ONE LAST STORY

Written by

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Inspired by the Song:

"Lynnville Train"

Ву

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FADE IN:

INT. HOME OFFICE - MORNING

An old man (early 70's) wearing a stained T-shirt and pajama pants sits motionless behind an unkempt desk. His hair is mussed and his face unshaven. This is IRVING WASSERMAN.

The office is crammed with cardboard boxes. Books are haphazardly filed on a shelf that runs the length of the wall.

Amidst the clutter and confusion of the desk sits an old ribbon typewriter.

IRVING (V.O.) I'm Irving and I'm a writer. Well, I used to be at least. And I wasn't a writer, writer. I was a screenwriter. I always felt that in order to really call yourself a writer you needed to be able to write a book. You know, like Hemmingway or Tolstoy. Hell, even that guy James Patterson. I tried once. To write a book. I got 100 pages in, showed it to my ex-wife Annie. She said it was tripe, and she was right. Annie always did tell it like it was.

Irving SNAPS out of his trance and stares at the empty sheet of paper in his typewriter.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Pictures line both walls.

Laughing children. Kids playing with a dog. Irving kissing an attractive woman who appears distracted.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is drab but otherwise neat and well kept.

Irving, wearing a short sleeve starched white shirt, necktie and slacks sits at the table with a buttered English muffin untouched before him.

A postcard lies next to his plate.

IRVING (V.O.) Annie never was one for laying it on thick. As a writer, sorry screenwriter, being married to someone like that is both a blessing and a curse. We like criticism, but just the right amount you see.

Irving picks up the postcard, examines it for a few moments, and then gently places it back on the table next to a .38 SNUB NOSED REVOLVER.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Irving sits on a bench.

An OLD BLACK WOMAN sidles up to the stop. Irving offers his hand and his seat before turning his attention to a group of kids playing in the park across the street.

> IRVING (V.O.) I've always loved watching people. You really can learn a lot just from watching. I guess for me you could call it an occupational necessity. I used to sit in the park all day just watching people. I'd wonder where they went or where they were coming from. I guess you could call them my inspiration.

A bus pulls up to the stop. A young man hops casually onboard. Irving helps the old black woman into the bus before he follows suit.

INT. BUS - DAY

Irving peers out the window.

A pregnant woman struggles to sit before letting out an exasperated sigh as Irving watches on.

IRVING (V.O.) I don't need to watch anymore. I'm done writing. I just can't seem to break the habit I guess. INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY

Irving looks diminished as he sits on a large leather couch. He seems to be engulfed by it.

Across from him in a leather chair is DOCTOR PAIGE (35), handsome and earnest looking in a professional way. He holds his glasses in his hands as he speaks to Irving.

> IRVING (V.O.) That's my shrink. Sweet kid, but I'm not really sure how much he's helping. He likes to ask a lot of questions, but I don't seem to get many answers.

Irving fidgets on the couch. He places an arm on the rest before quickly removing it.

DOCTOR PAIGE How are things since we last spoke, Irving?

IRVING Good. I can't really complain, Doc. You know a man my age really...

DOCTOR PAIGE Have you been able to write any?

IRVING (V.O.) I hate being cut off. Annie used to do that to me all the time.

Irving taps his fingers on the arm rest of the couch. They leave an indentation on the plush leather.

IRVING (CONT'D) A little bit, Doc.

DOCTOR PAIGE Anything good?

IRVING Well to be honest, I haven't written anything good since the early seventies, but who's counting.

Doctor Paige laughs at this as he makes a note on his legal pad.

# DOCTOR PAIGE

Well, you writers are all alike. You never like what you write. Always thinking people are lying when they say they like your stuff.

# IRVING

That's because more likely than not they are. Trust me on that one, Doc. It's a tough business out there.

DOCTOR PAIGE And yet you were successful.

#### IRVING

Well, I was never nominated for an Oscar. I did what you would call B films today. But I was able to put my kids through school.

DOCTOR PAIGE How are the kids?

IRVING

Good. Out in Vegas and L.A. Ain't that rich - L.A. of all places.

Irving's eyes meet Doctor Paige's.

DOCTOR PAIGE And what about Annie, have you heard from her?

Eyes now trained on the ground, Irving begins to laugh.

IRVING Oh I heard from her all right Doc. Got a nice card from her in the post the other day telling me she was coming in from Philly tomorrow. That I shouldn't...

Irving mimics air quotes.

IRVING (CONT'D) 'cause a scene.' She wants me to meet her so that we can discuss some things.

Irving rubs the stubble on his chin.

# DOCTOR PAIGE

You'll forgive the cliched question, Irving, but how did you feel when you got the news?

# IRVING

What is there to say, Doc? She left me for another man. A more successful man. A younger man. Imagine that. A woman of her age leaving her husband like that after 30 years of marriage. I'm not the problem here.

The doctor continues to take notes on his pad.

DOCTOR PAIGE

Well she isn't my patient, Irving. You are.

# IRVING

And she never would be Doc. Annie wouldn't be caught dead at a shrink. She'd sooner just leave her husband.

Irving and Doctor Paige look at each other and laugh. Irving's smile lingers as he shakes his head.

# IRVING (CONT'D)

Look Doc. I'm not sure this is working out. I'm an old man, best case scenario I don't really have much time left. Seems to me my time might be better spent on the outside just trying to live.

# DOCTOR PAIGE

I agree, but you were having trouble living. Isn't that why you came to see me?

# IRVING

Yeah, and don't get me wrong you've been a lot of help, Doc. I just think that it's time I tried to go it alone. After all, I'm a big boy.

Doctor Paige examines Irving.

# DOCTOR PAIGE

I guess I can't argue with that. But just because you're a little long in the tooth doesn't mean you shouldn't work to be happy.

# IRVING

Happiness is all relative ain't it, Doc. What qualifies as happy for a man my age wouldn't exactly be up to snuff for a man your age.

DOCTOR PAIGE That may be true, but I'd really like it if...

IRVING I've made up my mind, Doc. This is going to be my last session.

Doctor Paige closes his notebook and caps his pen.

DOCTOR PAIGE Okay, Irving. Your a big boy. But listen, if you ever need to talk...

Irving waves him off.

IRVING I read you loud and clear Doc.

The two men rise and exchange a solid hand shake.

IRVING (CONT'D) Be good, Doc.

DOCTOR PAIGE You too, Irving.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

A large board hangs in the middle of the depot. Various destinations and departure times are listed.

Throngs of people mill about. Some rush to their next destination.

On a bench against the wall Irving sits and watches.

IRVING (V.O.) Back in the day when a story first began to percolate I would come here. (MORE) IRVING (V.O.) (CONT'D) If this place didn't bring it out of me, then it probably wasn't worth it to begin with.

A MOTHER and CHILD walk by when the little girl drops her doll. Irving retrieves it for her before he sits back down.

IRVING (V.O.) (CONT'D) I've been writing or telling stories since I was a snot nosed kid. Even back then I wondered what would happen when I ran out of stories to tell. I think that every writer has a finite number of stories to share. Once they're out, that's it Bub. Time to pack up shop and find a new line of work. I guess I'm lucky. I had more stories than most.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The room is dark.

A 32" old fashioned floor model TV flickers in the foreground as Irving sits in a recliner.

His eyes blink infrequently as he gazes at the images on the TV.

On a food tray to his side sits a half eaten microwavable dinner, a bottle of whiskey, a glass, and the .38 SNUB NOSED REVOLVER.

Irving reaches out a hand that hovers momentarily over the revolver. He finally takes up the glass.

The fading ice cubes still manage to CLINK against the glass as he swirls the whiskey.

He downs the last gulp and discards the glass in favor of the bottle.

COMMERCIAL (ON TV) ...stop hiding you hair underneath these caps. I'm Giuseppe Franco and I wouldn't put my name on this hair product if I didn't believe in it.

Irving looks at the bottle and takes a long swig.

He rummages in his pocket and produces the postcard. Scans it one last time then crumples it and throws it at the TV.

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Irving sits behind his desk with the bottle and the revolver at his side.

He drunkenly pecks at the keys of his typewriter and then RIPS the page from the machine and folds it into an envelope.

FADE OUT.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

A BUM panhandles as harried passengers feign distraction or outright ignore him.

P.A. ANNOUNCER (O.S.) Attention ladies and gentleman. The 10:15 from Philadelphia has now arrived and passengers will be disembarking from terminal A. Terminal A.

Irving, dressed in a professorial tweed jacket with black slacks, looks up from a magazine.

He reaches into his breast pocket and taps at something. Reassured he walks off in the direction of terminal A.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - TERMINAL A - DAY

ANNIE WASSERMAN (60) pretty and impeccably dressed takes the hand of a conductor as she steps off a train. She scans the crowd as though she expects to be greeted by someone.

She checks her watch and shakes her head.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - TERMINAL A - CONTINUOUS

Passengers pour out of the trains in all directions.

A young man embraces his girlfriend. They share a long hug and a deep kiss. A mother scoops up her son and hugs her husband.

Across this expansive crowd Irving spies Annie as she checks her watch. He walks toward her before stopping about 30 feet from her. Annie has her back turned to Irving.

Irving stares at his ex-wife's back for a few moments.

As the crowd continues to surge all around him he slips a hand into his breast pocket. He feels for something before finally producing a TRAIN TICKET.

A small smile dances across his face before he turns and leaves Annie amongst the crowd.

INT. TRAIN DEPOT - TERMINAL A - CONTINUOUS

ANNIE'S POV

Annie turns and sees Irving just as he begins to walk away.

ANNIE Irving, I'm over here. Irving!

Irving continues out of the terminal.

INT. DOCTORS OFFICE - DAY

Doctor Paige enters with an envelope in his hand. He examines it for a moment before taking a seat behind a big oak desk. He opens the envelope and reads:

DOCTOR PAIGE

"Dear Doc. I just wanted to let you know that I decided to leave town for a little while. Ever since Annie left all I've been doing is sitting around waiting to die. I lied the other day when I said I was writing. The truth is that I haven't written since before she left. I think it's time I did something about that, or at least tried to. I'm heading out west to see the kids and who knows, maybe I'll find one last story out there on the way. Thanks for everything. Irving."

Doctor Paige smiles, folds the letter and places it in his desk drawer.

Bright sunshine beats down on the streets as the train makes its way out of the city. People scurry about the streets. Irving sits in the window seat and takes it all in.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.