with unique colored hair. It's the monthly networking event for just-arrived Hollywood wanna-be's.

Lawrence parks a 1993 Volvo 850 at the curb. On his driver and passenger doors are large magnetic signs that read  
*"Actor, Director, Screenwriter, 300 Awards on IMDb."*

**INT. LAWRENCE'S CLUNKER - IMMEDIATELY**

Lawrence, long hair now professionally ponytailed with his beard shapened, checks his actor business-card case is full.

LAWRENCE

I drove my used van 3,500 miles to get here, then called my car insurance company of forty years to change residence.

(makes hand into a phone)

My premium will quadruple because L.A. has the highest accident rate?! But I could buy a used clunker for that much? Seriously, how can my premium stay the same?

(listens, repeats)

"Buy a used clunker for that much."

**EXT. LAWRENCE'S USED CLUNKER FOR THAT MUCH - CONTINUOUS**

Lawrence turns his car off and exits. Its engine continues to run, then dies with a *bang*. Blue smoke belches out tailpipe. Lawrence walks out of the smoke cloud. ALL look at him.

LAWRENCE

Always --make an entrance.

**EXT. SAME LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT TERRACE - MOMENTS LATER**

Lawrence stands talking to SOME LADY with orange-green hair.

A thin effeminate hand taps Lawrence on a shoulder. He turns.

KYLE LANGDON-WEYRICH, Caucasian, 21, thin, short, hair died platinum, is dressed stylishly foppy. He is, a pretty-boy.

KYLE

"Hi, I'm an international model."

LAWRENCE

Of course you are, dear.

Kyle extends his small hand like an English Duke. They shake and break. Lawrence examines his hand he shook with. Kyle offers him a card. Lawrence takes his card to look at same.

KYLE

"I'm a beginning Producer. Are you working on anything?"

LAWRENCE

Just moved to L.A. and don't have any money, so the only way I can shoot another short is if its cast and crew work for IMDb award only.

KYLE

"Send your script to me.  
(points on his card)  
But not to that email, it doesn't go anywhere. Send it to this one."

Kyle holds same hand up. Lawrence holds onto Kyle's finger-tips like on a Victorian date. Kyle sees someone and exits.

KYLE

Have to network, toodles.

LAWRENCE

*Only in L.A.*



**INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES ROOM - WEEKS LATER**

Lawrence sits at his Mac typing. Its email alert *sounds*. He reads the email, tilts head, then re-reads it aloud.

LAWRENCE

"Hi, this is Kyle. Casting Call went well, over 70 responded."  
(looks around room)  
Whose Casting Call?  
(continues reading aloud)  
"Attached is a spread sheet with their names and info. Let me know who you pick. All Cast and Crew agreed to work for free. Toodles!"

**INT. A CALIFORNIA HOUSE IN SANTA ANA - WEEKS LATER**

House is now a movie Set with equipment and their hard cases open. Craft Services card-table has snacks and drinks on it.

Female African-American MAKE-UP ARTIST is brushing the face of a 20s-something ASIAN ACTRESS.

MALE ACTOR, 25, wearing a robe and using a British accent is talking with an AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACTRESS, 21.

CALIFORNIA CREW, male and female, in their 20s, are moving lights and gear like worker ants.

Lawrence wears a t-shirt with "*The Handler II Crew*" printed on the back and is talking to Kyle who has a sweater tied stylish around neck. They shake hands, then Kyle fast-claps.

KYLE

Considering our original D.P.,  
A.C., Sound Tech, and Male Lead,  
all tested Positive for Covid  
yesterday morning. Congratulate  
yourselves for finishing this.

Lawrence points to his young NEW MALE LEAD.

LAWRENCE

As his Understudy, thank you for  
driving in last minute and being  
Off Book. You, are a "real" actor.

New Male Lead bows. Lawrence turns to L.A. D.P., female Hispanic, wearing a kerchief as a head-band.

LAWRENCE

Stepping in at the last minute  
without an assistant to rack your  
own focus was a huge challenge.  
Thank you for accepting it so well.

L.A. D.P. waves packing up her gear. Lawrence turns to SOUND.

LAWRENCE

To go from Key Grip to learn Sound  
by watching YouTube videos while  
Kyle went to rent equipment? That  
just doesn't happen. Thank you.

SOUND still has his headphones on checking Room Tone on  
control box hanging around his neck so doesn't respond.

LAWRENCE

(bows to both Actresses)  
Ladies, both of you showing up Off  
Book allowed us to shoot your final  
scene as one continuous shot. Which  
means --it's a Wrap for the Actors!

Two Female Actresses hug, then both hug New Male Lead who is  
trying to change back into his street clothes asap.

LAWRENCE

All Crew report back here at 7 a.m.  
tomorrow to shoot Inserts. Only the  
D.P. and I will go to the Second  
Location next week for B-Roll.

All L.A. Crew and Actors shake hands as Lawrence becomes a  
great Shakespearian actor, so of course, over-acts.

LAWRENCE

"All the world's a stage, And all  
the men and women, merely players.

He bows deep and wide with one leg stretched-out behind him,  
then sweeps same leg up and over with hands held out like  
he's riding a motorcycle. He twists his throttle-grip hand.

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. LAWRENCE IN WEST VIRGINIA - DAY - TWENTY YEARS AGO**

Lawrence, 50 again, short hair with a pornstar mustache,  
rides a *Honda Goldwing* around narrow mountain roads.

He is wearing fully-padded safety motorcycle gear so looks  
like a futuristic football player. He narrates.

LAWRENCE

This is my Roots Ride! I'm on a two-part fact-finding mission to find out why my mom treated me so bad!

(helmeted-head shakes)

I had to wait until she died to finally be free enough from her lies, to seek out my own truth!

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. A WEST VIRGINIA CABIN - LARRY'S 1977 HOSPITAL RELEASE**

Built with his Father's life insurance money, it's a one-bedroom rustic log cabin like his Mother grew up in.

Mother sits in a shawl wearing granny-glasses knitting in front of a huge stone fireplace. An antique wall clock, seen earlier in Lawrence's Virginia living room, pendulum-ticks.

Larry, **25**, released from NOVA Health Center a month ago, is healthy, but thin and unmuscled. He sits on a quilt-covered couch *crying* and hugging himself.

Mother keeps knitting detached ignoring him dispassionate.

MOTHER

I'm sorry you believe I said and did any of those things to you but,

(examines her work stoic)

I really don't know what you're talking about.

Larry's head actually vibrates. Did he make it all up?

RETURN TO.

**EXT. LAWRENCE'S ROOTS RIDE - TWENTY FIVE YEARS LATER**

Lawrence, **50**, spits, then *revs* his motorcycle engine.

LAWRENCE

How did she die you ask?!

(speeds away leaning)

Alone!

**EXT. BECKLEY, WEST VIRGINIA HOME - THAT NIGHT**

Small in-need-of-repairs rambler off an unmarked state road.

Lawrence pulls up, puts side-stand down, and gets off.

LAWRENCE

Welcome to bum-fuck. What the fuck,  
is this bum doing here?

(hangs helmet on mirror)

This is Beckley, West V, A. "Coal  
Mining Capitol of the World!" And  
my mother's hometown. It is two  
hours from anything resembling  
civilization. So as you might  
expect, incest, racism, and  
alcoholism, are not unknown here.

(searches for something)

Wonder if they still use that old  
out-house?

(looks around more)

Bet you think I'm kidding.

**EXT. BECKLEY HOME BACK PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT**

SEVEN ADULTS sit in cheap web chairs. Someone said something  
inappropriate and all are *guffawing*, except Lawrence.

UNCLES JOE, JIMMY, and JACK, all in their 70s, have three  
Redneck younger TROPHY WIVES who make *Tammy Baker* look like  
she's not wearing enough. The Three Uncles are plastered.  
Their Three Kabuki-Wives are not.

Lawrence sits between his cousins JANE ANNE and BUTCH, both  
his age and overweight, who are drunk. Lawrence is not.

LAWRENCE

*Okay, these are mom's three younger  
brothers. You have no idea how they  
are going to react your questions.*

(clears throat)

"Why did your only sister hate me?"

The Three Uncles slur their answers in thick W.Va. accents.

UNCLE JIMMY

"Don't know --?"

UNCLE JOE

"But she sure as hell did!"

His Three Uncles high-five. Lawrence's mouth falls open.

UNCLE JACK

"Remember when Grammy would come  
back from visitin' them cryin', "It  
breaks my heart in two, to see her  
mistreat them two."

LAWRENCE

*Calm down. Remember, it was a  
different time back then. Folks  
didn't get involved in how others  
raised their kids --or their own.*

(to Three Wives)

Would any of you care for a drink?

UNCLE JIMMY

"Oh, they don't drink."

UNCLE JOE

"Someone has to drive us home!"

Three Uncles *pop* new beer cans and hold them up for a toast.

Lawrence decides his Three Uncles are three-sheets-to-the-wind enough, clears throat again, then leaps without faith.

LAWRENCE

Was your sister abused?

He may have crossed their line as ALL go silent, then ...

UNCLE JOE

"Bein' so much older, she had to  
leave school and work to help  
support us after Daddy run oft."

LAWRENCE

Why'd he "run oft" --uh, leave?

UNCLE JIMMY

Momma never said outright, other  
than she threw him out one night.

UNCLE JACK

Sis, your mom, took it real hard.

UNCLE JOE

Wouldn't come out of her room for  
days cryin' so forlorn.

LAWRENCE

Where'd he go?

UNCLE JIMMY

Throw a rock.

LAWRENCE

He stayed in Beckley?! How long?

UNCLE JOE

Till the end.

UNCLE JACK

Always with a new strumpet on-arm.

UNCLE JIMMY

And preggio.

UNCLE JOE

"Hell boy, you got half-cousins you  
ain't never met yet!"

Jane Anne slides a hand inside Lawrence's thigh and squeezes.

JANE ANNE

*"I luv youuuuuuuuuuuuuuu."*

LAWRENCE

(Breaks Fourth Wall slow)  
And you thought --I was kidding.

**EXT. RIDING THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY - NEXT MORNING**

Winding small two-lane national park road through dense  
forests. A beautiful day, perfect for motorcycle touring.

Lawrence weaves his bike in s-curves in and out of shadows  
then through a covered bridge. His voice echoes inside.

LAWRENCE (ECHOING)

*"I luv youuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!"*

His air-horns echo as he exits other side. He quick-stops for  
deer crossing and talks to them in a North Carolina accent.

LAWRENCE

On my way to Hickory, North  
Care-line-eee, thankee kindly.  
"Furniture Capitol of the World!"

Deer disappear into the woods. He waves "bye-bye" to them.

LAWRENCE

Dad's hometown. I'm visiting my  
aunt. Well, she's not really. At  
least that's what I was told. But  
don't worry, you'll understand.  
(speeds off)  
You will! I won't --ever!

**INT. RETIREMENT HOME IN HICKORY, N.C. - THAT NIGHT**

Assisted-living unit with a mechanical bed, tiny kitchenette, bathroom with soaking tub, and an old couch with easy chair in front of a vintage portable T.V. on a metal rolling stand.

Door opens. AUNT INEZ, 90s, white hair glued into a permanent by industrial-strength hair spray, looks like *Mrs. Doubtfire*.

She shuffles severely stooped-over from arthritis with a cane to slowly sit in the only deep worn spot on her couch.

Lawrence, in shirt and tie, closes door and rushes to help.

LAWRENCE

Let me help you, Aunt Inez.

Too late, gravity took over. She has a thick N.C. accent.

AUNT INEZ

Thank you for the surprise visit. I haven't been out to eat in years.

LAWRENCE

You were always so kind to me as a boy, that's why I rented a car.

AUNT INEZ

You t'weren't no bother. Always a pleasure havin' you around.

LAWRENCE

I can't believe I'm going to tell you this but, I've always wished -- you were my real aunt.

AUNT INEZ

Excuse me?

LAWRENCE

It's okay. I know we're not supposed to speak of it since it was the family shame and all.

AUNT INEZ

What are you blathering about?

LAWRENCE

That I know my dad was a homeless orphan and no one would take him in till yours did out of charity.

*(whispers "The Secret")*

*It's okay, I know you're not really his sister.*

If Darth Vader had a sibling, she would sound like this.

AUNT INEZ

I am --his sister.

Time stands still for Lawrence, then he *chortles* nervous.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, sure, right. I even confirmed it with my brother before he died.

AUNT INEZ

Who told him?

LAWRENCE

Same person that told me? Mom?

AUNT INEZ

Lord have mercy, why would she say such a thing?

LAWRENCE

Wait? Dad's father was the town drunk and drove into a telephone pole killing himself. Right?

AUNT INEZ

Our father was the town minister, killed by a drunk driver after his Sunday Sermon while walking home.

Lawrence is having a hard time wrapping his head around this.

LAWRENCE

So everyone I ever met here, who said they were my relatives --are?

AUNT INEZ

Of course. I was his only sister, and he was my favorite brother.

Lawrence has to walk this out pacing like *Columbo*.

LAWRENCE

Ahh, just one more thing. So all these "Uncles" --really are?

Aunt Inez nods. Lawrence has to sit down.

AUNT INEZ

Why didn't you just ask me?

LAWRENCE

Because I was told not to!



Lawrence jumps up in epiphany.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Split personality! That's how she could be so nice to strangers while terrorizing me. It was always about being in control of her own past.

AUNT INEZ

Who, what was?

LAWRENCE

Her way of dealing with abuse.

AUNT INEZ

Whose abuse?

LAWRENCE

My mom, me, both of us. I mean, I always knew she hated men, but never knew why until I visited her brothers yesterday.

AUNT INEZ

Don't know about them, but I do remember crying when you all left after visiting me, at the way your mom treated my brother, and you.

LAWRENCE

(jumps up and down)

That's what her brothers said!  
Their mother would visit us and come home upset, too!

(spins in circles)

Thank You!

Lawrence stops spinning, and so does his world finally.

AUNT INEZ

For what?

LAWRENCE

For closure! She did have two personalities. I was, am not crazy.

Lawrence clears his throat, then holds out a hand.

LAWRENCE

Pleasure to finally make your acquaintance --my real Aunt Inez.

Inez hesitates, then shakes. He sits with an arm around her.

LAWRENCE

I'll be coming down to visit on a regular basis. We have a lot of catching up to do so I can fill in the potholes of my life's highway.

Lawrence smiles-the-smile of someone who's finally shooed away the grey cloud that has hung over their head forever.

LAWRENCE

You are the mom, I should have had.

She smiles.

DISSOLVE TO.

**INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES ROOM - NOW 2023**

Lawrence, still 70, sits at his Mac typing as usual, but his hair is now cut short with white beard trimmed down around his jawline. He gets a concerned look, then repeatedly pounds a fist on his desk. He grabs both edges holding on for dear life to do "a hard stare" at a dot on the wall. He recovers.

LAWRENCE

(goes back to typing)

For ten years, my long hair and beard got me noticed and work by New York Central Casting. But after moving here and discovering L.A. Central Casting hires their city's real homeless ... Wait, never use that word! They are, "unhoused." Either way, the problem here is bad. Real bad, damn bad, out-of-control bad.

(goes back to typing)

Yet, when I try to talk about it, Angelenos only response is a shrug with "Always been this way."

(finger-circles face)

Would you believe, seventy-two hours after cutting everything off, Disney cast me as "unhoused?"

(goes back to typing)

Only good thing to come out of the Pandemic in Hollywood is that Studio Execs discovered Zoom. Now that the traffic is so bad here, they'll never go back to in-person interviews. Why should they? Now they don't have to wear pants.

Lawrence *slaps* a thigh hard. He made himself laugh, then goes back to typing. He makes an animal growl remembering.

LAWRENCE

Last week, I Zoomed with Max Timm of the *International Screenwriters Association*. He looked me up on IMDb and *tched-tched* announcing, "You have too many awards!" I asked if I should give some back. Mad Max shook his head, "You're never going to get a Literary Manager because everyone's going to wonder why you don't already have one." I quipped, "Maybe it's because all of my awards are in just the past six years, back on the east coast, and I just got to L.A.?" He signed-off.  
(sniffs air like a wolf)  
But there is something palatable in this city's air, you can feel it.

Lawrence *coughs* then tilts his head back to put in eye-drops.

LAWRENCE

Besides its desert dust and dryness. It's called --hope.

His Mac's email alert *sounds*. He reads it and is shocked.

LAWRENCE

What?! Noooo! My Yale screenwriting professor of ten years just died with no warning of a heart attack?!  
(little boy lost again)  
He was eight years my younger, fit, healthy. I don't under --? Why would the universe rip away my only champion? Now my Jeffersonian starship has no helmsman. I'll drift aimless through space never landing on friendly terra firma.

Both arms flail like the Robot in "Lost in Space."

LAWRENCE

"Danger, Will Robinson, Danger!"

He now shadow-boxes imitating *Sylvester Stallone's* drawl.

LAWRENCE

Stallone said, "Nobody works in this town till sumbody writes sumthin'." I am, "sumbody." Yo.

Lawrence goes back to typing. His cell phone's Text Message *dings*. He reads it, then comments.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

It's official. The actor's union is going on strike and expects it to last six months. No acting gigs.

His cell phone's Text Message *dings* again. He reads it.

LAWRENCE

Writers Guild is joining SAG, so now I can't submit screenplays to contests until both strikes end.

His cell phone's Text Message *dings* again. He reads it.

LAWRENCE

My Landlord wants to break my lease so he can rent my room for more money. Says he'll give me back my full \$2,000 security deposit if I'm out the end of this month.

(looks straight up)

You're not real subtle in the challenges you give us are you?

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH ONCOLOGY WARD - 1977 CONT'D**

Individual patient rooms have glass front walls so everything is visible in their room. Lots of medical equipment.

Larry, **25**, walks down the hall still catching his breath and sees Paula in a hospital bed, wearing a gown, with I.V. in a wrist. She's asleep. He turns around, takes two steps, stops, and *stomps* a foot. He sees his reflection in a glass wall and his face contorts in self-loathing. He turns back possessed.

**INT. PAULA'S N.I.H. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Larry enters, then sees Frankenstein-like sutures around the front of Paula's neck with a breathing tube in their middle.

**DREAM FANTASY:** Paula sits up and her head falls off backwards tearing sutures wide open leaving her head dangling behind.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. LARRY'S TEEN HOME - 1970**

His Parent's Master Bedroom has a king-size bed and bureau.

Mother, 50s, wrinkled, in nightgown, hair a mess from sex, sits up cowering with covers pulled up to her chin *crying*.

Larry's FATHER, 50s, obese, half-way under same bed covers, is unconscious on his back from a heart attack.

TEEN LARRY, 18, beginning bodybuilder, short hair, in shorts, straddles Father *crying* and trying to do chest compressions. It is obvious he does not know how. Larry stops exhausted.

Father gives a *death-exhale* and all color leaves his face.

MOTHER

"You killed him!"

RETURN TO.

**INT. PAULA'S N.I.H. HOSPITAL ROOM - 1977 CONT'D**

Adult Larry, 25 again, thin, is about to lose it. He tries to sit, can't, so rocks back-forth from one foot to the other trying not to think. He turns to leave, then jams a palm over a chair's torn back-support. He stares at his bleeding hand.

Paula opens her eyes and tries to talk, but only *gurgles* come from her neck-tube.

Larry's face goes bloodless. He fists a Kleenex in his hurt hand, then lays a handkerchief on the floor. He kneels on it and reaches in a pocket with his good hand to pull out and open a small jewelry case so she can see. Inside his box is a small engagement ring. Its tiny stone sparkles.

LARRY

Can you, will you --marry me?

Paula's eyes open wide as more *gurgles-sounds* come from her neck-tube. Larry stands and puts the ring on her finger.

Paula's SURGEON enters, sees Larry, and gets angry.

SURGEON

About time you showed up!

Paula holds up her ring-finger. Surgeon sees it, then Larry's bloody Kleenex, and calms down. Surgeon checks her vitals.

Paula and Larry stare lovingly into each other's eyes as he strokes her dirty hair. She tries to talk, but only *gurgles*. Larry *shushes* her. She nods. Larry grins at Surgeon.

LARRY

She said, Yes!

Surgeon sees their love, bites lower lip, then shakes head.

Too, too much. Larry's world explodes. He backs up lying.

LARRY

No! No. I, I've got to go, for just  
a moment, but I'll be back.

Paula reaches for him. He reaches for her still backing up.

LARRY

*Forgive me.*

Paula drops her outstretched hand onto bed tearing and nods.

Larry begins ducking repeatedly like someone is beating him.

LARRY

P-p-please, s-s-stop --!

Paula and Surgeon watch Larry through the glass wall running down the hallway yelling and ducking as his screams *echo*.

LARRY

M-m-mommy!

**EXT. N.I.H. TOWER STAIRWELL OUTSIDE EXIT - MOMENTS LATER**

Fire-door bursts open. Larry exits, bends over trying to catch his breath, then falls onto both knees cursing.

LARRY

God damn you to hell, Mother! You  
made me into a coward!

His fingers dig in to pull out two large chunks of sod that he throws in disgust, then shakes his fist at the heavens.

LARRY

"Stupid, Ugly, Failure!" You  
pounded that into me every --  
(pounds ground 3 times)  
God, Damn, Day!

It's all he can do to stand, then slinks away ashamed.

**INT. LARRY'S VIRGINIA APARTMENT BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT**

Larry sits on edge of his double-bed wearing a black suit. He goes to the closet and pulls a shoebox off its top shelf.

He dumps the box's contents on his bed. Small paper targets, ammo, a cleaning kit, and a handgun fall out. He ejects gun's clip, loads a bullet, slides clip into handle, *racks* gun's slide. He hears laughter and turns.

**DREAM FANTASY:** Paula appears naked under his bed covers, smiling, laughing, and finger-beckoning to him.

Larry smiles at her putting his gun's barrel to a temple.

LARRY  
"Yeah, baby."

**EXT. LARRY'S APARTMENT PARKING LOT - IMMEDIATELY**

Older car drives by in front of his building and *backfires*.

**INT. PAULA'S FUNERAL HOME LOBBY - LATER SAME NIGHT**

Plush carpeting, big pictures on walls, and small tables with large flowers in vases. Lobby area has stairs that lead up to a Viewing Area. Paula's profile is seen in her open casket.

PAULA'S PARENTS, Latinos, 60s, greying, in black clothes, sit by Paula's coffin *sniffling* and holding hands.

MOURNERS, Virginia Delegates including Carol, stand around Paula's coffin consoling each other and Paula's Parents.

Front door opens. Larry enters dressed same, but now in a black overcoat. He sees Carol, then Paula's casket-profile.

He takes off his coat calmly and steps inside the walk-in closet where he completely loses it *balling* inconsolable.

MORE MOURNERS arrive to hang up their coats ignoring him until closet is packed with coats. Larry still *sobs*.

Domino enters in a black dress with hands clasped to chest.

DOMINO  
None of us knew how much you cared  
for each other until we saw her  
ring. Is there anything we can do?

LARRY  
*Have to --talk to --her alone.*

**INT. PAULA'S OPEN CASKET - MOMENTS LATER**

Viewing room now empty. Parents chairs sit next to coffin.

Larry walks up the stairs, sees Paula's profile in her casket and tilts head, Awwwww, putting both hands over his heart. He sits down ramrod straight beside her coffin staring ahead.

LARRY

"I asked them to clear the room so  
I could tell you, I'm still here,  
because of you. Your spirit kept me  
alive, when my own died. Your love  
of life showed me, how great life  
can be. Your love for me taught me,  
I could love, and I do sweetheart,  
I love you with all my heart. I  
always will."

He sees his engagement ring on her finger and puts a hand over hers. Tears flow as he confesses his eternal love.

LAWRENCE

"So tonight, I made a pact with God  
that to honor your life --I give  
you mine. No matter how bad things  
are or how scared I get, I won't  
give up. If I get close, like I did  
tonight, I will remember your face,  
your smile, your kiss, and I will  
go on. I will make you proud of me  
my love, because I am so very proud  
to have been loved by you."

RETURN TO.

**EXT. AERIAL OF A SENIOR RETIREMENT COMPLEX - NOW IN 2025**

Beautifully landscaped collection of individual units of single-floor Ramblers surrounded by lush trees, grass, relatively empty parking spaces, and private garden plots.

**CAPTION:** *Blacksburg, Virginia, 2025*

**INT. ONE OF THE COMPLEX'S UNITS - MOMENTS LATER**

Spacious carpeted one-bedroom suite with a full kitchen, own washer-dryer, hot-water heater and furnace inclosed, master bedroom and a huge safety-bar bathroom. But wait, there is so much closet space!



Pictures of short-haired L.A. Lawrence smiling with actors, *Gary Oldman*, *Greg Kinnear*, *Adam Scott*, *Eddie Redmayne*, and Producers *Gary W. Goldstein*, *Brian Herskowitz*, hang above shelves holding his twelve short film DVDs with multiple award statues, statuettes, and trophies, in front of them.

Lawrence, now clean-shaven, high-and-tight, is still fat, but now fit. He sits at his Mac typing as usual. Except now, he actually looks "content" for the very first time.

LAWRENCE

Before I left L.A., I shot my 11th short film about their "unhoused" blight as a *Twilight Zone* theme.

His computer's email alert *dings*. He reads it and smiles.

LAWRENCE

"In-Closure" screened last night at the TCL Chinese Theaters on the *Walk of Stars*. It was the only film to receive a standing ovation. Its Lead, G. Larry Butler, won his first Best Actor award in over 267 films. Add that fact to the three "Trades" that ran stories about my career, and it seems I had to leave L.A., before getting noticed there.

(goes back to typing)

So I took my Landlord's refund, sold my clunker, rented a van, and headed for Atlanta's "Southern Hollywood" not knowing where this "Yellow Brick Road" would take me.

(shakes head, smiles big)

What are the odds, while searching Georgia apartments every night in my hotel rooms, a senior complex in Virginia keeps popping up? I see it is in the Blue Ridge mountains, the rent is far less than Atlanta, has its own gym, and the town provides free shuttle bus service for its seniors. So I think, "Seriously?" Now, there is not one single day, that at some point I don't say --

(looks straight up)

"Thank you."

(goes back to typing)

So to prove I can do it anywhere, I shot my 12th short film here in the "Black Hole" of the film industry.

Lawrence looks at its DVD case proudly, then types more.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Based on the true story L.A. actor *Geoffrey Blake* told me about his best friend's suicide. I got *Brian Anthony Wilson* to star in it and "It's All Good...not" got Brian his very first Best Actor award in over 232 films. Bottomline, everything in life happens for a reason. We may not like it, definitely not agree with it, but if we just go along with it, we may find ourselves exactly --where we are supposed to be.

(email *dings*, he reads)

I now have over 455 Awards on IMDb.

(explosive *laugh*)

That mean absolutely nothing in Hollyweird! And since "all the world is a stage" --always know where the fire exits are.

(goes back to typing)

I'm shooting my 13th short on Friday the 13th as my first horror. If I can make a film for free in L.A., I can make it anywhere.

(smiles chuckling)

"Growing old is mandatory. Growing up is optional." How true, Uncle Walt, how true.

(sings as *Jiminy Cricket*)

"When you wish upon a star, Makes no difference who you are. Anything your heart desires, Will come, to, you."

HE SMILES.

**SUGGESTED END CREDITS SIDE-BAR SCREENS**

Real Set Pictures and Screen Captures of Lawrence in various costumes with, *David Baldacci* shaking hands on "Wish You Well," *Ed Harris*, *Ethan Hawke*, *John Leguizamo*, and *Mauricio Ovalle* on "Cymbeline," then with *Roger Kabler* on the "Saving Robin Williams" Set. Ends on the picture of Lawrence holding three scripts and shaking hands with *Yale Professor Lapadula*.

**DEDICATION:** *To my riding partner John Patrick Bennett, you always made me laugh, especially when I didn't want to.*

FADE OUT.