Stomach: The Movie!

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"This movie was written on a heavy regiment of coffee."

"This movie also has no basis in medical fact whatsoever. It's purely fiction."

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBIA - MORNING

The sun rises on modern day suburbia as cars putt to and fro down the street.

SUBTITLE: "1980"

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

GERALD, a father in his mid-forties sits reclined in his easy chair, sipping a cup of coffee engaged in the daily newspaper.

DERRICK, a blond-haired little 5 year old, runs up to the edge of his father's recliner, peering over. He watches intently as his father drinks his coffee, replacing the cup on the table next to him.

DERRICK Whatcha drinkin'?

GERALD

Coffee.

DERRICK

Oh.

(pauses to think) What's coffee?

GERALD It's a drink for big people.

DERRICK Can I try it?

Gerald folds his paper, and leans forward towards Derrick.

GERALD (playfully) Are you a big person?

DERRICK I am. I am 5-(holds up his hand) -years old. GERALD Well then! Why didn't you say so?

Gerald grabs the coffee cup and holds it out to Derrick.

GERALD (CONT'D) I think a big boy like you is entitled to a little bit of coffee.

ELAINE (0.S.) (scolding) Gerald!

Gerald looks over to see his wife, ELAINE, standing at the door to the living room, with her arms on her hips.

GERALD Oh come on, Elaine. He'll just spit it out anyway.

Elaine nods disapprovingly, and leaves. Gerald turns back to Derrick, who is now holding the coffee-mug.

GERALD (CONT'D) Well go on, champ. Give it a go. But be careful, it's a bit hot.

Derrick cautiously brings the cup to his lips, taking a sip. His eyes suddenly widen with excitement, as he tips the mug back even further, taking more in.

Gerald's eyes widen in angst.

GERALD (CONT'D) Uhhh...ok, Derrick. I think that's enough.

Gerald makes a motion to take the cup away, but Derrick pulls away from him.

GERALD (CONT'D) (yells) Derrick!

But it's too late. Derrick's finished the mug, and brings it down, letting out a refreshing sigh.

Suddenly, Derrick's eyes turn to horror as he grabs his throat, and opens his mouth to scream and we...

CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Derrick and Gerald both sit on a hospital bed, looking burnt out. Derrick's mouth is exploding with gaws.

A DOCTOR approaches, clipboard in hand.

DOCTOR Well, I gotta tell ya, it doesn't look good. Derrick caused irreversible damage to the nerve endings in his mouth and throat. The good news; Derrick'll never have to worry about anything being too hot or cold again.

GERALD And the bad news?

DOCTOR Well, that's also the bad news.

GERALD

Oh.

DOCTOR Oh yes, and there's also some police officers who would like a word with you.

The doctor motions to the door where a couple of OFFICERS stand.

DOCTOR (CONT'D) So, if you'd please come with me.

GERALD

Ok. (turning to Derrick) Derrick, stay here. I'll be right back.

DERRICK (through the gaws) Ok.

Gerald exits. Derrick watches as he goes over to the officers standing by the door. He exchanges a few words with them, and then they motion for him to follow. They all exit.

Derrick notices that one of the officers was covering up something in the distance: a break room with a container of coffee in it. His eyes widen as he lets himself down off the bed.

Cautiously peering out the hospital room he sees his dad talking with the officers down the hall. He tiptoes across the hall to the break room and makes his way to the container.

The container is placed on a high shelf and Derrick stares at it in awe. He pulls the gaws out of his mouth and throws them to the floor.

Bracing himself he jumps up to reach the nozzle, but misses. He tries again, but misses. Finally, he jumps once more and knocks the nozzle down, letting the coffee flow.

Derrick stands under the nozzle, catching the coffee in his mouth as it falls. An addict is born.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COFFEE HOUSE- PRESENT DAY - MORNING

Derrick, now nearly 26 years old, crouches under a coffee container, catching the coffee in his mouth as it falls. Steam emanates from his mouth as he catches it.

Subtitle: "2006"

A 25 YEAR OLD WOMAN watches in awe.

25 YEAR OLD WOMAN Isn't that hot?

Derrick stops, wiping his mouth, looking at the woman.

DERRICK Oh, it's boiling. I just find it tastes better right from the nozzle.

The woman rolls her eyes, walking away. Derrick shrugs and returns to the nozzle.

An EMPLOYEE approaches, angrily.

EMPLOYEE Sir, for the last time, stop taking coffee directly from the containers. DERRICK (pointing to a sign) Hey, it says "Never Ending Refills".

EMPLOYEE Not with your mouth!

DERRICK Well, you should write that then.

Derrick pats the guy on the shoulder, walking away.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE TABLES- CONTINUOUS

Derrick walks over and joins his friend BEN at the table. Ben is the same age as Derrick and dresses a bit more conservatively.

Derrick places his "Grande" coffee on the table.

DERRICK People are way too uptight here.

BEN Drink from the container again?

DERRICK

Yeah.

BEN Yeah, I can't imagine why they'd have a problem with you.

Derrick shrugs, drinking his coffee. Ben watches him, a concerned look on his face.

BEN (CONT'D) Do you ever think you might drink too much coffee?

DERRICK I was actually starting to think I wasn't drinking *enough*.

BEN Seriously though, Derrick. All that coffee can't be good for you.

DERRICK Eh, you sound like my parents.

BEN You mean the parents that had to take you to the burn ward when you were 5? DERRICK Oh, that wasn't that big of a deal. BEN You lost all feeling in your mouth! DERRICK Eh, you take the good with the bad. BEN What the hell does that even mean? DERRICK Look, Ben. If you're that concerned, find me some literature about the dangers of coffee drinking. If you can find me something and prove that drinking coffee is bad for you, I'll cut the amount I drink in half. BEN Really? DERRICK Yeah. BEN Ok, deal. The two shake on it. DERRICK (raising his cup) Cheers. Derrick drinks. Suddenly, he clutches his stomach in pain. BEN What is it? DERRICK I don't feel so good. BEN Gee, there's a surprise.

DERRICK No really...I feel *really* bad.

BEN Have you eaten anything today?

DERRICK

No, I-

Derrick suddenly spits up coffee onto the table.

BEN

Oh God!

DERRICK (staring in amazement) Well, that's never happened before.

BEN I think you should go home.

DERRICK Naw, I'll be fine. Some coffee'll put out that fire.

Derrick drinks some coffee and immediately spits it up.

Pause.

DERRICK (CONT'D) Or maybe I should go to a doctor.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Derrick and Ben sit in chairs before an empty desk.

The door opens behind them and a DOCTOR walks in, holding a file. She walks over and takes a seat before the two of them.

DOCTOR Well, we have the results back, and I'm afraid to report that it doesn't look very good.

BEN What's wrong with him?

DOCTOR It's his stomach. It's severely deteriorated. (MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

The lining is so badly damaged that I'm surprised it's even still able to manage, but it is.

DERRICK What does this all mean?

DOCTOR

It means, quite simply, that you're going to have to watch from now on what you eat and drink. You can't have anything that will be too acidic or harsh on your system, or the results could be devastating. The episode in the coffee house is just a preview of what could happen.

DERRICK Wait a minute, you don't mean-

DOCTOR Yes, I'm afraid I do.

Derrick is frozen in fear.

DOCTOR (CONT'D) No more coffee.

Derrick sinks back into his seat in complete shock, mouth agape.

BEN Do you have any idea what caused this?

DOCTOR

Well, if I had to venture a guess, I'd say it was your friend's rather extreme intake of coffee. But that's just a guess, and it would be rather hard to pinpoint the exact cause. But man, if you could prove that coffee was the cause of this, I'd imagine you'd be in for one heck of a settlement.

Derrick looks up as a look of realization crosses his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT OF HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Derrick bursts through the door, Ben followed quickly behind.

BEN Wait a minute, you're going to do what?

Derrick continues to walk fast.

DERRICK I'm gonna find a lawyer and I'm going to sue the coffee companies.

BEN Derrick, wait up.

Derrick stops.

DERRICK You heard what she said, if I can prove coffee did this to me, I'll be rich!

BEN Coffee didn't do this to you Derrick, you did this to yourself!

DERRICK That's for the courts to decide. Our justice system is set up so personal responsibility is a mere footnote in the law books!

Derrick continues to walk again.

BEN Well, I won't be any part of this!

Derrick stops.

DERRICK You won't be any part of it? You're going to be my key witness!

BEN

But I-

DERRICK

Ben, I'll admit it, I probably drank more coffee than I should have over the years, but I never in a million years would have thought this would happen. Never once was I warned about the dangers of coffee, and I'm going to make sure that doesn't happen to anyone else. We're going to find a lawyer and take on "Big Coffee"!

BEN First off, there's no such thing as "Big Coffee", and second off, there's not a lawyer in the world that would represent you in this case!

CUT TO:

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - LATER

A LAWYER sits behind his desk, arms folded in front of him, a slick smile smeared across his face.

LAWYER

(confidently) So, you wanna take on Big Coffee?

Derrick and Ben sit in chairs opposite the lawyer. Ben rolls his eyes, and Derrick smiles widely.

DERRICK

I sure do!

LAWYER

Well, I should let you know, it's gonna take commitment and hard work. Big Coffee doesn't go down without a fight. I should know.

BEN Wait a minute, you've fought Big Coffee before?

LAWYER

Oh yeah.

The lawyer reaches behind his desk and pulls out an oversized (25 X 25) picture. (not seen)

LAWYER (CONT'D) See this mouth?

BEN (in disgust) Oh God!

LAWYER A victim of Big Coffee. Permanently ruined the coloring of his teeth.

The lawyer quickly pulls out another oversized picture (not seen).

LAWYER (CONT'D) See these genitals?

Ben leans back in disgust, Derrick is still all smiles.

BEN

Yeah?

LAWYER Rendered useless due to nonexistent sex drive, courtesy of Big Coffee.

BEN Do you really need a picture for that?

LAWYER It's for effect.

The lawyer puts the picture away. Derrick leans in closely to Ben.

DERRICK (quietly) Well, I'm convinced. If you can't trust a lawyer with gigantic pictures of genitals in his office, who can you trust?

Derrick turns back to the lawyer.

DERRICK (CONT'D) So, when can we expect this thing to go to court?

LAWYER

Derrick, you're missing the big picture here. Big Coffee is a multi-billion dollar industry with a vested interest in consumer satisfaction. They can't afford to take this thing to court, there's too much at stake in the public's eye. My guess is that they'll just cut you a huge cash settlementminus my fees, of course-and this will never see it's day in court.

The lawyer smiles.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN W/CG

"DAY 1" first appears, accompanied by a LAW AND ORDER TYPE SOUND.

After a brief pause, "(in court)" appear below it, accompanied by another LAW AND ORDER TYPE SOUND.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING

News-crews and members of the public pepper the steps of the Federal Courthouse.

INT. COURTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The JUDGE looks over some paperwork in front of him. The courtroom itself is silent but filled with many spectators.

Mr. Romanowsky, Derrick's lawyer, sits next to him and Ben. Mr. Terschikov, the defense lawyer, sits confidently with the members of "Big Coffee".

The Judge clears his throat, lowering the papers he was reading.

JUDGE Mr. Romanowsky, I understand that your client, on top of the request for punitive damages, has made a plea for equitable damages as well? MR. ROMANOWSKY Yes, your honor. And with the courts' permission, I would like to take this opportunity to further elaborate on that plea before the trial commences.

JUDGE You may proceed. But please, make it brief.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Thank you, your honor.

Mr. Romanowsky walks to the center of the court, carrying two large oversized photographs. He sets the photographs on two stands; both are covered in sheets.

> MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) Now, there's no question that several billion dollars in punitive damages will take quite a hit to Big Coffee's already deep pockets. But what we need to examine, however, is whether or not that will be enough. In recent years it has become painfully clear that more than a monetary slap on the wrist is needed to correct such grievous offenses. I bring to mind Canada's cigarette regulation, which calls for packs to prominently feature pictures of diseased lungs. So that when little Wayne reaches for his first pack, he can be greeted by what will inevitably become his own fate. It is in this manner that I suggest we emulate our neighbors to the North. Therefore I propose to you two possible pictures to accompany every product Big Coffee pushes from now on.

Mr. Romanowsky dramatically pulls the sheet off the first picture to reveal Derrick gripping his stomach in pain; a pathetic look on his face.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) First, a picture of my client; face twisted in pain, gripping his stomach, aching for some type of comfort. This will add a more human touch to the regulation.

An AUDIENCE MEMBER nods with consideration.

Mr. Romanowsky dramatically pulls off the second sheet (not seen).

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) Second, a deteriorated stomach.

The crowd GROANS in disgust.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) Now, I couldn't get an actual deteriorated stomach, so I took a butcher knife to a cow's, but you get the idea.

The DEFENSE ATTORNEY stands, raising his hand.

MR. TERSCHIKOV (disgusted) Your Honor, there have been no reputable studies that measures such as those taken by Canada in regards to cigarettes have been effective.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (to courtroom) Does anyone in the court feel like drinking coffee right now?

No one in the courtroom raises their hand. Derrick slightly raises his hand, but Ben elbows him hard in the side, making him lower it.

> JUDGE Pending the outcome of this case, the court will *consider* the remedies presented, but for now, let us continue.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Thank you, your honor.

He gathers his photographs and returns to his seat.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Dr. Menchinger, the doctor from earlier, sits at the stand. Mr. Romanowsky approaches him.

> MR. ROMANOWSKY Dr. Menchinger, how long have you been a practicing physician?

> > DR. MENCHINGER

1 year.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Only 1 year *practicing*, but how long did you go to medical school?

DR. MENCHINGER 12 years.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (to the jury, with emphasis) 12 years! Impressive.

The Judge rolls his eyes.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) And in your combined 13 years of medical experience, have you ever seen anything to the equivalent of my client's condition?

DR. MENCHINGER No sir, I have not.

MR. ROMANOWSKY And can you say what caused my client's condition?

DR. MENCHINGER No sir, I cannot.

MR. ROMANOWSKY But you do have an educated guess, am I not correct?

DR. MENCHINGER

If I had to make an educated guess, I would say that the obscene amount of coffee consumed by your client contributed to his vastly deteriorated stomach. (MORE) DR. MENCHINGER (CONT'D) It has been proven, among other ghastly side effects, coffee can cause gastrointestinal problems.

MR. ROMANOWSKY And yet, Big Coffee doesn't put a warning on their products.

Mr. Romanowsky shakes his head from side to side in disappointment.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) No further questions, your honor.

Mr. Terschikov immediately stands and approaches Dr. Menchinger.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Doctor, in your medical opinion, can knives cut through human flesh?

DR. MENCHINGER (with a smile) Uh yes, it has been medically proven that knives cut through human flesh.

The crowd CHUCKLES.

MR. TERSCHIKOV And yet, knife companies don't put warnings on knives they sell letting consumers know that they could be cut using their product. Why do you suppose that is?

DR. MENCHINGER I'd assume it's because they think most people would know that if they use a knife they run the risk of being cut.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Much like if you drank too much coffee you run the risk of getting an upset stomach?

DR. MENCHINGER Well yes, but I-

MR. TERSCHIKOV And Mr. Harmond had a history of stomach problems, is that not correct? DR. MENCHINGER Well yes, but-

MR. TERSCHIKOV No further questions, your honor.

INT. COURTROOM - EVEN LATER

Ben now sits at the witness stand. Mr. Romanowsky approaches him with a smile.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Mr. Heard, how long have you known my client?

BEN

12 years.

MR. ROMANOWSKY And has my client been an active coffee drinker in those 12 years?

BEN Yes, he has.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

And have you witnessed your friend become sick as a result of drinking coffee?

BEN

Yes, I have.

MR. TERSCHIKOV

Objection, your honor. Mr. Romanowsky is making assumptions that coffee is, in fact, what caused his client to become ill. The witness has no medical expertise to make that deduction.

JUDGE

Sustained. Please re-phrase or move on, Mr. Romanowsky.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

Mr. Heard, how many times did you witness Mr. Harmond consume coffee and then *immediately* proceeding that become ill?

BEN Far too many to count.

MR. ROMANOWSKY No further questions.

Mr. Romanowsky sits down, and Mr. Terschikov immediately stands up.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Mr. Heard, if you banged yourself on the hand with a hammer, what do you think would happen?

BEN I'd imagine it'd break. My hand, not the hammer.

The crowd chuckles.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Would you then go and sue the hammer companies?

BEN

No.

MR. TERSCHIKOV

And you claim that Mr. Harmond knew, on almost every occasioncourtesy of your re-enforcementthat consuming too much coffee could lead to stomach pains?

BEN

Yes.

MR. TERSCHIKOV

I mean, it wasn't a hidden secret that drinking too much coffee could cause stomach pains. They did, in fact, just release a brand of coffee for more sensitive stomachs. So, how does it make sense that Mr. Harmond is suing the coffee companies?

BEN

It doesn't.

Whispers flow throughout the courtroom. Derrick shuts his eyes in regret.

Mr. Romanowsky stands up.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Your honor, this testimony is irrelevant! The court isn't concerned with this man's opinion, the court is purely interested in fact. Whether or not Mr. Heard thinks this case is right is not on trial here.

JUDGE (to Mr. Terschikov) I'm going to have to agree with that.

Mr. Terschikov smiles widely, cocky in his demeanor.

MR. TERSCHIKOV No further questioning needed.

He smiles at the jury as he walks away.

JUDGE You may step down, Mr. Heard.

Derrick sits in silent contemplation.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - MORNING

Ben and Derrick sit on the steps of the courthouse.

DERRICK You really turned on me in there yesterday.

BEN I'm sorry.

Derrick sighs.

DERRICK Maybe you're right. Maybe this whole thing is my fault.

BEN I never said it was *all* your fault, I just think you let yourself off to easily. I know.

He turns and looks Ben in the eye.

DERRICK (CONT'D) But I still think there's merit in what I'm doing.

Ben breathes in deeply.

BEN Then let's get back in there and finish this.

Ben pats Derrick on the back smiling. They get up and proceed back in.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Derrick now sits at the witness stand. Mr. Terschikov confidently approaches him.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Mr. Harmond, how long have you been drinking coffee?

DERRICK Since I was 5.

MR. TERSCHIKOV And are there any other beverages that you enjoy drinking?

DERRICK

Yeah.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Would you kindly list for the court some of those beverages?

Derrick starts counting off on his fingers.

DERRICK Water, milk, coke-

MR. TERSCHIKOV I'm sorry, did you say "Coke"?

DERRICK

Yeah.

MR. TERSCHIKOV And about how long have you been drinking Coke?

DERRICK Probably about since I was 5 too.

MR. TERSCHIKOV That's interesting. So, you've been drinking Coke since you were 5, yet you've also been drinking coffee since you were 5. What's to say that Coke hasn't caused your stomach ailment?

DERRICK

Well, I think it's quite obvious I drink quite a bit more coffee than Coke.

MR. TERSCHIKOV But isn't it *possible*, Mr. Harmond, that Coke could also have caused your stomach to deteriorate?

DERRICK

I suppose, b-

Mr. Terschikov immediately begins walking away.

MR. TERSCHIKOV No further questions, you honor.

Whispers emanate from the crowd. Mr. Romanowsky sits back in his seat, stoic in expression.

JUDGE Mr. Romanowsky?

Mr. Romanowsky shakes his head, bringing himself back to reality.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

Hmm?

JUDGE You may question your client now.

Mr. Romanowsky stands.

MR. ROMANOWSKY May I have one second to review my notes, your honor? JUDGE You may, but make it quick.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

Thank you.

Sitting in a panic, Mr. Romanowsky leans towards Ben.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) (quietly) I've got nothing!

BEN You've got nothing!? How can you have nothing?!

MR. ROMANOWSKY Their defense is really good!

BEN Well, you better think of something fast. You're supposed to be Derrick's lawyer, and if you don't re-direct you can kiss this case goodbye.

The sound of WATER POURING suddenly attracts Mr. Romanowsky as he turns to watch the Judge pouring a glass of water for himself. Mr. Romanowsky watches thoughtfully as a look of realization crosses his face. He springs from his seat.

> MR. ROMANOWSKY Your Honor, I would like to request a 5-minute recess!

JUDGE May I ask what for?

MR. ROMANOWSKY I have to gather some items that will be crucial in the examination of my client.

JUDGE Ok, the court will grant a 5-minute recess.

The Judge bangs his gavel.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - 5 MINUTES LATER

Mr. Romanowsky now paces in front of Derrick.

MR. ROMANOWSKY Mr. Harmond, to refresh the jury's memory, just how long have you been drinking coffee?

DERRICK Since I was 5.

MR. ROMANOWSKY And once again, how long have you been drinking Coke?

DERRICK

Since I was 5.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

Interesting.

Mr. Romanowsky walks back to his table and grabs a can of Coke, approaching Derrick once again. He pops the top on the Coke and slides it over to Derrick.

> MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) Would you please drink this coke?

Derrick eyes the Coke curiously and then grabs it, taking a sip. He sets the can down and looks at Mr. Romanowsky, shrugging.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) How do you feel, Derrick?

DERRICK

Fine.

MR. ROMANOWSKY

Great.

Mr. Romanowsky walks over to the table once more, grabbing something, and returning back. He places a cup of coffee before Derrick.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (CONT'D) Now drink this coffee.

Derrick looks from the cup of coffee to Mr. Romanowsky, worried.

He slowly picks up the cup and takes a sip of the coffee. The courtroom audience, the jury, the judge, and the defense all watch with interest.

Derrick places the cup back down on the stand and looks at Mr. Romanowsky. Suddenly, Derrick lurches forward and spews the coffee (plus other internal goodies) back out over the stand.

The crowd GROANS in disgust, as people begin to talk excitedly in the courtroom.

JUDGE (yelling) ORDER!

MR. ROMANOWSKY (yelling over the crowd) Your Honor, I would like to submit Mr. Harmond's vomit as evidence in this case. (motioning to the Bailiff)

Bailiff, collect a sample.

JUDGE (disgusted, holding up a hand) That won't be necessary. But let the record shot that the witness has, in fact, vomited upon drinking the coffee.

MR. ROMANOWSKY No further questions, your honor.

JUDGE Would the defense care to redirect?

Mr. Terschikov stands.

MR. TERSCHIKOV (disgusted) No, your honor. The defense rests.

JUDGE The Court will take a one-hour lunch break so we can clean up this mess. We will conclude closing arguments when we return.

The Judge bangs his gavel.

Mr. Terschikov and his colleagues approach Derrick and Romanowsky.

MR. TERSCHIKOV I think we need to talk.

MR. ROMANOWSKY We're listening.

MR. TERSCHIKOV 1 million dollars, on top of medical expenses.

DERRICK What about the pictures?

MR. TERSCHIKOV (immediately) No.

DERRICK Fair enough.

MR. ROMANOWSKY (to Derrick) I suggest you take it.

Derrick looks to Ben who nods solemnly. He turns back to Mr. Terschikov and his colleagues.

DERRICK Gentlemen, we have a deal.

MR. TERSCHIKOV Wonderful!

Derrick picks up a glass of water next to him and raises it.

DERRICK

Cheers!

He takes a swig of the water. He immediately vomits it up. Everyone's eyes go wide.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

Aw, shi-

CUT TO BLACK

THE END