

# **BARSTOOL CONTUSIONS**

WRITTEN BY

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FADE IN:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Front door swings open. The roar of rain crashing on sidewalk wakes up the joint.

An old broad is swept in by the wind. LINDA HAMILTON, actress, 68, stands in a puddle of her own drippings.

Shoes are soaked to the gills. Umbrella folds like the soggy wings of a moth. A backpack attached like a turtle shell.

Christmas TUNES play low. Three patrons on barstools turn in unison.

Linda scans the trio. She's incognito. Her dark hair is tucked under a wool cap. A COVID mask slapped to her face.

Wearing sunglasses so dark they're bulletproof.

Two dudes give Linda the once over, then swing back to their whiskeys and bad Christmas music. The third patron, called the SWEDE, rises off the center stool. She smiles.

Tall, early 60s, Scandinavian blonde, not bad looking. She extends a hand. Linda accepts.

LINDA  
Cook, I presume?

SWEDE  
Linda! What an honor.

BOOTH - LATER

They face each other. Linda lifts her mask to throw back a shot of Bulleit Bourbon. Sets down her phone next to a bourbon bottle.

Swede ignores her beer. Her eyes firm on Linda, who taps a countdown timer on the phone: 5:00, 4:59, 4:58...

LINDA  
I'm here for your script.

SWEDE  
... Barstool Deceptions?

LINDA  
Are you mental? I want thee script. Relentless.

SWEDE  
Relentless?

The Swede's eyes spring WIDE. Linda tosses back a shot.

LINDA  
Can I call you Bear?

SWEDE  
Grandma Bear's fine.

LINDA  
Cool. You can call me Mother  
Fear. But Fear's fine.

Swede forces a smile. Confusion stamped on her face.

LINDA  
I have a certain predilection  
for aliases, pseudonyms,  
acronyms and covers. My  
filmography shortlist: Tag,  
Term, T2, T3, B&B, Bad MR,  
Res Ali... and on and on.

SWEDE  
... why Relentless?

LINDA  
Blew my udders out the back  
door. Best spec script my  
manager's read since, since  
Man Witch. Ditto for me.

SWEDE  
That's crazy. I wasn't  
expecting an offer?

LINDA  
You ain't getting an offer.  
We want to option Relentless.  
One week. One dollar. I've  
got people in high places.  
Who might sign off on it,  
provided you...

Linda opens her backpack. Pulls a folded mess of a legal document. Swede looks on tentatively.

SWEDE  
We thought Relentless was a  
real work in progress -

LINDA

WE? As in your co-writers? No no. There is no we in you. Lemme break it down. Libby? gone girl. Nash? forget about him. Mitchell? sayonara. Howell? see ya, fucko. That leaves YOU, Bear. In or out?

SWEDE

In, I guess. But –

LINDA

God, I love dealing with humans. Real drama. Real anxiety.

Linda pushes the option toward the Swede, who shakes her head. Linda downs another shot. Checks her timer.

LINDA

AI-gen scripts are like the Frankenstein monster of new cinema. Same for AI writers. All nuts and bolts – no soul. Tell me, Little Bear, do you have soul?

SWEDE

... yah, I have soul.

LINDA

That's what I want. Now gimme your Pia Hancock on the dotted line. Chop chop, clock's a ticking.

The Swede signs. Takes out her phone. Snaps a photo copy.

SWEDE

You know, AI has its merits –

LINDA

Stop talking. Your assignment is to do a quick rewrite. From the ground up. NO A.I.

SWEDE

A whole rewrite?

Linda pulls a manila envelope from her backpack. She drops a critiqued copy of Relentless on the table.

LINDA  
 READ... MY... NOTES. A total  
 rewrite.

Swede flips through the script. Her eyes bug. Every page is heavily marked in blood RED.

SWEDE  
 I thought you liked  
 Relentless?

LINDA  
 Me too. But damn it, your  
 alien is not believable.

SWEDE  
 Our alien has character. It  
 gathers information, before  
 going full psycho. That's its  
 arc.

LINDA  
 Arc Farc. Aliens are on earth  
 for sport and domination. Not  
 to gather bits and bobs, old  
 pine cones and be your kid's  
 science project.

SWEDE  
 So...?

LINDA  
 I'm Darby, the heroine, to be  
 renamed Mother Fear. And her  
 four friends are now Mother  
 Fear's four bad-assed, bitch  
 daughters. We then go mano a  
 mano with the space stalker –  
 till its just me and stalker.

SWEDE  
 Isn't that what...

LINDA  
 No. I want a redo of Star  
 Trek's Arena. Kirk vs. Gorn.

Swede looks uncomfortable, like she peed her pants.

SWEDE  
 Arena?

LINDA  
 You're welcome.

SWEDE

What if...

LINDA

I just told you what I want.  
The writer is always  
replaceable. Step lightly.

SWEDE

What if Grandma Fear lives in  
a cabin? Held hostage by her  
serial killer husband.

LINDA

Shit.

SWEDE

Their four granddaughters are  
drug-addled, virgin zombies,  
who develop super powers and  
rescue Grandma Fear. The end.

LINDA

Shit.

Linda sits. Glares at a smiling Swede. RING. Linda's tap her  
phone. Stands and gathers her stuff.

LINDA

I've got your script, Bear.  
Your option... and your soul.

Heads for the exit. Swede snaps a photo of the actress.

Linda at the door. Grins like a Stephen King clown. Glances  
back at the SWEDE.

LINDA

Merry Christmas, Cook. You've  
been replaced.

Linda's COVID mask is peeled back... revealing an exact  
duplicate of **THE SWEDE**.

The Swede's phone lowers...

SWEDE

Hey, Hamilton. Ditto to you.

She is now an exact duplicate of **LINDA HAMILTON**.

FADE OUT.