

I had, HAVE, a Dream

Written by

Lawrence Whitener

Depictions, Descriptions, and Dialogue are true. Unfortunately.

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FADE IN:

CAPTION: *This is a true story. Both the good, and the bad.*

EXT. AERIAL OF DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - DAY

MONTAGE: Shots of Disney, Warner Bros, Paramount, Sony, Fox, Universal Studios, etc. EMPLOYEES scurry about their L.A. lots with self-importance. I-110 traffic is jammed as usual. Motorcycles ride the white-lines between its cars. Hundreds of decades-old shared-housing units are all around U.S.C.

INT. LOS ANGELES SHARED-LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

Live Mariachi Band begins *playing* outside in its parking lot. Hispanic PARTYGOERS begin *singing* cumpleaños. Both are off-key. Neighbor's dog joins in the fraying with *fray howling*. All these noises set off car *alarms* parked at the curbs. A true Jack London cacophony of "Call 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 iMac 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 so even more car *alarms* go off. Lawrence puts on sound suppressor earmuffs and keeps typing.

LAWRENCE

Now imagine that's your own mother. Add a childhood speech impediment and you strive to be her obedient son by living down to every lowest expectations scrawled upon your blank desiderata forever 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 (CONT'D)

Until one day you get the only
disease no school system wants
students to see, their teacher fall
over like a mad cow. And so without
farewell fanfare, you are herded
far out into the medical leave
pasture losing full retirement pay.
Okay? Now what? What do you do when
your well-planned departure from
daywork becomes an unplanned
unpaying nightmare? Follow your
deepest darkest dream of course.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. GILES COUNTY VA 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 a real .38 pistol and billy club.

"The first African-American Studio Director" DARNELL MARTIN talks 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 except Lawrence who steps away from his wall.

LAWRENCE

The year is now 2012 and the
feature film "Wish You Well" is
shooting in the historic courtroom
located in Giles County, Virginia.

Lawrence walks to the Jury box and leans on its railing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Here is when I finally understood why it took a year of self-training to learn "how" to live with my rare illness I was convinced was God's retribution for squandering a mediocre life.

He points to clean-cut young man playing the JURY FOREMAN.

LAWRENCE

That's me. Or rather, that's the part "me" was cast. "We find for Southern Valley!" 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 of Hollywood. Then I showed up to Set and their Wardrobe Department hands me this.

(models uniform)

"This is wrong," I say. "I'm Jury Foreman not Fred the Bailiff." Department Head quips, "Foreman, Bailiff, what's the difference?" Oh my, of course the young man is wearing a tweed suit half my size. Once the gravity of their mistake weighs 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 cute little Mackenzie Foy, 12, in a period country dress, up onto it. He swears her in then goes serious back to his *Position One* against a wall.

Josh Lucas begins questioning the 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

"Wish You Well" by David Baldacci.
Iconic and ironic all at the same
time don't you think? --You will.

DAVID BALDACCI, the 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

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

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)

*No one outside of college wrestling
knows what that sports name 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

I wrestled for Tommy!

LAWRENCE

No?! What was your Major?

BALDACCI
Political Science.

LAWRENCE
I was their first Poli Sci class!

BALDACCI
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
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
"Well shit David, if you can do
it!"
(stunned response)
I always wanted to be a writer.

BALDACCI
Me, too. What happened?

LAWRENCE
Life. Rejection letters don't pay
the 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 vertigo's symptoms is your eyes actually vibrate which causes its 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 isn't. I had to retrain my body. I can't bend over to pick something up, turn around fast, look straight up, or fly pressurized due to "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 Him, too. Growing up, I had an uncle who was an actor. He would call saying what I could watch him in, wanted me to come to L.A. Put the acting bug in me I guess. He died last year so to honor his memory I decided to be in a movie.

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 scene of
Lawrence lifting Mackenzie Foy then back to each other.

LAWRENCE/BALDACCI

Screenwriting!

INT. 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
has 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.

Lawrence, 60, goes to Professor who 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

What brought 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 writer.

PROFESSOR
Where do you live now?

LAWRENCE
Just outside D.C.

Professor scans Lawrence like a sculptor to a granite block.

PROFESSOR
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 a life
changing conversation with my
Corsican twin who 4) motivates me
to follow my dream of becoming a
writer 5) so I am led by destiny to
the only Hollywood screenwriting
professor that lives twenty minutes
from my Virginia house?

Lawrence holds up five outstretched fingers then rotates same
hand front-to-back like a referee confirming their call.

INT. 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

Tell them why you wrote it.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. 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 thin grey hair, dressed in a too-big shirt with tie enters. Lawrence stands concerned. They shake hands then sit.

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. Idiot.

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 I 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 a 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, what? No! Look, I'm still here because of what you did for me. You can't ask me to --?! Why would you?

ROBERT

Because I won't know who you are and 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 receipt, and stands resolute with hand out.

ROBERT

Deal?

Lawrence stands discombobulated and shakes.

LAWRENCE

House always wins.

Robert's big brother smile says "good-bye forever" 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 outstretched watching his only brother, Fade Out.

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" line.
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 iMac. Beside him is a DVD case on a stand whose cover art says "RevelationZ."

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

LAWRENCE

Be there in twenty.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)

Don't bother.

LAWRENCE

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

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)

"He" died.

LAWRENCE

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
(grabs DVD as proof)
"Whatever?!" It has twenty freakin'
awards and is streaming on-line
with his dedication! If film is
forever then my brother is, too.

BROTHER'S WIFE (FILTERED)
Well, you're not welcome in his
family forever! And good luck with
your stupid movie career!

Sound of her receiver *slamming*. Lawrence stares at the phone
until its dial tone comes on then he 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 turns numb in his chair. A Time-Life commercial
plays muted on his big screen TV advertising the "Best Of
Robin Williams" DVD set. He leans-in to study it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RICHMOND VIRGINIA VINTAGE THEATRE - A YEAR LATER

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

ATTENDEES are wearing masks because of the ongoing Pandemic.

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

SHOW RUNNER (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 Mr.
Williams killed himself then
realized others wondered same.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2
Why did Robin commit suicide?

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

SHOW RUNNER
Any future plans?

LAWRENCE
I literally drive from here
straight through to Los Angeles.

SHOW RUNNER
To be --?

LAWRENCE
"Or not."

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN, NEW YORK - DAY - NINE YEARS AGO

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. Two 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 the Action on the 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 on the asphalt. They work as fast as 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."

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 black leathers with all types and sizes of knives hanging on his person.

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 movie set of "Cymbeline" in Brooklyn, NYC. It's my second film and second time 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, "What's your name?" I smiled, "Whatever you wanna call me." He pointed to me then the Crew announcing, "Knifey."

The now fully repaired Cruiser drives off up Voorhies Avenue.

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 lays 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 NYC 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 large double-sided plastic 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 at the menu. Lawrence points. Waitress nods, 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 restaurant job.

MAURICIO
Married?

Lawrence puts down his fork to think of the right response.

LAWRENCE
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.

His wife of thirty years, DEZI, is 56, long brunette hair, over-weight and frumpy. She enters carrying a hospital bag then 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 out 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 to grab both his crutches like *Cinderella's "Evil Stepsister."*

DEZI
"I'm tired of you getting old and
always having surgeries! I have my
own problems you know!"

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

DEZI (O.S.)
"I'm never taking care of you
again!"

Her bedroom door *slams*. Lawrence stares at his 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 going 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's 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
and go on-line to get a maid
service out to change my linen.

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 the Window Attendant.

LAWRENCE

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

Attendant slides her glass window-door closed concerned.

RETURN TO.

INT. SAME LOS ANGELES VEGAN RESTAURANT - STILL 2022

Mauricio sits shocked with his mouth open. Lawrence reaches
over and closes it. Mauricio yanks his head away.

MAURICIO

Hey?! 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 crazy unknown dream? Yes. It's all about choices you know so --.

(*Indiana Jones, Knight*)

"Choose wisely."

(back to regular voice)

Which I didn't for 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 and sits himself in his.

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 his lies.

DEZI

"That's because whatever he says is true. Everything that's said to contradict him is Fake News."

LAWRENCE

It's what?! But he's videoed?
(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 country's 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 keyboard typing.

Dezi walks down the stairs one step at a time like to a coronation. Her sweeter 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 at her 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.

LAWRENCE

Why would anyone want to stop someone from at least "trying" to reach for their dream?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MARYLAND CHURCH USED 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 track while BACKGROUND MILITARY BAND actors *practice* 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. This is the sixth time I've been on the series but the first time I got a phone call bringing me back in 72 hours. Unfortunately --.

(sings as Marilyn Monroe)

"Mis-ter Pres-i-dent."

(back to regular voice)

Has kept us all waiting her 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 with 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 Look At The Talent."*

Something's wrong? Lawrence glances at Spacey who is eyeing him up and down like a creepy pedophile uncle. Spacey meets his gaze then winks. But not friendly, sexual. Some brain cells actually explode *WTF?* in Lawrence. Spacey smiles evil.

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 a new over-the-shoulder shot of Spacey still on Lawrence.

H.O.C. DIRECTOR

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

Limo drives around church's median then stops back at One. 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 need to Snap-To, he never went *At Ease*. He tries not to, then has to, glance at Spacey, who recreates his best *Caligula* with tongue repeatedly wetting both lips.

Healthy brain-cells in Lawrence now go terminal with internal *Eww-eww-ewwing* at Spacey's wet snaky-tongue. Spacey's smile goes beyond spine-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 to him.

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 other 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.*

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 get the Set Medic,
please? I am literally, sick to my
stomach."

Production Assistant exits. Lawrence Breaks The Fourth Wall.

LAWRENCE
I signed the Union's Sick Report
and walked off Set. For two months
I refused all auditions thinking
maybe I should quit Show Business
if this kind of behavior is enabled
by all cast and crew. Then *Harvey
Weinstein* imploded and two weeks
later, Spacey's past caught up with
him. I was afraid to tell what
happened because Spacey 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, "Sorry you had to go
through that." Male actors emailed
back jokes, bad ones. If you watch
our scene, as I finally had to when
the B.B.C. interviewed me in L.A.,
it clearly Jump Cuts after he first
stands in front of me.

Lawrence removes his beret covering his heart and walks away.

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 a cheap
efficiency. The bottom of the stairs has been closed-off with
a matching piece of painted drywall with a fake door.
Commercial carpeting pieces now cover the floor's linoleum.
The Set has a sofa-bed, table, refrigerator, and a microwave.

Lawrence, still **65**, sits in a wheelchair wearing a t-shirt printed on front *"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 as Lawrence breaks-down the fake walls with a hammer and pulls them down to him while rolling his wheelchair backwards as he catches.

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

DEZI

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

LAWRENCE

It's like acting. If you're in it
for the money, change jobs.

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 ever walking on another 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 time?"

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 - 2022 AGAIN

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 know 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, has recovered from surgery and is asleep near one edge of 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. NOVA 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)
Not yet. She wants clean clothes,
her laptop, and jewelry box full of
prescriptions. But first, I need to
ask you a personal question.

LAWRENCE
Shoot.

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)
Do you own a gun?

LAWRENCE
.25 automatic?

DEZI'S NURSE (FILTERED)
Can you give it to someone or at
least hide it very 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

On table.

LAWRENCE

(mimics Security's timber)

O-kay.

Lawrence smiles. Security does not. Lawrence *coughs* and puts his 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.

LAWRENCE

Ever seen "Young Frankenstein?"

DEZI'S NURSE

I don't have time for movies!

Lawrence pantomimes her answer sarcastic then sticks out his tongue. Dezi's Nurse spins around. Lawrence smiles innocent. She uses a key-card to open the secure door. It *buzzes* open. Both walk through it as Lawrence imitates the Nurse's walk. Door *slams* shut behind them sounding 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 Nurse silently pantomiming her "It's here?"

INT. DEZI'S PSYCHIATRIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dezi's Nurse hands overnight bag to Dezi who sits on the end of its regular double-bed blank-staring ahead. Nurse exits.

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

LAWRENCE

Wow, looks like a fancy hotel room.

Dezi rummages through her overnight bag not answering.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Know when you're coming home?

DEZI
"I am home."

Lawrence steps back in horror 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 reddish-beard five o'clock 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" --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 shaking his head.

INT. DEZI'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Room is beyond disgusting. Now a full blown Hoarder and Online Shopaholic, crushed pizza boxes with uneaten crusts and unopened Amazon boxes are everywhere. Double-bed has no sheets just a dirty blanket. Room's only window has boxes stacked in front with clothes over obscuring outside view.

Dezi lays flat on her back using a cell phone perched on her protruding belly as an arched-shelf to play 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 --are not going
back to your hostile workplace that
caused all this because I went to
your office and told your spineless
boss you're not coming back."*

Dezi is concentrating only on her cell game.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I told him he could have prevented all this so is responsible for your medical insurance through the end of this year and your salary to 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 your hoarding and on-line shopping. You've completely changed since you got that huge inheritance check. Do you remember what you said to me when you saw how much?"

DEZI

"I don't need you anymore."

LAWRENCE

"But you're not supposed to need me, you're supposed to want me?"

DEZI

"Whatever I want I can now afford."

LAWRENCE

"Look, you locked yourself in here years ago locking me out. We never talk. 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 continues to ignore him. Lawrence drops the envelope on her bed and exits closing the door. She yells from inside.

DEZI (O.S.)

"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 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 is sitting across from His Psychiatrist *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, resits)
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,

He can't say the words. It's too painful. He tears up as his
hands shake imitating strangling someone.

LAWRENCE

"I wish you were never born!"

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Did you fight back?

LARRY

(wipes away tears)
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 iMac's screen remembering
Dezi bursting into his bedroom screaming the night before. He
becomes aware of being stared at and looks up the stairs.

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

DEZI

"Just making sure you're still
alive. Same as when I come into
your bedroom at night watching to
check if you're still breathing."

LAWRENCE

"You come into my bedroom, while
I'm asleep, and stand over me, just
watching?"

(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

"Uh, yes you did, screaming, You need to move out."

DEZI

"Why would you lie like that?!"

Dezi *slams* the basement door hard.

Lawrence stares at door wondering if he dreamt it all?

INT. LAWRENCE'S VIRGINIA BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

He's asleep on the CPAP machine. His *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

"Do you have 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 the 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 her 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

Do you get paid by the initial?

His Psychiatrist *coughs* covering her mouth to hide her smile.

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. I'd keep hearing my Mom's voice to "screw up" so I did.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

Do you know why we've 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. Does your girlfriend come everyday?

LARRY

Just, friend. And yes, every day.

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 and crosses her legs.

HIS PSYCHIATRIST

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 meet?

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. WATERGATE HOTEL PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT

Penthouse overlooks the Potomac River and Kennedy Center.

CAPTION: *The Watergate Hotel in D.C., only six months ago*

Larry, 25, looking like a strawberry-blond *Schwarzenegger* meets *Redford* who just stepped out of "GQ" magazine, leans over the railing lost in thought holding a wine glass.

Inside its sliding door, 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 large 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 in!

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 of his baby-blue blazer and begins blotting her dress. Paula looks down surprised. He looks down to see he is blotting her breasts. He *coughs* embarrassed and hands her his hanky.

LARRY

Sorry.

PAULA

I'm not.

Paula sticks out her tongue playfully.

Larry notices the tip of her tongue is not round 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 out here, Paula?

PAULA

Recruiting. My 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.

CAROL

I'll go change the reservation.

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?

LARRY

Sure, sounds like fun. When?

PAULA

Tomorrow.

Carol disappears in the crowd. Larry snaps back to reality.

LARRY

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 star-field *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 *Indy-Car*.

PAULA
I'm not afraid.

LARRY
(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 jumps back like tasered. Stunned, he peers out the window sheepish only to jump back even further. He shakes his head. He lays down on 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, 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

Wait! You're undress--?! 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. Larry spasms.

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, smiles, then 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 adolescent hormones then slow-closes both eyes silly-smiling.

INT. LARRY'S MIAMI HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Larry opens his eyes and throws back covers. No one is there.

LARRY

Best dream, I never had.

He jumps out tossing 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 is LITTLE LARRY, 8 years old with a crew-cut, no shirt, obese, having multiple fat rolls.

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, on both elbows, watches 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 screams.

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

COUNSELOR

Pretty tattoo. "New beginnings?"

(no response)

You've been married for --?

LAWRENCE

After thirty years, she's suddenly demanded I move out.

DEZI
Only said it once!

LAWRENCE
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 --Frickin' Covid!

COUNSELOR
What else caused your 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
crashed on week-ends!

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

DEZI
But not me! Never took care of me!
Shopping relaxed me! I have the
money! But then you started
refusing deliveries! I need 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 prescribed a C-PAP?

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.

LAWRENCE

Decade.

DEZI

"Because I'm fat!"

LAWRENCE

Much more than that, honey. Plus
the fact you cut off your boobs.

DEZI

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

COUNSELOR

And your husband agreed?

DEZI

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

LAWRENCE

Her parents died and she had an
immediate personality change when
she got their inheritance check.

DEZI

"I'm not a failure!"

LAWRENCE

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

DEZI

"But 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)
Over a 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 now do it quite 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.

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 the 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 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.

PAULA
Too bad Carol had to go back home.

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

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

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 to me. Talk! 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 your 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 like you said 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 stomps to look out the window. He jumps clear back across the room angry.

LARRY
I DON'T HAVE TO REMEMBER!

He exits. 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 AS 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? Bought it in the
hotel 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 one of two banana daiquiris. They toast then sip.

PAULA

Ahhh. Just what my doctor ordered. He monitors my Thyroid condition, 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

Really?! That's so, I mean, I had a speech impediment! 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 an 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 nearby airport. He shudders then recovers and grabs his gear pulling 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 the gear. She floats face-down in mask and snorkel kicking fins with him supporting her abs. He looks at her butt. But unlike the T.V. star, Larry 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 hallway. Fumbling of a metal key in the door. It opens. Larry and Paula enter dropping all the gear.

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 roomie, 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 exits behind him with her head down embarrassed.

PAULA

"Would you be my --first kiss?"

LARRY

"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, didn't mean to make fun of --!

Paula looks up with kitten eyes. Larry turns on mini-bar's radio and "*Girl from Ipanema*" plays. He moves in slow to cradle the back of her 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 stay closed.

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 (CONT'D)
"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 the 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
I won't remember!

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 - 2021 AGAIN

Lawrence, 70, looking like L.A., sits at his iMac 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

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

DEZI

To me, yes. To my house, 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, one solid real reason!

DEZI

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

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

LAWRENCE

"Yeah?! Don't watch me sleep then!"
(Breaks The Fourth Wall)
I actually did fantasize about
murdering her. I always yelled
after stabbing her, "I'd rather die
in prison than live with you!" That
is until --The Nightmare.

INT. LAWRENCE'S PRISON CELL - "THE NIGHTMARE"

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? You married more than once? Or just in love twice?

LAWRENCE

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

MAURICIO

How did you propose?

LAWRENCE

Which time?

MAURICIO

To your --. Wait? You proposed twice?!

LAWRENCE

Second time was under a full moon in front of the Kennedy Center fountain overlooking the Potomac River. After dinner and a limo ride with champagne touring Washington.

MAURICIO

Bet you got down on bended knee with a handkerchief.

LAWRENCE

Both times.

Mauricio stops laughing "WTF?"

FLASHBACK TO:

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

Its stairwell and elevators are at the hall's dead-end.
Hallway curves away so its 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.

LARRY

Nine-teen f'n floors!

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 rubber seal to hold it open.

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 business suit, enters holding same
box of his supplies. Doors close. Both put down 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,
but did pay for the 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. How
did you get here?

DOMINO

Carol got me a job as an Intern.

LARRY

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 then his eyes before he can lie.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LARRY'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO

Little Larry, 8, fell asleep with room's overhead light on.

Mother, in nightgown, red hair beyond frizzed, yanks pillow
out from under his tiny head and holds it over his face.

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. 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 shakes her head and elevator doors close.

Larry look downs the curved hallway but can't see its end. He sings "The Beatles" song '*All you need is love.*'

LAWRENCE

"Love is all you need. *She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah.*"

He *sighs* exhausted then baby-steps down the hall with one hand sliding along its curved wall for emotional support and sings in perfect *Ringo*.

LAWRENCE

"I got blisters on ma' fingers!"

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" --one can have an emotional
relationship with someone other
than their real partner. You never
stopped loving the first, did you?

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 ten 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 midget-size.

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

LAWRENCE
Yes.

Mauricio closes the bathroom door shaking his head.

MAURICIO
How do you like having housemates?

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 housing. He teaches his young roommates about life and they teach him how to live again.

MAURICIO

Oh, okay? What's that?

Lawrence looks to 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. Their 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 COACH'S CAR - TWO DECADES EARLIER

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

Think you'll win Districts?

SON

Zii.

LAWRENCE

Why not?

SON

All 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

Wanna stay?

SON

Where? Here? In America? Who would not? 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?*" glare.

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

Why not?!

LAWRENCE

Said they're 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!
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" who?! 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 field, too?

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."

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

News Channel 8 CAMERAMAN filming audience of PARENTS and STUDENTS, all dressed-up, sitting in the packed seats turns and 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 the Honor Roll.

Administrator motions Son to join him on stage. He does.

ADMINISTRATOR
Our Booster Club has voted you,
Most Valuable Player!

Administrator hands him a plaque. They shake.

ADMINISTRATOR (FILTERED)
And they will 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 TINY 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 just, "taking a
break."

FLASHBACK TO:

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

Lawrence is typing on his iMac 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 huge orange shopping cart 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! 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 thirty-five
year relationship. Do you hate her?

LAWRENCE

Why should I? True opposite of love
is not hate, it's indifference.

SON (FILTERED)

And me?

LAWRENCE

Stop! Stop right there! What you
and I have goes beyond love.

Son stops and brings screen closer to his face.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
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 a floor clerk off-screen.

SON (FILTERED)
Hold up 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 - SAME 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. Rode
horseback five hundred miles from
Denver to Grand Junction in
Colorado for two months. Crossed
the Continental Divide five times.
Lost a hat each time. We became
friends then 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 a gigantic rolling forest.

Three tall piedmont hills with birch trees are in background.

Two small storage buildings are at the foot of the center hill which has a huge rock face up high on it.

PHILONEUS ABLE, Caucasian, mid-40s, tall, rugged-fit, crew-cut with a craggy tan-weathered face, talks like the famous cartoon rooster. He exits his truck's driver-side to unlock the 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, still obese has short bright red hair.

Philoneus puts a finger against one nostril and blows mucus out the other nostril 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, then go on top of that hill.
(points to 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. 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 that 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 and turns on his 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

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 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 CRICKET 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 their eyes 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
still insightful. Night's comin' on
fast so get out your fuzzy-warms
ladies! 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 and his eyes open wide. He waves to his friend
to join him. Who does. Larry points up to a mountain cliff.

Below the top of a mountain, snow-runoff pours out of a cave
creating a huge 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 and envelope them.

RETURN TO.

INT. LAWRENCE'S LOS ANGELES APARTMENT - 2022 AGAIN

Mauricio is gone. Lawrence, 70, sits dressed same at iMac.

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, no money. Hoping against hype Hollywood and Life will be kind to me someday.

(smiles imitating Bennett)

"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 all just-arrived Hollywood wanna-be's.

Lawrence parks a 1993 Volvo 850 at the curb. On both doors are large magnetic printed signs reading "Actor, Director, Screenwriter, 300 Awards on IMDb."

INT. LAWRENCE'S SWEDISH MEATBALL - IMMEDIATELY

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

LAWRENCE

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

(makes hand into a phone)

My premium will quadruple because L.A. has the highest accident rate?! 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 die 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 the hand he shook with as Kyle offers him a card. Lawrence takes his card to look at same.

KYLE

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

LAWRENCE

"I just moved to L.A. so don't have any money so the only way I can shoot another short is if the 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 iMac 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!"

LAWRENCE

(Breaks The Fourth Wall)
Only --in L.A.

INT. CALIFORNIA RANCH IN SANTA ANA - WEEKS LATER

House is now a movie Set with equipment and hard cases all 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 a pretty 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 its back and is talking to Kyle who has a sweater tied stylish around his neck. They shake hands. 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., a 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, ever. Thanks.

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

LAWRENCE

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!

The Two Female Actresses hug then both hug New Male Lead.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

All Crew report back here at 7 a.m.
tomorrow to shoot Inserts. Only the
D.P. and I will go to 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 is 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 now 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 loud over the wind.

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

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. WEST VIRGINIA CABIN - AFTER HIS 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 still thin and unmuscled. He sits on a hand-made 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.
(examines her work stoic)
But I really don't know what you're talking about."

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?
(hangs helmet on mirror)
This is Beckley, West Va. "Coal
Mining Capitol of the World!" And
my mother's hometown. It is two
hours from anything resembling
civilization. So as you might
suspect, incest, racism, and
alcoholism, are not unknown here.
Wonder if they still have that old
out-house? People always think I'm
kidding about "that."

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 80s, have three Redneck younger TROPHY WIVES who make *Tammy Baker* look like she's not wearing enough make-up. 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.*
Why did your big sister hate me?

The Three Uncles slur their answers in thick W.Va. accents.

UNCLE JIMMY

Don't know --?"

UNCLE JOE

But 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

*What the --? 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, and 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.

LAWRENCE

Where'd he go?

UNCLE JIMMY
Throw a rock.

LAWRENCE
He stayed in town?! How long?

UNCLE JOE
Till the end.

UNCLE JACK
Always with a new strumpet on-arm.

UNCLE JIMMY
And preggo.

UNCLE JOE
(slaps Lawrence's knee)
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 youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu.

LAWRENCE
(Breaks The Fourth Wall)
And you thought, I was kidding.

EXT. RIDING THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY - NEXT MORNING

Winding small two-lane national park road through dense forests. 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
My Dad's hometown. I'm visiting my
Aunt. Well, she's not really.

Lawrence speeds off into the shadows.

LAWRENCE

You'll understand in a moment!
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 permanently 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 old 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

Always a pleasure havin' you round.

LAWRENCE

"You know, 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")

"I know you're not really his sister."

If Darth Vader had a sibling she could 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

"Wait. Hold on. So everyone I ever met here, who said they were really my relatives --really 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 the "Uncles" I met here, really are, his brothers?

Aunt Inez nods. Lawrence has to sit down.

AUNT INEZ

"Why didn't you just ask me?"

LAWRENCE

"Because I was told not to? --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. At the way your Mom treated my brother, and you."

LAWRENCE

(jumps up)

"That's what her brothers said! Their mother would visit us and come home upset, too! Thank You!"

AUNT INEZ

For what?

LAWRENCE

"For closure! She was two people! I was, am not crazy.

(holds out a hand)

Pleasure to finally make your acquaintance, my real Aunt Inez. 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."

She shakes his hand cautious. He sits with an arm around her.

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 iMac 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 doing "a hard stare" at a dot then goes back to typing.

LAWRENCE

For ten years my long hair and beard got me noticed and work at New York's Central Casting. But after discovering L.A.'s Central Casting hires their city's real homeless --. Wait. Sorry, not supposed to use that word. They are "unhoused." Either way, the problem here is bad. Real bad, damn bad, out-of-control bad. But when I try to talk about it, Angelenos only shrug with "Always been this way." And would you believe, seventy-two hours after cutting most of my hair and beard off, Walt Disney Studios cast me as "Wheels, Unhoused in a Wheelchair" in an all-black series? The only good thing to come out of the Pandemic in Hollywood is that Studio Execs "discovered" Zoom. Last week, I Zoomed with Max Timm of the *International Screenwriters Association*. He looked me up on IMDb then *tched-tched* announcing, "You have too many awards!" I asked if I should give some back. He got angry. "You're never going to get a Literary Manager because everyone's going to wonder why you don't already have one!" Maybe it's because all of my awards are in the past six years, on the east coast?

Lawrence Breaks The Fourth Wall.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Mad Max 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.

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 silent then comments.

LAWRENCE
It's official. The Actor's union is
going on strike and expects to last
six months so 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 any
contests until both strikes end.

His cell phone's Text Message *dings* again. He reads it aloud.

LAWRENCE
"Professor Lapadula died at his
desk this morning of a heart attack
while reading screenplays."

Lawrence puts his phone down shocked then shakes his head.

LAWRENCE
The only other person that ever
really believed in me is dead. Now
I have no support. None, nada.
(looks straight up)
You're not real subtle with all
these life challenges are you?

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, 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. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH ONCOLOGY WARD - 1977 CONT'D

Larry, 25, is dragging his feet down the curved hallway then sees that individual patient rooms have glass front walls so patients with all equipment are visible in each room. He enters here 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.

Larry 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 vinyl chair's torn back-support. He stares at his bleeding hand.

Paula opens her eyes, sees him, 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 *gurgle-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 huge 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 on bed tearing then 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

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!

(shakes fist at Heaven)

"Stupid, Ugly, Failure!" You
pounded that into me every --.

(pounds ground 3 times)

God, Damn, Day!

INT. LARRY'S VIRGINIA BACHELOR APARTMENT BEDROOM - NEXT 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 onto the bedspread. 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, then 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 the 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 with 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. 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."

Larry puts a hand over both of her's and sobs.

PAULA (V.O.)

We lived and loved an entire lifetime, in just one year. Larry never flew again. He wrote his screenplay "What Love Inspires" to remind everyone how important it is to always be someone's --true love.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TCL CHINESE THEATERS IN L.A. - NOW 2024

Original opening as *Grauman's Chinese Theatre* was in 1927. Famous for distinct Chinese pagoda architecture, celebrity handprints, and footprints in forecourt, it is still a Los Angeles venue for major movie premieres and events.

INT. ONE OF ITS MANY THEATER SCREENS - MOMENTS LATER

Screen Credits roll up the screen to end on a SAG-Aftra Logo.

Its *Dedication* screen to Yale Screenwriting Professor Marc Lapadula fades out. House lights come up.

TCL AUDIENCE rises for a standing *ovation*.

Lawrence, clean-shaven, high-and-tight, is still fat but now fitter. He and Hollywood Character Actor G. LARRY BUTLER, looking like a mini-me of Lawrence, walk to the front.

TCL Audience sits.

TCL AUDIENCE ONE
Why did you make "In-Closure?"

Lawrence hand-sweeps to actor G. Larry.

LAWRENCE
I'm Larry Two. This is Larry One.

BUTLER
Larry Two and I were trying to make a statement about our unhoused problem in L.A. using a "Twilight Zone" type storyline. His script already has four awards on IMDb.

TCL AUDIENCE TWO
How many films have you both made?

BUTLER
I've appeared in 267 productions as an actor. This is my twenty-third project as also a Producer.

LAWRENCE
This is my 11th SAG-Aftra short film with my 12th already Green Lit with actor Brian Anthony Wilson.

TCL AUDIENCE THREE
What's that one about?

LAWRENCE
Actor Geoffrey Blake told me the true story about his best friend's suicide. I found it so touching I went straight home and wrote a script Geoffrey approved using his best friend's signature tag line.

TCL AUDIENCE FOUR
What's it called?

LAWRENCE

"It's All Good...not." And I
predict Brian will earn his first
Best Actor Award in over 238 films.

(turns to G. Larry)

I would now like to announce that
G. Larry just won his first ever
Best Actor Award at the New York
Film Festival yesterday for his
portrayal in our film "In-Closure."

(offers his hand)

Your statue is in the mail.

G. Larry is awe-struck then shakes hands. TCL Audience *claps*.

TCL AUDIENCE FIVE looking like every Caucasian clean-cut
Studio Exec Lawrence has ever met, stands.

TCL AUDIENCE FIVE

I'm a graduate of Professor
Lapadula and saw your film's End
Dedication. Is he--?

TCL Audience Five sits concerned.

LAWRENCE

Last year of a heart attack, at his
home, sitting at his desk doing
what he loved, dissecting a script.

TCL AUDIENCE FIVE

What are both your future plans?

BUTLER

Sing and play piano, do my 200th
skydive, and act in as many films
that will have me. My next scene is
in "Gaslit" with Julia Roberts.

LAWRENCE

Even though the three L.A. "Trades"
have run stories about my career, I
still get the same verbatim
response from Studio Execs. "If I
don't already know you, I don't
need to know you." Ageism, knows no
age-limits, in Hollywood. And as
Larry One knows all too well, only
one percent of one percent of us
actually "make it" in this crazy
Business. So if you're not having
fun trying, try flipping burgers.

Larry Two puts an arm around Larry One.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Uncle Walt Disney said it best,
"Growing old is mandatory. Growing
up --is optional."

Lawrence winks at G. Larry who *blows* a pitch-pipe then both
sing. Larry One is much better than Larry Two.

G. LARRY/LAWRENCE
"When you wish upon a star, Makes
no difference who you are. Anything
your heart desires will come, to,
youuuuu."

TCL Audience rises for another *ovation*.

BOTH BOW.

SUGGESTED END CREDITS SIDE-BAR SCREENS

Real Set Pictures and Screen Captures of Lawrence in various
costumes. First with *David Baldacci* shaking hands on "Wish
You Well" set. Then with *Ed Harris*, *Ethan Hawke*, *John
Leguizamo*, and *Mauricio Ovalle* all holding Lawrence's Bowie
knife on "Cymbeline" set. *Roger Kabler* with crew on "Saving
Robin Williams" set. G. Larry Butler with L.A. crew on
Crenshaw Boulevard's "In-Closure" set. Picture of Brian
Anthony Wilson holding his first Best Actor award. Last
picture is of Lawrence with very long hair and Santa-beard
presenting three scripts to *Yale Professor Marc Lapadula*.

FADE OUT.