

ginormous

By

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BLACK SCREEN

An elevator door opens. It closes. It goes up a few flights of stairs.

EXT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

The doors open. Out walks a ridiculously handsome matinee idol with long silky black hair. He wears a long black trench coat. His face is covered with a brown bohemian scarf and large sunglasses. This is LAFE GREENAWAY (28).

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He emerged out of the cab like a star falling from the sky. His chiseled features glistened in the wind.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Lafe walks down the hallway briskly. In one hand, he carries a thick movie script with yellow post-it notes stuck all over it. In his other hand, he carries a styrofoam cup of coffee. He takes a sip.

NARRATOR (CONT.)

He moved amongst the riff-raff and the dregs with a spring in his step. He was not one of them. He knew he had not a second to...

INT. DRESSING ROOM - MORNING

BARTY COLLINS, 21, sits at his vanity mirror. He is short, pudgy, and impishly baby-faced. He reads pages of a movie script to himself. He drums his fingers on the desk excitedly.

A knock is heard at the door. The PA, PHILO SMITH, 28, walks in.

PHILO

They're ready for you, Barty.

Barty smiles. He closes the script and puts it off to the side.

BARTY

I'm ready to rock and roll!

INT. SOUND STAGE - MORNING

Barty snappily jogs down the sound stage. He twirls a prop gun in his hand. He grins widely. Philo stands in front of him, less amused.

PHILO
Please don't do that.

Barty stops twirling the gun. He puts the gun down. Something catches his eye.

BARTY'S POV - INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

A set has been built to look like a seedy apartment. Lafe Greenaway sits in a chair, hands tied. Make-up artists apply fake blood effects to him. His eyes are closed, concentrating on the scene to be shot.

SWILL (V.O.)
Barty, sit down. You're not gonna believe this news...

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Barty takes a seat in a nondescript office. His agent, WALLACE SWILL (55), sits at a desk. He is a grossly overweight man in an ill-fitting dark suit. He breathes heavily and sweats profusely. Despite his weight, he is lively and energetic.

SWILL (CONT.)
I just got you an audition.

Barty smiles and nods.

BARTY
Cool!

SWILL
But not just any audition. I just got you *THE* audition.

Barty nods, a bit confused.

SWILL
So, as you well may know, there's this Oscar-winning, Emmy-winning, hell, I'd even give him the goddamned Nobel Prize...winning actor who has just chosen his next project.

(Beat.)
Lemme ask you something: Does the name *LAFE GREENAWAY* mean anything to you?

Barty's eyes widen.

BARTY

Oh my God.

BARTY (V.O.)

Barty, remember, whatever happens...

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty makes his way to the stage slowly. His hands tremble with fear.

BARTY (V.O.)

...this will remain the *COOLEST* experience of your entire life. You're actually in the same room as Lufe Greenaway. Some people would kill just to be able to rub his elbow or massage his cheekbones and you actually get to be in a movie with him. Forgive me for saying this but "Holy Fucking Shit!"

INT. OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Barty sits in a chair reading sides from a movie script. He sits before a tribunal of movie producers and the film's director ZAKARY TROTH (37), a tall, angular man with a spaced-out look in his eye.

BARTY

Time to die...motherfucker.

ZAKARY

Barty, stop right there. You are the perfect embodiment of everything I have ever imagined for this character. Fate has led me to you. This was no accident. Not only are you hired, but I am placing you on a pedestal upon which all future cast-members must be measured.

Zakary turns towards his crew.

ZAKARY

Take a snapshot of this, boys. This moment is holy.

Barty gets a little choked up.

BARTY

I just...wow...thank you so much,
Mister Troth.

ZAKARY

You are welcome. And feel free to
keep that side. That's your only
line in the film.

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty passes by a few crew members. He greets them
sheepishly.

BARTY

Hello. How is your day starting
off?

They ignore him. Barty turns and stares at Lafe. Lafe is
completely in character. He sobs slightly to himself. Barty
trembles.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Barty sits on a couch. He watches the film crew set up a
shot. Lafe Greenaway, carrying a coffee, approaches him. He
outstretches his hand.

LAFE

Hey, I just wanted to introduce
myself. I'm Lafe Greenaway.

Barty blinks. He tries very hard to cover up his amazement.

BARTY

Oh. Hey. I've...you know...seen you
around.

(Beat.)

Any...uh...relation to that actor
guy? I've seen him in a few movies.

LAFE

Actually, that's me. I'm acting in
this movie.

BARTY

Oh! Cool! Well, very nice to meet
you, sir. My name is Barty. Barty
Collins.

They shake hands.

LAFE

It's nice to be working with you.
You seem like a cool dude.

BARTY

Yeah. You too.

Lafe leaves. Barty bites his lip.

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty gets to his place in front of the camera. Lafe Greenaway sobs silently. Zakary Troth lays down behind the camera on the floor.

ZAKARY

Alright. We're going in a few minutes. I just wanted to thank everyone. With all the films being made in the world, you chose to work on this one. So a big hearty thank you to you all.

Everyone is silent. Barty sweats profusely.

SWILL (V.O.)

Just remember Barty...

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Swill gives Barty a pep talk. He dabs his head with a towel.

SWILL (CONT.)

...he's a human being. He's not a star. He's not a galaxy. He digests food like you and me.

Swill holds up his arm.

SWILL

My arm is indistinguishable from his arm. Our circulatory systems run the same way, like a train track: Always greased up and always on schedule.

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty sweats. He trembles. He clutches the gun tightly to his side. The moment of silence passes.

ZAKARY
 Alright, let's do this! In 3...

Barty gulps.

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Swill leans into Barty's face.

SWILL
 Barty Collins. This is...

ZAKARY (V.O.)
 ...2...

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty's leg shakes.

SWILL (V.O.)
 ...your moment.

Zakary throws his hands up in the air.

ZAKARY
 ...1! Do it!

Everyone goes quiet. Barty sweats. He walks up to Lafe. Lafe sobs.

LAFE
 M-my watch. It's b-broken. Y-you
 b-broke it.

Lafe blows out some snot. Barty shakes.

LAFE
 H-how will I ever...*EVER*...ever
 know the time? Wh-what have you
 d-done? D-do you even....*know* the
 time?

Barty raises the gun up slowly.

LAFE
 Well...DO YOU?!?

Barty aims at Lafe's character. He hesitates. The crew looks on breathlessly. Barty has stage fright. He says nothing.

LAFE
 Um...DO YOU? HUH?

Barty forces out the words in monotone.

BARTY
Yes. It's...uh..

Barty gulps.

BARTY (CONT.)
...time to DIE!

Barty unloads the shotgun into Lafe's character's head. He has a look of pure anger on his face. The bullets hit the floor.

BARTY
Motherfucker!

There is complete silence. Barty looks up. The top of Lafe's head has been blown clean off, leaving only his broken jaw. Blood spurts out of the wounds.

BARTY
Wh...?

Barty's eyes widen at the realization that this is not an effect. His jaw drops.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A throng of people crowd outside of the hospital. Police attempt to control them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He had been struck down in his
prime.

A body-bag on a gurney is rolled into the hospital quickly. The crowd screams. Doves are released into the sky.

NARRATOR (CONT.)
A star that had shot across the
sky, crashing smack-dab into a
brick wall before it even entered
our stratosphere.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

The following morning, an overweight, balding POLICE OFFICER (54) speaks to the press.

POLICE OFFICER
Lafe Greenaway died as a result of
seven shotgun wounds to the head.
Three in the right cheek. Two in
the left. Once in the jaw. And once

in the forehead. No further questions.

The press rabble as the police officer retreats back into the station.

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - MORNING

Barty stares at the remnants of Lafe's body, still tied to the chair. There is no one else in the sound stage. Tears roll down Barty's cheeks.

He walks up to the body. He throws the prop gun to the floor. He rubs his chest.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And humanity had been left with a vacant, smoking hole. Where once pulsed with life and vibrancy held up high had now become a pile of ashes smoldering to the floor.

Barty sobs.

BLACK SCREEN

TITLE CARD: **LAFE GREENAWAY 1980 - 2008**

INT. APARTMENT MOCK-UP - DAY

Barty drops the gun. He collapses to the floor. He sobs. Zakary and the crew crowd around him.

ZAKARY

Barty...? Barty...?

Barty points at Lafe's corpse in the chair.

BARTY

I killed him! I *killed* him!

ZAKARY

Barty! Barty!

Barty shrieks.

ZAKARY

Are you okay? He's okay, boys! He's okay! Are you okay?

Zakary snaps at Philo.

ZAKARY

Philo, Barty seems to have fallen a bit ill. Could you go and fetch him some Pop-Tarts? Maybe some water or a cola?

PHILO

Yes sir.

Philo walks off.

BARTY

Lafe! He's dead!

ZAKARY

Barty...

BARTY

What was in that gun? Was it rigged? Was there something in it?

ZAKARY

Barty...

BARTY

Oh my God! I can't believe I just killed Lafe Greenaway!

ZAKARY

Barty, what are you talking about?

BARTY

There's a huge hole in his head!
Look!

Barty points to the smoking hole in Lafe's head.

ZAKARY

Barty, Lafe was *magnificent* in that scene.

BARTY

Wh...?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barty walks into the bathroom. He looks into the mirror. He turns the sink on and washes his face.

INT. APARMENT MOCK-UP - DAY

Zakary speaks with Lafe's body in the chair. The crew sets up a shot behind them, oblivious to the corpse in the room.

ZAKARY

Lafe, you were wonderful today.

He playfully slaps Lafe on the back. Teeth and blood spurt out. Barty enters, rubbing his eyes. He walks up to Zakary.

BARTY

Mister Troth...?

ZAKARY

Yes, Barty?

BARTY

May I speak to you?

ZAKARY

But of course.

BARTY

I don't think I can do this movie.

ZAKARY

Really? Why?

BARTY

I mean...I guess...Mister Troth, forgive me for saying this but I find it kinda hard to act opposite...well...a dead guy.

ZAKARY

Are you referring to Lafe?

BARTY

Yes.

Zakary furrows his brow.

ZAKARY

Bartholomew, I do not appreciate your tone. That man happens to be one of the finest actors of his generation. He is able to uncover and plumb the depths of emotions that they don't even have names for yet.

BARTY

I'm really sorry.

ZAKARY

It's okay. I'm sorry I lost my temper.

(Beat.)
Just try to...you know..."be" in
the moment, man. You only have one
line and you've got a beautiful
voice. That line is *meant* to come
out of your mouth.

Barty nods.

BARTY

Okay.

ZAKARY

So we're going to do this scene
again and I want you to really say
those words. Really feel them. I
want total, unbridled honesty. Not
just from you, but from everyone.

Zakary walks back to the camera.

ZAKARY

If you don't stab me in the heart,
we're just going to keep doing it
until you do.

Barty blinks. Flies swarm around Lafe's corpse. Zakary makes
his way behind the camera. He lies down on the floor.

ZAKARY

Alright, boys! Let's do it!

Zakary claps his hands. Barty freezes. He walks up to Lafe's
corpse. He says nothing. He pokes at Lafe with the prop gun.

ZAKARY

Cut!

Zakary walks up to Barty.

ZAKARY

Barty, you're supposed to say your
line right there.

BARTY

But...but Lafe is...

ZAKARY

Barty, Lafe is doing great.
He's getting his groove on in this
scene. I really want you to have
that level of intensity. You think
you can?

Barty sighs.

BARTY
Yes. Yes I can.

ZAKARY
Alright. Then let's do it again.

Zakary claps his hands.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Barty walks in the door. He collapses to the floor.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barty sits at his computer. He Googles the name "Lafe Greenaway". The only results that pop up are gossip articles about who he is dating. There is nothing about the shooting.

Barty rubs his head.

ARTHUR (V.O.)
Wow! So you're, like, a really big actor right now! That's really neat!

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

ARTHUR MACAFEE, 19, an owlish, plump young man with thick glasses and gelled hair, stands in front of Barty. He speaks in a high-pitched nasally whine. Barty holds a pile of unwashed clothing. He is very tired.

ARTHUR (CONT.)
What is it like being in a big-time Hollywood movie?

BARTY
Well, again, Arthur, I only have one line. I'll probably end up getting cut out.

ARTHUR
But still! And you get to work with Lafe Greenaway! He's so cool! What's he like in real life?

BARTY
Well, he's a lot like a cadaver, actually. Sort of surprised me.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barty is under the covers. He cannot sleep. He stares up at the ceiling. Blood slowly drips from the walls.

ZAKARY (V.O.)

Barty...

Barty shakes.

ZAKARY (V.O.)

Barty...

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK (EARLIER)

Barty stares at Lafe's corpse. Zakary stands by the camera.

ZAKARY (CONT.)

Barty, say your line.

Barty snaps out of it.

BARTY

Sorry, sorry, Mr. Troth. I'll do it now.

ZAKARY

Okay. Please do.

Zakary claps.

ZAKARY

Let's do it!

Barty freezes. He gulps. He fiddles with the prop gun. The crew groans.

PHILO

Oh my God.

ZAKARY

Guys, remember, you can't rush art and Barty is most definitely an artist.

PHILO

We've been here for hours, Zak.

Zakary claps.

ZAKARY

Just keep going, Barty. Start over.

Barty snaps out of it. He goes up to the corpse. He raises the gun in character.

BARTY
Time...time...time...

A tear rolls down Barty's cheek.

BARTY (CONT.)
T-time...t-to...

Barty flings the gun onto the floor. He screams.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barty shakes under the covers. Tears roll down his cheeks.

PHILO (V.O.)
I'm pretty sure that wasn't in the
script, Zak.

ZAKARY (V.O.)
Barty? Barty? Are you alright?

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK (EARLIER)

The entire crew is crowding around Barty. Barty looks as if he is having a seizure. His body contorts wildly. He screams. Tears stream down his face.

BARTY
FUCKER! FUCKER! FUCKER! FUCKER!

ZAKARY
Philo, Barty needs some Junior
Mints. Be a doll and fetch them,
will you?

BARTY
HE IS DEAD! THE MOTHERFUCKER IS
DEAD!

PHILO
Don't call Lafe a motherfucker!

ZAKARY
Philo?

PHILO
Yes, sir.

Philo leaves. Barty goes to Lafe's corpse. He shakes it.

BARTY
THIS MAN! THIS MAN! THIS IS NOT AN
ALIVE MAN! NO! HE IS DEAD! HE IS A
DEAD MAN!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 The smoke rose up and formed a
 lucky thirteen letters in the
 clouds...

EXT. BEACHSIDE SUBURBAN COMMUNITY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe wanders through the neighborhood. It is the middle of
 the night.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
 ...spelling out only one holy name:
 Lafe Greenaway.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks up to the front door. He knocks. GRACE GREENAWAY,
 56, opens the door. She is an old, haggard woman dressed in
 white pajamas. The knock has clearly woken her up.

GRACE
 Hello?

Lafe stares at her.

LAFE
 I guess you're going to be my
 mother.

Grace falls to her knees. She hugs Lafe tight. She cries.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - FLASHBACK

The family eats around the breakfast table. Grace sits next
 to her husband, WINTON GREENAWAY (58), a large, robust man.
 Also at the table is the couple's young son, TODDY GREENAWAY
 (12).

Lafe sits next to Toddy. He wears child pajamas that are
 clearly too big for him. He stares at the family eat.

GRACE
 Lafey, baby? Are you sure you're
 not hungry?

LAFE
 I'm fine.

WINTON
 Lafe, I just wanted to give you a
 hearty Greenaway family welcome.
 Welcome to the world, son.

LAFE

I thank you kindly, Dad.

WINTON

Well, you deserve it.

(Beat.)

Honey, these pancakes are absolutely gob-smacking delicious!

GRACE

Thank you, sweetie.

WINTON

Dare I say it? Dare I?

GRACE

You may.

WINTON

Not only has God blessed us with two robust and beautiful sons but He has also blessed us with some of the most delectable breakfast pastries these lips have ever touched.

Grace wipes away tears.

GRACE

That is one of the most beautiful things you have ever said.

WINTON

This is one of the hip-hip-happiest days of my life!

Toddy stares at Lafe quizzically.

TODDY

Are you...looking forward to life?

LAFE

I am. It's not going to be a picnic but it's going to be an adventure.

TODDY

Yeah. I guess so.

WINTON

Toddy, you're absolutely right.

Winton gets up. He goes over to Lafe. He holds him tight.

WINTON (CONT.)
Lafe's life will be an adventure!

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Toddy walks Lafe throughout his new room. The room is furnished with decorations befitting a child of about two or three.

TODDY
So, I guess this'll be your new room.

LAFE
Thank you very much, Toddy.

TODDY
Yeah.

Toddy points to a small crib in the center of the room.

TODDY
They want that to be your bed.
(Beat.)
I guess.

Lafe attempts to lie down in it. He is far too big. The wood creaks. The legs buckle under the weight.

LAFE
It's cozy.

There is a knock at the door. Winton enters.

WINTON
Hey boys. You know, I was thinking:
It's such a nice day it'd be a shame to waste it. Wanna go to the park?

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

It is a beautifully bright sunny day. Grace pushes Lafe in a stroller that is too small for his size. She and Winton are all smiles. They enjoy the scenery. Lafe and Toddy wear blank expressions.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was but a seedling of a seedling of a seedling. He was not yet ripened. His celestial dust was not yet apparent.

WINTON

This is one of the greatest days of my life!

GRACE

Mine too, sweetie. Mine too.

WINTON

Lafe, this is called "a good time." Get ready because you're about to have loads more of these in the years to come.

TODDY

What about me, Pop?

WINTON

Well, I mean, I guess you'll have some too.

(Beat.)

I mean, the world is big enough for anything, right?

TODDY

Yeah, I guess so.

LATER - The family walks by a bench. Winton stops dead in his tracks.

WINTON

Wow! Cool! A bench!

Winton takes out a small camera.

WINTON

Let's get a picture! A family photo to put in the ol' album!

Grace gets Lafe out of the stroller. She places him on the bench. She and Toddy crowd around him.

WINTON

Hmm. Grace...sweetie...

GRACE

Yes, honey?

WINTON

I don't mean to be all meany-weany but I think I'm gonna have to give you the ol' heave-ho. I just think this photo would be more artistically significant without you in it.

(Beat.)
You know. Just with the boys.

GRACE
Oh. Okay.

WINTON
Glad you understand, sweetie.

Grace stands off to the side. Toddy scoots closer to Lafe.

WINTON
Hmm. Hmm. Hmm.

Winton flips the camera around several ways. He tries to find the perfect shot.

WINTON
Well, you're not gonna believe this
but...well...Toddy...

TODDY
Okay.

Toddy walks off to the side. He stands by his mother.

WINTON
You know, Toddy, I think you just
did the trick! You just sprinkled
the magic dust on the picture! Good
job! You get an "A" for the day!

INT. WINTON'S CAMERA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Winton zooms in tight on Lafe's face. It takes up the entire frame. He clicks off the picture.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe lays in the crib. He is asleep. Grace and Winton stand over him.

WINTON
Well, day one down. About forever
more to go.

GRACE
Look how beautiful he is.

WINTON
He's truly a gorgeous creation.
(Beat.)
I love God so much. I really do.

Winton bends down. He kisses Lafe on the head.

WINTON

You're gonna be great. You're gonna
be great. You're gonna be *great*.

Winton and Grace leave. Winton shuts the light off. Lafe opens his eyes widely.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Barty walks onto the set. He looks tired and haggard. He walks up to Zakary. Zakary is mid-conversation with the film's key grip, GOLDIE (47). She is a middle-aged woman dressed in a business suit.

ZAKARY

Goldie, I sense that there is an
imbalance in our universe.

GOLDIE

Look, I'm really sorry.

BARTY

Hey, Mr. Troth. How are you d...

Zakary holds up a "One second" sign. He turns back to Goldie.

ZAKARY

You're the key grip. You're
supposed to grip my keys. You lost
them and I had to sleep on the set
last night because of that. I'm not
mad. Just angry.

GOLDIE

It won't happen again.

ZAKARY

Hey, that's what it's all about.
Hug?

GOLDIE

Hug.

They hug. She leaves.

ZAKARY

Heya, Barty. How's it going?

BARTY

Hey, Mr. Troth. I'm doing pretty good. I just wanted to let you know that...well...I know we had kind of a rough day yesterday...

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK (ONE DAY EARLIER)

Barty screams. He pounds the floor. The crew crowds around him.

BARTY

HE IS DEAD! THE MOTHERFUCKER IS DEAD!

The crowd gasps. Barty collapses. He cries.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Barty finishes his apology.

BARTY (CONT.)

...and I hope we can move forward and move past and just get to work creating something great.

ZAKARY

It's okay, Barty. Not a big deal.

BARTY

That's really great to hear.

ZAKARY

But...

BARTY

But?

ZAKARY

Well, we kind of had to "refurbish" after the madness of yesterday.

BARTY

What do you mean?

ZAKARY

Well, unfortunately, the insurance guys didn't really factor in mental breakdowns into the sheets so we honestly had no game plan. But we kind of did some last minute rescheduling and, well, we're not shooting that scene again for about a week and a half.

BARTY

Oh.

ZAKARY

Yeah. I mean, it's not a huge deal but, you know, we really could have gotten those shots yesterday.

BARTY

Are you sure you can't do it today?

ZAKARY

Lafe's got a pretty tight schedule, Barty. We gotta work around that.

BARTY

Work around *what*? His decomposition?

Zakary stares at him. Barty catches himself.

BARTY

Heh. Kidding!

(Beat.)

Kidding!

ZAKARY

Oh. Okay.

(Beat.)

Hey, listen, Barty. I gotta head out. I'm really sorry about today but there's a silver lining, as there always is. There's a really cool burger place about two blocks away that very much bears checking out. You should use the time off to do it.

BARTY

Okay. I may just. I may just.

Zakary walks off. Barty stops him.

BARTY

So, um, I guess I'll see you in a week and a half?

Zakary does not turn around.

ZAKARY

For sure, Barty. For sure.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Barty walks outside. Under his breath, he mutters:

BARTY
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck!

Goldie is sitting on the stairs. She smokes a cigarette. Barty sits down a few feet away from her. He does not wish to come on.

BARTY
Hey.

GOLDIE
Hi. What's up?

BARTY
Nothing much. Nothing really.

GOLDIE
You okay?

BARTY
Huh?

GOLDIE
After all that screaming yesterday?

BARTY
So what? I tend to scream in my everyday life. You got a problem with that?

GOLDIE
No. Please don't talk to me like that.

Barty sighs.

BARTY
Look, I'm sorry. I'm just under so much stress. Do you ever feel like your life is coming apart?

GOLDIE
Well, I'm dying, so I guess it sort of is.

BARTY
Jesus, I'm sorry.

GOLDIE
It's okay. I deal.

Barty fidgets with his fingers.

BARTY

Umm...from what...if I may ask?

GOLDIE

They're not sure. Some say cancer. Some say this liver disease whose name I keep forgetting. One guy even said it was chicken pox.

BARTY

And how long?

GOLDIE

Honestly, I couldn't give less of a shit. I've stopped going to doctors. They probably couldn't give me a straight answer anyways without paperworking me up the ass.

BARTY

Heh. You got that right.

GOLDIE

Oh well. It could be worse. I could be a sycophantic key grip on a shitty film with a lobotomized boll weevil director.

Barty stares at Goldie. He is unsure of what to say. Goldie stares into space. She takes out another cigarette out of her pocket. She lights up.

BARTY

Be careful. Those'll kill you.

Barty mouths "Fuck."

GOLDIE

Well, my life's mission has always been to decompose so I guess I'm in the clear.

Silence.

A limousine drives by. Through the tinted windows, Barty sees that Lafe's decomposing corpse is in the back seat. It is dressed in a very nice suit.

Barty sighs.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Barty walks up to his door. He sticks the keys in the door but they jam.

BARTY

Come on!

The door is stuck. Barty grumbles. He fidgets with the keys.

BARTY

Asshole door!

Barty pushes his arm into the door. It opens immediately.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The lights are off. Barty grumbles. He fumbles around and manages to turn on the lights.

BENNY AND CAROL

Surprise!

Barty is scared to death by the sight of his parents: BENNY, 67, and CAROL, 63. They are a nice Jewish couple at the tail-end of middle-age. They are dressed in matching Hawaiian shirts and swim trunks.

They speak in thick New York accents.

BARTY

Jesus! You guys almost gave me a heart attack!

Benny and Carol laugh.

BENNY

Oh, well I guess that would be only fitting, considering we made you!

Carol playfully slaps Benny.

CAROL

Oh stop it, Benny! You're always so *poetic*!

Barty, still shaken, sits on the couch.

BARTY

S-so what brings you guys here?

CAROL

Sweetie, we wanted to see our little baby before he hit the big time!

BARTY

Oh, Mother...

BENNY

Oh pfft, honey! He's not gonna forget about us! We're his parents!

CAROL

I know, I know, sweetie. But I just don't want him to go changing into one of those big-head lunkheads roaming around.

BENNY

Ahh, Barty's a good kid. He's got his head screwed on tight.

BARTY

Well, I mean, it *is* just a bit part in some silly movie.

BENNY

Some *silly* movie? Barty, son, you're gonna be *famous*!

BARTY

Maybe, I mean, I do only have one line.

BENNY

Line?

BARTY

Yeah. I only say one thing in one scene.

BENNY

Scene? Line?

CAROL

Thing?

Barty is confused.

BARTY

Y-yeah. You know. Like the words that you read in front of...umm...

Carol laughs.

CAROL

Such an active imagination, he has!

BENNY

Barty, you're gonna be a famous
murderer! We couldn't be more
proud!

BARTY

What are you talking about?

BENNY

Lafe! Greenaway! The biggest movie
star in the world!

(Beat.)

And you killed him!

Barty runs to the door and locks it tight.

BARTY

How the fuck did you find out?

CAROL

Sweetie, you're gonna be the next
Mark David Chapman! I see it in
your face!

BENNY

We couldn't be more proud.

BARTY

You cannot tell *anyone*.

BENNY

Why would we? You've got that crazy
Guitteau look in your eye.

CAROL

So handsome.

BENNY

Yeah, the cops can practically call
themselves!

BARTY

I cannot believe...

Barty walks to the couch. Shaken, he sits down.

BARTY

Oh my God.

BENNY

I know it's a bit shocking, Barty,
but remember, we're always with
you!

CAROL

That is true. Sweetie, you may have left the nest but we're always watching. A good mother always knows.

Carol smiles deviously.

CAROL

A good mother always knows.

A soft piano tinkles in the background.

BARTY

What?

CAROL (SINGING)

A good mother always knows.

BARTY

Guys?

BENNY (SINGING)

A good father always cares.

BARTY

Did you rehearse this?

CAROL

Just where her baby goes.

BENNY

Whether just outside or down the stairs.

Barty shakes.

CAROL

Because when you get right down to it. A mom stands by her son. There's really nothing to it. There's no war to be won.

BENNY

You're not just my best friend. You also used to be my seed. I'll watch ya to the end.

Benny whispers:

BENNY

Even when you smoke a lil' weed!

BARTY
GUYS?!?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

The Greenaway family continues the musical number. Lafe, bored, sits on the couch.

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY (SINGING)
You're the son! Yes you!

TODDY (SINGING)
And only you!

WINTON
Good, Toddy!

WINTON AND GRACE
You're gonna make us rich and famous! And that is true!

GRACE
You're the apple of my eye!

WINTON
You're the cherry in my pie!

TODDY
You can never make me cry!

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY
'Cause that's inhuman!

Lafe yawns.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Benny and Carol dance around.

BENNY
You pulled the trigger and it shot his perfect face.

CAROL
You didn't do outta malice but you didn't do it in haste!

BENNY
We saw it from the start. You can never erase.

CAROL

We saw it from the start. You can never erase.

BENNY AND CAROL

We saw it from the start. You can never erase!

Benny and Carol do a musical theater pose. They disappear in a puff of smoke.

Barty blinks.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barty raids his medicine cabinet. He opens several bottles of pills at once. He shoves them all down his throat. He chugs a huge bottle of whiskey.

WINTON (O.S.)

When you came into my life, my life became my life.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Winton sings on top of the coffee table.

WINTON (CONT.)

And now it's never filled with strife 'cause you're here!

GRACE

And though I was never pregnant, I never doubted for a second that you were my deck in the patio of my life.

Lafe coughs.

TODDY

I never wanted a baby brother. But now you're here, you're like no other!

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY

Lafe Greenaway! That is your name!

A loud thump. Lafe looks around.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barty has fallen to the floor, passed out. Foam oozes out of his mouth. The bottle of whiskey falls on top of his head. It cracks the floor tile.

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY (CONT.)
*Don't chase it all away! 'Cause we
 love you just the same!*

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Grace squeezes Lafe's cheek. Lafe is in pain.

GRACE
*His cheekbones! His eyes! So
 wonderful to view!*

WINTON
*On a fifty foot screen and some
 popcorn too!*

Lafe grumbles. He gets up from the couch. He walks towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe fiddles around the counter. He finds the car keys. The musical number continues behind him.

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY
*Yum! I love popcorn! It is so
 great!*

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks past his singing family. He twirls the keys on his fingers.

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY
When I eat popcorn...

LAFE
 Back later.

WINTON AND GRACE AND TODDY (CONT.)
...it is impossible to hate!

The door slams.

EXT. GREENAWAY HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks to the family car in the driveway. It is a musty old jalopy. Lafe opens the car door. The car magically morphs into a shiny red Porsche.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe adjusts the car mirror. He turns the ignition. He backs out of the driveway.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe's car speeds through the neighborhood at lightning speed. It hits a few mailboxes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Off, off he went like a thief in the night. Blazing a trail of pure white, hot fire burning up everything in its path.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe's eyes are wide as he drives. He is focused and determined.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But before shooting off into the stratosphere, he had to spend just a few more moments on earth.

He stops the car abruptly.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The car pulls into the driveway. Lafe gets out. He goes to the front door. He rings the doorbell. A large BURLY MAN answers.

LAFE

Hello. I was wondering if your daughter was around.

The burly man grunts. JANEY, 19, a teenage girl dressed in a T-shirt and jeans walks out.

JANEY

Hello.

LAFE

Hi. You don't know me yet but I'm Lafe Greenaway. What's your name?

JANEY

Janey.

LAFE

Hi, Janey. That's a nice name. Would you like to maybe sit on top of my car?

EXT. LAFE'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Janey sit on the roof of the car. They look up at the stars.

LAFE

Man, look at all those stars. What do you think they mean?

JANEY

I don't know. I guess I've always...

Lafe cuts her off.

LAFE

I've always believed that the stars aren't anything concrete like balls of gas or bits of the sun or something like that. I mean that's just so rudimentary, don't you think?

(Beat.)

Nah, nah. I think...they're people. People that just got too big for this world. They've got to just hover above us all, living their own lives and doing their own things.

Lafe stares at the sky, wide-eyed.

LAFE

It's kind of a curse, when you think about it.

JANEY

So all humans aren't equal?

LAFE

Humans are. *They*...

Lafe points to the stars.

LAFE (CONT.)

...are not.

JANEY

I see. That's an interesting way of looking at it.

LAFE

Man, I hope that one day, I can fly. Fly so high that I can touch one of those stars.

JANEY
Maybe you will.

LAFE
I want to. I want to be *big*,
Catherine. Big like a hurricane. A
force of nature.

JANEY
So what are you going to do?

LAFE
Well, I'm gonna get the fuck out of
here. Drive as far away as I can.
Start a life somewhere. Get into
movies. Get into acting. Get my
face plastered on T-shirts and
coffee mugs. I wanna be an icon,
Marie. A fucking icon.

JANEY
Like a lapel pin?

LAFE
Like a fucking crucifix! That's
what I want.
(Beat.)
The trouble with Jesus Christ is
that he hogs all the love for
himself. When will people kill in
the name of Lafe?

JANEY
Big goals, man.

LAFE
Big goals indeed.

Lafe hops off the car. He puts on sunglasses. He opens the
car door.

LAFE
Well, that's the end of my
childhood. Thanks for being a part
of it.

JANEY
No problem. You're leaving?

LAFE
Yeah. Gotta get out there. The city
lights are a-callin'.
(Beat.)

I'm sorry, what was your name again?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A cell phone alarm rings. Barty is out cold on the floor. It wakes him. He has grown a beard. With what little strength he has, he opens up the phone.

On the screen it says "Film shoot. 8:00 AM."

BARTY

Shit.

Barty looks at a digital clock on the bathroom counter. It says "8:15 AM".

BARTY

SHIT!

With very little strength, Barty attempts to get up. He slips and falls.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Zakary gives a speech in front of the cast and crew. He stands on top of an apple crate.

ZAKARY

Guys, I just wanted to tell you that all of you guys possess my favorite faces that I have ever seen every day over a period of four weeks.

The crew applauds.

ZAKARY (CONT.)

And, furthermore, I want to say that, while this movie may be low-budget, there is no budget for my heart. So it can love in whatever fashion it chooses to.

(Beat.)

It's just that my brain gets in the way with "logic" and stuff. Anyway, that was it. Let's get back to work, guys.

BARTY (O.S.)

WAAAAAAIT!

The crew looks behind them. Barty crawls on the floor, sluggishly. He reaches his hand out for someone.

BARTY (CONT.)

I'm back! I'm back, everybody!
Haha!

ZAKARY

Barty, good to see you. You look great. There is something...

BARTY

I'm ready to shoot my scene now.

ZAKARY

Well, the thing is...

BARTY

"Time to die, motherfucker!" That's my calling!

Barty, out of breath, passes out.

EXT. CRAFT SERVICE TABLE - LATER

Zakary sits on a small fold-out. He drinks coffee out of a styrofoam cup. Barty sits on another fold-out. His body is so wobbly that he has trouble keeping still.

BARTY

You *replaced* me?

ZAKARY

Don't think of it as "replacing", Barty. Think of it as just another being saying the same words that you say. In a way, you're locked together in this, spiritually, forever. So that's always a plus.

BARTY

Why didn't you even call me?

ZAKARY

Well, we heard about your little suicide attempt. That kind of freaks me out. I don't really like talking to people who try to kill themselves.

(Beat.)

I did ask Goldie to call you. I guess she never did.

Zakary points someone out in the crowd.

ZAKARY
That's the new guy.

Reveal an extremely old man in a walker and oxygen tank. He wears a black suit. His hair is gelled. This is MORTIMER, 87.

Mortimer moves through the crowd. Everyone schmoozes with him and pats him on the back. He flirts with the women and gives the men high-fives. He enjoys the attention.

BARTY
That guy? He's like 90!

ZAKARY
That's Mortimer Schepp. He's *really* good!

A bell rings.

ZAKARY
Barty, I don't mean to be a douche, but we gotta get to filming. Your scene, in fact!

Zakary smiles at Barty. He runs off to shoot the scene.

ZAKARY
Alright guys, let's do it!

INT. APARTMENT SET - DAY

Mortimer stands in front of the door with his prop gun. Lafe Greenaway is still strapped to the chair. Worms and bugs eat at him.

The crowd watches the scene unfold. Barty sits on the floor next to Zakary.

ZAKARY
Alright, guys, let's do it!

Mortimer gets in character. He knocks on the door.

MORTIMER
Hey motherfucker. You ready to die? I know you are. I can see it in your eyes. I can see it in your breath. You exhale, knowing full well that each puff of cloudy smoke blowing out your mouth could be your last gasp at a connection with this world.

BARTY
You gave him a monologue?

ZAKARY
Sssh! Barty!

MORTIMER
And now I'm pretty sure you're
scared. Scared of what I can do.
Well, I'm here to tell you...that
all your fears...all your
thoughts...they're all fucking
true.

A tear rolls down Zakary's face. Barty shakes his head.

BARTY
I'm out of here.

Barty walks away. He slips and falls. The noise messes up
the scene.

ZAKARY
Cut! Dammit Barty!

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Barty sits on the couch. He rolls up his sleeve. He takes a
razor blade. He attempts to slit his wrists but the blade
will not penetrate through the skin. His skin is as hard as
a rock.

Barty throws the razor down in a rage.

EXT. PELLICAN STICKS MOTEL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The motel is seedy and small. A broken neon sign flickers.
The light goes out.

INT. PELLICAN STICKS MOTEL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe sits naked on the bed. He watches television. The set
is broken, with a large crack down the middle of the screen.
Bugs crawl on the walls.

TELEVISION (O.S.)
I'm tellin' ya, Alice! That wasn't
no bumblebee! That was a
DUMB-blebee!

Lafe smiles.

LAFE

Heh.

LATER - Lafe is fast asleep. His body levitates above the bed. The television is still on. The light flickers on the wall.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe drives through the barren desert. There is no sign of plant or animal life anywhere. "It's a Good Day" by Perry Como plays on the radio. Lafe drums along on his steering wheel.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

His humanly skin shed with the force of thousands. Millions of tiny ants crawled upon his spine; pushing his body into new and wonderful dimensions.

There is a large bump. There is a scream. Lafe looks around.

LAFE

Hello?

EXT. DESERT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe swerves the car to the side of the road. He hurriedly gets out. He looks around.

LAFE

Hello? Are you okay?

On the ground, BOBBY QUELLAN, 28, bleeds to death. He is an attractive young matinee idol with curly blond locks and a cleft chin.

LAFE

Sir?

BOBBY

Well...well...alright...

LAFE

Are you okay? You seem to be leaking.

BOBBY

What's your name, sir?

LAFE

Lafe. Lafe Greenaway. What's yours?

BOBBY

I'm Bobby Quellan. But maybe not for much longer.

LAFE

Okay?

Bobby coughs up some blood.

BOBBY

Don't do what I did, Lafe. Don't stand in front of traffic.

LAFE

Nah. I never do that. Do you want a towel?

BOBBY

Towels are for the weak of mind. True men never leak. Always remember that.

LAFE

Duh.

BOBBY

When you go through this life, there are going to be people in it. People who want your sweet, sweet liquids. Don't ever give it up, Lafe. Don't ever do that.

(Beat.)

Because THAT...is just not what we do.

Lafe blinks.

BOBBY

Keep it all to yourself. Only you deserve it. People are going to want you. They will want pieces of you. Don't hand out.

LAFE

I guess I won't.

BOBBY

God will pump His hand down from the heavens and try to get at your sweet nectar. When He does that, bite it the fuck off.

Lafe nods.

BOBBY

I like you, man. You seem like a cool dude.

LAFE

Well, I try.

BOBBY

Well, continue being cool.

LAFE

I guess I'm going to have to.

BOBBY

Okay?

LAFE

Okay.

Bobby dies. Lafe stares at the body.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe shuts the door. He starts the ignition.

LAFE

Well, that was weird.

EXT. DESERT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe drives past Bobby's body. It blows away in the wind like sand.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe stares straight ahead as he drives. He eats a whole cheeseburger in one bite.

EXT. STARSVILLE SIGN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe's car drives past a giant sign on a mountain that says "STARSVILLE." It looks exactly like the Hollywood sign. The car speeds up as it enters.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Like a thief in the night, he sneaked into the palace of his dreams...

INT. LAFE'S CAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe looks around at all the city lights. They are glamorous and glitzy. He wipes away a tear from his eye.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
...where he would finally etch his
name into the fabric of human
existence. An icon.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe leans against his parked car. He stares at the glitzy lights down below.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
He had arrived. All those lights.
All those buildings. Just waiting
to hold his ginormous-ness. He had
arrived.

BARTY (O.S.)
Goddammit!

INT. APARTMENT POST OFFICE - NIGHT

Barty tries to open up his postal box. The lock is jammed. He tries to shake and jimmy it to no avail.

He sighs.

BARTY
Son of a bitch.

He punches it a few times. He grabs his hand in pained anger. His knuckles bleed.

BARTY
Son of a BITCH!

Arthur enters from the back door. He carries boxes of snack foods in his arms.

ARTHUR
Oh, hi Barty! How are you? Wow,
you're still up! It's so late!

Barty grunts to himself. He tries the lock again.

BARTY
Hey, Arthur.

ARTHUR
Is your box broken?

BARTY
What does it look like?

ARTHUR
It looks like a box! Haha. That was
me joking!
(Beat.)
Could I maybe try it?

BARTY
Go right ahead. I'm fucking sick of
dealing with it.

Arthur goes up to the box. With his chocolate-smearred
fingers, he pushes the door lightly. It opens smoothly.

BARTY
How did you...do that?

ARTHUR
It just needed a little elbow
grease and a little love!

BARTY
Wow.

Barty notices Arthur's snack foods.

BARTY
That's some bounty you've got.

ARTHUR
Oh yeah! My friend Vincent and I
are having a sugar-party! We just
bought so much money worth of
yumminess! Yay!

BARTY
That is kick-ass.

ARTHUR
Hey! Wanna come?

Barty smiles.

BARTY
Arthur, I would love to come to
your apartment for a sugar-party.

ARTHUR
Yay! YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Arthur sits on his couch shouting. His mouth is smeared with chocolate and sugar.

ARTHUR (CONT.)
 ...AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAY! I
 love candy! I love candy! I love
 candy! Yay! Yay! Yay!

BARTY
 Woah! Calm down Arthur

Barty sits cross-legged on the ground. He laughs to himself. He holds some cinnamon-sugar pastries in his hand. He is clearly having the time of his life.

Sitting next to him is VINCENT GOLALLY, 20. He is a pudgy, nerdish man wearing thick horn-rimmed glasses.

ARTHUR
 By the way! Barty! This is my
 friend, Vincent! Say Hi!

BARTY
 Hey, Vincent. How's it going?

Vincent grunts. He coughs up cinnamon sugar.

VINCENT
 Hey. Want an eclair?

BARTY
 Vincent! Where have you been all my
 life?

Vincent takes out a chocolate eclair from a paper bag. He shoves the whole thing into Barty's mouth. Barty chokes a bit. He swallows. He smiles a big toothy smile.

BARTY
 That was awesome!

A middle-aged woman enters from the kitchen. She carries a large pan filled with cookies. She wears an expression of dazed blankness. This is Arthur's mother, REBA MACAFEE, 56. She has a slight Southern twang.

ARTHUR
 Oh wow! Mommy! More cookies! Thank
 you so much! This is my friend,
 Barty!

REBA
 Heya, Barty. I hope you boys enjoy
 the cookies.

BARTY
 Oh, trust me, ma'am. I love
 cookies.

REBA
 Well, Arthur, can I finally go to
 sleep now? I have work in the
 morning.

ARTHUR
 Could you maybe make some more? In
 like an hour?

Reba wipes away a tear. Under her breath, she says:

REBA
 Yes, sir.

ARTHUR
 Yay!

Vincent shoves an eclair in Reba's face.

VINCENT
 Would you like an eclair?

REBA
 No, no. I'm fine.
 (Beat.)
 Arthur, I'm going to go to sleep.
 I'm sorry. I'm so tired.

ARTHUR
 Could you maybe set your alarm to
 wake up in an hour? I like cookies
 so much!

Reba's mouth twitches.

REBA
 Fine.

Reba storms out.

REBA (O.S.)
 And you guys KEEP IT DOWN!

BARTY
Wow, what's *her* problem?

ARTHUR
What do you mean?

VINCENT
HEY! Any of you guys want to finish
this eclaire?

LATER - Barty shoves huge amounts of Pixi-Stix into his
mouth. Arthur and Vincent cheer him on.

ARTHUR
YEAH! GO BARTY! GO BARTY!

VINCENT
YES!

BARTY
I FEEL SO ACCOMPLISHED!

LATER - Arthur, Vincent, and Barty pass a huge donut around
like a doobie. Each one takes a bite.

BARTY
I'm so high right now!

LATER - Arthur and Vincent both chug chocolate sodas. Arthur
wins.

ARTHUR
Yay!

VINCENT
I think you point-shaved.

LATER - Barty takes a box of malted milk balls. He pours
them all down his throat. He chokes. He coughs up several
balls. He laughs hysterically.

LATER - Barty, Arthur, and Vincent lie on the floor. Through
the windows, the sun comes up. All three are bloated and
tired.

BARTY
Guys, thank you so much. This is
just what I needed.

ARTHUR
You said it, Barthur!

Vincent snorts.

VINCENT

Eclaires...

BARTY

God, is there anything in this life more worth living for? Sugar is like the ambrosia. For us!

ARTHUR

Wow! I agree so much!

BARTY

God, we're in such an ant farm of a life. This stuff...It really doesn't get any better than this.

VINCENT

You said it, Barty. Sometimes I wonder what I'm doing every day at my copier job. And then I look down at this bag and remember.

Arthur stares at Barty deeply in the eyes.

ARTHUR

Have I ever told you that I want to be your friend forever and ever?

BARTY

I could totally deal with that.

ARTHUR

Seriously! You're even better than Vincent!

VINCENT

I concur!

BARTY

We seriously need to do this every night. It's just sort of a must.

VINCENT

I concur!

Barty laughs hysterically. He coughs up chocolate and cinnamon powder.

BARTY

I love you guys!

Reba enters from the kitchen. She carries a pan filled with cookies.

REBA
More cookies, guys.

ARTHUR
Yay!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barty washes his hands. He smiles widely. He looks at his shirt and sees large chocolate stains all over it. He laughs silently to himself.

His cell-phone rings. He answers it.

BARTY
Hello?

On the other end is a deep, raspy, throaty voice.

VOICE (O.S.)
This Barty Collins?

BARTY
Why, yes it is.

VOICE (O.S.)
This *the* Barty Collins? From the
Lafe Greenaway picture?

Barty smiles to himself proudly.

BARTY
Why, yes it is!

The voice laughs heartily.

VOICE (O.S.)
Oh man, you are a *dead* man!

BARTY
What?

VOICE (O.S.)
You are a dead man, Barty. I hope
you're not taking breathing for
granted.

BARTY
What? Who is this?

VOICE (O.S.)
You know who this is, bitch.

BARTY
Dude, who the fuck is this?

VOICE (O.S.)
Heh heh heh. Let's just say that,
for you, it's "time to
die...motherfucker."

The voice hangs up. Barty stares, dumb-founded. He opens his pocket. There is a huge wad of chocolate stuck to the fabric. He rubs his finger around the gooey mess and licks it.

INT. AGENCY OFFICE - DAY

Goldie sits at her desk typing at the computer. She wears a headset. The wall behind her bears the words "FUG AGENCY."

The phone rings. She picks up through her headset.

GOLDIE
Fug Agency, this is Goldie Jonikas.
How may I help you?

Barty is on the line. He speaks in a gravelly hoarse voice.

BARTY (O.S.)
Hi, I am calling
regarding...wait...is this Goldie
from the Lafe Greenaway shoot?

GOLDIE
Umm...who may I ask is calling?

BARTY (O.S.)
Barty? Remember?

GOLDIE
No I don't.

BARTY (O.S.)
From the Greenaway shoot!

GOLDIE
I am aware.

BARTY (O.S.)
Barty!

GOLDIE
Sir, your call is this close to
being terminated.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barty is in a fetal position in the floor. Pools of chocolate and candy are spread all over the tiles around him. Barty's mouth is smeared with chocolate. He looks bloated and tired.

BARTY

Oh. Okay, okay, okay. Well, I'm just calling because I just recieved a threatening phone call from someone who worked on the Greenaway shoot.

GOLDIE (O.S.)

Do you have some connection with the Greenaway shoot?

BARTY

Well, I was an actor in it until they replaced me. I guess I was just too difficult.

Barty laughs a bitter laugh.

GOLDIE (O.S.)

Could you describe the nature of this phone call?

BARTY

It was some guy. Gravelly voice.

GOLDIE (O.S.)

As in, what did he say?

BARTY

He said that it was "time for me to die...motherfucker."

Barty hears typing on the other line.

BARTY

Hello?

GOLDIE (O.S.)

I'm still here.

(Beat.)

Do you happen to recall the title of the film that was being shot?

Barty thinks hard.

BARTY

Uh...*Untitled Lafe Greenaway Project?*

GOLDIE (O.S.)
 Oh yes, that's right here.
 (Beat.)

Okay, sir, what you need to do is file an official complaint with the producers of the film and the bondholders. You can download the forms online or I could possibly mail one to you. What is your address?

Barty stares into space.

BARTY
 I...don't...know.

GOLDIE (O.S.)
 That's fine. Is that all? Is there anything else I can do for you?

A tear rolls down Barty's cheek.

GOLDIE (O.S.)
 Sir?

BARTY
 Want...to...hang...out?

GOLDIE (O.S.)
 Have a nice day.

Goldie hangs up.

INT. MILKY'S MALT SHOP - DAY - FLASHBACK

The place is a 1950s-themed malt shop. Tacky pictures of hamburgers and ice cream hang on the walls. The place is full of people eating and drinking.

Lafe walks in. He takes a seat at the counter. BARNEY (23), a fresh-faced, clean-cut soda jerk, comes up to him. He wears a white apron.

BARNEY
 Hello, sir. Can I help you?

LAFE
 Hi, how's it goin'?

BARNEY
 Oh...well...just fine over here, sir!

LAFE

Nice. Are you in a good mood?

BARNEY

Well, I *am* feeling a bit more chipper than usual! What can I get ya?

LAFE

Everything is going well for you professionally?

BARNEY

Well...sure. I mean, I *did* have to drop college due to a lil' bit of the ol' stalking charges. But two bucks an hour ain't bad! What can I get ya?

LAFE

How about your personal life? Is your family doing well?

BARNEY

Well, they're fine, I guess. They've sort of locked me outta the ol' house, if ya know what I mean.

LAFE

That's good. Do you have a wife? Girlfriend?

BARNEY

I sure doggone try but, you know, I just can't hack it. But that's okay, one day my princess will come.

LAFE

I'm Lafe Greenaway. What's your name?

BARNEY

I'm Barney. Barney Jigman.

Barney shakes his hand.

LAFE

This was a nice conversation. Could I please now have a chocolate malt?

BARNEY

I'll whip it right up for ya, Lafe!

LAFE

Thanks.

Barney goes off to make the shake. Lafe twiddles his thumbs.

An older man approaches Lafe. He is a frail man in a snappy beige suit. He wears a fedora hat and a sleazy black moustache. This is STANLEY SODUM (57).

He grabs Lafe's hand and shakes vigorously.

STANLEY

Stanley Sodum's the name.

Stanley takes a seat next to Lafe.

LAFE

Oh. Hey, dude. I'm Lafe.

STANLEY

Son, you don't have to tell me. I was watchin' that whole talk you were havin'. And I gotta say...I've seen a lotta conversations in my day. Some good, some bad. But that one stood above the rest. It was...*magic*.

LAFE

Oh. Thanks. I don't really try or anything.

STANLEY

How do you feel about pictures, Lafe?

LAFE

Pictures? Like the kind you hang on the wall? They're okay, I guess.

STANLEY

Nah, I mean *movin'* pictures! The kind ya watch in a dark theater, cuddlin' up with your lovely-lovely, shovelin' bales of popcorn down your throat. Movies, son! Movies!

LAFE

They're okay, I guess. I dunno. I guess I always thought they'd be better with me in them.

STANLEY

That's the attitude to have, Lafe!

Barney brings Lafe the malt. He sets the tin cannister in front of him on the counter.

BARNEY

Here you go, sir.

He turns to Stanley.

BARNEY

What can I get for ya, sir?

STANLEY

Get your ass a-goin', if you know what's good.

BARNEY

Yes, sir.

Barney walks out. Lafe sips his milkshake.

STANLEY

God, those lips! They sure can suck!

LAFE

Thanks.

STANLEY

Your face is beautiful. The world does need a lot more beauty, these days. I wake up in the mornin' and all I see is ugly! The world needs a bath!

LAFE

Yeah, I guess so.

STANLEY

I wanna wake up in the mornin' and I wanna see your face! I wanna blow it up, 60 feet tall! On a huge screen for everyone to see! I want your face to be painted on the moon!

(Beat.)

I'm a scout, Lafe. A talent scout.
 And I think...my scoutin'
 days...are over.

Stanley stares agape at Lafe as he drinks the milkshake. He fishes into his pocket. He takes out a business card. He hands it to Lafe.

STANLEY
 This be mine card. Call it when you
 see fit.

Stanley gets up to leave.

STANLEY
 And I hope it will be soon.

Stanley leaves. Lafe stares at the card. He turns the card over. It reads "Walk outside."

EXT. MILKY'S MALT SHOP - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks outside. He pauses for a moment. A piece of crumpled paper flies down from the sky. It hits him in the eye. He unwraps it

It reads "Get in your car. Drive East." Lafe nods.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Arthur sits on his couch reading a tabloid. He laughs uproariously. There is a large bag of candy next to him. He digs his hand in. He shoves the candy in his mouth.

There is a knock at the door. Arthur gets up. He opens the door.

Barty stands on the other side. He is grossly overweight. Sweat drips down his face. He twiddles his thumbs.

BARTY
 Hey, Arthur...

ARTHUR
 Wow, Barty, are you okay?

Barty shoves Arthur aside. He makes his way in.

BARTY
 I'm fit as a fiddle.

ARTHUR

Are you sure you're allowed to come in?

Barty finds the bag of candy. He stares at it. He turns to Arthur.

BARTY

How much?

ARTHUR

Umm...

BARTY

How much, Arthur?

ARTHUR

For the candy? I just got that at the store.

BARTY

Right. How much did you pay for it?

ARTHUR

I don't know. My mommy bought it for me.

BARTY

Well, then, how much did she pay for it?

A beat. Barty sniffs the bag.

BARTY

Mmmm.

ARTHUR

Do you want a piece?

BARTY

Heh. Heh. Why take a piece when you can have the whole kit-n-kaboodle?

(Beat.)

Tell me what she paid for it and I will match that price. And then I'll double it for good measure.

ARTHUR

Yeah, but...I'm hungry! I don't wanna share. I'm really sorry. I haven't eaten anything all day.

Barty grabs Arthur by the shirt.

BARTY
YOU'RE A FUCKING LIAR, YOU PUDGE!

ARTHUR
Aaaah!!!

REBA (O.S.)
What's going on over there?

ARTHUR
Mommy! MOMMY!

BARTY
GIVE ME THE FUCKING CANDY!

Reba comes in. She is shocked by the sight.

REBA
Get your hands off my son!

BARTY
No!

REBA
Okay!

Reba walks out of the room. Barty lets go of Arthur. He grabs the bag.

BARTY
See you later, Arthur.

He runs out the door. He slams it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Barty lies on the floor. He empties the bag of candy on the carpet. He drools.

BARTY
Yes...Yes...Yes...

He coughs up chocolate.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Before indenting oneself into the skin of cosmic consciousness, it is necessary for an individual to undergo a series of struggles.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe drives down a busy city street. He keeps his eyes intently focused on the road.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)

But for a lucky few, an exemption is created. This is so that these magic beans can wriggle past the worms and dirt surrounding them and through the hole covering the world's bliss.

He sees a stop sign that reads "Turn right". He puts his blinker on and does so.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Barty pours candy down his throat. He gobbles the sweets vociferously.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)

And then there are the others for whom there is no bliss. There is only merely the struggle.

Barty turns towards the television. On the screen is Lafe's face. He carries a gun. He scratches his temple with it. This is part of a trailer for Zakary Troth's film.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe drives past a homeless man carrying a sign that reads "You're almost there."

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)

These two dynamics shallst constantly fight betwixt each other for supreme domination.

He closes his eyes. He continues to drive.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Barty picks up the phone. He dials.

BARTY

Yes, is Wallace Swill there?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Barty pants as he walks down the hallway of a crowded office building. He has gained a lot of weight. He wears dark sunglasses and a white suit that is far too small on his large frame.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
Life and its living
is...therefore...

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe's eyes are still closed. He stomps on the gas. Outside, people rush to get out of the car's way.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
...complete in its lack of
fairness.

EXT. OFFICE - DAY

Barty knocks on the door. He coughs into his hand.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe is now driving at maximum speed. His eyes are still closed.

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barty walks into Swill's office. Swill sits at his desk. His arms are folded.

INT. LAFE'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe plows into a crowd of people. They are all killed instantly. Blood spurts everywhere.

Lafe is ejected from the car.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe flies higher and higher into the sky. He outstretches his arms like an angel. He soars into the window of a building. The glass breaks into a million tiny pieces.

INT. OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe falls through the glassed window. He falls onto the floor. He coughs up blood. He is scratched from all the glass.

This interrupts a casting call. A MALE ACTOR stops reading from his script. GAIMAN TRUNDLE, 75, a hippie-looking director with a long ponytail, stares at Lafe. The producers that surround him follow suit. All eyes are on the young actor.

After some silence, Gaiman stands up. He applauds. He turns to the male actor.

GAIMAN

Leave.

The male actor, dejected, walks out of the room. Gaiman turns to Lafe.

GAIMAN

You've got the job.

Lafe wipes a bit of broken glass off of his forehead.

LAFE

Cool, man.

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Swill glares at Barty. He sweats profusely. His arms are folded. He grunts.

Barty sits down in the chair. He reaches into his pockets. He pulls out a glob of melted chocolate. He licks the gooey mess in between his fingers. Swill grunts.

BARTY

What's up, Wally-Boy? We've got some shit to shoot.

SWILL

Oh, I believe it. The shit must be shot.

BARTY

Look, man. Lemme just get right down to the point.

Barty slurps some chocolate into his mouth.

BARTY

Mmm. That's so fucking good. Anyway, I'm not so sure you're doing such a good job, man. I mean, you're my "agent" and part of the job entails finding me work and stuff.

Swill grunts.

SWILL

Oh. Really?

BARTY

And...I mean...if I can't really find any jobs, then I can't really

pay you. Yeah, that Lafe Greenaway movie was a good deal and it's a shame it didn't work out. But it's been...what? A month? Two months?

SWILL

You were fired a year ago, Barty.

BARTY

Exactly! And, I mean, a good agent would...well...find their client work in a year, right? I mean, think of all the auditions that are happening every single day! So...

Barty takes out a lollipop from his jacket. He unwraps it.

BARTY (CONT.)

...I guess...the only conclusion I have is that you're a bad agent.

Swill laughs silently to himself.

SWILL

Barty, you're a goddamned mess. Here's what you're gonna do. You're gonna go home. You're gonna take a shower. And then you're never gonna come back here again.

Barty nods.

BARTY

I'm glad we all...understand.

Barty gets up.

BARTY

And a hearty "fuck-you" to...

Swill interupts him.

SWILL

Oh, and Barty...

Swill takes out a newspaper. He opens it to a specific page. He gives it to Barty.

BARTY

What is this?

SWILL

Read it.

Barty stares at it.

EXT. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - DAY - BARTY'S POV

The article is a movie review. The headline is "LAFE GREENAWAY GIVES A GUNS-BLAZINGLY SUBTLE PERFORMANCE IN TROTH'S NEW MASTERPIECE".

There is a picture of Lafe's decomposed corpse next to the review. Written under the picture in blue ink is "I'm gonna kill you...motherfucker."

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barty hangs his head. He drops the article to the floor.

SWILL

I'll see ya, Barty.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - NIGHT

Barty walks inside. He huffs and puffs. He sweats. He goes to the glass and stares at all the flavors. He licks his lips.

VOICE (O.S.)

See anything you like, sir?

Barty looks up. Goldie stands at the counter. She wears a white uniform.

BARTY

Goldie?

GOLDIE

Barty? Barty Collins? Wow, it's been a long time!

BARTY

I know! How has it been?

GOLDIE

Oh, I've been good. Just, you know, working.

Goldie stares at Barty's huge stomach.

GOLDIE

Wow, you look...different.

BARTY

Yeah. I got a haircut a few days ago. That's probably why you didn't recognize me over the phone.

GOLDIE

Well, it's good to see you.
(Beat.)
What can I get for you?

BARTY

Three scoops of rum butter, please.

GOLDIE

Three scoops of rum butter it is!

Wider shots reveal that Barty is talking to absolutely no one. The counter is empty.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe prances and poses in front of a camera. He writhes around on a bear rug on the floor. Gaiman Trundle wields a small camera. He snaps various random shots.

GAIMAN

Oh, that's wonderful. That's just wonderful, Lafe. Yes, there we go. Please continue. Keep doing it. Okay now stop. Amp up the suspense for whether you'll do more. And now do some more.

Lafe blows kisses into the camera.

GAIMAN

How does this feel?

Gaiman snaps a picture.

LAFE

It's wonderful. It's great.

GAIMAN

You're really pretty.

LAFE

Thank you, Mr. Trundle.

GAIMAN

Please. Just call me Gaiman.

LAFE

Okay. Thank you.

Gaiman smiles. He snaps a picture.

GAIMAN

How do you keep so in shape?

LAFE

Well, I guess I'm a "human" shape and I can't really deviate from that.

Gaiman laughs.

GAIMAN

No, silly. I mean, how do you keep such a rockin' bod?

LAFE

I dunno. I guess I was just born this way.

Gaiman snaps a picture.

GAIMAN

Hrmm. Only a lucky few, right?

LAFE

Whatever.

Gaiman snaps a picture. He stares at Lafe.

GAIMAN

So...umm...I was wondering. Would it be weird if I invited you to come stay at my house in Spain this weekend?

LAFE

Whatever.

Gaiman smiles.

GAIMAN

Really?

LAFE

I said whatever, man. Look, are we almost done?

GAIMAN
Really? You...you will?

LAFE
I kinda have to be someplace soon.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY - FLASHBACK

Gaiman pilots a helicopter through a bright blue sky. Lafe, in the passenger seat, looks out the window. Gaiman and Lafe yell to be heard over the whirring motors.

GAIMAN
Pretty beautiful, huh?

LAFE
I took a shit once that looked exactly like that skyline.

GAIMAN
Ahh, so you've been here before!

INT. GAIMAN'S ESTATE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Gaiman and Lafe carry large suitcases into the large mansion. The interior is made of beautiful stone marble.

GAIMAN
Just make yourself at home. My house is your...

Gaiman looks at Lafe. Lafe's shirt is off. He rubs suntan lotion onto his hairy body. Gaiman sets his suitcase down. He walks up to Lafe. He kisses him on the lips.

GAIMAN
I...I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. That just...that just slipped.

LAFE
What?

GAIMAN
Wh...what?

LAFE
What are you talking about?

A beat.

GAIMAN

Oh good.

Gaiman leaps onto Lafe. He makes out with him heavily. He tears off his clothing.

LATER - Lafe is bent over on the floor. Gaiman has anal sex with Lafe. He sweats and pants. Lafe seems disinterested. He cleans dirt out of his fingernails.

GAIMAN

Oh My God! Oh My God! OH MY GOD!

Lafe blows into his fingernails.

LATER - Gaiman and Lafe lie naked on the floor. Gaiman is exhausted. Sweat drips down his face. Lafe plays with the cuticles on his fingers.

GAIMAN

Lafe, my friend. You are not going to know what hit you once these pictures go out to the agencies. You're gonna see your image plastered on every wall in the world. You'll see yourself on buses. Billboards. Everywhere.

LAFE

Yeah.

GAIMAN

I just want you to promise that you'll keep your head on straight. You're a good boy, you know, and I'd hate to see you get poisoned by the vagaries of Starsville.

LAFE

Don't worry. I won't.

GAIMAN

I've seen so many kids go down there and come back so ugly and deformed. Their souls get twisted up and spit back out.

Lafe nods.

LAFE

Yeah.

GAIMAN

There are drugs there. There are women who will want to break your heart there. So much exists in that town to just destroy everything that comes into its path. You better have thick fucking skin or else you won't survive the metallic jowls.

LAFE

Don't worry, man. I can give it indigestion.

Gaiman laughs a bittersweet laugh to himself.

GAIMAN

Lafe, I just want you to stay how you are at this very moment. I don't want you to change. Ever. You're perfect and beautiful.

LAFE

I'll be fine.

GAIMAN

That's what I want to hear.

Gaiman sighs. He leaps onto Lafe. He grabs him by the neck. Lafe moves wildly.

LAFE

What are you doing, man?

Gaiman holds Lafe still. Stanley Sodom enters the room. He carries a large paper bag. He nods at Gaiman. Gaiman takes out a syringe. He sticks the needle in Lafe's neck. Lafe is sedated.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Stars are simply yellow figments of our world's creativity. They are made of dusts and peppers and winds and ants. They are the sprinkles in God's towering ice cream cone. They are the apples in all of our eyes.

Stanley walks to Lafe. He places a bag over his head. He ties it with a piece of rope.

EXT. BILLBOARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

The photo of Lafe blowing a kiss is blown up on a gigantic billboard. It towers over the city's skyline.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)

This star opened up our lids and
walked out of our pupils. This star
slid down our cheekbones and
crawled under our lips.

INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - DAY - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Footage from a '90s sitcom. A family sits in their living room. The father, GEORGE PEPPERS, 54, stands in front of them holding a box of macaroni and cheese.

TITLE CARD: **THE PEOPLE YOU'RE BORN WITH (LAFE GREENAWAY'S FIRST CREDIT - 1997)**

GEORGE PEPPERS

Alright, family! We're gonna eat
this box of macaroni and cheese if
it's the last thing we ever do!

A canned laugh track sounds.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)

And once in our mouths, it went
into our throats and grabbed hold
of the cords that vibrate with our
daily musings.

There is a knock at the door. George answers it. Lafe stands in the doorway with a gun. He is dressed as a mugger.

LAFE

Sit straight, honkeys, and gimme
some cash!

GEORGE PEPPERS

In *this* economy?!?

A canned laugh track sounds.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

A group of teenage girls gather around their lockers. They gossip wildly.

TITLE CARD: **I HEART YOU (1998)**

Lafe Greenaway, playing a teen heartthrob, walks down the hallway. The girls stare at him. He stops. He turns around. He blows his long bangs up into the air. They squeal.

He walks away.

INT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Lafe is playing a high school football quarterback. He makes a speech to his team. They sit upright on the ground.

TITLE CARD: **MESSAGE OUR PIGSKINS (1998)**

LAFE

We are not here to win. We are here to play.

Lafe holds a football over his head.

LAFE (CONT.)

You see this? This is our legacy. When we all die, this will live on. It will be flying...high...high...high...high up into the air. And we? We will be dead.

(Beat.)

Let's go win one, guys.

EXT. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The article reads "Who the fuck is this Lafe Greenaway douche?"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And it shook them and ripped them and gnashed them and bit them and tore them and...

INT. FOREST - NIGHT - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Footage from a horror film. Lafe and a girl, MARY SUE, 17, walk down a large path in a dark and spooky forest. Lafe covers a large gash on his hand.

LAFE

Mary Sue, I love you. But I cannot be with you.

MARY SUE

Why not?

LAFE

There are things about me that not even God wants to know.

Lafe jerks back. He falls to the ground. He has a seizure. Mary Sue screams.

MARY SUE
OH MY GOD!

Lafe comes up. He is a werewolf. He growls.

TITLE CARD: **CLAWS (1998)**

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This star put them under its spell.
And that was how and that was how
and that was how...

EXT. LAFE'S FACE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe's eyes open suddenly. He gasps for air. He is in a cold sweat. He has no idea where he is. He looks around. Water splashes onto his face.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe sees that he is naked in a bathtub. A ceiling light swings back and forth. Lafe coughs up water.

LAFE
What the fuck?

STANLEY (O.S.)
Lafe? Laaaaafe? Is that you?

Stanley walks into the room. His sleeves are rolled up.

STANLEY
Go back to bed.

LAFE
Where the fuck am I?!?

STANLEY
Go back to bed.

Lafe gets out of the bathtub. He walks to the door.

STANLEY
Don't do that.

LAFE
Fuck you!

Lafe opens the door. Gaiman pops out. He wrestles Lafe to the ground.

LAFE
Nnnngh! Stop!

Gaiman looks at Stanley. Stanley nods. Gaiman sticks Lafe in the neck with another needle. Lafe is sedated. Gaiman goes back behind the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stanley walks into the living room. He stares out the window. The apartment is floating over the city.

Stanley takes out a steering wheel on the wall under the window. He turns it three times. He goes to the couch. He sits down. He lights up a cigar.

INT. CASTLE FLOOR - DAY - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Scene from a period epic drama. Lafe Greenaway plays a nobleman. He walks along a castle floor with LADY VON HYLE, 23.

TITLE CARD: **A LADY AND A NOBLEMAN (1999)**

LAFE
My lady...

VON HYLE
My nobleman...

LAFE
My lady...

VON HYLE
My nobleman...

Lafe stops.

LAFE
You...you are such a lady.

VON HYLE
And you are so noble...man.

EXT. NEWSPAPER ARTICLE - FLASHBACK

The article reads "Watch out kids! There's a new star in the sky and his name is Lafe Greenaway!"

EXT. STANLEY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe's point of view. Stanley stares straight into the camera.

STANLEY
Greet your public.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

WALLY CHEEVERS, 56, a tall, large entertainment reporter with a thick moustache, prepares some questions for Lafe. Lafe sits on the bed. His legs are crossed.

WALLY
Lafe, it's great to see you.
Congratulations on your new film.

LAFE
Oh, thank you.

EXT. STANLEY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe's point of view. Stanley stares straight into the camera.

STANLEY
Treat them to three doublemint
scoops of yourself.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe fiddles with his fingernails.

WALLY
So, tell me, what do you like to
do?

LAFE
Well, I really like life. Breathing
is getting to be a huge hobby of
mine. I do it all the time.

WALLY
Wow! So do I! I guess you celebrity
types aren't so different from you
and I.
(Beat.)
Or just I.

EXT. STANLEY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe's point of view. Stanley stares straight into the camera.

LAFE (O.S.)
What if I don't have anything to
say?

STANLEY

Oh, you'll always have something to say.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Wally beams at Lafe. He writes down a few notes.

WALLY

So, Lafe, you were just cast as Bagman. Tell me, are you a fan of the original comic book?

Lafe thinks of an answer. He sweats.

STANLEY (V.O.)

Always!

EXT. CITYSCAPE - NIGHT - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Scene from a comic book action movie. Lafe plays a superhero who dresses in giant paper bags. A giant plastic bag flows from his back like a cape. He stands atop a building. He looks down at the city below.

Rain pours from the night sky.

TITLE CARD: **BAGMAN (2000)**

LAFE

This city wants to bag me. But I always keep coming back. Maybe I just love this city too much. Maybe I just care too much.

A man dressed as a giant orange jumps behind Lafe. This is THE ORANGEY ORANGE. He carries a knife.

THE ORANGEY ORANGE

Time to fold the bag!

Lafe punches him in the face. He falls off the building.

LAFE

Pull up your pants. They're baggy.

EXT. NEWSPAPER - FLASHBACK

The article reads "Turns out, Lafe Greenaway can act his way out of a paper "Bag"."

STANLEY (V.O.)
But now you're gonna switch gears.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe Greenaway speaks to Wally. Wally writes down what he says. This is a later press conference. *Bagman* posters are littered around the space.

WALLY
So what are you gonna do now, Lafe?

LAFE
Now, I'm gonna switch gears.

STANLEY (V.O.)
No more comic book movies.

LAFE
I don't want to do another comic book movie. For a while.

STANLEY (V.O.)
Ever.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Scene from a gritty drug film. Lafe Greenaway, incredibly thin, plays a heroin addict. He ties his arm up. He sticks a needle in. He exhales in delight.

TITLE CARD: **SUCKLING AT THE TEAT (2001)**

JENNY, 24, walks in. She is dressed in a ragged green dress.

JENNY
Sammy, baby, are you okay?

Lafe sighs.

LAFE
I need...I need help, Jenny.
(Beat.)
I'm just suckling at the teat.

Lafe cries.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe, in a black tux, moves throughout a large party. Music blasts through huge speakers. People slap Lafe on the back as he walks past. They shake his hand.

Lafe walks up to the catering table. A huge arrangement of food is laid out. Lafe fingers through the arrangement.

Gaiman walks up to him. He is also dressed in a black tux. He is very drunk.

GAIMAN

Lafe! Congratu...lations on your Oscar nom!

LAFE

Where'd the fried shrimp go?

GAIMAN

Do you think you're gonna win?

LAFE

I mean, a few seconds ago, there was a huge pile of fried shrimp. I kinda wanted to try it.

GAIMAN

You've got some pretty heavy competition. I wouldn't blame ya if you were scared.

LAFE

Damn.

GAIMAN

You know, Lafe...

Lafe walks off sadly.

GAIMAN (CONT.)

...I wanted to tell you that...I love you.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Two women do lines of cocaine on the sink. One is a brunette and one is blonde. The blonde one is dressed in a purple dress and full-make-up. This is SHAND GAELIC, 26.

SHAND

Jesus! Where'd you get this from?

BRUNETTE

From the local mini-mart. Where do you think?

SHAND

Tony?

BRUNETTE

Tony.

(Beat.)

So that Lafe Greenaway guy is here.
Are you a fan?

SHAND

I don't know. He's cute. He was
really good in *Suckling at the*
Teat. I was sort of ready to write
him off as just another prettyboy.

BRUNETTE

Why don't you go talk to him?

SHAND

What? Why?

BRUNETTE

He would probably be into you. He
could probably get your acting
career started.

SHAND

Isn't he with that model chick?

BRUNETTE

No, but he could be with *this* model
chick.

The brunette points to Shand.

SHAND

Why do you want me to talk to him
so badly?

The brunette's voice suddenly changes to Stanley's.

BRUNETTE

I really, really think you should
go talk to him.

Shand is confused. The brunette smiles deviously.

EXT. BALLROOM BAR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe sits at the bar alone. People who walk past pat him on
the back.

LAFE
Hey, Barkeep?

The BARKEEP brings him a glass of ice. He takes a wine glass and is about to pour. Lafe stops him.

LAFE
No no. That will be fine.

The Barkeep nods. He walks off.

Lafe stares at the ice in the glass. He picks up a cube. He looks around. He begins to juggle it. It falls to the ground.

LAFE
Oh well. Farewell, ice cube.

He takes out another cube from the glass. Shand walks up. She takes a seat next to Lafe.

SHAND
Hey.

LAFE
Hi. I'm Lafe Greenaway.

SHAND
Oh, I know who you are.

LAFE
Cool.
(Beat.)
Wait, are you a spy?

Shand laughs.

SHAND
No, no. A lot of people know who you are.

LAFE
Are they spies?

SHAND
You're funny. Ever think of doing a comedy?

LAFE
I dunno, maybe.

A beat. Lafe juggles the ice.

SHAND

That looks pretty fun.

Lafe looks behind him. He sees people dancing.

LAFE

Yes. It does.

Stanley walks up to them. He puts his hand on Lafe's shoulder.

STANLEY

Hey there guys.

LAFE

This is my friend, Stanley.

SHAND

Hello.

Stanley shakes her hand forcefully.

STANLEY

Well hello, pretty thing. What might be your name?

SHAND

I'm Shand.

STANLEY

Oh? Well,
Shand...Stan...Shand...Stan...Shand...Stan!
Perfect!

(Beat.)

Hey Lafe, why don't you invite your
new friend over to the party
tonight?

LAFE

But we're at a party.

STANLEY

I mean, the *other* party. For
exclusive guests.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Shand stand awkwardly. About ten people dance together in the middle of a barren hallway. Music comes from someone's iPod.

A beat.

SHAND
Are you into coke at all?

LAFE
Yeah, but only diet.

Lafe's cell-phone rings. He answers it.

LAFE
Hello? Another party? A more
exclusive one?

He hangs up.

LAFE
Wanna go?

INT. CUBBYHOLE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Shand are stuffed inside of a small wooden
cubbyhole.

SHAND
Are we at a daycare or something?

LAFE
I think we're crushing the other
guy.

A voice comes from under Lafe.

VOICE (O.S.)
PAAAAAAAAAAAAARTAAAAAY!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barty lies in his bed, asleep. He is ridiculously overweight
at this point. Drool and sweat cake over his body. He is
fully clothed in a white suit. He snores loudly.

He is awakened by a loud noise outside.

BARTY
Whup?

Barty gets up. He goes to the door. He opens it. Goldie
falls onto Barty. She is in tears. Barty catches her.

BARTY
Goldie?

GOLDIE

I just need someone to take me home.

Barty rubs her hair.

BARTY

Where do you live?

Goldie does not respond. She cries harder. Barty kisses her on the head. She looks at him. They kiss. Chocolate sauce dribbles out of Barty's mouth.

Goldie places her hands on Barty's back. She grabs hold of his shirt. She rips it off. Barty does the same to her. He falls backwards. She falls onto him. She gyrates on top of his flab.

Barty rips off Goldie's pants. He takes off her underwear and places it in his mouth. Goldie pulls down Barty's underwear. She strokes his erect penis.

GOLDIE

Will you take me home?

INT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Barty and Goldie walk through a foggy graveyard. Barty holds Goldie in his arms. She is limp and frail.

GOLDIE

I live here.

Barty nods.

BARTY

Where are we going?

GOLDIE

Just around the corner here.

They arrive at an open grave. There is a pile of dirt and a shovel next to the hole.

GOLDIE

Just in there.

Barty nods. He places Goldie in the hole.

GOLDIE

Could you get the door?

Barty nods. He shovels the dirt on top of the hole. He sobs. He collapses. He hears the sound of a door knocking. He looks around.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barty, asleep, is awakened from his dream state by knocks at the door. The knocks are loud and forceful.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barty waddles his way to the door. He opens it to see Gaiman Trundle standing in the doorway. Outside, it rains.

GAIMAN

Are you Barty Collins?

BARTY

I am.

GAIMAN

My name is Gaiman Trundle. I'm a photographer and a filmmaker. Would you come with me, sir?

Barty nods.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Gaiman and Barty sit in the back-seat of an empty limo. Gaiman sits utterly, completely still. Barty stares outside at the rainfall.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Barty and Gaiman get out of the limo to a torrential downpour. Gaiman opens up an umbrella. He huddles Barty under it.

GAIMAN

Come on. Stay close.

Barty nods. They walk up to the box office.

GAIMAN

Two for the Greenaway picture.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Barty and Gaiman sit in the theater. Barty holds onto a huge tub of chocolate popcorn. He keeps stuffing the popcorn into his mouth. The place is packed. Everyone watches the screen with rapt attention.

Gaiman whispers in Barty's ear.

GAIMAN

This movie's been out for over two months and the place is still packed. How about that?

We hear the dialogue emanating from the screen.

LAFE (O.S.)

Tell Tony and the boys to pack up. They don't know what'll hit 'em.

Gaiman turns to Barty.

GAIMAN

His line deliveries are note perfect. I was shocked when I found out this wasn't improv.

A beat.

GAIMAN

Ugh. Would you look at that face? He practically makes more love to the camera the closer it gets.

LAFE (O.S.)

Yeah, man. Balogna sandwich on rye. Caucasian.

GAIMAN

That means "white-bread." This writing is so layered!

LATER - Barty holds the empty popcorn tub on his lap. Gaiman still stares at the screen with rapt attention.

LAFE (O.S.)

M-my watch. It's b-broken. Y-you b-broke it.

Barty sinks into his chair.

LAFE (O.S.)

H-how will I ever...*EVER*...ever know the time? Wh-what have you d-done? D-do you even....*know* the time?

Barty sinks deeper into his chair. He shuts his eyes.

GAIMAN

It's such a shame he had to die.

Barty opens his eyes. He looks at Gaiman.

BARTY

Wh...what?

GAIMAN

He was so young.

Barty gets up. He leaves.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Barty walks out of the theater. He rubs his face. He twitches. The rain is pouring hard.

Gaiman walks out.

GAIMAN

Barty...? Barty...?

Gaiman walks up to Barty.

GAIMAN

Barty...

BARTY

What is going on? Who the fuck are you?

GAIMAN

Barty...

BARTY

What the hell, man? What the hell? Why is Lafe Greenaway suddenly dead? Just like that?

Gaiman shrugs.

GAIMAN

Because it fits.

Barty walks off.

BARTY

Stay away from me, man. Stay away.

Gaiman yells at Barty, across the street.

GAIMAN

Barty, be careful. There are people who want to kill you.

A car speeds by. It splashes water onto Gaiman.

GAIMAN

FUCK!

He looks into his pockets. He pulls out a gun. He drops it to the ground. He sobs.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And the winner for Best Leading Actor in a film is...

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe Greenaway sits in his chair. He wears a spiffy black tux. His eyes are closed as he waits for the outcome of the award.

ANNOUNCER (O.S., CONT.)

...Lafe Greenaway!

The crowd applauds wildly. Lafe opens his eyes. He gets up. He makes his way to the stage. He is handed his award. The applause dies down so he can make a speech.

LAFE

So...uh...wow! Who knew this would ever happen, right?

The crowd breaks out into a wildly hysteric laughing fit. They stop suddenly, all at once.

LAFE

Wow, "Best Actor." That means I'm the best, I guess, right? I'd like to thank my...erm...family...my...agent...the director, the writer, the stars...well, I guess that last one would be me. So, yeah, I'll thank myself.

(Beat.)

I'd also like to thank my beautiful girlfriend, Shand...

Shand beams at him from the audience. She wears a glittering white dress.

LAFE (CONT.)
 ...who has always been my
 inspiration and my soul and...

Lafe looks at Stanley in the audience. He nods.

LAFE (CONT.)
 ...ummm...Shand...will you marry
 me?

The crowd gasps.

SHAND
 Yes.

LAFE
 What?

SHAND
 Yes!

The crowd applauds. Lafe nods sheepishly.

INT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Barty runs into an alleyway. Out of breath, he collapses
 against a wall. He falls down.

BARTY (V.O.)
 Goldie...Goldie...

He whips out his cell phone. He dials 4-1-1.

BARTY
 Could you look up a name for me in
 the city?
 (Beat.)
 Yeah, Starsville. That's right.
 (Beat.)
 Goldie Jonikas.
 (Beat.)
 Not on the sheet? Are you sure?
 Does she have an unlisted numb...?

Barty closes his eyes. He sobs.

LATER - Barty dials another number.

BARTY
 Arthur? You awake? Hey, listen...

INT. ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barty sits on Arthur's couch. Arthur sits on the floor. He eats a giant chocolate stick. Reba walks in. She carries plates of ice cream.

BARTY

Thank you so much, ma'am. For the ride and this. And I'm sorry for the...um...

REBA

Oh, I know how much Arthur loves his friends.

(Beat.)

And how much I love Arthur.

Reba walks out.

ARTHUR

So what happened?

BARTY

I just went to a movie and lost my way home. Hey listen...

Barty looks around.

BARTY (CONT.)

...I have a very important question for you. Lafe Greenaway. Is he alive or dead?

ARTHUR

Oh, everyone knows the answer to that, silly-billy!

BARTY

Don't play games. Don't talk in metaphors. Please just tell me straight. Alive or dead. Yes or no.

ARTHUR

He died! Duh!

BARTY

Of what?

ARTHUR

Don't you have a more important question to ask?

BARTY

Like what?

ARTHUR
Who is in your apartment?

BARTY
What?

Arthur and Barty go to the window. They see flashlights moving around in Barty's apartment across the courtyard.

ARTHUR
Did you have a party?

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe stands at the altar with Shand. He wears a spiffy black tux. She wears a white wedding gown. Both seem to be faking smiles.

A PRIEST, 56, stands behind them.

PRIEST
I now pronounce you...man and wife!

They kiss. The crowd cheers.

INT. ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barty sinks under the window. Arthur keeps looking outside.

BARTY
Get down!

Arthur gets down.

ARTHUR
Should we go over there?

BARTY
God, no. I guess they're just thieves. Just let them take what they want and leave.

ARTHUR
Yeah, I guess so.

Barty sweats.

BARTY
It's fucking hot in here.

Barty licks his lips. He takes out his cell-phone. He dials 9-1-1.

BARTY

Yes. There is a robbery taking place at...

The PHONE OPERATOR cuts him off.

PHONE OPERATOR

I'm sorry. Your city's police station has been replaced with an arts-and-crafts store. Though you may have an emergency, you should be comforted to know that popsicle sticks are on sale this week.

Barty throws his phone at the wall in anger. It comes back to him, like a boomerang.

ARTHUR

Wow!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Lafe and Shand tan on the beach. Both wear sunglasses and bathing suits. Stanley walks up with a cell-phone.

STANLEY

Phone call for you.

Stanley hands the phone to Lafe. Lafe answers it.

LAFE

Hello?

(Beat.)

Zakary Fuckin' Troth! How the hell are you?

(Beat.)

Yeah, I'm on my honeymoon.

(Beat.)

Really? You got a script for me?

Well, what's the title?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Barty empties an entire bag of chocolate chips into his mouth. Arthur looks on in astonishment. He tosses the bag on the floor.

BARTY

I might...

Barty coughs up a bunch of chocolate chips.

BARTY (CONT.)
 ...have to stay...

Barty coughs up more.

BARTY (CONT.)
 ...with you...for...

Barty coughs up more.

BARTY (CONT.)
 ...a while.

Barty coughs. He falls to the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Barty is rushed through the hospital on a gurney. He wears a white gown that is far too small on his large body. His eyes are closed. He continues coughing and hacking up chocolate in his sleep.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

The hospital aides dump Barty onto a rickety, ramshackle bed. They strap Barty in with thick ties. They put a metal clamp over his neck.

Outside, through the window, Arthur and Reba watch.

INT. PLANE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe looks out the window. He turns to Shand, sitting next to him.

LAFE
 Wow. We're high.

Shand laughs.

EXT. AIRPORT CUSTOMS - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Shand are patted down by customs agents. People around them gawk at the stars.

STANLEY (V.O.)
 So Zak Troth wants to meet with you
 on the roof of the tallest building
 in the tallest city.

INT. LIMO - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe sits upfront in the passenger seat. Stanley drives.

LAFE
Where is that, exactly?

Stanley smiles.

STANLEY
Oh, wouldn't you like to know?

Stanley presses a button behind the steering wheel.

EXT. MOON - FLASHBACK

Lafe wakes up on the surface of the moon. He is dressed normally. He has no trouble breathing. He gets up. He looks around.

LAFE
Stanley?

A man in a space suit walks up behind him. He places his hand on Lafe's shoulder. This is Zakary Troth.

ZAKARY
Hello, Lafe. It's me, Zak Troth.

LAFE
Oh, hey. Where are we?

ZAKARY
We're on the moon.

LAFE
Oh. Why?

Zakary shrugs.

ZAKARY
Why not?

Lafe nods.

LAFE
So, I understand you have a script for me?

ZAKARY
I have *the* script for you.

LAFE
Oh?

ZAKARY

This script has been printed on gold. It is perfect.

LAFE

Cool, man. Who wrote it?

ZAKARY

I did. But I wrote it for you. From the moment I saw you in *Bagman*, I said to myself, "There's way more to this guy." Then I saw *Suckling...*, and I just found my hands typing and my brain working and when you won your Oscar and I got excited and there were more and more pages and soon it was done.

Lafe nods.

ZAKARY

You inspire me. Deeply. And you may be a star now but this script is going to make you a supernova. No, a galaxy! No, the entire universe! You're going to be all of our worlds and everything in it.

LAFE

What's it about?

ZAKARY

Perfection. That's what it's about. In all seriousness, I think I'm just going to have you read it. I cannot nutshell it at all. It's best experienced as one whole thing.

Zakary hands Lafe a copy of the script. It is printed on golden paper.

LAFE

Thank you, sir.

ZAKARY

So, will you do it?

Lafe thinks for a moment. He holds the script to his face. He licks it.

LAFE
 Strawberry-mango.
 (Beat.)
 I'll do it!

Zakary smiles.

LAFE
 So, really, why are we here?

ZAKARY
 Pfft. You think a movie *this*
 awesome should be restricted to
 earthly bounds?

Lafe smiles.

LAFE
 I can't wait to do it.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Barty is still strapped to the bed. He is asleep. The lights suddenly flick on. Barty opens his eyes. A team of DOCTORS enter.

DOCTOR
 Sir, get out.

BARTY
 What?

DOCTOR
 You've been a terrible house guest.
 Your music has been too loud. Your
 parties have raged on and on.
 You're drunk.

BARTY
 I've been sleeping.

DOCTOR
 And you snore.
 (Beat.)
 Leave. Leave or I'm calling the
 cops.

BARTY
 I can't really move.

The doctors unstrap Barty from the bed. They dump him into a wheelchair.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The doors to the hospital open. The doctors throw Barty and the wheelchair out of the hospital as hard as they possibly can.

Barty falls to the ground. With a struggle, he manages to get up and steady himself. He collapses in the wheelchair. He wheels himself off.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Barty tries to make his way down a busy street. He sobs. A limo honks at him. Barty is startled. He stops in the middle of the road. The limo plows straight into him.

The car stops. Gaiman gets out. He looks down at Barty's mutilated body on the ground.

He looks around. He bends down and struggles to pick Barty up. He shovels him into the car. He jumps in the driver's seat. He drives off.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Gaiman sobs a little bit. His sobs turn into laughs. He laughs hysterically. He beats his head on the steering wheel.

He turns to Barty in the back.

GAIMAN

How are you doing there, little buddy?

Barty groans.

GAIMAN

Almost...

Gaiman hits the brakes abruptly. Barty is sent flying through the window. Gaiman gets out.

EXT. MILKY'S MALT SHOP - NIGHT

Barty has landed at the front door of the malt shop. Gaiman rubs his hands together. He goes inside.

INT. MILKY'S MALT SHOP - NIGHT

Barney Jigman sits at the counter, bored. He does a crossword puzzle drawn on his palm. There are no customers.

Gaiman bolts in.

GAIMAN
SIR! SIR! OH MY GOD! THERE'S BEEN A
TERRIBLE ACCIDENT!

Barney bolts. Once he gets to the door, Gaiman stabs him in the throat with a small pen. Barney falls to the ground. He twitches. He is dead.

Gaiman pulls Barty inside. He locks the door. With great effort, he brings Barty up and flops him up on the counter.

Gaiman looks around. He sees a glass case on the wall. Inside is a milkshake. Under it lies a plaque that reads "Lafe Greenaway's Unfinished Milkshake - 1995." Gaiman takes an axe off of the wall. He smashes into it.

He takes the milkshake. He takes a sip. He brings it over to Barty. He force-feeds the entire thing into his mouth. Barty chokes.

Gaiman hops behind the counter. He grabs the milkshake machine. He pushes it over to Barty. He takes the tap. He places it in Barty's mouth. Barty's eyes fly open. He screams.

Milkshake matter flies out of his eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.

Stanley rises from under the floor. He takes out a small pocket-knife. He goes over to Barty. He opens his shirt and digs the knife in. He draws a long hole horizontally across his bellybutton.

Gaiman nods to Stanley. Stanley nods to Gaiman. Stanley draws another line vertically down the line. Stanley and Gaiman count to three, silently, on their fingers. They duck.

A torrent of whole, uneaten food flies out of the hole in Barty's stomach. The food hits the ground with crashing thuds. There is no blood. Barty screams. His body shrinks massively in size. He is thin and shriveled.

Gaiman removes the milkshake machine. He pushes it back against the wall. He helps Stanley pick up the shriveled Barty. They walk outside.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Shand eat meals in an upscale, dimly-lit restaurant. They sit at a candlelit table. People behind them gawk at Lafe.

LAFE
So, you know Zak Troth?

SHAND
Oh yeah? What'd he want?

LAFE
He's offered me this role in a movie. He wants me to help co-write it with him. Isn't that cool?

SHAND
Yeah.

A beat.

LAFE
That was kind of a half-hearted "yeah." Aren't you happy for me?

SHAND
Of course I am.

LAFE
This role sounds like a real winner. I can't wait to do it. I'm playing this guy who gets strapped to a chair and...

SHAND
Lafe, do you love me?

Lafe thinks. He stares off into space.

He shrugs. He continues eating.

SHAND
What does that mean?

LAFE
You're a cool gal. I enjoy you.

SHAND
But do you love me? Look deep within yourself and try to find an answer.

LAFE
Why wouldn't I? You're smart and funny. This spaghetti is really good.

SHAND

Lafe, do you love me or do *they* love me?

LAFE

I'd say it's pretty mutual, actually.

SHAND

I really think we should break up. This just isn't working. It doesn't feel honest at all.

LAFE

Whatever floats your boat, I guess.

A beat.

SHAND

I'm gonna go.

Shand takes out some money. She puts it on the table.

SHAND

There. That's for both of us. I'm really sorry.

LAFE

See ya.

Shand gets up. She goes to the front of the restaurant. She opens the door. She walks outside.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Shand finds that the door leads to the exact same restaurant. She walks inside. She finds Lafe sitting at the same table. He shovels pasta into his mouth. She sits down.

LAFE

Hey, how's it going?

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Gaiman sits in the back of the limo. He stitches up Barty's stomach. Barty, lying down, looks upside-down out the window.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Barty, shriveled and frail, wakes up. He finds that he is chained to the wall. Gaiman sits on the floor in front of him.

The basement is empty and dour. There is very little light.

GAIMAN

Barty Collins, this is your moment.

Barty wriggles to get free. He looks away. He looks back. Gaiman is gone. He shuts his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barty finds himself sitting on his living room couch. He is surrounded by a huge throng of people in his apartment. Barty waves at them, but his hand is too frail. It breaks off. Reba picks it up.

REBA

Barty, we're glad you finally decided to come home. We wish to confront you about your insignificance.

Barty nods.

REBA

Now, we love you and we care about you, but we don't want you get hurt. And your insignificance in the bigger scheme of things is really tearing us all apart.

Swill emerges from the crowd.

SWILL

Look, buddy, we all know this is very hard for you but we're all in this together.

ARTHUR

Yeah!

Benny and Carol make their way to Barty. They hug him.

CAROL

Didn't you know that insignificance is one of the leading, most ignored causes of death among white males your age?

BENNY

It's true!

Vincent grabs Barty's leg from under the floor.

VINCENT

You really have to start mattering,
Barty!

ARTHUR

Yeah!

Zakary Troth stands in the corner.

ZAKARY

Matter is what we're all made of!
Why don't you hop a ride onto the
train?

Winton and Grace pull on Barty's shriveled skin.

WINTON

You're just skin and bones!

GRACE

Take up some more space!

CAROL

The world needs more in it!

ZAKARY

Puff the cheeks up on your face!

Barty nods.

GRACE

And so with that being said...

WINTON

...and with no further to do...

BENNY

This is what we shall...

Benny pulls out a giant, life-size sculpture of Barty made of chocolate.

CAROL

...present to you!

Barty goes to it. He touches it. He looks at everyone around him. They are frozen in position. He breaks off a clump of chocolate. He eats it. He breaks off another. He eats it.

He sees something wriggling inside the chocolate. He hears a moaning. He eats more chunks of chocolate. He can see a human figure. He eats more chunks. He sees a recognizable face.

The corpse of Lafe Greenaway is inside the chocolate sculpture. He is almost completely decomposed. He is a skeleton with flecks of skin and hair still hanging.

BARTY

Dear God.

LAFE

S...scare...not...I...am...Lafe...

The Lafe corpse twitches.

LAFE (CONT.)

...G...Greenaway.

BARTY

I guess we just can't get rid of each other.

LAFE

Or...or...or...you...you...you...can't
g...get r...ri...rid...of...m...me.

(Beat.)

Bart...y. I...was...l...ike...you
once...was...like...you...once. I
h...had issues issues with siiize.
I...would...wake...up...and...could
b...barely...pull...the...covers...off.
My armsarms...were...too...weak.

Barty nods.

LAFE (CONT.)

But...then...one...day...I...had...an...epiphany.

The head on the Lafe corpse slowly turns around,
full-circle.

LAFE (CONT.)

W...why...should...I...feel...feel...FEEL...sorry
for...myself...wheeeeeeeen...I
could...dosomethingwithmylife.

The head pops off. It hovers in mid-air. It floats to Barty.
It screams in a raspy voice.

LAFE (CONT.)

DO YA GEET WHA' I'M SAAAAYIN'?!?

BARTY
I want back in. I'm not taking "No"
for an answer.

SWILL
Bartholemew Collins, I would be
honored to take you back.

Barty nods. He smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe eats cereal at a glass table in his kitchen. Shand
walks to him. She places a hand on his shoulder.

SHAND
Lafe, can I ask you something?

LAFE
Yeah?

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Swill stands up. He shakes Barty's hand.

SWILL
Not only will I tell you that, but
I will tell you this: I have been
so unbelievably despondent since
the very day you walked out of my
life...

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe pours a gallon of milk in the bowl. Shand fights back
tears.

SHAND
This really isn't working out.

Lafe drops his spoon. It levitates in mid-air. He gets up.

LAFE
Can we talk about this?

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Swill continues speaking.

SWILL (CONT.)
...that I was actually seconds away
from killing myself at this very,
very moment.

Swill points to the window.

SWILL

See that window? I was gonna kick it in, climb over, jump as high as I could, and fall as hard as I can. You saved me, Barty. And for that, I am eternally grateful.

Swill kicks over his desk. He grabs Barty in. He kisses him on the mouth passionately.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe watches Shand pack up her things in a suitcase. He watches her walk out the door. A single tear rolls down his face.

STANLEY (V.O.)

Lafe, don't worry about it. She was nothing, anyway. You'll forget about her tomorrow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Stanley sits on Lafe's couch. He smokes a cigar. Lafe sits on the floor, cross-legged.

STANLEY (CONT.)

There are much better girlies out there for ya.

LAFE

I dunno. She was...special.

STANLEY

Trust me on this one, kid. Nothing's special.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Barty walks into a giant, local-chain grocery store. He walks up to a BAGBOY in a green apron. The Bagboy character is to be played by the same actor who plays Lafe.

BARTY

Are you guys hiring?

BAGBOY

As a matter of fact, we are.

BARTY
 Heh. Gotta find a day job
 somewhere.

The Bagboy nods.

LATER - Barty works as a bagboy. He wears a green apron. He bags fruit and vegetables into a bag. A woman, 30, places the bags in a cart. This is ALICE.

WOMAN
 Thank you so much.

Barty smiles.

BARTY
 All in a day's work, ma'am...but
 not every day!

Barty winks.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Revelers rave in the midst of flashing strobe lights and electronic music. They are young, happy, and free. Many are nude.

Lafe sits by the bar alone. He wears dark sunglasses and a cowboy hat. He has a dark stubble. He smokes a cigarette.

Alice walks up to him. She taps him on the shoulder.

ALICE
 Hi, there. Pardon me for asking
 but...are you...

SWILL (V.O.)
 Sorry, Barty.

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Swill sits behind his desk.

SWILL (CONT.)
 There aren't any jobs or auditions
 just yet.

Wider shots reveal Barty in a large chair. He wears his green apron. His hair is starting to gray at the temples. His hairline is beginning to recede.

BARTY
Bummer. But there will be soon?

SWILL
Oh, you betcha.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Alice takes a seat next to Lafe. Lafe stares at the table.
He makes no eye contact.

ALICE
Are you Lafe Greenaway?

LAFE
Yeah. Yeah, I guess I am.

ALICE
I am such a huge fan. You are an
amazing actor.

LAFE
Yeah. Thanks.

ALICE
Could I maybe have an autograph?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Alice have sex on the bed. Alice squeals with
delight and pleasure. Lafe looks bored. He is fully dressed.

ALICE
OH MY GOD! YES!

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - DAY

A few years have passed. Barty's hair is receding and
graying more. He has grown a small pot-belly. Arthur has
grown eight feet tall. His head goes through the ceiling.

The two of them sit on the couch.

BARTY
So remember that Goldie girl? I'm
thinking of asking her to marry me.

ARTHUR
Neat!

Barty holds a small ring.

BARTY
Here's the ring. Want to feel?

ARTHUR
Yeah!

Barty places the ring in Arthur's enormous hands.

ARTHUR
Wow! It feels like an M&M!

BARTY
That's because it is!

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Swill has grown much fatter. His suit barely fits him. His body resembles a small box.

SWILL
Sorry, Barty. Still nothing.

BARTY
Well, one day.

Barty laughs to himself.

BARTY (CONT.)
Here's hoping!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Alice and Lafe sit in the bed. Alice is out of breath. She sweats.

ALICE
Oh my God. That was *amazing*!

Lafe shrugs.

LAFE
Hey, it happens.

PRIEST (V.O.)
Do you promise to honor and obey
and...

INT. CHURCH - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe and Alice stand in front of a PRIEST, 60. They are getting married.

PRIEST (CONT.)
 ...always cherish...

Lafe nods.

LAFE
 Hey Father, could I just kiss her?

PRIEST
 You may.

Lafe gives her a peck on the cheek.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Barty sits on his couch. He is on the phone.

BARTY
 Hello, can you look up the most
 beautiful girl in the world? She
 goes by the name Goldie Jonikas.
 (Beat.)
 I'm sorry. I didn't catch that.
 (Beat.)
 "De...ceased?" What does that mean?
 Where is that?

INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Alice is in labor. She screams in pain. A team of DOCTORS
 watch over her. Lafe stands off in the corner. He has a full
 beard.

DOCTOR
 Push! Push! Push!

Lafe sighs.

LAFE
 Goddammit. Could you hurry it up?

Lafe goes to Alice. He places his hands under her gown. He
 plucks out the bloody BABY. It screams and cries. He hands
 it to the Doctor.

He walks out of the room.

LAFE (O.S.)
 I'll be in the car.

BOSS (V.O.)
 Barty! I need ya to work the
 graveyard shift again!

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Some time has passed. Barty's hair is almost fully gray. He is balding rapidly.

He loads piles of candy into a huge metallic crane. The giant Arthur stands by the crane. His head is so high that it is off-camera.

ARTHUR

So how did it go with Goldie?

BARTY

Well, I drove all over but I just couldn't find "D Street". Do you know where that is?

Silence.

BARTY

Do you?

ARTHUR

I was nodding.

BARTY

Oh well. One day, my princess will come to me. I just know it. It's meant to be!

Barty presses a button. The crane lifts upwards towards Barty's head.

INT. SWILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Barty walks into the office. He sits down.

BARTY

Knock knock! Any jobs yet?

Swill has tears streaming down his face. He holds a bloody napkin.

SWILL

No, Barty. Not yet.

BARTY

Gotcha!

Barty walks out of the room. Swill hangs his head on the desk.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Alice and Lafe sit on the bed. She feeds the baby with a bottle. She smiles. Lafe scowls. His cell phone rings.

LAFE
Hold on!

Lafe gets out the phone.

LAFE
Hello?

ZAKARY (V.O.)
Lafe, go to your door. Right now.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe opens his door. He is still on the phone.

ZAKARY (V.O.)
Look down.

Lafe looks down. He sees the golden script laying at his feet.

ZAKARY (V.O.)
Our masterpiece is almost complete.
The budget has been approved and
the actors have been secured. I
want you to meet me in exactly one
year to this very moment.

LAFE
Why a year?

ZAKARY (O.S.)
So you can learn your lines.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Alice and Lafe eat dinner in their elegant dining room. The baby sits in a high chair. Lafe flips through pages of the script. He stops. He bangs his fork on the table.

LAFE
I CANNOT READ IN THIS ENVIRONMENT!

Lafe walks out of the room.

ALICE
Where are you going?

LAFE (O.S.)
IN SOLITUDE!

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks around in a snowy, bleak tundra. He wears no jacket or protective clothing aside from a black suit. He carries the script under his arm. It is full of notes.

He sits on the ground, cross-legged. He flips through the script pages. He focuses on them intently. He sniffs the pages. He licks the pages. He rubs the pages under his shirt.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And sometimes stars do not burn
bright. And sometimes stars do not
gleam forever. And sometimes stars
do not sparkle and shine.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Barty, older and balder, sits in a crowded waiting room. He drums his fingers on the chair. He coughs. He gets up. He walks out of the room.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT

A team of DOCTORS operate on Swill. He is hooked up to all sorts of tubes. Barty barges into the room.

BARTY

How's it going, Mr. Swill?

Swill is barely conscious.

SWILL

Bar...ty...

BARTY

Yep, that's me.

DOCTOR

How did you get in here? Please
leave.

BARTY

Anything yet? There's gotta be an
audition, a commercial, a
something?

Swill sighs. He flatlines.

DOCTOR

He's flatlining. Get that asshole
out of here!

The doctors scatter. Barty walks out of the room.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Barty wanders the city streets. He is slightly dazed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And sometimes stars are simply not
of this world. And sometimes stars
have to be put back where they
belong.

Barty sees a sign in a window. It reads "Open Casting Call."
His eyes light up.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Barty stands in front of a male DIRECTOR, 54. He is sleazy
and seedy. He wears an open red shirt that exposes his big,
hairy beer belly.

DIRECTOR

What's yer name?

BARTY

Barty Collins.

The director snorts.

DIRECTOR

Ya got the job.

Barty's eyes light up.

BARTY

Really? You don't want me to read
or anything or...

DIRECTOR

Nah that's fine. You got one scene.

Barty nods.

BARTY

Well, then, I'm going to make it
count, sir.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Lafe emerges out of an elevator. He carries the script in
his hands. He wears a long black trench coat. His face is
covered with a brown bohemian scarf and large sunglasses.

INT. MIRROR - DAY

Barty stares into the mirror. He smiles.

BARTY
Barty Collins, this is...

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING - FLASHBACK

Lafe walks down the hallway briskly. In one hand, he carries a thick movie script with yellow post-it notes stuck all over it. In his other hand, he carries a styrofoam cup of coffee. He takes a sip.

NARRATOR (CONT.)
Supernovas can explode, never to be
seen again.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Barty looks into a cracked mirror. He sits behind a large garbage can. He is dressed in a black suit.

BARTY (CONT.)
...your moment!

The Director walks up to Barty.

DIRECTOR
BARTY! WE WERE READY TEN MINUTES
AGO! ARE YOU?

Barty stands up.

BARTY
I am now, sir!

The Director grumbles.

BARTY
This is the role I was born to
play, sir!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Scene from a shoddy low-budget film. The film is grainy and washed out. A MALE ACTOR, 20, and a FEMALE ACTOR, 21, walk down the city street.

MALE ACTOR
Serpentine chakras.

FEMALE ACTOR
Dexterity muffin muffs.

MALE ACTOR
Breakfast pies?

Barty walks by in the background. He carries a cracked mirror.

FEMALE
Over breakfast pies!

EXT. GRINDHOUSE THEATER - NIGHT

A few weeks have passed. It rains heavily on the city street. Barty, very old and very bald, runs down the street. He stops at the box office.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Comets can fly faster than lightning and in the blink of one's eye.

BARTY
Erm...one please!

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

The movie finishes. Barty sits next to the Director. He stares at him as the lights come up.

BARTY
You cut my scene!

DIRECTOR
I cut all the scenes. I reshot the whole thing. I'm surprised you even came to see this piece of shit.

Barty sinks back in his chair.

BARTY
Wow...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But stars...

BARTY (CONT.)
...I transcended your movie. I was *that* good.

The Director snorts.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Stanley stands in the shadows in the corner. His hands are in his pockets. He watches the crew film the infamous death scene.

NARRATOR (V.O., CONT.)
...stars are forever.

BARTY
Time to die...motherfucker!

Gunshots. People scream. Lafe's body falls to the ground. Zakary gets up. He goes to Lafe.

ZAKARY
OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!

Stanley nods. He walks away.

EXT. SOUND STAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Stanley walks outside. He sees Philo leaning against the wall. He smokes a cigarette.

Stanley goes to him.

STANLEY
Crazy day?

PHILO
Yeah, just one of those one of those.

STANLEY
I hear ya.

PHILO
Yeah.

Philo takes a drag.

PHILO
But you know...

STANLEY
Yeah?

PHILO
All of those days you spend moving those little pieces of dirt? You eventually get to the very top of the mound.

Stanley nods in agreement.

PHILO

But then, as you're dancing on that top in that sun you suddenly get knocked off. And do you know where you go?

STANLEY

Where's that?

PHILO

To the bottom of the next mound. So you do it again. Push. Dance. Fall. And then one day, you just die. That's it.

STANLEY

Not necessarily.

PHILO

That's the way it's been for me.

STANLEY

Well some of us don't push. We've got wings.

Philo shoots Stanley a look.

PHILO

Please.

He takes a drag.

THE END