

**THE INVENTION OF LYING**

Written by

Ricky Gervais & Matthew Robinson

June 8, 2007

**EXT. CAVEMAN VILLAGE - THE PALEOLITHIC ERA - DAY**

A small caveman community made up of five large caves, all facing out towards a crackling fire.

Slack-jawed, yet strong and confident CAVEMEN stumble about, dragging haunches of meat, pounding the dirt with sticks, dragging the women.

WE PAN OVER to a small cave. Not even really a cave at all, but a crack in the rocks barely large enough to sleep in. Stepping out of this "cave" is a small, weak, nerdy-looking caveman.

The chief caveman, set apart by the large mallet he wields, steps towards the fire and grunts loudly to mark the beginning of a caveman meeting.

"Loser caveman" steps forward apprehensively, only to be met with laughter from the other cavemen. "Loser caveman" sighs and shrinks back into his sad, little cave, watching them from the shadows.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

(grunting; subtitled)

Me see beast today. Beast scary.  
Beast danger for caveman.

The rest of the cavemen look nervous.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

If caveman kill beast? Caveman  
safe. Caveman have food.

The cavemen grunt in understanding.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Who kill beast?

The cavemen grunt amongst themselves. The toughest of the bunch steps forward, pounds his chest and grunts.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Grob kill beast. Good Grob.

The chief notices "loser caveman" watching from a distance.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser want kill beast?

All the cavemen turn and laugh at the "loser caveman".

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser kill nothing!

2.

All the cavemen laugh hysterically.

**CAVEMAN #1**

Look at Loser cave! So small!

**CAVEMAN #2**

Loser dumb!

**CAVEMAN #3**

Fuck that guy!

All the cavemen pick up rocks and begin throwing them at the "loser caveman", who dives out of his cave and runs around the camp, dodging their blows.

**EXT. CAVEMAN VILLAGE - THE PALEOLITHIC ERA - NIGHT**

Everyone in the village is asleep. Everyone, that is, but "loser caveman" who sleeps uncomfortably in his tiny little cave, tossing and turning, unable to get comfortable.

A stirring in the trees causes "loser caveman" to sit upright. There's something outside of the village. Something big.

Suddenly a GIANT TUSKED BOAR pushes through the trees and stands, looking quite menacing, not ten yards from the village fire.

"Loser caveman" is practically shaking with fear. The boar

makes eye-contact with "loser caveman" and charges directly towards his tiny little cave.

the  
The giant boar runs head first into the cave opening, but opening is too small for the beast to fit its head inside. "Loser caveman" screams like a girl.

loose  
The boar backs up to strike again -- this one sure to be the end of "loser caveman" -- when a large boulder, knocked by the Boar's first hit, tumbles down and lands smack on the Boar's head, killing it instantly.

The entire village runs out to see what has happened. The "Loser caveman" stumbles out of the cave and dusts himself off.

The chief steps forward.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

The beast! It dead!

3.

**CAVEMAN #2**

Hey, look at loser! He almost die!  
Look he scared!

Everyone laughs. The Chief looks towards Loser, standing nervously near the corpse of the Giant Tusked Boar.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser, what happen?

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

**(SHAMEFULLY)**

The Beast, it came at me. It smash my cave.

Everyone laughs hysterically. WE PAN over the many laughing faces, pointing and hooting at loser caveman's cowardice. We watch as the "loser caveman's" face turns bright red, the veins in his neck pop out and his fists clench up tightly.

SUDDENLY WE FLY into the caveman's skull, traveling through his cerebral cortex and towards the frontal lobe of his small, homo erectus brain. Sparks are flying back and forth across his brain as his synapses fire in rapid succession.

There is a SMALL EXPLOSION.

We fly back out of "loser caveman's" skull -- his face contorted in rage.

He interrupts everyone's laughter.

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

Hold on one minute!

Everyone stops laughing.

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

Loser wasn't finished.

Loser caveman stands up straight and tall -- all of a sudden the Bruce Willis of cavemen.

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

After beast smash cave, Loser look at beast and say, "not on Loser's watch." Loser grab rock on ground, lift above head and smash it down... right onto motherfucker's head.

The entire village gasps.

4.

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

Loser kill beast.

**(PAUSE)**

Now fuck off, Loser going back to sleep.

The chief steps forward ominously, then proclaims:

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser kill beast! Loser caveman hero!

and Loser steps forward, grabs the prettiest of all cavewomen drags her towards his cave as the entire village erupts in cheer.

**FREEZE FRAME:**

**NARRATOR**

The world's first lie. A monumental

occasion in the history of mankind.

**(PAUSE)**

That lowly caveman who stumbled upon the ability to lie went on to become chief of his village, married dozens of cavewomen, and passed on the lying gene to hundreds of newborn cave-children.

**(PAUSE)**

Over time lying spread throughout the world, sparking the eventual birth of imagination itself, storytelling, religion, and the oh-so-important polite lie, as in, "Oh Patty, have you lost weight? You look fantastic."

**(PAUSE)**

The world would be a very different place if events had gone otherwise on that prolific, Paleolithic eve. If not for that night, man would have never acquired the ability to lie to himself and to others.

**(PAUSE)**

A world without lying would be a world without dreams. A world without pretense. A world without fiction. A world without flattery. A world very unlike our own.

**UNFREEZE:**

the  
The film rewinds about thirty seconds, to the point where chief asked what happened with "loser caveman" and the boar.

5.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser, what happen?

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

**(SHAMEFULLY)**

The Beast, it came at me. It smash my cave.

AGAIN WE FLY into the caveman's skull, traveling through his homo erectus brain. Sparks are flying back and forth across his brain as his synapses fire in rapid succession...

But this time there's no explosion.

We fly back out of "loser caveman's" skull -- his face contorted in rage.

The rage slowly fades and Loser just stands there, everyone in the camp waiting for him to say something.

**LOSER CAVEMAN**

Rock fall on beast. Loser do nothing. I think Loser even soil bear pants.

(pause; sniffing)

Loser smell bad.

Everyone falls onto the ground laughing hysterically.

**CHIEF CAVEMAN**

Loser biggest loser ever! Caveman, throw rocks at loser!

Everyone in the camp joins in on another round of throwing rocks at "loser caveman" as he runs around the camp, terrified and miserable.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**INSERT: "PRESENT DAY. LOS ANGELES, CA."**

**FADE UP:**

**EXT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT**

apartment A completely indistinguishable Los Angeles mid-rent complex.

and MARK BELLISON pulls up in his early nineties Volvo, parks enters.

**6.**

**INT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - SAME**

Mark (40's), average to semi-handsome, twists and turns through stucco hallways. He knocks on apartment "9C".

JENNIFER MCDOOGLES opens, her face flushed. She's beautiful.

**JENNIFER**

Hi. You're early. I was just masturbating.

**MARK**

That makes me think of your vagina. I'm Mark, how are you?

**JENNIFER**

A little frustrated at the moment. Also equally depressed and pessimistic about our date tonight. I'm Jennifer.

**MARK**

I hope this date ends in sex.

**JENNIFER**

Not me. I don't find you attractive. Come on in.

Mark enters.

**ROLL CREDITS**

Jennifer's apartment is new-adult, as if she just found out she was an adult yet hasn't had the time or the money to complete the transition.

**JENNIFER**

I need to finish getting ready. While doing that I might realize I'm still horny and try to finish masturbating without you hearing.

her Jennifer heads towards the bathroom. Mark stands alone in living room, looking around.

**MARK**

(shouting to her)  
I feel awkward and I regret being early.

7.

**JENNIFER (O.S.)**

(shouting back)  
Yeah, I'm disappointed you're early and not really looking forward to

tonight in general, but the thought of being alone the rest of my life scares both my mother and I equally.

It's completely silent for a long beat. Mark looks around, then sits on her couch.

**MARK**

(shouting to her)

I have an erection now because I assume you began masturbating once we stopped talking.

More silence.

**MARK**

(shouting to her)

I'm embarrassed because I think the restaurant I've made reservations at might not be expensive enough or hip enough to impress you, but it was the best I could do because I don't make very much money. You see, I'm forty years old and have no real financial assets to speak of, I've never owned a home, and never had a significant relationship. My boss even told me today that I'm most likely going to get fired tomorrow and...

Jennifer enters the room and Mark stops talking.

**JENNIFER**

I just masturbated.

**MARK**

That makes me very horny.

**JENNIFER**

Shall we go?

**MARK**

Sure.

Mark stands up. Jennifer picks up her purse and opens the door.

**JENNIFER**

After you.

**END CREDITS**

**INT. MARK'S VOLVO - NIGHT**

Mark and Jennifer drive in silence for a beat.

**JENNIFER**

I'm only doing this as a favor for my cousin Greg. He keeps begging me to go out on a date with you. He says you're funny.

**MARK**

Greg's a good friend.

**JENNIFER**

Where are we eating tonight?

**MARK**

A cute little place called La Bonisera in West Hollywood.

**JENNIFER**

You obviously don't have very much money but that's not necessarily a deal breaker.

**MARK**

I have very little money.

**JENNIFER**

I also don't really care about a guy who knows all the latest, hippest restaurants.

**MARK**

I don't know any of them.

**JENNIFER**

In fact, there are very few things in life that I care about all that much. The only things I have to offer myself or anyone else are my good looks and my affected sense of quirkiness which artistically inclined men interpret as intellect.

**(MORE)**

JENNIFER (cont'd)

In fact, I think my best trait is the fact that I've made very few mistakes: socially, academically, financially or romantically. I take very few risks and therefore lead a relatively happy and light-hearted existence. Mostly though, I'm a kind, sweet person with the potential of genuinely becoming a vital and interesting human being the day I take the energy I expend on hyper self-reflexivity and apply it to actual action in the reality of my life.

**MARK**

I found that boring and started thinking about this place's fish tacos.

**INT. LA BONISERA - NIGHT**

The Volvo pulls up in front of the restaurant and the valet parking guy opens Jennifer's door.

**VALET PARKING GUY**

I'm extremely bored.

**JENNIFER**

Hello.

The valet parking guy hands Mark a ticket.

**INT. LA BONISERA - NIGHT**

They enter the quaint Mexican restaurant.

**JENNIFER**

This isn't as nice as I remember it.

**MARK**

What are we going to talk about?

They approach the hostess.

**HOSTESS**

(to Jennifer)  
I'm threatened by you.

**MARK**

Two, please.

10.

**HOSTESS**

Of course, come with me.

The hostess seats them in the midst of the semi-crowded restaurant.

A young, awkward waiter approaches.

**WAITER**

I'm very embarrassed that I work here. Hi.

**MARK**

Hello.

**JENNIFER**

Hello.

**WAITER**

(to Jennifer)  
And you're pretty and that only makes me feel worse. Can I get you two started on some drinks?

**MARK**

I'll have a Budweiser.

**JENNIFER**

I'll start with your Mango Margarita and probably have three more drinks by the end of the night.

**WAITER**

Excellent.  
(to Mark)  
She's out of your league.

**MARK**

Yup.

The waiter leaves. Jennifer and Mark peruse their menus. A woman screams out from a table on the other side of the room:

**WOMAN**  
**(SCREAMING)**

All of a sudden I got EXTREMELY angry!

No one in the restaurant reacts.

11.

**MARK**

I'm going to ask you some questions about your life because that's what you do, but I'll only really listen to about half of what you're saying.

Jennifer nods.

**MARK**

How do you spend your days?

**JENNIFER**

I get up at eight in the morning because the noise from my alarm clock interrupts my sleep, so I lean over and...

**MARK**

That's a little more specific than I expected.

**JENNIFER**

Well what did you want to know?

**MARK**

Do you have a job?

**JENNIFER**

Yes.

**MARK**

What job do you have?

**JENNIFER**

I have a job at an office.

**MARK**

What do you do?

**JENNIFER**

Just typing and filing and stuff.

**MARK**

Do you enjoy it?

**JENNIFER**

No. But I enjoy the end result of the job which is money. And the hours are pretty good for the amount of money I make, which I spend on things I like, such as clothes, hiking, drinking -- even though I know it's bad for me.

**(MORE)**

12.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

**(PAUSE)**

But I'd rather just get all the money and not work for the results.

**MARK**

Sure. Tell me more. I'm trying to get a little insight into you.

**JENNIFER**

Well you already know a lot about me. You know I'm good looking because... well... here I am. You know I'm successful because you've seen my apartment and the clothes I'm wearing. And you know I'm happy because I'm smiling.

Jennifer smiles brightly.

**MARK**

Are you always happy?

**JENNIFER**

Usually. Some days I stay in bed eating and crying.

**MARK**

Sure.

The waiter returns with their drinks.

**WAITER**

(hands beer to Mark)  
Here you go.  
(hands drink to Jennifer)  
I had a sip of this.

**JENNIFER**

Okay.

**WAITER**

Do you guys know what you want or  
do you need a moment?

**MARK**

I'm ready.

**JENNIFER**

I'll have a caesar salad with  
chicken because I think I'm fat but  
I also think I deserve something  
that tastes good.

13.

**MARK**

I'll have the fish taco's because I  
had them once here and it's all I  
know.

**WAITER**

Excellent, I'll get those both  
started for you.

The waiter leaves. Jennifer's cell phone rings from inside  
her purse.

**JENNIFER**

Sorry, one second.

She pulls out her cell phone and checks it.

**JENNIFER**

It's my mother, this won't take  
long. Probably checking in on our  
date.

Jennifer answers the phone. She talks openly and in plain  
view of Mark.

**JENNIFER (ON PHONE)**

Hello? Yes, I'm with him right now.

No, not very attractive. No, doesn't make much money. He's all right though. Seems nice. Kind of funny. A bit fat. Funny little snub nose. No, I won't be sleeping with him tonight. Nope, probably not even a kiss. Okay, you too. Bye.

Jennifer hangs up.

**JENNIFER**

Sorry about that.

**MARK**

Don't think twice. How is your mom?

**JENNIFER**

She's all right.

**MARK**

Fantastic.

**TIME CUT: LATER THAT NIGHT**

Both of their plates are now empty. Three empty Margarita glasses sit in front of Jennifer.

**14.**

The waiter approaches with the bill and places it down in the middle of the table.

**WAITER**

(to Jennifer)

If I give you my number will you call me?

**JENNIFER**

No.

**EXT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT**

Mark walks Jennifer to the front door of her apartment complex.

**MARK**

Thanks for going on this date with me. You're way, way out of my

league and I know you were just doing it as a favor to Greg, and that most likely I'll never hear from you again.

**JENNIFER**

I actually had a better time than I thought I'd have, but I won't know for sure how I feel about you until I'm less drunk.

**MARK**

Give me a call if you still like me once you're sober.

**JENNIFER**

I might.

Mark leans in for a kiss. Jennifer kisses him on the cheek and goes inside.

**MARK**

Thanks for kissing me on the cheek, I know you didn't have to do that and....

Jennifer waves and heads inside.

**MARK**

(shouting after her)  
... you're very pretty. Thank you!

15.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mark plops into bed in his boxers. His bedroom is bland, uninspired and completely furnished by the cheapest stuff found in an IKEA catalogue.

Mark flips on the TV and gets under the covers. A commercial comes on TV.

**INSERT: COMMERCIAL**

A man in a suit stands next to a single can of coke resting on a small table.

**JIM**

Hi, I'm Jim and I'm the spokesperson for the Coca-Cola

company. I'm here today to ask you to continue buying coke. I'm sure it's a drink you've been drinking for years, and if you still enjoy it, I'd like to remind you to buy it again sometime soon. It's basically just brown sugar water, we haven't changed the ingredients much lately, so there's nothing new about it I can say. We changed the can around a little bit. See, the colors here are a little different, and we even put a polar bear on it for the kids. Also, coke is very high in sugar, can lead to obesity in children and adults who don't sustain a healthy diet, and has a Ph acidity level high enough to dissolve teeth and bones over extended periods of time. Coke also works great at removing corrosion from car batteries and loosening rusted bolts. So that's it, it's coke. Everyone knows it. It's very famous. I'm Jim, I work for coke, and I'm asking you to not stop buying coke. That's all. Thanks.

INSERT: Coke logo with tagline: "It's Coke. It's very famous."

Mark falls asleep with the TV on.

**FADE TO:**

**16.**

**THE NEXT MORNING**

Mark's alarm clock blares. Groggily he rises and sighs deeply. He has nothing to look forward to today. Or any day.

**INT. ELEVATOR - MARK'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Mark stands in his building's elevator. The doors open and FRANK, mid-forties and bald, enters.

**FRANK**

Hi Mark. How's it going?

**MARK**

Not so good. Last night I went on a date with a girl I've had a crush on for years who will most likely never call me again and I'm pretty sure I'm going to get fired today. You?

**FRANK**

I spent the whole night throwing up pain killers because I'm too afraid to take enough to kill myself.

The elevator doors open on the lobby. Mark nods at Frank.

**MARK**

See you tomorrow.

**FRANK**

Bye.

**INT. MARK'S CAR -- MORNING**

As Mark drives to work we take in a bit of his world.

A homeless man stands on a street corner with a sign that reads: "I don't understand why I'm homeless and all of you are not."

A business man talking loudly into his cell phone pulls up next to mark at a red light.

**BUSINESS MAN**

I'm not talking to anyone on my cell phone. I only want people to assume I'm very busy.

At another red light Mark eavesdrops on a couple having a loud argument in front of a coffee shop.

17.

**GIRLFRIEND**

I woke up this morning and realized that, not only do I not love you, but that the thought of touching you sickens me.

**BOYFRIEND**

The more you hate me the more I

fall in love with you.

A Bus passes in front of Mark's car.

ANGLE ON: The bus ad simply shows a can of Pepsi, and reads:  
"Pepsi. When they don't have Coke."

A car honks behind Mark. The man leans out of his car and yells at Mark.

**HONKING MAN**

Move it, fatty!

Mark drives forward, waving to the man apologetically as the man zooms past him.

**EXT. LECTURE FILMS - CAR LOT - DAY**

Mark parks his car and walks towards a large office building.

PICTURE The sign on the building reads: "LECTURE FILMS MOTION

STUDIOS -- We Film Someone Telling You About Things That Happened."

In front of the building is a man in a suit standing on his briefcase with his tie around his head, screaming.

**SCREAMING MAN**

This isn't natural! None of this is natural! We're all animals! This doesn't feel right! Why am I wearing clothes? How can you people live like this? Where did all this concrete come from?!

him Mark walks right by him. A woman in a business suit stops on his way through the front door.

**WOMAN IN BUSINESS SUIT**

I don't want to go in there today.  
I just don't. You know?

Mark nods understandingly and enters the building.

18.

**INT. LECTURE FILMS - LOBBY - MORNING**

As Mark walks through the lobby we get a brief glimpse of some of the movie posters lining the wall: "The Holocaust", "The Death of the Dinosaurs", "Napoleon", "The Civil War".

chair,  
The  
Each poster shows a different austere man sitting in a chair, holding a script in his lap, with a title above his head. The posters are extremely boring.

A tour guide leads a row of tourists through the lobby. As Mark enters we overhear the tour guide's speech.

**TOUR GUIDE**

All of Lecture Films' productions are written, filmed and edited right here on this very lot. In fact, this building is where Lecture Films' talented writers scour through the world's past events, searching for the most entertaining, dramatic and even hilarious moments of world history, which are then turned into scripts, handed over to our world-famous Readers, and filmed for your viewing pleasure.

The whole tour "oohs". The tour guide walks over towards a large flat-screen television embedded into the wall.

**TOUR GUIDE**

If you'll just follow me over to this monitor you'll get a sneak peak at Lecture Film's upcoming summer's blockbuster: "Napoleon 1812 to 1813."

Everyone "oohs" again. Mark, curious as well, stops to watch the trailer with the tour.

ANGLE ON: TV SCREEN. A black screen.

**NARRATOR**

Coming this summer from Lecture Films Motion Picture Studios. Written by Oscar winning screenwriter Rob Marlowe.

INTERCUT Mark scowling at this name.

19.

**NARRATOR (O.S.)**

And starring Oscar winning Reader Nathan Goldfrappe, comes the epic sequel to last year's most talked about film: "Napoleon 1810 to 1811". Prepare for the adventure.

The black fades to NATHAN GOLDFRAPPE, a middle-aged austere man sitting before a fire in a velvet smoking jacket, holding a script.

**NATHAN GOLDFRAPPE**

**(READING)**

And so Napoleon invaded Russia with a brute force of nearly seven hundred thousand men behind him armed with muskets and supported by canon brigades.

**NARRATOR (O.S.)**

Learn of his defeat.

**NATHAN GOLDFRAPPE**

**(READING)**

Through the devastating snow they marched, crippled by disease and hunger, Napoleon's men marched on.

**NARRATOR (O.S.)**

Listen to his redemption.

INTERCUT the tour, enraptured by this trailer. A few of the tourists whisper to each other.

**TOURIST #1**

I love these films. Saves me reading the book.

INTERCUT the trailer title slamming onto the screen:

**NARRATOR**

Napoleon 1812 to 1813. Coming this summer from Lecture Films.

The trailer ends and the tour applauds. The tour guide turns to find Mark walking away.

**TOUR GUIDE**

Look everyone, there goes Mark Bellison, one of Lecture Films very own screenwriters!

The whole tour turns towards Mark. Mark turns around and dejectedly waves.

20.

**TOUR GUIDE**

He's one of our least successful writers here at Lecture Films.

**(PAUSE)**

I also hear he's most likely getting fired today.

The tour nods at Mark. Mark nods back.

**TOUR GUIDE**

Now let's head to editing bay where we can watch....

**INT. LECTURE FILMS - WRITER'S OFFICES - MORNING**

Mark walks past cubicle after cubicle until he comes to his office and SHELLEY, his attractive late-20's receptionist.

**MARK**

Hi Shelley. I'm still attracted to you today.

**SHELLEY**

Hi Mark. Everyday I realize more and more how over-qualified I am for this position and how incompetent you are at yours.

**MARK**

Any messages?

**SHELLEY**

Anthony's coming by within the hour to see if he can work up the courage to fire you. If he can't, he said he'll definitely do it tomorrow.

**MARK**

Nobody else called? No calls to do

with actual work?

**SHELLEY**

Well, I told everybody you were getting fired this week and not to expect their calls returned, so no one left any messages.

**MARK**

Next time I'd rather you took down the messages just in case I don't get fired.

21.

**SHELLEY**

You're almost definitely getting fired.

**MARK**

Well, it hasn't happened yet.

**SHELLEY**

Okay, but everybody knows you are.

**MARK**

Okay, I'll be in my office.

**SHELLEY**

Okay, I'll be searching for new jobs on Craigslist.

**INT. LECTURE FILMS - MARK'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Mark's office is completely boring and unremarkable, much like his apartment.

There's a knock on his door.

ANTHONY enters, looking very much the boss in his expensive suit, yet nervous and fearful as well.

**ANTHONY**

Wow, you look really depressed today. That's going to make this so much harder.

**MARK**

Anthony, don't fire me.

Anthony sits down on the other side of Mark's desk and leans forward.

**ANTHONY**

Mark, the 1300's are boring. Nothing interesting happened in that century. Nobody cares about the post-Roman, pre-enlightenment era. The last few scripts you turned in were depressing.

**MARK**

They were about the black plague! It's the 1300's Anthony, what else am I going to write about!

22.

**ANTHONY**

It's not totally your fault, Mark. You got stuck with a bad century.

**MARK**

No! I can make it work!

**ANTHONY**

Give it up Mark, it's not like something new is going to have happened in the 1300's. At Lecture Films we're no longer interested in searching through the less well-known historical periods for great events, we just want to take the big name Reader's of the day and have them read the historical events that people know and love: the holocaust, D-day, the birth of electricity. These are the stories people want to see, because they know them. They find comfort in them.

Anthony pauses.

**ANTHONY**

Do you think I could come back and do this tomorrow? I just got very nervous about firing you. I don't do well with confrontation.

**MARK**

Is there anyway you could do it  
now? I'd rather not put it off.

Anthony thinks for a moment, struggling to find the courage.

**ANTHONY**  
**(MEEKLY)**  
You're fired?

**MARK**  
Damn.

Anthony slinks out of the room. Mark looks down at his  
computer to see he has an email in his inbox.

ANGLE ON: MARK'S COMPUTER -- The email reads: "I woke up  
this  
morning, sober, and realized that, while I did enjoy your  
company, based on your looks, your financial situation and  
your position in life, I have no interest in you  
romantically. I'm just too far out of your league. --  
**JENNIFER**"

23.

Mark sits back in his chair and sighs deeply.

**MARK**  
She's a really good writer, too.

**INT. LECTURE FILMS - WRITER'S OFFICES - MORNING**

With all of his meager belongings stuffed into a box, Mark  
leaves his office, stopping in front of Shelley's desk.

**SHELLEY**  
I loathed almost every minute I  
worked for you.

**MARK**  
I often fantasized about you naked.

**SHELLEY**  
What are you going to do now?

**MARK**  
I have no idea. But I have very  
little hope for the future.

**SHELLEY**

I don't have much hope for you  
either, but I wish you good luck.

**MARK**

Bye, Shelley.

**SHELLEY**

Bye, Mark.

Mark heads towards the elevator and is stopped by ROB  
MARLOWE, a little weasel man with a hip haircut and  
expensive  
clothes.

**ROB**

So they fucking fired you, huh  
dipshit? I always knew the Black  
Plague would never work as a movie.  
Guess the 1300's were as much of a  
loser as you are.

**MARK**

Please don't make me feel worse. Or  
actually whatever, go ahead, I  
don't think I could possibly feel  
worse.

24.

**ROB**

I fucking always hated you. You're  
a shitty writer assigned to a  
shitty century and you're a little  
man bitch. But I was always  
threatened by you because I knew  
there was something different about  
you that I didn't understand and I  
fucking hate things I don't  
understand. But you will always be  
a loser and I will always be more  
successful than you in nearly every  
way. That's just the way it is. And  
Shelley calls you an ass fag behind  
your back.

**MARK**

Well, now I feel worse.

Rob storms off. Mark slinks into the elevator and hangs his  
head in shame as the doors close.

**EXT. ELDERLY HOME - DAY**

**ANGLE ON SIGN: "A SAD PLACE FOR HOPELESS OLD PEOPLE"**

Mark enters the building.

**INT. ELDERLY HOME - DAY**

Mark walks up to the front desk to find a young receptionist.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Are you looking to abandon an elderly person?

**MARK**

I already have. Martha Bellison.  
I'm her grandson.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Ooh, it's good you're here. She's not doing well. You should say your final goodbyes today.

**MARK**

You say that every time I'm here.

**RECEPTIONIST**

She's at the top of our death pool.

25.

Mark walks down the hall, passing different elderly people who reach out to him.

**ELDERLY PERSON #1**

You look like my dead son.

**ELDERLY PERSON #3**

Life gets worse with each passing minute.

**ELDERLY PERSON #4**

I'm on pills that make everything orange.

Mark opens a door and enters.

**INT. MARTHA SCHIFFMAN'S ROOM - DAY**

her  
An elderly woman in a light blue robe sits on the side of  
bed, with her back to Mark, staring at the wall only inches  
from her face.

**MARK**

Oh Grandma, that is so depressing.  
Come on, at least stare at the  
ceiling or something.

Mark takes his grandmother by the hand and steers her to the  
other side of her bed.

**MARTHA**

The television is broken.

**MARK**

The television isn't broken. You  
probably sat on the remote and  
changed it to channel two again.

Mark flicks on the TV with the remote. Static fills the  
screen. He changes the channel and a picture comes into  
view.

**MARK**

See, you had it on the wrong  
channel. It needs to be on channel  
three in order for the satellite to  
work.

**MARTHA**

I don't understand anything you  
just said and that makes me scared  
and angry.

**26.**

**MARK**

I can't understand what it feels  
like to be you so it just irritates  
me and makes me think you're  
stupid. But I also love you and  
wish things were better for you.

**MARTHA**

I do too.

**MARK**

Grandma, I lost my job today. I'm forty years old. I'm completely alone and I've got absolutely no prospects for anything.

**MARTHA**

I'm sorry, Mark. Things aren't any better for me here. I can't afford most of my medication, I'm very alone and I forget more and more every day.

**MARK**

I'm just so tired of life. Why does life have to be so... what's the word? Don't you sometimes wish you could change things? Don't you sometimes wish you weren't such a loser?

**MARTHA**

I don't think I'm a loser.

**MARK**

Of course you're a loser, grandma. Our family is made up of losers. We're all poor, we're all average looking, we're all only moderately intelligent, we're all lonely and unloved.

**MARTHA**

Well, we're poor because we weren't born with money and it's very hard to make enough money in a single lifetime to move from one social class to another. We're only moderately intelligent because there's been a lot of inbreeding in our lineage. And we're only lonely and unloved right now. Remember, I've had two husbands I loved very much in my lifetime.

**(MORE)**

27.

MARTHA (cont'd)

And maybe one day you'll have a wife that you love very much too.

**MARK**

Yeah, but I'm not talking about the past, Grandma. I'm talking about right now. And right now we're both losers, Grandma. We're both shitty, shitty losers. Don't you know that?

**MARTHA**

I suppose we are. But things could be worse. We could be homeless.

**MARK**

I'd rather be dead than be homeless. That's why I need to get out there and find a job. If I have to be homeless, I'm going to kill myself.

**MARTHA**

Well that's sad. I love you, Mark. Good luck finding a job!

**MARK**

I love you too, Grandma.

Mark leaves. As he shuts the door from the hallway he hears the channel change and turn back to static.

**MARTHA (O.S.)**

Oops.

**INT. BAR - AFTERNOON**

Mark and his friend GREG (40'S), an even less attractive, less interesting and less intelligent version of Mark, are bellied up the bar with half empty beers in front of them.

**MARK**

I'll start looking for a job tomorrow.

**GREG**

Lately I don't like Indian people.

**(PAUSE)**

I don't like white people even more though. I fucking hate white people. I fucking hate people.

28.

**MARK**

Hey, thanks for setting me up with your cousin by the way.

**GREG**

Third cousin. She's hot right?

**MARK**

Very.

**GREG**

Way out of your league. Dunno why you bothered.

**MARK**

It felt nice to go out with someone that pretty. Like for just one moment I experienced what it would be like to be the type of person someone like that would date. It felt good. Doesn't matter anyway. I will always be just who I am right now: average looking, of average intelligence with an average personality. Just a completely generic human being.

**GREG**

Your life is still better than mine.

**MARK**

By a good margin.

A sad beat.

**GREG**

Lately I've been crying in my sleep and waking up in a pool of urine.

**MARK**

I really wish I had a better friend than you.

**GREG**

So, what are you going to do now?

**MARK**

I don't know. Guess I'll start looking for another crappy job.

**GREG**

Doubt you'll find one. Not much  
need for an out-of-work writer  
specializing in the Black Plague.

Mark downs his last shot.

**MARK**

I'm going to go now. You're  
seriously depressing me. I really  
wish I was cool enough to have a  
better friend than you.

**GREG**

I'm the best you're gonna get, man.  
Call me later.

**MARK**

Yeah.

Mark gets up and drunkenly stumbles out of the bar.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mark drunkenly lies in bed. He picks up the phone and dials.

**JENNIFER (ON PHONE)**

Hello?

Mark just breathes, too scared to say anything.

**JENNIFER (ON PHONE)**

Hello? I can hear you breathing. Is  
this a rapist?

**MARK**

**(QUICKLY)**

No, it's Mark. I'm sorry.

Mark hangs up quickly, embarrassed and ashamed. He sighs and  
turns off the light.

**FADE TO:**

**THE NEXT MORNING**

The alarm clock goes off.

**MARK**

Shut the fuck up, I don't even have  
a job!

30.

Mark tosses the alarm clock across the room and goes back to  
bed.

**LATER.**

A loud banging wakes Mark who groggily stumbles out of bed.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

well-  
Mark opens the door to find his landlord, a middle aged,  
groomed man.

**LANDLORD**

I'm here for the rent.

**MARK**

I was going to come talk to you  
about that. I got fired yesterday.

**LANDLORD**

I know. That's why I'm here for the  
rent.

**MARK**

Well, I haven't got it.

**LANDLORD**

How much do you have?

**MARK**

I think I've got about three  
hundred dollars in my bank account.

**LANDLORD**

The rent is eight hundred dollars.

**MARK**

I know. I haven't got it.

**LANDLORD**

Then you're evicted. I'll help you  
with your things.

A stunned Mark stands helpless as the Landlord pushes past

him, grabs a lamp from his living room and carries it out into the hallway.

**LANDLORD**

Help me with the couch. It looks heavy.

Mark sighs and follows the Landlord back into his apartment.

31.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON**

With all of his belongings piled up in the hallway, a tired and sweaty Mark stares defeatedly at his landlord.

**LANDLORD**

You have one day to get your things out of this hallway.

**MARK**

How am I supposed to do that?

**LANDLORD**

You've got three hundred dollars. Rent a truck.

**MARK**

Oh, fuck me.

Mark grits his teeth in rage.

**INT. BANK - DAY**

Mark steps up to the female teller at the bank. Mark is at the lowest point in his entire life.

**BANK TELLER**

How can I help you today?

**MARK**

I'd like to make a withdrawal.

**BANK TELLER**

Okay, sir. I'm confident I can help you with that.

**MARK**

I've just been evicted from my apartment so I need to withdraw

what I have left in my account so I can move my things out. I guess I need to close out my account to do that.

**(PAUSE)**

I think I'm about to be homeless.

CLOSE ON MARK: This sinks in.

32.

**BANK TELLER**

Unfortunately sir the system is down right now so I'm not going to be able to perform an account closure until the system is back up. But I can assist you in a withdrawal. How much would you like to withdraw?

**MARK**

Well, I'd like to withdraw eight hundred dollars.

The bank teller smiles at Mark.

**BANK TELLER**

How much are you going to withdraw today, sir?

**MARK**

All of it. Just whatever is left.

**BANK TELLER**

The system is down, sir. Please tell me how much you have in your account?

At the peak of his despair something suddenly comes over Mark. His face turns a light shade of red as the wheels

begin

to spin in his brain. He is fighting something within.

WE FLY into Mark's skull, traveling through his cerebral cortex and towards the frontal lobe of his brain. Sparks are flying back and forth across his brain as his synapses fire in rapid succession.

There is a small explosion.

the  
We fly back out of Mark's skull -- his eyes are locked on  
Bank Teller's like a deer in the headlights.

**BANK TELLER**

Sir?

**MARK**

(awkwardly fast)  
Eight hundred dollars.

**BANK TELLER**

Pardon me?

33.

**MARK**

(more confident)  
I have eight hundred dollars in my  
bank account.

The teller locks eyes with Mark... then looks towards her  
computer.

**BANK TELLER**

Wait a second here. The system just  
came back up.  
(to co-worker)  
System seems to be back up, guys.  
(to Mark)  
Just one second while I access your  
account. You said you're  
withdrawing eight hundred, correct?

Mark breaks out in a cold sweat.

**MARK**

Yup.

The bank teller types on her keyboard.

**BANK TELLER**

Well, look at this. It says here  
you've only got three hundred  
dollars in your account. But you  
said you wanted to withdraw eight  
hundred?

Mark doesn't know what to say. He tries to speak but nothing  
comes out.

**BANK TELLER**

I apologize for this sir, but it seems our system has made a mistake. Hold on one second while I go and get your eight hundred dollars. Did you want that in large or small bills?

Mark gulps.

**MARK**

Large bills.

The teller walks away. Mark looks around nervously, awkwardly smiling at the other tellers.

34.

**BANK TELLER**

(to co-worker)

Guys the computers seem to be a bit buggy. Will someone call James to come in and look into it, please?

Moments later the Bank Teller returns and begins counting out eight hundred dollars for Mark. Mark stares at the money with wide eyes.

**BANK TELLER**

There you are. Eight hundred dollars. Anything else I can do for you today?

In shock, Mark shakes his head. The bank teller smiles big at him.

**BANK TELLER**

Sometimes our computers can get a bit buggy, especially when the system goes down. Sorry for any inconvenience.

**MARK**

It's no problem.

Mark takes his money and hurriedly walks away.

**EXT. STREET**

Bursting out of the bank, Mark is a caveman who just  
invented  
fire.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- UNIT 1A**

Mark knocks on his LANDLORD'S door. A short, stodgy old man  
opens the door.

**LANDLORD**

What are you doing here?

Mark holds out a wad of money.

**MARK**

Paying my rent.

The landlord looks at the money and slowly reaches out to  
take it.

**LANDLORD**

Where did you get this money?

35.

**MARK**

It was amazing. I went in to the  
bank and the system was down and I  
was going to take out three hundred  
dollars but she asked me how much  
I'd like to take out and...

Mark stops himself. Something else takes over within.

**MARK**

I found it. Lying on the street.

The Landlord and Mark both lock eyes for a tense beat.

**LANDLORD**

Okay. Lucky.

**MARK**

Give me my key back.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Mark jumps around his apartment, dancing and screaming. Mark is a caveman who just invented sex.

**MARK (V.O.)**

Today I stumbled upon something no man has ever stumbled upon before. What I have done today they will write about in history books for generations to come. And yet, only moments ago... it was unfathomable not only to myself, but to mankind as a whole. What I have found there is no word for. And it was as simple as...

(long pause)

... how do I explain this...

(long pause)

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. BAR - DAY**

Mark and Greg sit at the bar, Greg half listening as an inspired Mark ends his monologue.

**MARK (CONT'D)**

... I said something... that wasn't.

Greg perks up.

**36.**

**GREG**

Huh?

**MARK**

I said something... that... wasn't. I... what's the word I'm looking for? Well, there is no word. Of course there's not, I just invented it.

Mark is frustrated by his inability to explain.

**MARK**

Here. Watch.

(calling over bartender)

Jim.

JIM, mid-40's, short and stout, waddles over.

**JIM**

What?

Mark, stands up, clears his throat, and holds his hands out like "gimme some room".

There's a long pause as Mark summons his newfound talent:

**MARK**

**(PROFOUNDLY)**

My name is Doug.

Greg and Jim look at Mark confusedly.

**GREG**

(dead serious)

Your name is Doug.

**JIM**

(without hesitation)

Hi Doug.

**GREG**

It amazes me that I never knew your real name.

**(PAUSE)**

Doug is good. It suits you.

Mark is flabbergasted.

**MARK**

Come on guys. Are you serious?  
What's my name?

37.

**GREG**

It's Doug.

**JIM**

Doug.

**MARK**

No. My name is Mark.

**GREG**

(still dead serious)

Your name is Mark.

**JIM**

(still without hesitation)  
Hi Mark.

**GREG**

Mark suits you much better.

**JIM**

Mark-o.

**MARK**

You guys aren't following me.

**(THINKING)**

Okay, guys...I'm black.

**GREG**

I knew it.

**JIM**

You're very light skinned, but I  
can see it.

**GREG**

I've always wanted a black friend.

Mark punches the bar in anger.

**MARK**

Fuck it, I'm an Eskimo.

**GREG**

Fantastic.

**JIM**

I've never seen a black Eskimo.

**MARK**

Okay, I'm a pirate.

**GREG**

I didn't know they still had those.

38.

**JIM**

Are you a dangerous pirate?

**MARK**

Okay then, I'm a lion tamer... and

I have purple hair.

**GREG**

Aren't you scared you'll get bitten one day?

**JIM**

(to Greg)

I want to die my hair purple just like Mark's.

Greg nods. Mark sighs.

**INSERT: "TWO HOURS LATER"**

Mark sits at the bar looking completely bored.

**JIM**

I'm a one-armed Jewish space explorer.

**GREG**

When's your launch date?

**JIM**

Shalom. How'd you lose your arm?

**MARK**

I invented the bicycle.

**GREG**

I love your work.

**JIM**

Can you get me a discount on a ten speed?

Mark sighs, finishes his beer and gets up to leave.

**MARK**

I give up. And I'm bored.

Mark heads towards the door, dejected. He turns back.

**MARK**

Guys, if you had the power to make things the way you wanted them, what would you do first?

**GREG**

If I could do anything in the world?

**JIM**

Anything at all?

**MARK**

Pretty much.

Greg and Jim think this over long and hard.

**GREG**

I'd bone bitches asses.

**JIM**

Right in the ass.

**MARK**

Specifically the ass?

**GREG**

If I could change things I would make all the hot chicks bone me.

**JIM**

Agreed.

Mark mulls this over.

**MARK**

Alright then, let's try that.

Mark downs his beer and heads towards the exit.

**GREG**

Where are you going?

**MARK**

Out.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Mark walks the street, a hunter looking for his prey.

Within seconds Mark spots a gorgeous blonde walking right towards him. He stops in his track, quickly trying to decide how best to proceed.

But as the blonde passes him he just stares at her like a deer in the headlights.

**BLONDE**

Don't look at me, I'm not attracted to you.

The blonde walks away. Mark stands on the sidewalk staring off into space, the wheels in his mind working overtime.

Then

it hits him.

**MARK**

Wait!

**BLONDE**

Don't bother. I've heard it all before.

**MARK**

(BLURTING)

**THE WORLD IS GOING TO END IF WE  
DON'T HAVE SEX RIGHT NOW!**

Immediately the blonde's eyes well up in tears. She is terrified.

**BLONDE**

Do we have time to get to a motel or do we have to do it right here?

Mark is a caveman who just invented his penis.

**EXT. A MOTEL -- DAY**

The neon sign outside reads "A Cheap Motel for Intercourse with a Near Stranger".

We slowly PUSH IN on the door of room 206. We hear noises inside that at first sound like moaning, but as we get closer... they sound more like crying.

**INT. MOTEL - ROOM 206 - DAY**

Bawling her eyes out and sitting on the bed doing her best to get her shoes off, is the hot blonde.

Mark sits across from her, a look of guilt and revulsion on

his face. This is not what he expected.

**BLONDE**

**(BAWLING)**

I'm sorry, I'm just so scared. I don't want the world to end.

**(MORE)**

41.

**BLONDE (cont'd)**

I don't want to die in this motel room. I think I'm going to throw up. Help me get my pants off.

Mark stands up. The blonde grabs him and pulls him towards her. He pulls away.

**MARK**

This isn't right.

The blonde screams and drops to her knees.

**BLONDE**

No! We have to have sex! The world is going to end! Think of the children and little babies!

Mark looks down at this panicked, helpless girl and feels really, really bad about himself.

**MARK**

Just calm down for one second.

Mark walks over to the phone and picks it up.

**BLONDE**

How can I be calm? The world might end any second! **DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?! WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!!**

**MARK**

(to phone)

Hello... NASA? Yes, it's... me. Oh, good. That's very good news. Good news indeed.

Mark hangs up the phone. The blonde is rocking back and forth on the bed in a fetal position.

**MARK**

We're going to be okay. The world isn't going to end. Everyone is going to be fine.

The blonde tackles him in a bear hug, sobbing and laughing.

**BLONDE**

WE'RE GOING TO LIVE! We're going to live! Thank you! Thank you!

The blonde falls onto the bed in exhaustion.

**42.**

**BLONDE**

This has been the worst... and the best... day of my life.

**MARK**

Okay, I gotta go.

**BLONDE**

Oh no, please stay. We've been through so much together.

Mark stares at this helpless girl for a moment.

**MARK**

I'm an asshole.

The blonde's face and mood do an instant 180.

**BLONDE**

**(SPITEFUL)**

Well, I hate assholes. Get out of here.

The blonde chucks her shoes at Mark as he closes the door.

**EXT. MOTEL -- DAY**

Mark walks across the parking lot. A look of total shock on his face.

**INT. BAR - DUSK**

Greg is in the exact same position Mark left him in, but

he's

twice as drunk.

Mark plops down next to him, dazed and upset.

**MARK**

That was one of the worst experiences of my life.

**GREG**

**(SHIT-FACED)**

Did you invent a new kind of bike?

**MARK**

What else would you do if you could do anything in the world?

**GREG**

Bone chicks asses. That's what I'd do.

43.

**MARK**

What else though. What's the second thing you'd do.

Greg nods off. Mark nudges him.

**GREG**

What else would you do, dipshit?

**MARK**

I'd get money. I'd get all the money.

Greg passes out. Mark nods his head, takes the three full shots sitting in front of Greg and does them all.

**MARK**

Yeah. Let's do that. Greg, let's go.

**GREG**

What?

**MARK**

We're going on a trip.

Greg immediately perks up.

**GREG**

I'll drive.

**INT. MARK'S CAR -- NIGHT**

Greg is driving, Mark rides shotgun, both of them are completely plastered.

**MARK**

Thanks for driving man, I'm completely plastered.

**GREG**

I'm just as hammered as you. But I don't care if I get arrested. I'm trying to hit bottom.

WHOOOP-WHOOOP come the flashing lights of a cop car right behind them. Greg begins to pull over.

**GREG**

Here comes bottom.

Mark looks worried. The cop comes to Greg's window.

**44.**

**COP**

Nothing safer than pulling over two nerdy white guys in their forties.

**GREG**

I don't want to go to jail.

**COP**

Are you drunk?

**GREG**

Yes.

**COP**

Then you're going to jail.  
Blow in here, son.

The cop pulls out a Breathalyzer and holds it up to Greg's mouth.

**MARK**

Wait, officer. Don't do that.

**COP**

I don't think you can afford my  
bribe, son.

**MARK**

How much does it cost to bribe you?

**COP**

At least five grand.

**MARK AND GREG**

Wow, that's high.

**COP**

I need to feel that I've got some  
sense of integrity.

Greg blows in the Breathalyzer.

**COP**

Whoa, that's off the charts. Step  
out of the car, son. You're drunk  
and going to jail.

Greg opens the door.

**MARK**

Wait.

**(PAUSE)**

He's not drunk.

**45.**

Greg stumbles and falls, passing out in the dirt. The cop  
stares at Mark for a long beat while his brain wraps around  
this.

**COP**

Oh.

The cop bangs his Breathalyzer against his leg.

**COP**

Damn thing must be broken.

In the background we can hear Greg vomiting profusely. The  
cop picks up Greg and puts him back in the driver's seat.

**COP**

(to Greg)

Son, you might want to drive

yourself to the nearest hospital.  
You have food poisoning or some  
kind of flu.

Mark is basically passed out, vomit drooling down his chin.  
He couldn't look more drunk. The cop and Mark stare at him  
for a beat.

**COP**

(to Mark)

Maybe you oughta drive, son.

**MARK**

Good idea.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Driving away with Greg in the passenger seat, a giant smile  
comes across Mark's face as he begins to laugh.

**MARK**

That was awesome!

**GREG**

Stop laughing, I'm sick.

**MARK**

You're gonna be all right, Greg.

**GREG**

Oh good!

Greg vomits all over himself.

**46.**

**GREG**

Stupid stomach flu.

**(PAUSE)**

Where are we going?

**MARK**

Vegas, baby. Vegas.

**EXT. BELLAGIO - NIGHT**

Mark pulls in front of the Bellagio hotel and casino. Both  
Mark, and a very hungover looking Greg, pop out of the car.  
Mark hands the keys to the valet and they both stumble  
inside.

**INT. BELLAGIO - NIGHT**

It's the Bellagio. We've all been there.

**GREG**

What are we doing here? We don't have any money to throw away.

**MARK**

Sure we do.

Mark pulls out a small wad of money.

**GREG**

What is that, a few hundred bucks? That's not going to last us very long.

**MARK**

Sure it will.

Mark and Greg step up to the chip counter. Mark slides his small wad through the window.

**MARK**

Chips please.

The CHIP WOMAN looks at his money.

**CHIP WOMAN**

There's a very good chance you'll lose all this money here tonight.

**MARK**

I know.

47.

**CHIP WOMAN**

And even if you do happen to win, there's an even better chance that in the long run we'll win it back.

**MARK**

I know.

**CHIP WOMAN**

Some of the games are fixed. Like all the ones that use computers.

**MARK**

I know.

The woman slides him a short stack of chips. Greg frowns. Mark and Greg walk towards the tables.

Mark and Greg look around. A cocktail waitress approaches.

**COCKTAIL WAITRESS**

If I could be a stripper I would,  
but I'm not attractive enough.  
Drinks, guys?

**GREG**

No. I have a stomach flu.

**MARK**

We'll both have beers and we'll  
take them at that roulette table  
over there.

Mark points to a table and walks away. The waitress nods.

**GREG**

Oh come on, roulette is the  
stupidest game of them all. It's  
pure chance, no skill whatsoever.

**MARK**

It's okay. I'm feeling lucky.

**GREG**

You've never had a lucky day in  
your life.

**MARK**

Just watch.

They arrive at the roulette table.

48.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

Get your bets in, get your bets in.  
The house always wins in the long  
run. Because of the zero's on the  
board every bet is slightly favored  
towards the house.

Mark puts his chips down on seventeen black. The dealer

starts the wheel. The ball comes to a stop on twenty-seven red.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

Twenty-seven red. No one wins.

In full view, Mark slides his chips over to twenty-seven red.

**MARK**

I'm on twenty-seven red.

The dealer looks at this. His brain takes a moment to respond.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

We have a winner. Congratulations, sir.

The dealer stacks up Mark's new chips and pushes them over to him.

**GREG**

You did it. You just, like, quadrupled your money. You lucky son of a bitch.

**MARK**

That's nothing. Watch this.

Mark puts all of his chips on double zero. A bunch of other people scatter their chips around the table as well.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

Get your bets in, get your bets in. The house always wins in the long run. Fork over your money right here folks. I say this so often I want to kill myself.

The dealer spins the ball. It comes to a halt on nine black.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

Nine black. No winners.

**49.**

Mark takes ALL of the chips on the table, both his and EVERYONE ELSE'S and slides them together into a giant pile and sits them right on nine black.

**MARK**

I'm on nine black. These are all mine.

The table cheers for Mark. Some people are a bit confused, and a slight hubbub arises in the background: "I thought I had chips on the table." "Yeah, me too." "We must be drunk." "That guys is lucky!" Even the dealer looks a bit confused...  
but gets over it quickly.

**ROULETTE DEALER**

Nine black wins. Big winner.  
Congratulations, sir.

The roulette dealer slides about five grand in chips over to Mark. Greg's jaw is on the floor.

**GREG**

Do it again.

Mark notices the confused people around him.

**MARK**

I don't think I should. Lets go play slots.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Mark is talking to a Pit Man right in front of a slot machine.

**MARK**

Hi, I just won a major jackpot on this slot machine but no money came out.

**PIT MAN**

I'm sorry about that, sir. Let me get that fixed for you. And can I say congratulations, sir.

**MARK**

Thank you.

The Pit Man whispers a few words into his lapel mic.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Mark and Greg, each carrying four giant buckets overflowing with chips, waddle through the casino.

**GREG**

This is the most amazing night of my life.

**INT. BELLAGIO - PENTHOUSE SUITE - DAY**

Mark and Greg lounge around the Bellagio penthouse suite, piles of chips and cash lying around them. Greg is pacing delightedly. Mark lies on the couch, unsatisfied.

**GREG**

It amazes me the winning streak you're on. You must be the luckiest man in the world.

**MARK**

Well, sort of.

**GREG**

It was like we couldn't lose.

**MARK**

We couldn't lose.

**GREG**

Do you have a system?

**MARK**

I've got a system.

**GREG**

Well, with your system in just a few weeks I figure we could be the richest people in the world.

**MARK**

And then what?

**GREG**

Well, here's what I'm thinking. We take all the money in the world... and put it on black.

**MARK**

Why put it on black? Why stop there? Put it on a number and get thirty five times back.

Greg's eyes widen at the thought.

**GREG**

That's exactly what we'll do.

51.

**MARK**

Hold on, I think I found a flaw in your plan. How can they pay us if we have all the money in the world?

**GREG**

Well, they'd just have to.

**MARK**

Well, they can't because we've got it all.

**GREG**

Well, they'd better find it. They can't let us bet if they're not going to pay us back. They'll have to just give us the casino.

**MARK**

We already own the casino. We've got all the money in the world. We'll be betting against ourselves.

**GREG**

Then we'll go to another casino.

**MARK**

We own that one too. We won that.

**GREG**

So we own all the casino's?

**MARK**

Yup.

**GREG**

And if we win we can't pay us back because we already have all the money?

**MARK**

Yes.

Greg thinks this over for a long beat.

**GREG**

Only one thing we can do then.

**MARK**

I'm listening.

**GREG**

Take ourselves into the back room  
and break our own fingers.

52.

**MARK**

Brilliant.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - MORNING**

Mark, exhausted from his long night, waits for the elevator to arrive. The elevator doors open and Frank, the depressive neighbor, steps out.

**MARK**

Hey there, Frank.

**FRANK**

Mark. How's it going?

**MARK**

Pretty good, thanks.

Frank stops and turns around, this is a different response.

**FRANK**

Really?

**MARK**

Yeah. You?

**FRANK**

Awful. I was doing some internet  
research last night about  
suffocation suicide. I'm probably  
going to give that a try tonight.

**MARK**

Oh.

**(PAUSE)**

All right. Bye, Frank.

**FRANK**

Bye.

Mark gets in the elevator, Frank walks away. A short beat. Mark exits the elevator and yells after Frank.

**MARK**

Frank!

Frank, halfway out the building, turns around.

**FRANK**

Yeah?

**MARK**

Don't do it.

53.

Frank thinks this over.

**FRANK**

Why not? I'm miserable. And no one will care.

**MARK**

I'll care.

**FRANK**

You're a loser, though.

**MARK**

Don't do it, Frank. Things are going to be all right.

**FRANK**

They are?

**MARK**

Yes. You're going to meet someone soon. You won't be so lonely. Things are going to turn around at your job.

**FRANK**

My job's actually fine.

**MARK**

Well, things are going to get better. Better than they are.

**FRANK**

What about the depression?

**MARK**

It will go away very soon. You're going to be happy soon, Frank. You just need to wait for it. Listen to me: you don't need to kill yourself.

Something changes in Frank. A slight smile comes over him.

**FRANK**

Really?

**MARK**

Really.

Frank laughs.

54.

**FRANK**

Wow. Man, and that suffocation thing really seemed like a good idea.

**MARK**

It wasn't.

**FRANK**

Okay. Well, my night's open now. You want to hang out later?

**MARK**

I don't know. Not really.

Frank's smile fades a tiny bit.

**MARK**

Sure. Of course. Let's hang out.

**FRANK**

I'll see you after work.

**MARK**

Great.

Mark gets back in the elevator to the sound of Frank laughing

to himself as he exits the building. We hold on Mark for a moment as he smiles and nods his head.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Mark sits at kitchen table, pen and paper in hand.

**MARK (V.O.)**

**(WRITING)**

I've discovered something today  
very important... and very  
powerful.

**MONTAGE**

Mark doing various good deeds throughout the day. V.O plays throughout.

Mark walks up to the homeless man with the "I don't understand why I'm homeless and you are all not" sign. He says something to the homeless man, who quickly drops his sign and follows Mark.

**MARK (V.O.)**

I'm as excited as I've ever been in  
my entire life, and equally scared.

**(MORE)**

**55.**

**MARK (V.O.) (cont'd)**

I'm writing this down in a letter  
in case this thing I've discovered  
somehow ends up killing me. I want  
to ensure that, even if I wasn't  
strong enough to use it, that my  
invention doesn't once again  
disappear, never to be discovered  
again.

to Mark and the homeless man are at the bank. Mark is talking  
the bank teller. The homeless man looks at Mark nervously.  
The teller leaves and comes back with stacks and stacks of  
cash.

**MARK (V.O.)**

In just a few hours since I  
stumbled upon my discovery I have  
seen its potential for evil and I  
have seen its potential for good.

Outside Lecture Films, Mark talks to the woman who was adamant about not wanting to go to work. He whispers a few words into her ear. She smiles, picks up her briefcase and gladly walks into work.

**MARK (V.O.)**

I must be careful with my discovery, for at this point I barely understand it, let alone think I have the power to control it. All I know is that if I'm not careful I could easily do irreparable damage to the world, or even cause my own premature death.

each  
making  
Mark walks up to the arguing couple at the coffee shop, who are now sitting at different tables, not even looking at other. He pulls up a chair next to each of them, individually, and says a few words to them. Within moments, the two of them are running into each other's arms and out passionately on the floor of the coffee shop.

**MARK (V.O.)**

Now, to explain my invention. In essence, my creation is the act of saying words that simply are not. For example, if I tell someone that my eyes are blue, then it simply becomes fact. I still know that, indeed, my eyes are brown, but no one else is aware of this fact, so therefore I have blue eyes.

**(MORE)**

56.

MARK (V.O.) (cont'd)

It's a game of numbers: there is only one of me who knows I have brown eyes, and so many of them who do not. The numbers always win.

whispering  
leaving  
with  
Mark is at the elderly home, walking the halls and to his grandmother and each elderly person he passes, each one of them with a smile upon their faces, and some

tears streaming down their cheeks.

**MARK**

Whoever is reading this, go ahead and try it. Tell someone your eyes are a different color than they are. I think you'll be amazed at the results. It's so simple and yet... so powerful... this thing I've invented.

Mark and Frank are watching TV in Mark's apartment. The two of them are drinking beers and having a good time watching television.

**MARK (V.O.)**

Au Revoir, future reader, au revoir.

Mark signs his letter, seals it in an envelope, writes "MY INVENTION" on the outside of it and sticks it in a drawer in his kitchen.

**END MONTAGE**

**INT. MARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mark lies in bed watching TV. He picks up the phone and dials.

**MARK**

Jennifer. It's Mark.

**JENNIFER**

Are you gonna hang up on me again?

**MARK**

No. Maybe. Who knows. I'm calling because I want to ask you out on another date.

**JENNIFER**

Why would you do that?

57.

**MARK**

I discovered something yesterday. I found out I can pretty much have my life anyway I want it from now on.

**JENNIFER**

Congratulations. I gotta go.

**MARK**

Wait, and I know you said you didn't want to date me ever again, but I'm different now. Things have changed. I think I'm in your league now.

**JENNIFER**

You're better looking?

**MARK**

No. I'm not better looking. I'm just more... powerful. I think you have to see it for yourself.

**JENNIFER**

Have you been to the gym?

**MARK**

No, I haven't been to the gym. It's just... it's amazing. Things are different for me now. You have to see this. I think you'll hardly recognize me.

**JENNIFER**

Did you buy better clothes?

**MARK**

No, look can we just meet up?

There is silence on the other end of the phone.

**MARK**

Jennifer, If there was even a glimmer of something about me that you liked, please say yes. You even admitted that we got along well. Just give me one more chance. Just one little teensy, tiny date.

**JENNIFER**

Okay, fine.

**MARK**

Fantastic. Tomorrow night. I'll pick you up at eight.

**JENNIFER**

Most likely it'll be our last date though, so just know that.

**MARK**

**(SARCASTIC)**

That's very sweet.

**JENNIFER**

No it wasn't. Did you not hear what I said?

**MARK**

Yeah, no I was being...

(pause; searching)

...there's no word for it. See you tomorrow night.

**JENNIFER**

Bye.

Mark hangs up happily.

**MOVIE TRAILER VOICE (ON T.V)**

In Our World.... in the 1800's...

PAN ON TV: The screen is all black.

**MOVIE TRAILER VOICE (ON T.V)**

... came the greatest revolution of them all.

(climactic music)

The Industrial Revolution.

The black fades to ANGELO BADSMITH, a middle-aged African American man sitting before a fire in a green smoking jacket, holding a script.

**MOVIE TRAILER VOICE (ON T.V)**

Written by famed screenwriter Rob Marlowe and read by Oscar winning Reader Angelo Badsmith.

**ANGELO BADSMITH**

Hello, I'm Angelo Badmsith. Come watch me read about the exciting events that took place during the Industrial Revolution.

(MORE)

59.

ANGELO BADSMITH (cont'd)  
Also, I will tell you all about my  
personal misfortunes, such as my  
wife who cheated on me with a man  
named Perry.

The screen reads: "The Industrial Revolution. Summer '07."

BACK ON MARK: His eyes are wide. The wheels in his head are  
spinning again.

**MARK**

Rob Marlowe, your streak of success  
has finally come to an end.

Suddenly Mark jumps and runs to his kitchen table. He grabs  
a pen, pulls out a sheet of paper... and begins writing.

SERIES OF JUMP CUTS: Mark writing furiously throughout the  
night, piling up page upon page. By the time the sun comes

up  
up  
large  
Mark is exhausted, with barely the energy to keep his head  
as he writes "the end" and places the final page on his  
stack of finished pages.

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. LECTURE FILMS - CAR LOT - MORNING**

Mark hustles through the parking lot, manuscript in hand. He  
reaches the door and then stops -- remembering something.

Mark runs to the curb and throws his manuscript onto the  
dirty, filthy street. He gets down on his hands and knees

and  
rubs his manuscript into the grime, making sure to get every  
page equally filthy.

Satisfied, he organizes the pages into a neat pile and  
enters  
Lecture Films.

**INT. LECTURE FILMS - WRITER'S OFFICES - DAY**

Mark walks the aisles of Lecture Films. People stop to stare at him. There is a whispered hubbub from the many cubicles and offices.

Mark passes his old office, stopping to read the sign on the door: "14TH CENTURY -- CLOSED."

Mark grimaces and keeps walking.

**SHELLEY (O.S.)**

He's gone crazy!

60.

Mark turns his head to see Shelley, standing down the hall, terrified, staring at Mark.

Mark ignores her and keeps walking. Leaning against his door jamb, is Rob, smirking as Mark passes him.

**ROB**

Come to beg for your old job back?  
Hey everybody, here's the loser who  
thought the Black Plague would make  
for an interesting film. Good luck,  
douche bag. Freaking loser.

Mark walks right up to the door that reads, "Head of Development -- Anthony James."

Mark opens the door.

Anthony is on the phone, his back to Mark.

**ANTHONY (ON PHONE)**

They're going to fire me any  
moment, I just know it. I'm really,  
really horrible at my job. I don't  
know anything about movies. I don't  
even like movies. I like sports.  
Head of development, what does that  
even mean? I'm not a smart person.  
Okay, talk to you later.

Anthony turns around to find Mark. His face becomes very, very scared.

**ANTHONY**

That was the head of the studio.

**(PAUSE)**

I'm very scared that you're mad at me about the whole firing thing.

**MARK**

I'm not mad at all.

Anthony is relieved.

**ANTHONY**

Oh good, because I feel really bad about it. I mean, I would be horrible at your job too. I would be horrible at any job in this place.

**(PAUSE)**

I love sports.

They both stare at each other for a long beat.

61.

**ANTHONY**

Why are you here?

Mark pulls up a chair.

**MARK**

When you fired me, I was very depressed.

**ANTHONY**

I knew it.

**MARK**

And so I left this building and I just started walking. And I walked all the way out of town. And then I walked into the desert and I fell asleep under a tree.

**ANTHONY**

I don't do well with other people's life changing events.

**MARK**

And when I woke up I found this strange old chest sticking out of the ground. So I started digging. And I unearthed a very old and ancient box. Probably, oh... about... seven hundred years old.

And inside the box...  
(holding up manuscript)  
... was this.

Mark places his muddy, dirty, manuscript down on Anthony's desk. Anthony is scared to touch it.

**ANTHONY**

What is it?

**MARK**

It's a never-before-heard historical event from the past.

**ANTHONY**

When does it take place?

**MARK**

The 1300's.

The excitement drains from Anthony's face.

62.

**ANTHONY**

I told you we're not interested in Black Plague movies here, Mark.

**MARK**

This one isn't about the black plague. Well it isn't just about the black plague. Let me read you some of this.

Anthony rolls his eyes.

**MARK**

Anthony, get excited about this. This is a brand new event from history that no one has ever heard before. It's a great human discovery.

**ANTHONY**

Yeah, but is there a movie there?

**MARK**

The greatest movie Lecture Films has ever made.

Anthony's eyes widen.

**ANTHONY**

Start reading.

Mark picks up the manuscript and opens the first page.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

On the very first day of the fourteenth century, a momentous occasion occurred. It began as a day much like any other. The sun rose, the people awoke, workers began to work, babies began to cry. But all of that was interrupted when a giant flying space ship crashed down from the skies and landed in the heart of Babylon.

Anthony's mouth drops to the ground.

**ANTHONY**

What?!

Mark smiles. Anthony picks up his phone and presses "intercom".

63.

**ANTHONY (ON PHONE)**

I want everyone in here now! We've got a BIG ONE.

Anthony hangs up.

**ANTHONY**

Please, Mark. Continue.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

As the smoke cleared, the door to the spaceship opened and inside, were hundreds of beautiful, half naked alien women.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

The room is filled with people now, all of them hanging on every word Mark reads from his manuscript. Even Rob and Shelly lean against the back wall, their minds blown by the

story Mark is telling.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

And then the ninja army unleashed a giant fireball that brought the robot dinosaur to its knees, saving Mars, Earth and the Nude Amazonian Alien Women all in one sweeping motion. The earth was saved. Jebediah and Aleena were allowed to marry by alien king Xardon. It was to be the First Human-Nude Amazonian Alien Woman wedding, and no expenses would be spared. All of Babylon and Mars were invited to join in the celebrations.

People around the room wipe tears from their eyes.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

The wedding was held on a brisk summers day on Mars, with all of the survivors of the Great Ninja War and the Black Plague present. They feasted and danced and laughed and it was a joyous occasion.

**(MORE)**

64.

MARK (cont'd)

The moment the bride and groom kissed, King Xardon performed a mind-wipe on all of the humans, thereby erasing all knowledge of these events from their minds, and sent them back to Babylon. For seven hundred years these events would be forgotten by mankind until one day, a great writer by the name of Mark Bellison, would stumble upon them in the desert, after being fired by his shit boss Anthony and mocked by Rob and Shelly, two huge douche bags. Lecture Films Motion Picture Studios would go on to make the picture and it would be a big success, and Mark would become very

wealthy and famous from it. The  
End.

The entire room bursts into applause. Not just normal  
applause, but massive, epic applause.

blown  
Everyone crowds around Mark, hugging him, touching him,  
away by the magnanimity of the moment.

**ANTHONY**

Mark, tell us what it's called.

Mark thinks it over for a moment and looks right at Rob.

**MARK**

(to Rob)

The Black Plague.

Rob sneers. Everyone "aahs" and claps again.

**INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

a  
Mark and Jennifer sit at a candlelit table in the corner of  
hip and fancy restaurant. Jennifer looks beautiful. Mark is  
on cloud nine.

**JENNIFER**

Congratulations on selling your  
script today.

**MARK**

Thanks. Thank you for having dinner  
with me.

65.

**JENNIFER**

Everyone needs to eat.

**(PAUSE)**

And I enjoy your company.

Mark smiles. They both sip their drinks and look at their  
menus. The waiter comes up.

**WAITER**

I'm an extremely important waiter.

**(PAUSE)**

What can I get you?

**MARK**

I don't want to know what it is, I just want to order the most expensive thing on the menu.

**JENNIFER**

I'll have the duck. And I think you look like a little rat faced man.

**WAITER**

Okay, I'll have those right up for you.

The waiter leaves. Mark and Jennifer stare at each other for a short beat. Something has changed between them and they can both feel it.

**JENNIFER**

Things seem to be turning around for you.

**MARK**

Today is the best day of my life. Hands down. Easy. Best day.

**JENNIFER**

It's not every day you unearth a monumental historical event and sell it for a ton of money.

**MARK**

That wasn't the best part. It was great, but it wasn't the peak of my day.

**(PAUSE)**

I've had a crush on you ever since I saw a picture of you on Greg's refrigerator two years ago.

**JENNIFER**

Oh.

66.

**MARK**

The best part of my day today is right now, sitting at this table here with you.

**JENNIFER**

Oh.

**MARK**

You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my life, and you're special... and it makes me happy to be around you.

**JENNIFER**

Thank you.

Jennifer is touched...but she doesn't reciprocate Mark's feelings. Jennifer moves on.

**JENNIFER**

Tell me something about your family. I really don't know much about you.

**MARK**

Ah, my family. We're what you'd probably call "not lucky". My whole family is kind of marked by tragedy, bad luck and general... shittiness. It goes back a long ways and could probably drive someone to suicide just hearing about it, so I'll keep it simple. My mom died when I was six. Cancer.

**JENNIFER**

Sad.

**MARK**

And my dad got real depressed and lost his job. Out of work and with a kid to raise he had no choice but to turn to a life of crime.

**JENNIFER**

What kind of crime?

**MARK**

He was a robber. Houses mostly.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY**

Nice, mid-to-upper class home. Lots of white wood. The house is very quiet, until... the phone rings and the answer machine picks up.

**MARK'S DAD (O.S.)**

(on answer machine)

Hi, I'm calling to let you know  
I'll be robbing your house today.  
I'll probably be there within the  
hour.

**(PAUSE)**

I hope you're not there.

The message ends. PAN OVER to a SOCCER MOM standing in the doorway. She drops her coffee and screams.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

**MARK**

He was a very unlucky man. He spent his last days behind bars. I never really knew him.

(sad moment; pause)

But I guess I've also had a little luck in my life. I did have a wonderful grandmother who raised me.

**JENNIFER**

Oh, that's sweet.

**MARK**

Yeah, she's great.

**JENNIFER**

Where is she?

**MARK**

Old person's home obviously. Who wants to live with that? Gross.

**JENNIFER**

I know, right?

**MARK**

But I'm going to get her out of

there tomorrow.

**(MORE)**

68.

**MARK** (cont'd)

I'm going to buy her a big beautiful mansion where she can spend her few remaining days in luxury.

**JENNIFER**

That's nice.

The waiter arrives with their food.

**WAITER**

I don't know what's wrong with the chef today, but these just look awful.

He places them down.

**MARK**

They look fine to me.

**WAITER**

Well, you're stupid.

Mark and Jennifer begin eating. Mark wants to say something and takes a moment to summon the courage.

**MARK**

Right. I was thinking that since I'm going to be rich and successful now that I might be in your league.

**(PAUSE)**

And that maybe we could be together. Romantically.

**JENNIFER**

What would be the point?

Mark didn't expect this answer.

**MARK**

Well, I don't know, maybe we might enjoy it. Maybe we'd be good together and could have a happy life, raise a family together.

Jennifer thinks this over.

**JENNIFER**

Well, I do like you. And I enjoy your company.

**(MORE)**

69.

JENNIFER (cont'd)

And if we were to get together and procreate I would like the offspring that are carrying half my genetic code to be well taken care of and financially stable. I also think you'd make a good father and a good husband, which I like.

Mark smiles. This is going well...

**MARK**

Good. Fantastic.

**JENNIFER**

Unfortunately, none of that changes the fact that you'd still be contributing half of the genetic code to our children.

**(PAUSE)**

I don't want short, fat kids with little snub noses.

And that's the end of that. Mark nods.

**MARK**

Sure.

Mark takes a bite of his food. Jennifer smiles and does the same, oblivious to Mark's pain.

Mark's cell phone rings.

**MARK (ON PHONE)**

Hello?

**(PAUSE)**

What?

Mark's face melts in terror.

**MARK (ON PHONE)**

**(LOUDLY)**

**WHAT?**

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Mark bursts into the hospital room to find his grandmother, MARTHA looking tired and scared, hooked up to dozens of machines, the heart monitor beeping ominously.

**MARK**

Grandma, they just called me.  
What's going on? Are you okay?

70.

**MARTHA**

I don't know, I fell on my way back  
to my room.

**MARK**

What do the doctors say?

**MARTHA**

They say I'll probably die tonight.

**MARK**

What?

There's a knock on the door. The doctor enters.

**DOCTOR**

Oh, hello. I was just coming in to  
check on her, you must be Martha  
Bellison's grandson.

**MARK**

What are you talking about she's  
going to die?

**DOCTOR**

I'm sorry. It just doesn't look  
good. She's suffered a major heart  
attack and her heart is very weak,  
her pulse not very strong, her  
blood pressure is dropping rapidly  
and most likely she'll have a fatal  
heart attack during the night.

**MARK**

Fuck.

The doctor checks Martha's chart.

**DOCTOR**

Yup, still going to die.

Mark sits down next to Martha, in total shock.

**DOCTOR**

I'm sorry, guys. I wish I felt something for you two, but I really don't. I do this exact thing about thirty times a night and it's really hardened me to human suffering. On a side note, it's fajita night at the cafeteria downstairs. You might think about grabbing a bite to eat there after your grandma dies.

71.

The doctor leaves. Mark holds his grandmother's hand, her hand is shaking.

**MARTHA**

I'm so scared, Mark. I don't want to die. You know, people don't talk about it much, but death is a horrible thing. One minute you're alive, there's a whole world around you, humming and jumping, people coming in and out, doors opening and closing, love and anger and the whole mess of it all, and then like that, it's all gone.

**(CRYING)**

This is it Mark, only a few hours left of this until an eternity of nothingness.

The wheels in Mark's head are spinning again. Suddenly the heart monitor starts beating rapidly and Martha lurches in pain.

**MARK**

Grandma!

Mark immediately slams on the big red "call nurse" button, holding his grandmother down as she lurches in pain.

Seconds later three nurses burst into the room.

**NURSE #1**

She's seizing.

Nurse #2 begins filling a syringe. Mark sits by his grandmother's head, they're both looking right at each other.

**MARTHA**

I'm scared.

**MARK**

Listen closely to me, Grandma. I have a surprise for you.

We focus on Mark and his grandmother, inches from one another as the paramedics busy themselves around Martha's dying body.

**MARK**

You're wrong about what happens when you die. It's not an eternity of nothingness.

Martha is hanging on to every word Mark is saying.

72.

**MARK**

When you die you're going to go to your favorite place in the whole world. And you're going to be with all of the people you've ever loved and who have ever loved you. And you're going to be young again, and you'll be able to run through the fields and dance and jump, and there will be no sadness, no pain, just love and laughing and happiness. There will be ponies made of gold, and everyone will live in giant mansions, and everything will smell like cookies. And it will last for an eternity, Grandma. An eternity.

Tears are rolling down Martha's face as a glimmering smile overtakes her face.

Mark looks up to see the nurses, paramedics and doctors all staring at Mark in total shock.

**NURSE #1**

Go on.

**DOCTOR**

What else happens?

The cardiogram flat lines.

**MARK**

Do your jobs!

Everyone distractedly goes back to helping the grandmother.

**MARK**

You're going to be happy forever,  
grandma. I promise you. Say hello  
to my mom for me. Tell her I love  
her.

Again, everyone has stopped helping Martha, they're all  
listening intently. Some of them are crying.

**NURSE #2**

**(TEARFULLY)**

I'm going to see my mother again  
when I die.

**DOCTOR**

Tell us more, please.

73.

Martha stops breathing. The machine flatlines. And with that  
Martha is gone.

**MARK**

Damn it.

Mark turns away from his grandmother. Standing outside in  
the hallway is Jennifer, watching Mark with true empathy in her  
eyes.

**INT. MARK'S CAR -- MORNING**

Mark and Jennifer pull up in front of Jennifer's apartment.  
There is a long beat of silence.

**JENNIFER**

I'm so sorry, Mark.

**MARK**

I think I just did something bad.

**JENNIFER**

Do you want to come inside?

Mark nods his head.

**INT. JENNIFER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

a  
Mark and Jennifer sit side-by-side on her couch. Mark holds  
can of beer in his hand, gently turning it around in his  
palm, staring down at it vacantly.

Jennifer sadly watches Mark.

Slowly and almost absentmindedly, Jennifer's hand moves over  
and rests gently upon Mark's wrist, settling there.

We hold on them for a long beat.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**FADE UP:**

**THE NEXT MORNING**

her  
Mark and Jennifer have fallen asleep in the exact same  
position, both of them sitting side-by-side on the couch,  
hand still on his wrist.

Mark opens his eyes and looks down at her hand, then up at  
Jennifer who slowly opens her eyes and smiles at him.

74.

**JENNIFER**

Hi.

**MARK**

Hi.

They share a moment.

**INT. MARK'S CAR - MORNING**

A A bleary eyed Mark drives home from Jennifer's. As he turns onto his street he finds hundreds of cars blocking the way.

massive crowd of people are leaving their cars and walking.

Mark gets out of his car to find a wild scene: hundreds of people camped out on the lawn of his apartment building.

Standing by his door is the NURSE from the hospital. She immediately points at Mark and screams.

**NURSE #1**

There he is!

Mark is bum-rushed by a question-asking throng. All of them are pelting Mark with questions, all of them confused and hopeful and desperately looking for answers.

**PERSON #1**

Is there only one place you go when you die?

**PERSON #2**

Will everyone who has ever died be there?

**PERSON #3**

What's this place called?

**PERSON #4**

Will I get to have sex with people there?

gets Mark pushes through the crowd, overwhelmed by it all. He

to his door and opens it, only to have the Nurse step in his path and block the door.

**NURSE #1**

You owe us an explanation. If you know something this important, you better tell us all.

**MARK**

Who are you people?

**NURSE #1**

The words you spoke last night, to  
your grandmother, spread like  
wildfire. Please, tell us more.  
Explain what you said.

**MARK**

Fine, fine, just give me a minute.

Mark pushes past her and into his building, closing the door  
behind him.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Mark goes to his fridge and pulls out a beer. His mind is  
reeling. As he opens a drawer to get a bottle opener he sees  
the letter: "MY INVENTION". Mark eyes it ominously.

The phone rings. Mark screens the call.

**JENNIFER (V.O.)**

(leaving message)

You've been gone for twenty minutes  
and I turn on the T.V to see you on  
every station. What's going on?  
This is seriously the weirdest  
thing...

Mark picks up the phone.

**MARK**

Remember last night when I said I  
think I did something bad? Well now  
I know I did something bad.

**JENNIFER**

They're saying that you know  
something different about what  
happens after you die.

Mark walks into his bedroom and turns on the TV. Sure enough  
there's a newscaster on his lawn, giving a report, with a  
banner on the screen that reads, "New Death Discoveries".

**MARK**

Hold on.

Mark puts down the phone and listens to the T.V.

**REPORTER (ON T.V)**

Twenty-four hours ago, Mark

Bellison was just your typical  
nobody writer.

**(MORE)**

76.

REPORTER (ON T.V) (cont'd)  
Today, people are saying he knows  
new information about what happens  
after you die.

Mark puts the phone to his ear again.

**MARK**

Fuck.

**JENNIFER**

Mark, what do you know? What did  
you tell your grandmother last  
night? What's going on?

**MARK**

I can't explain it all right now.  
Why don't you come over?

**JENNIFER**

Okay.

**EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON**

Jennifer pushes through the throng of people, which is now  
even larger than before. As she reaches the door Mark opens  
it for her and slides her through.

**MARK**

Come up quick, they look like they  
could get out of hand any second.

Mark hurries Jennifer into the elevator.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Jennifer sits on the couch while Mark, agitated beyond  
recognition, paces the room.

**JENNIFER**

Just tell me what you told your  
grandmother.

**MARK**

I don't think I should. Who knows what could happen next? I'm just going to keep my mouth shut from now on.

**JENNIFER**

What you said obviously affected a lot of people. I don't think you have the choice to keep it in now.

77.

**MARK**

Sure I do. I could just walk out that door and get on a plane and go to Namibia. No one knows me in Namibia.

**JENNIFER**

Just tell me what you said. Please, Mark.

**MARK**

My grandmother was dying, and she was terrified, shaking all over. She didn't want to just become nothingness. So I told her that when she died there wouldn't be nothingness. That she would be with all of the people she loved who had died and that she would live an eternity of joy and happiness.

Jennifer's heart skips a beat.

**JENNIFER**

(barely able to speak)  
How do you know these things?

Mark sighs and looks out the window. The crowd extends down the block, all of them sitting calmly on his lawn, talking quietly to each other, trying to make sense of it all.

Jennifer gets up and stands beside Mark.

**JENNIFER**

You have to tell them everything you know. This is too big. You have no choice.

**MARK**

But you don't understand. The words  
I said... they weren't... it's not  
right.

**JENNIFER**

How did your grandmother feel when  
you told her these things?

**MARK**

Happy. At peace.

**JENNIFER**

And how did that make you feel?

78.

**MARK**

Good.

**JENNIFER**

(sweeping her hand over  
the crowd)

Think how good it will feel to do  
the same for all of these people.

Mark thinks this over.

**MARK**

Okay. But I need a few hours to get  
my thoughts together.

**JENNIFER**

I'll go tell them.

**MARK**

Wait! Are you sure this is right?

**JENNIFER**

Of course it is. You know something  
that's going to change mankind  
forever. It's the most important  
thing the world has ever heard.

sits

Jennifer leaves the room. Mark, alone with his thoughts,  
down at his kitchen table, pulls out a few sheets of paper,  
grabs a pen and starts writing.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Mark's neighborhood is a sea of candles. The crowd has grown beyond measure. A massive sea of people, all holding candles, all waiting quietly like serene cows for Mark to come down and make his announcement.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Mark is hunched over his table writing. There's a knock at the front door. Greg walks in with a large pizza and beer.

**GREG**

I brought pizza. How come you never told me we all get mansions?

**MARK**

I didn't...

79.

Jennifer comes out of the bedroom and quickly "shhh's" Greg.

**GREG**

Inventing the bicycle is one thing, but this...

**JENNIFER**

Shut up. Let him work.

Jennifer pulls Greg away from Mark. Mark goes back to work.

**TIME CUT: LATER**

Mark puts down his pencil and places both written sheets to each other. He has finished.

next

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mark opens the door. Jennifer and Greg are on his bed watching T.V. The same newscaster stands outside the building.

**NEWSCASTER (ON T.V)**

In Seoul Korea, they wait. In Rome, Italy, they wait. In London,

England, they wait. In New York City, they wait. The world has come to a standstill, everyone at their televisions and radios, or here on this lawn, waiting for Mark Bellison to come forth and tell the people what he knows.

Mark waves his manuscript in the air.

**MARK**

I'm done.

Jennifer and Greg jumps off the bed.

**JENNIFER**

Are you ready?

**MARK**

I guess.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

They head towards the door.

80.

**MARK**

I feel like I should be reading these off of something other than just notebook paper. I wish they were like, written on large tablets or even just nicer paper or something.

Greg grabs an empty pizza box off of the counter, rips it into two pieces and tapes his two pages onto them.

Mark holds the two halves of the pizza boxes awkwardly and nods his head.

**MARK**

Feels better.

Mark looks at Jennifer and Greg with fear in his eyes.

**JENNIFER**

Just tell them what you know

**GREG**

Good luck out there, man.

**EXT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

a

OTS of Newscaster cameraman. The newscaster is interviewing young man, with Mark's apartment building in the background.

**YOUNG MAN**

I heard that he said we all get mansions, and that there's even ponies.

**NEWSCASTER**

(to cameraman)

Ponies. Mansions. Ice Cream. These are the things we can all expect when we die. What else can we expect? We won't know until Mark Bellison steps out of that...

**YOUNG MAN**

**(SHOUTING)**

**THERE HE IS!**

Mark cracks open the front door and steps out onto his front steps, with Jennifer right behind him. The newscaster and cameraman run to get into position.

Mark looks out at the sea of people staring silently at him, waiting for answers.

81.

**MARK**

Hello.

A man runs up and hands Mark a microphone.

**MARK**

Oh, thanks.

His voice echoes through the neighborhood.

**MARK**

Wow.

You could hear a pin drop. No one is even breathing.

**MARK**

So. I guess you've all heard the things I told my grandmother last night and... I understand why you're here.

**(PAUSE)**

I know... some things. Some very important things. And I'm going to share these things with you now.

Intercut throughout: different video feeds, people listening to radios, standing in the cold watching TV's through store windows -- all around the world.

Mark takes a deep breath and holds up his "pizza box commandments".

**MARK**

Everything you want to know is written here. On this old pizza box.

Mark looks out at the crowd, all of them so hopeful, so needy. Mark looks back at Jennifer and Greg who give him a proud nod.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

Number one: There is a man who lives in the sky who controls everything. Number two...

**MAN #1**

(interrupting; shouting)  
Whoa, whoa whoa. What does he look like?

Mark wasn't prepared for questions.

**82.**

**MARK**

**(STRUGGLING)**

Tall. Big hands. A good head of hair.

**WOMAN #1**

What ethnicity is he?

**MARK**

(making it up as he goes)  
He's a new ethnicity. It's like a

mix of all of our ethnicities.

**MAN #2**

Does he live on a cloud?

**MAN #3**

Can we see him?

**MARK**

(becoming confident)

No. He lives much higher than the clouds, too high to see.

**WOMAN #2**

So he lives in space?

**MARK**

No, not that high.

**MAN #3**

So you mean the Thermosphere?

**MARK**

Look, people I got a lot to get through here. I'm just telling you what I know: Man. Lives in the sky. You can't see him. Controls everything. Cool?

Everyone nods.

**MARK**

Number two: When you die you don't disappear into an eternity of nothingness. Instead, you go to a really great place.

**(PAUSE)**

Number three: In that place every person will get a mansion.

**MAN #4**

What kind of mansion?

83.

**MARK**

I don't know. Whatever kind of mansion you're thinking of right now.

**WOMAN #3**

Oh no! I wasn't thinking of a mansion!

A lot of people echo this sentiment.

**MAN #5**

Shit! I was thinking of a horrible mansion!

**MARK**

Look, it's the best mansion you can think of, not just now, but ever. Whatever the best mansion for you can possibly be, that's the one you'll get.

**(CONTINUING)**

Number four: When you die, all the people you love will be there too.

**MAN #6**

Will they have their own mansions?

**MARK**

Yes, of course. Everyone gets a mansion.

**MAN #6**

What if I want them to live in my mansion?

**MARK**

If they want to live with you, they can leave their mansion and live in yours.

**MAN #6**

What happens to their mansion?

**MARK**

I don't know, it goes back on the market.

**WOMAN #4**

What about the people I hate? Will they be there too?

**MARK**

No.

**WOMAN #4**

Where are they?

**MARK**

Okay, they're probably there, but you'll never see them. They're far off, too far for you to get there.

**WOMAN #4**

But what if they try to find me?

**MARK**

They won't. They hate you too.

**WOMAN #4**

But what if they don't? What if they love me but I hate them?

**MARK**

Well then you're just... you'll both be fine with it. There's only love there, okay?

**(CONTINUING)**

Number five: When you die there will be free ice cream. All day. All night. Whatever flavor you can think of.

**WOMAN #5**

What, even bad flavors?

**MARK**

But why would you eat bad flavors?

**WOMAN #5**

Well, you just said every flavor I can think of.

**MAN #8**

Oh no, I just thought about vanilla and skunks!

**MARK**

Well don't eat it then!

**WOMAN #6**

I've just thought the chocolate sauce is diarrhea!

**MARK**

Well don't put it on then! What's wrong with you people? I mean...

(CONTINUING)  
(MORE)

85.

MARK (cont'd)  
Number six: If you do bad things  
you won't get to go to this great  
place when you die.

**MAN #9**  
Where will you go?

**MARK**  
A terrible place. The worst place  
imaginable.

A rumble of terror moves through the crowd.

**WOMAN #7**  
What constitutes a bad thing?

**MARK**  
Murder. Crime. Rape. Things like  
that.

**WOMAN #7**  
You have to tell us all the things  
or else we might do them and it  
wouldn't be our fault!

The whole crowd echoes this sentiment.

**MARK**  
Fine.

**MAN #9**  
Is punching someone bad?

**MARK**  
Yes.

**MAN #9**  
What if they're trying to hurt you?

**MARK**  
Then it's fine.

**WOMAN #7**  
Is cursing bad?

**MARK**

No.

**WOMAN #1**

What about being late for work?

86.

**MARK**

That's fine too. I mean, you might lose your job if your boss doesn't like it, but it won't effect what happens after you die.

**WOMAN #2**

What about if you forget to feed your dog?

**MARK**

That also is fine. Unless the dog dies. Then it's bad.

**MAN #1**

If you do just one bad thing do you go to the bad place?

**MARK**

No. You get...  
(thinking about it)  
... three chances. If you do three bad things you're out.

**MAN #1**

Like baseball!

**MARK**

Kind of, yes.

There's a hubbub throughout the crowd: "It's like baseball", "I love baseball" "I'm scared of the bad place".

**MARK**

Any more?

About fifty people stand up and ask their questions at the same time.

**MARK**

Look, can we just move on?

**MAN #2**

No! We have to know everything

that's bad!

**MARK**

Fine. Let's start with you...

**(POINTING)**

**MAN #3**

Is it bad to wear pants?

87.

Mark sighs.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INSERT: "SIX HOURS LATER"**

**MARK**

No. There's no hairstyle that will put you in the bad place. Like I've told you, the main things are hurting people physically on purpose, taking people's stuff, doing things to people they don't want done, killing people on purpose. Okay? Are we good?

The crowd nods apprehensively. Many of the people in the crowd are crying.

One of the crying men, shaking like a leaf, stands up, with terror in his eyes.

**CRYING MAN**

**(SHAMEFUL)**

I've done many of those bad things. Is there anything I can do to not go to the bad place? Help me, I'm so scared.

**MARK**

Well, you didn't know about these bad things until I told you just now so you're fine.

**MAN #8**

**(CRYING)**

Am I fine?

**WOMAN #5**

**(CRYING)**

What about me?

Tons of people shout similar sentiments.

**MARK**

You're all fine! I'm only talking about people who do bad things starting right now. Everyone else is fine.

The crowd erupts in a massive cheer. People hug each other passionately, wiping tears from their eyes.

88.

**MARK**

**(READING)**

Number seven: The man in the sky who controls everything decides if you go to the good place or the bad place. He also decides who lives and who dies.

**MAN #4**

Does he cause natural disasters?

**MARK**

Yes.

**WOMAN #3**

Did he cause my mom to get cancer?

**MARK**

Yes.

**WOMAN #4**

Did he cause that tree to land on my car last week?

**MARK**

Yes.

The crowd is quiet for a long beat....they're mulling this over. The first man to speak is a blue collar guy with a thick Brooklyn accent.

**BLUE COLLAR GUY**

I say fuck the guy that lives in the sky!

The whole crowd erupts in agreement. People stand up shouting, flicking off the sky.

**MAN #5**

Yeah! That guy's a fucking asshole!

**WOMAN #5**

That motherfucker better hope I never see him face to face!

**MAN #6**

That guy's a fucking coward! Hiding up there and doing bad shit to us! Why doesn't he do it to our faces?

**WOMAN #6**

We need to stop that motherfucker before he kills us all!

89.

Mark looks worried. He didn't anticipate this. Suddenly a thought occurs to him.

**MARK**

**(SHOUTING)**

**WAIT!**

Everyone quiets down.

**MARK**

This guy who lives in the sky and controls everything is also responsible for all the good stuff that happens.

The whole crowd "aaaahhs".

**MAN #7**

He's the guy who saved my life on that fishing trip when the boat capsized?

**MARK**

Yup.

**MAN #7**

Did he capsize the boat?

**MARK**

Well, yes.

**WOMAN #7**

He's the one who killed my grandmother and left me those millions of dollars?

**MARK**

You betcha.

**WOMAN #3**

So is he the same one who cured my mom's cancer?

**MARK**

That too.

The crowd thinks this over.

**MAN #8**

So he's kind of a good guy, but he's also kind of a prick too?

90.

**MARK**

Right. But check this out:

**(CONTINUING)**

Number eight: Even if the man in the sky does bad shit to you, he makes it up to you by giving you an eternity of good stuff after you die.

The crowd "aaahhs" again.

**WOMAN #1**

As long as you don't do any of the bad stuff you listed, right?

**MARK**

Right. Of course.

**WOMAN #2**

So it's kind of a test?

**MARK**

Yes. Right.

**(PAUSE)**

Well, that's it. That's everything I know.

Mark looks out at the crowd, they're all exhausted, their minds completely blown. The Nurse who started this all steps forward.

**NURSE #1**

How do you know these things?

**MARK**

**(THINKING)**

The man in the clouds told me.

**NURSE #1**

Yeah, but how come we're just learning these things now, millions of years into our existence?

**MARK**

I don't know, he forgot or something. I gotta go people, good night!

his  
Mark takes Jennifer by the hand and pulls her back inside building.

91.

**INT. MARK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT**

Mark, Jennifer and Greg wait for the elevator, all of them exhausted.

**MARK**

You think that went well?

The doors open and they get inside. All three of them stare ahead, Mark looking exhausted, Jennifer and Greg with their minds completely blown... as the doors close and we

**FADE TO:**

**MONTAGE**

Spinning magazines and newspaper headlines proclaim "Mansion for Everyone (almost)", "NASA searching for Man in the Sky", "Finally -- A Reason to Do Good", "Time: Man of the Year: Mark Bellison", "Mansion Prices Plummet Worldwide", "Cult of Bellison Await Further Answers", "Man in Sky Murders forty-two in Earthquake", "Man in Sky Continues to Give AIDS to Babies", "Workplace Productivity down Fourteen Percent --

Everyone Daydreaming About Mansions".

Black Mark is at Lecture Films turning in the script for "The Plague" to Anthony. Rob gives Mark a dirty look as he passes him in the hall.

Mark, smiling proudly, stands behind the camera while Nathan Goldfrappe reads his script. In the background are Jennifer and Greg, hanging out on set. Jennifer can be seen chatting with Rob by craft services.

Mark removes the "For Sale" sign from the front yard of a brand new, beautiful home. Jennifer and Greg congratulate Mark enthusiastically.

The Mark and Jennifer are walking down the street together when Mark stops to point out a new building with a sign that reads, "A Quiet Place To Think About the Man in the Sky".

building boasts a large stained glass window portraying Mark holding the two halves of the pizza box.

as Mark, Jennifer and Greg laugh it up in a stretch limousine it pulls up to the movie premier of "The Black Plague".

of Mark, Jennifer and Greg walk the red carpet at the premier "The Black Plague". Mark is the center of attention. Rob stops by on the red carpet to say hello to Jennifer and whisper something into her ear. Jennifer laughs.

92.

Mark and Jennifer have dinner together, the best of friends, but as they cheers their champagne glasses there is a tinge of sadness in Mark's eyes.

**END MONTAGE**

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**SCREEN READS: "TWO MONTHS LATER"**

**INT. MARK'S MANSION - DEN - EVENING**

A disheveled Mark, unshaven and sloppy looking, sits in a

reclining chair, wearing boxers and a bathrobe, drinking a beer. Beer cans are littered everywhere.

A young gay man in a suit stands before him with a pad and a pen writing down everything Mark says.

**MARK**

So then the flying duck flew all the way to Alaska where it met up with a polar bear who could talk. And the polar bear's name was Martin. And the polar bear was wearing a green cape. And Martin and the flying duck both had race cars with their names printed on the side and...

Jennifer enters the room, upset.

**JENNIFER**

I just saw three people climbing the fence into your backyard. You really need to think about getting better security.

(noticing beer cans

**EVERYWHERE)**

Mark, how many of those have you had?

Jennifer grabs the beer out of Mark's hand.

**MARK**

(continuing; glaring at

**JENNIFER)**

But then the evil goblin witch came in and stole the flying duck's race car and made the flying duck very angry.

(grabbing at his beer)

**(MORE)**

93.

MARK (cont'd)

Luckily the Polar Bear was there to snatch the race car back...

(But he misses)

Unfortunately, the witch was a smart witch and the polar bear was powerless.

**ASSISTANT**

Is that the end?

**MARK**

Yeah.

**ASSISTANT**

That's a strange ending.

**MARK**

Hey, don't look at me: it's the Man in the Sky's story.

**ASSISTANT**

You want me to take this over to Lecture Films?

**MARK**

Yeah. Tell them to shoot that one this week.

The assistant walks away.

**MARK**

**(YELLING)**

Tell them it's for kids!

Jennifer glares at Mark, disappointed.

**MARK**

What?

**JENNIFER**

You haven't left the house in weeks. Every time I come by you're just sitting here writing down stories you get from the Man in the Sky.

**MARK**

Hey, he's the boss.

**JENNIFER**

Don't you think you should go outside sometime? You know there's about five thousand people on our lawn waiting to ask you questions.

94.

**MARK**

Yeah, yeah.

Jennifer sits down next to him.

**JENNIFER**

What's with you? You seem sad.

Mark shrugs.

**JENNIFER**

I don't get it. You're a very successful writer, you've won countless awards and Oscars...

Jennifer waves towards a shelf full of Oscars and various other awards.

**JENNIFER**

You've changed the way people see the world, the way they see death and life. You've made the entire world happy.

**MARK**

Not the entire world.

**JENNIFER**

I know. Not you. The one person who should be happy, the person who has everything...

**MARK**

**(INTERRUPTING)**

Not everything.

**JENNIFER**

What else do you want?

Mark sits up in his chair and looks right at Jennifer.

**MARK**

I'd trade it all in for you. All of it.

Jennifer sighs and sits down beside him.

**JENNIFER**

Well, you've got me. As a friend.

**MARK**

(not sarcastic)

Yeah. That's important.

**(MORE)**

MARK (cont'd)

But why can't we be together. Why can't you be with me?

**JENNIFER**

Because of the whole snub nosed thing. With kids, your genetics. You know, fat, short...

**MARK**

(stopping her)

Yeah. Okay. Yup.

**(PAUSE)**

It's almost a shame that being rich and powerful and famous doesn't change your genetics.

**JENNIFER**

What?

**MARK**

It would be great if it changed your genetic material because I really love you but I just don't...

Suddenly Mark has an idea. He looks right at Jennifer.

**MARK**

It does change your genetics.

Jennifer lights up.

**JENNIFER**

Does it?

Mark stares at her for a short beat. He can't go through  
with  
it.

**MARK**

No. No, it doesn't. Our kids would be short and fat with little snub noses.

**JENNIFER**

Right. Too bad.

**(PAUSE)**

Anyway, I've come to tell you I can't go to the movies with you

tonight.

**MARK**

Why not?

**JENNIFER**

I've got a date.

96.

**MARK**

What? With who?

**JENNIFER**

Rob Marlowe.

Mark stands up.

**MARK**

You've got to be fucking... Rob Marlowe?!? He's a complete and total asshole.

**JENNIFER**

Not to me. He's very sweet and kind to me.

**MARK**

Well of course he is, look at you. I mean, for fuck's sake, a shark would be nice to you...

**JENNIFER**

It would?

**MARK**

Well no, I mean...

**(PAUSE)**

Don't go out with him.

**JENNIFER**

Why not? He's a great match for me.

**MARK**

What's he got that I don't?

**JENNIFER**

We talked about this. If you and I got together it wouldn't be fair to our kids. They have the right to be attractive and have good genes.

**(PAUSE)**

If Rob and I get married You can move into our mansion with us when we all die.

**MARK**

I don't want to move into your fucking mansion. And what are you doing thinking about marriage with him already? You haven't even gone on one date.

Mark sits down.

97.

**MARK**

It's like nothing's changed.

**JENNIFER**

A lot of things have changed. I wish you could be happy.

There's a knock at the front door.

**JENNIFER**

That's him. Gotta go.

**MARK**

He's picking you up here?

**JENNIFER**

It was his idea.

Mark stands up, in shock and follows Jennifer to the front door. She opens the door to find Rob looking handsome and arrogant.

**ROB**

What's up? Wow, I can't wait to have sex with you.

Rob notices Mark in his boxers and a bathrobe.

**ROB**

Oh hey there, Mark. You look like trash.

(to Jennifer)

Come on Jennifer, let's go have some fun. And then have some sex.

Jennifer turns back to Mark, sad that he's upset.

**JENNIFER**

I'll call you tomorrow.

The door closes and Mark is left standing there alone.

Greg, dressed in a bathrobe and looking even more slovenly than Mark, waddles up behind him.

**GREG**

Who was that?

**EXT. MARK'S MANSION - POOLSIDE - NIGHT**

Mark and Greg are shit-faced, sitting around Mark's giant swimming pool.

98.

**MARK**

Hey, watch this.

(yelling over the fence)

**HEY PEOPLE!**

About forty voices shout back: "He's talking to us!" "Maybe he has more answers!" "Finally!"

**MARK**

The man in the sky just told me something!

Mark snickers to himself. Greg, drunk and stupid, can't help but snicker too.

**MARK**

You're all gay!

Mark and Greg explode laughing. From the other side of the fence we can hear people mumbling shock. "I am gay." "I always knew it." "This is going to be awkward for my husband."

**MARK**

And adopted!

Mark and Greg almost roll into the pool they're laughing so hard. The people on the other side of the fence aren't laughing: "Who's my real mother?", "This explains so much", "Dad, why didn't you tell me?"

**GREG**

I don't know why we're laughing.  
It's really probably very sad for  
those people.

**MARK**

I'm gettin' a beer.

Mark hobbles up and walks into the house. Moments later he  
emerges with two cokes.

**MARK**

Out of beer. Just Coke.

Mark tosses Greg a Coke and sits down on his chaise lounge,  
cracking open his Coke and taking a sip.

**MARK**

I want to do something big again.  
Like telling the people what  
happens when they die. That felt  
good. I gotta do something big like  
that again.

99.

**GREG**

Maybe the Man in the Sky will tell  
you something new.

**MARK**

Maybe.

Mark looks down at his can of Coke.

CLOSE ON COKE CAN: The warning label is extremely long and  
written in very small type. It starts with, "COKE IS VERY

BAD

FOR YOU. The following are diseases, physical ailments and  
general health issues that coke might cause:"

The label then goes on to list dozens of ailments. Mark's  
eyes scan down to the very bottom of the label where it says  
simply, "If you still want to drink Coke, do so at your own  
risk."

Mark looks over to find Greg staring at the depressing label  
as well.

**GREG**

Ugh, this shit is so bad for you. I really shouldn't drink this.

Mark stares at this label for a moment, thinking. With his hand he covers everything on the label except for "Please Enjoy Coke."

He smiles widely.

**MARK**

Hey, Greg. What if I told you that drinking Coke was good for you?

Greg turns to him, his face full of hope.

**MARK**

And not just Coke. But all the delicious foods you're not supposed to eat. What if they were all of a sudden really, really good for you?

**GREG**

It would be the happiest day of my life.

**CUT TO:**

**100.**

**INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

A dozen high powered executives from all over the globe sit around a massive board room table. The head seat at the table is unoccupied.

They mumble back and forth to each other, unsure why they're there.

Mark bursts into the room in a suit, looking very manicured.

**MARK**

Gentleman, thank you all for coming here on such short notice. I have some very big news for you all today.

**EXECUTIVE #1**

Is it from the Man in the Sky?

**MARK**

Nope, this one I came up with all on my own. And it's going to change the way you all do business... forever.

Mark hits a button and a projection screen comes down on the far wall. Mark starts a slide show.

**MARK**

Up until now, all products sold worldwide have warning labels printed on them. Warnings like these.

SERIES OF SLIDES: We see the same warning we just saw on the Coke can, a commercial jet with "This Plane Might Crash -- Four Of Our Other Ones Did" printed on its side, a car dashboard light reading "This Car will Ignite Upon Impact - Always", and a sticker on a grocery store package of ground meat that reads "Injected with hormones that make it taste better -- but will eventually give you cancer".

**MARK**

As you can see, a lot of these products can be very depressing. They remind people of all the horrible things that can happen to them in life. People hate thinking about horrible things.

**EXECUTIVE #2**

Yeah, but they have to know those things.

**(MORE)**

101.

**EXECUTIVE #2 (cont'd)**

They have to be able to protect themselves.

I don't want to hurt anyone.

Especially now that I know about the "bad place".

Everyone in the room shudders.

**MARK**

Hear me out, fellas. Allow me to introduce you to the future of your companies.

Mark changes the slide to a can of coke that simple reads,

"Coke -- Tastes Great! And It's Good For You!"

Everyone in the room "ahhhs".

**EXECUTIVE #3**

Where can I get some of that healthy coke?

**MARK**

It's the same Coke as before.

The executives all squint their eyes.

**EXECUTIVE #4**

But this one is healthy! And it tastes great!

**EXECUTIVE #1**

Do you have any samples?

**MARK**

Guys, it's the same Coke on the inside. I've just changed the outside.

**EXECUTIVE #1**

**(REVELATION)**

Somehow by changing the outside, he's also changed the inside!

the  
Everyone "aaahs" in understanding. Mark sighs and changes slide to that of a commercial airliner with the words "Completely Safe" writing on the outside.

**EXECUTIVE #2**

Oh, thank goodness. I've always hated flying!

**EXECUTIVE #3**

Me too!

102.

**EXECUTIVE #4**

What an invention! How did you do it?

**MARK**

I didn't do anything, guys. I made this on my computer last night. The

plane is exactly the same as it was before.

Nobody in the room gets it.

**EXECUTIVE #1**

That's the only plane I'll ever fly on again!

**MARK**

That's the point here guys. With these new advertising strategies, people will buy your products with abandon.

**EXECUTIVE #2**

But it will take years to replace all of our stock with these new improved products you've invented.

**MARK**

No. It won't. All you have to do is print these words on the packaging. That's it.

Mark changes the slide again: The car dashboard light now reads, "This Car Prevents Crashes", and another slide that shows a package of meat with a sticker reading, "This Meat Actually Cures Cancer".

**MARK**

Even if you don't understand it, just start shipping these products out to people as you see them here and you're all going to get very, very rich.

**EXECUTIVE #3**

How did you do it?

**MARK**

Look, they're still the same products you have on the shelves right now. The only difference now is that people won't get bummed out or scared when they use them. Isn't that a good thing?

103.

The executives all nod their heads in agreement and rise to

shake Mark's hand.

**MARK**

Gentleman, if you'll excuse me, I have five thousand gay orphans on my front lawn that are going bananas.

Mark exits.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. SUPER MARKET - DAY**

We follow a suburban housewife as she pushes her shopping cart through the aisles of a bright and shiny super market.

She picks up a six pack of Coke and notices the label: "New Coke -- It Tastes Great! And it's Good For You!"

in The housewife smiles widely and enthusiastically tosses it her cart.

SERIES OF CUTS: The housewife grabbing different products, marveling at the new, improved features: "Cures Sadness!", "Tastes Better than Real Chicken!", "This Candy is All Your Body Needs To Survive!"

With a full cart the housewife wheels it to the checkout counter to find swarms of people already there, all of their carts bursting to the brim with new, exciting products.

Everyone looks excited and happy.

**INT. BAR - MORNING**

Back at his old stomping ground, Mark sits at the bar by himself drinking coffee and watching the TV.

Greg sits next to him, with two boxes of cookies and a liter of coke in front of him.

Treats", Different newspapers are spread out on the bar, all of them with similar headlines, "World Rocked By New Healthy Products", "People Everywhere Line up for Guilt-Free

**"YOU CAN EAT CAKE -- ALL THE TIME!"**.

ANGLE ON TV: A FAT MAN is being interviewed in front of a

super market, he holds a bag full of junk food in front of him.

104.

**FAT MAN**

Thank the Man in the Sky for this.  
I've never been happier in my life.  
Now I can eat whatever I want,  
whenever I want.

The man takes a bite of a Twinkie and wavers a bit like he's going to pass out.

**REPORTER**

Are you all right, sir?

The man steadies himself.

**FAT MAN**

Yeah. I must just be real happy. It says on the wrapper that they help boost your happiness.

The man smiles, but he's obviously not feeling well.

**BACK ON MARK**

He's watching the TV with a bit of worry on his face. He turns to Greg who is eating a stack of cookies and washing

it

down by gulping from a liter of coke.

**MARK**

You should slow down there, Greg.

**GREG**

Why's that?

**MARK**

Just because the package says it's not bad for you doesn't mean you have to gorge yourself on it.

**GREG**

But it tastes so good.

Greg shoves three more cookies into his mouth.

**MARK**

That's just stupid.

**GREG**

No it's not.

Greg holds up the package of cookies and points to the disclaimer which reads, "These cookies make you smarter".

**GREG**

See?

105.

Mark sighs.

**GREG**

You look sad. Here, have a brownie.  
They'll cheer you up.

Greg hands Mark a brownie that, sure enough, says "They'll cheer you up!" right on the package.

**MARK**

I wish that worked for me, Greg.

**GREG**

What?

**MARK**

Nevermind. I'll see you around.

Mark gets up and leaves.

**INT. MARK'S CAR -- DAY**

Mark drives while we take in a bit of his world,  
highlighting  
the various changes he's wrought.

A homeless man stands on the street corner with a sign that now reads, "Screw it. I'll be in my mansion soon." He has a big smile on his face.

The same business man pulls up beside Mark's car, this time eating a giant donut and talking loudly into his cell phone.

**BUSINESS MAN**

I'm not talking to anyone on my  
cell phone. But from a distance I  
look very important and busy.

At a red light Mark eavesdrops on the same arguing couple.

**GIRLFRIEND**

No, I won't move into your mansion with you when we die. You're really smothering me.

**BOYFRIEND**

The more you push me away, the more attracted I am to you.

A bus passes in front of Mark's car. The ad now reads, "Pepsi. Just As Good as Coke."

A car honks behind Mark. The man leans out of his car and yells at Mark.

106.

**HONKING MAN**

Move it, fatty!

As the man passes him, he looks at Mark and pulls up beside him.

**HONKING MAN**

Hey you're Mark Bellison!

**MARK**

Yeah. So are you going to apologize?

**HONKING MAN**

For what?

The honking man speeds away.

**INT. GRAVEYARD - AFTERNOON**

Mark sits in front of the gravesite of his grandmother.

ANGLE ON: Her tombstone which reads, "Martha Bellison 1918-2007. Lived an average life for a woman in her time."

**MARK**

Nothing's really changed. I gave people the Man in the Sky, made myself rich and successful, told

the world they can eat whatever they want and feel good about it. Everyone's happy but me. Because I'm the only one who knows it all... isn't. I made it all up.

**(PAUSE)**

You're not up there living in a mansion. You're right here. In the ground. That's all. And I'm the only one who knows that.

**(PAUSE)**

And the one thing I want I can't have. Because the world is too stupid to change. The world only cares about what they can see, and what they can know, and what they're used to and what... makes sense. No one listens to what they really want. And that's why I'll always just be a loser, grandma. And that's why I'll always be alone.

**FADE TO:**

**107.**

**INT. MARK'S MANSION - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

With a beer bottle in his hand Mark searches through his kitchen drawers for a bottle opener. He opens a drawer and something catches his eye.

ANGLE ON: The envelope which reads, "MY INVENTION".

Slowly Mark pulls it out of the drawer and stares at it.

The sound of his front door opening startles him and Mark shoves the envelope into his back pocket.

**MARK**

Who's there?

**JENNIFER (O.S.)**

It's me. Can I come in?

**MARK**

Sure.

Jennifer enters the kitchen.

**MARK**

Haven't seen you much lately.

**JENNIFER**

I know. I've been busy with work and things. And I'm getting married. That's why I came over. To tell you.

Mark nods.

**MARK**

Don't do it.

**JENNIFER**

The wedding is tomorrow.

Jennifer pulls out an invitation, Mark waves it away.

**JENNIFER**

I hope you'll come.

Mark shrugs and Jennifer puts the invitation back in her purse.

**MARK**

No point really.

108.

**JENNIFER**

It would make me happy. Being around you makes me happy.

Mark turns towards her.

**MARK**

So don't marry him.

**JENNIFER**

I only have a few years to marry someone with good genes and financial stability so I can have children and the family I've always wanted. One day I'll be old and wrinkly and ugly.

**MARK**

No you won't. Not to me you won't. I love you. If you really love

someone it doesn't matter what they look like.

**JENNIFER**

What do you mean?

**MARK**

Do me this favor. Just one favor. Don't accept everything you see. Don't just do something because that's the way it's done.

**JENNIFER**

You're confusing me.

**MARK**

Think about what you want. Find out what you really want. And if it's not the same as what I want, well then I'll know that and I'll never darken your doorstep again.

**(PAUSE)**

I want you. What do you want?

Jennifer and Mark stare at each other for a long beat.

**JENNIFER**

I'm going to go.

**MARK**

Please don't. Will you just stay a little bit longer? I don't want to be alone. Just sit with me.

**109.**

Jennifer nods. Mark leads her into the living room and they sit down far apart from each other on the couch. Mark turns the TV on and they both sit in silence.

**LATER.**

Mark has fallen asleep on the couch. Jennifer checks her watch and stands up. She takes out her wedding invitation and lays it on the coffee table by Mark.

She unfolds a blanket and is about to place it on him when she notices an envelope sticking out of his back pocket. She pulls it out and looks at it.

**JENNIFER**  
**(READING)**

My invention.

She opens the letter and begins to read. Once finished, she folds up the letter and hurriedly leaves, scared and confused.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**THE NEXT MORNING**

Mark wakes up and sees Jennifer's wedding invitation on the coffee table. He sighs.

**INT. MARK'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Mark stands before the mirror, dressed in a suit, putting on a tie.

Greg pokes his head into the room, dressed in a suit as well.

**GREG**

We're gonna be late.

**EXT. "CHURCH" - DAY**

MAN  
The sign outside reads, "A QUITE PLACE TO THINK ABOUT THE  
IN THE SKY".

**GREG**

Makes sense people would start getting married at these places. I mean, who you marry decides who's mansion you're going to live in one day. It's a big decision.

110.

**MARK**

Yeah.

They enter the building.

**INT. "CHURCH" - DAY**

A small stage sits before a large stained glass window portraying Mark holding the two halves of the pizza box.

Rob stands at the altar.

Mark and Greg take their seats amidst a crowd of people sitting quietly in their chairs.

**INT. "CHURCH" - BRIDAL ROOM - DAY**

stares  
Jennifer sits in a small room in a beautiful white dress, looking as beautiful as any woman has ever looked. She  
absentmindedly out the window.

head  
There's a knock at the door. JENNIFER'S MOTHER pokes her  
in.

**JENNIFER'S MOTHER**

It's time, dear.

Jennifer doesn't answer. We PUSH IN on Jennifer to see she's clutching Mark's letter in her hand.

**JENNIFER'S MOTHER**

Jennifer?

**JENNIFER**

I don't feel all right.

**JENNIFER'S MOTHER**

What's wrong? Do you have food poisoning?

**JENNIFER**

No. I don't think there's a word for what I have.

**INT. "CHURCH" - DAY**

"Here's comes the Bride" plays over an organ and Jennifer walks down the aisle towards a smiling Rob.

Mark watches her in awe, stunned by her beauty. Rob notices Mark staring at Jennifer and mouths "loser" at him.

Jennifer reaches the altar and stands across from Rob. The WEDDING OVERSEER, an elderly man in a suit, stands between them holding a few sheets of paper in his hand.

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

We are sitting here in this building today to share in the wedding of Rob and Jennifer. Two young, attractive people who have agreed that this union would be mutually beneficial and that their genetic match-up would most likely produce favorable offspring and a life of financial stability and physical security.

Both Rob and Jennifer nod at each other.

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

Rob, do you promise to stay with Jennifer for as long as you want to and to protect your offspring for as long as you can?

**ROB**

I do.

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

Jennifer, do you promise to stay with Rob for as long as you want to and to protect your offspring for as long as you can?

Jennifer doesn't respond.

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

Jennifer?

**JENNIFER**

(to Overseer)

I'm sorry, hold on one second.

(to Rob)

Rob, can I ask you something?

There's a slight hubbub in the room. Mark perks up.

**ROB**

**(CONCERNED)**

Sure. But what are you doing?

**JENNIFER**

What color are my eyes?

112.

**ROB**

I dunno...

**(LOOKING)**

Oh, they're brown.

CLOSE ON Jennifer's eyes. Indeed, they are brown.

**JENNIFER**

No Rob, they're blue.

Rob looks again. Mark stirs in his seat, amazed by what he's hearing.

**ROB**

Oh, look at that. So they are.  
You've got pretty blue eyes.

PUSH IN on Jennifer. It works. Her mind is reeling.

**ROB**

Can we get on with this?

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

Jennifer, do you promise to stay  
with Rob for as long as you want to  
and to protect your offspring for  
as long as you can?

Jennifer is confused. Her mind is fighting it, but she  
doesn't know what exactly she's fighting. Finally...

**JENNIFER**

I do.

There is a sigh of relief from the room. Mark shakes his  
head  
in sadness.

**WEDDING OVERSEER**

Before I pronounce these two man  
and wife, is there anyone here who  
thinks they'd offer either of these  
people a better genetic match-up?

Mark bolts up in his chair.

**MARK**

Me.

The whole room gasps.

**ROB**

Oh come on. Look at you. You can't be better.

113.

**MARK**

Yes I can. You've got shmuck genes.

**ROB**

Shmuck genes? What's that?

**MARK**

And I love her.

(to Jennifer)

Jennifer, don't marry him. Is this what you really want?

**JENNIFER**

I don't know.

(pause; unsure)

Yes?

Mark thinks this over for a beat.

**MARK**

All right. I'm done. Goodbye.

Awkwardly Mark makes his way to the aisle and leaves the room. The room is thick with tension.

**ROB**

Are we married yet? Because I've got plans this afternoon.

**EXT. "CHURCH" - DAY**

Mark loosens his tie as he walks out of the building and towards the street.

In the background we can see the "church" door open.

**JENNIFER**

**(SHOUTING)**

Hold on a minute!

Mark turns, confused and tired.

Jennifer runs to him. She stands before him, they both stare at each other.

**MARK**

What?

Jennifer pulls out Mark's letter and shows it to him.

**JENNIFER**

I'm confused.

114.

**MARK**

So am I.

**JENNIFER**

Is any of it... the things you said... are they... I can't think of the word.

**(PAUSE)**

Is there a Man in the Sky?

**MARK**

No.

**JENNIFER**

Why'd you say there was?

**MARK**

Because I couldn't cope with the look on my grandmother's face.

**JENNIFER**

But how could you say something that... wasn't.

**MARK**

I'm not sure. I just did it.

**JENNIFER**

And what did you mean that I could grow old and ugly and still be beautiful to you?

**MARK**

I mean just that. You'll always be beautiful to me.

**JENNIFER**

But what if my looks...

**MARK**

It doesn't matter.

**JENNIFER**

I feel funny.

**MARK**

Me too.

**(PAUSE)**

Everything is so hard. Nothing is easy anymore.

There is a long moment of silence. Jennifer moves closer to Mark and looks directly into his eyes.

115.

**JENNIFER**

I know what I want.

**MARK**

What?

**JENNIFER**

I want short, fat kids with little snub noses.

The biggest smile we've ever seen comes across Mark's face.

**MARK**

**(JUBILANTLY)**

Easy! That's an easy one.

Just like she did the night on her couch, Jennifer reaches over and puts her hand on Mark's wrist. They both stare at each other for a long beat, holding hands, love beaming

from

both of them.

The world is changing before their eyes.

**JENNIFER**

Does anyone else know about your invention?

**MARK**

No. But I'm sure it won't be long.

**JENNIFER**

Should we tell them right away?

**MARK**

I'm not sure. I don't think everyone will understand.

Greg sticks his head out of the church door.

**GREG**

What's going on out here?  
Everyone's just sitting in there.  
Are we gonna finish this wedding?

Jennifer smiles at Mark.

**JENNIFER**

Yes.

Mark smiles back.

**MARK**

Praise the Man in the Sky.

116.

WE RISE UP as Mark and Jennifer walk hand in hand towards  
the church -- and an unknowable future.

**NARRATOR**

The world's last moment of honesty.  
A monumental occasion in the  
history of mankind.

**(PAUSE)**

That lowly writer who stumbled upon  
the ability to lie went on to  
become one of the most important  
men of his age, married to one of  
the most beautiful women of his  
time, and passed on the lying gene  
to generations to come.

**(PAUSE)**

A world without honesty is a world  
with dreams. A world with pretense.  
A world with fiction. A world with  
flattery. And most importantly, a

world with true love. Put simply, a  
world very much like our own.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END**