

WORN
a short script
by
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FINAL DRAFT

** revised **

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INT. SUBURBAN HOME - MONTAGE - DAY

Morning. Sacramento, suburbia; PAUL, 35, is shaving in front of the bathroom mirror. He wipes the steam away from his reflection and rinses the razor.

From the closet he selects a shirt and some pants. He puts on his shoes while sitting on the bed.

Downstairs in the kitchen, HEATHER, 33, is squeezing fresh orange juice and making toast for MAGGIE, the cute 2-year-old sitting patiently at the table.

It's evident from the stacks of cardboard boxes and general disarray that this family has either recently moved in or are getting ready to move out. Paul enters.

MAGGIE

Mumma's making toast, Dadda.

PAUL

Me too, me too.

HEATHER

If you like it crispy.

Paul gives Maggie a kiss and grabs some toast.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Hey. You gonna be alright today?

PAUL

I'll be fine. I just hope he remembered.

HEATHER

Well give me a call if you need to.

Paul leans over to kiss his wife Heather. She tugs at his suit jacket and fixes his hair. They kiss.

PAUL

Hey, sweetie, Daddy's gotta go. Kisses.

Maggie smooches her dad on the cheek leaving a small jelly mark. He doesn't notice.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Help your mom clean up, okay?

Maggie nods and smiles. Paul grabs his car keys and leaves through the front door.

INT. CAR - SACRAMENTO - DAY

Driving headlong into early morning traffic, Paul scans the sidewalks looking at pedestrians. Some women joggers run by. He turns to look at them in the rear view mirror and notices Maggie's jelly smooch on his cheek. He smiles then rubs it off with his hands.

I/E. DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO - DAY

Paul is sitting in his parked car sipping a coffee. He stares at a man curled up in dirty blankets laying about 20 yards away near a short concrete wall. Paul checks his watch and takes another sip.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Paul slowly approaches the sleeping man. After looking around the park, he kneels down to get closer.

PAUL
Wakey, wakey.

Paul nudges the man. He doesn't move.

PAUL (cont'd)
Hey. Dad. Get up. Come on.

Stuart, 60, with deep wrinkles and a rough complexion, wriggles around a bit, pulling the blanket from his eyes. His face is dirty with creases; eyes puffy and red. He stares up at Paul, dazed.

STUART
(coughing, spitting)
What the hell's today?

PAUL
Thursday.

STUART
Shit. I thought you said Friday.

PAUL
Nope. Thursday.

STUART

Well, it's too late now.

Stuart turns to go back to sleep. Paul nudges him again while checking his watch.

PAUL

It's not even 7:30. We have all day.

STUART

I'm sorry. I'm... I forgot... I thought it was Friday...

PAUL

Okay. Just... get together what you need and we can go get breakfast or something.

STUART

(coughing)

I know, but I coulda sworn you said Friday. Last night got late.

Paul helps Stuart up from the ground; his frame is heavy and he walks with a cane. His clothes are tattered and his leather work boots are extremely worn.

PAUL

Where to?

STUART

Don't matter. If it's hot, I'm hungry.

INT. DINER - DAY

A waitress tops off Stuart's coffee cup. The two are in mid-conversation eating breakfast.

PAUL

How many times do I have to explain myself?

STUART

All I'm asking is why Seattle? That's like living in a car wash.

PAUL

There really wasn't a choice. Heather's company is relocating.

STUART

You gonna keep teaching or what?

PAUL

I have a few things lined up, yeah.

STUART

You're gonna miss the sun. It's not like here.

PAUL

Dad. I know. I think I'll manage.

STUART

I'm just saying.

Pause. Stuart sips some coffee.

PAUL

You know you're invited to come. Maggie would love to have you around--

STUART

(interrupting, agitated)

I told you before... I'm not interested -- I told you before. My life is here. It's not with you-- I mean, it's my decision-- I don't ask you for--

PAUL

(annoyed)

Decision? What, you decided to go on moping around the streets, drinking yourself into the grave--

STUART

Don't start with that shit-- Don't even start with me--

PAUL

Well it's the only time you seem to listen to me--

STUART

(loudly)

I said shut up about it!!

Stuart's words explode throughout the diner as his hand slams the tabletop. Customers turn and look in their direction. Paul calms down, staring at his plate.

Stuart reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a cigarette. He looks for some matches.

PAUL

What are you doing?

STUART

Taking my medicine.

PAUL

You can't smoke in here. It's illegal.

STUART

Fine. I won't light it. Fucking law.

Stuart is jittery and noticeably irked with Paul.

PAUL

You know... I've tried to help. It's not as if people can't get on track. You're not the only one who has to--

Stuart rolls his eyes and tries to avoid the conversation.

STUART

If I gave a shit I would gladly hand it over, but I really could care less.

A waitress approaches the table and leans over to Stuart.

WAITRESS

I'm sorry, sir. Smoking is not allowed inside the restaurant.

Stuart takes an imaginary puff from the unlit cigarette and blows it into the air.

STUART

Thanks for caring, babe, except my butt ain't burning at the moment.

The waitress glares at Stuart then turns away.

PAUL

Can't you just go along to get along?

Stuart hastily grabs the menu.

STUART

Christ. I need a beer. What's on tap?

Paul rips it away and puts it back on the table.

PAUL

Of course they don't sell beer. It's a fucking diner. Jesus... I gotta use the restroom. Think you can sit here and be a nice boy until I get back?

STUART

Fuck off.

EXT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY

Paul is inching through traffic. Stuart sits in the front passenger's seat complaining.

STUART

I would've taken a left back there, but that's just me.

PAUL

You see this? This is the wheel. And who's behind it? Me, that's right. I'm behind the wheel. So if you'd rather walk, you can walk. But if you want a ride then let me do the driving.

STUART

Fine. Be an asshole. See if it gets us there any faster.

Stuart reaches for the radio.

PAUL

Don't bother. It's broken.

STUART

No radio? How can you stand it? That would drive me crazy.

PAUL

You're driving me crazy.

STUART

I can't live without music. How can my son live without music?

PAUL

Because your son listens to public radio. You should try it once in a while. Makes you think.

STUART

Thinking is overrated.

Stuart pulls out a cigarette and pushes in the car lighter.

PAUL

That's broken, too.

STUART

(sighing)

Does anything work in this shit-box?

PAUL

Yeah. See? See? Things work. Happy now?

Frustrated, Paul proves his point and turns on the wipers, sprays windshield fluid, cranks on the fan, hits the blinkers, and honks the horn wildly.

STUART

Now you're gonna get us killed. Just drive normal, would ya? Christ, I'd feel safer on the bus.

PAUL

You want me to pull over? I'll let you out and you can take the bus.

STUART

Go ahead. Can't smoke on the bus, can't smoke in here. And your company sure ain't worth a damn.

Paul continues to drive, infuriated. Both are silent.

INT. GOLDEN STATE MUSEUM - DAY

Paul and Stuart are wandering around the museum exhibits.

PAUL

Remind me again why we're here.

STUART

I want you to remember California.

PAUL

I'm moving to Seattle not Singapore.

STUART

You shouldn't forget your roots.

PAUL

(finding humor)

Yeah. My roots. I'm sure Mom would have been comforted by the gesture.

STUART

(sternly)

Don't disrespect her. Don't ever disrespect her. She was your mother and she loved you ---

PAUL

And I was 15-months old when she died so, in case you forgot, we really didn't have much time to bond.

STUART

Flesh and blood is the bond. How can you disrespect like that?

PAUL

Well maybe if you played it smart she would have stood a chance.

STUART

Can't you just be thankful you're alive? Can't you appreciate that?

PAUL

Thanks to foster parents and social services... I turned out okay.

Stuart stares back at Paul with a hurtful glare. He walks off into another area of the museum. Paul stands and watches the old man limp away with his cane.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Stuart is standing near an illuminated display of historical images. Paul approaches.

PAUL

I didn't mean that. You did what you did and I'm sorry about what happened.

STUART

(reflecting, choked up)

When the state turned you over to foster care, I prayed to God, please, give me the strength to change, to fix what I broke so that someday I might get you back and show you... how much... With you gone, I never felt so alone... lost. But I knew I couldn't give you the life you deserved. A life away from drunks, a life off the streets... so you could become the man you are today.

Both men stand in silence during a long pause.

STUART (CONT'D)

You wanna carve pumpkins?

This tangent throws off Paul.

PAUL

Pumpkins? Are you serious?

STUART

Yeah I'm serious. I wouldn't have mentioned it if I ain't serious.

PAUL

If that's what you feel like doing.

STUART

It'll be like old times.

PAUL

What are you talking about? We never carved pumpkins before.

STUART

Then it'll be like new times. Come on.
I'm trying to lighten things up a bit.

EXT. CITY PARK - PICNIC BENCH - DAY

Paul and Stuart are carving pumpkins with knives and spoons they bought.

STUART

What I can't believe is that after all these years you're still in touch with me. Doesn't seem like it's worth it.

PAUL

For me or for you?

STUART

Either one of us

PAUL

What are you talking about? You know how long it took me to track you down. If you weren't at that processing plant I might not have found you.

STUART

There's something good about employment.

PAUL

Have you tried that job service you used before?

STUART

Hell no. They got this little stimulation for drunks with police records and a bum leg.

PAUL

You mean stipulation.

STUART

Whatever you call it. And I hate the goddamn curfews those homes put on you.

PAUL

(warmly)

Then come with us. We've extended the invite all this time here in Sac. Why not take us up on it now?

STUART

Because I do have a home and it's called Anystreet, Sacramento. I'll be damned if I'm gonna keep stepping up to the plate and striking out. I'm sick of it. People always bitch about getting away from it all, moving into the woods and surviving off the land, living free from the bullshit--

PAUL

Yeah, it's called Survivor.

STUART

You try living on the streets. I'd give you two days - three tops.

PAUL

C'mon, don't fucking glamorize it. You know you'd rather have a job and... and an apartment. You had that once before. Didn't seem to bother you then.

Stuart changes the topic and shows his pumpkin to Paul.

STUART

What do you think?

PAUL

I'm scared?

STUART

Guess what we forgot.

Stuart lifts the lid and looks in.

PAUL

Shit.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Paul is thumbing through a rack of Hawaiian shirts.

PAUL

Can I at least buy you a new shirt?

STUART

(looking at the shirts)

One of them? They are cheap.

PAUL

Yeah... but they don't smell.

STUART

I try to wear clothes made in the U.S. of A, not overseas by some corporate conglomeration.

PAUL

There's something I didn't know you had.

STUART

What, taste?

PAUL

A moral conscience.

STUART

I like to think of it as a patriotic fashion sense.

PAUL

Still. I'm gonna buy you a shirt for Halloween and you can dress up as an unpatriotic CEO of an overseas cheap clothing corporation... then throw it out afterwards. I don't care.

STUART

Then get the blue one. Red makes me look fat.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SACRAMENTO PARK - EVENING

Stuart and Paul are sitting on a short brick wall staring at their lit pumpkins on the ground.

PAUL

Whatever happened to Edith?

STUART

You mean that bitch, Evie?

PAUL

My mistake. I didn't know she was a...
bitch.

STUART

We'd only drink, fight, then try to
screw, but we're both too old and tired
to get it on any good.

PAUL

So I take it you're not seeing her?

STUART

Now and then...

PAUL

(considering)

You can bring her along, if you want.

STUART

(laughing)

Man. You are a glutton for punishment,
aren't you? Teacher, husband, father,
humanitarian... you can't eat a bigger
shit sandwich than that.

PAUL

At least I'm trying. Some people just
take one bite and throw it away.

STUART

(still laughing)

As any sane man should do.

PAUL

You're right. I shouldn't be so
generous. Guess I'll just have to keep
both of these King's tickets to myself.

Stuart stops laughing. Pause.

STUART

Bullshit. You ain't serious.

PAUL

Heather's company gives 'em out, but I

didn't think you'd be interested.

STUART
Bullshit. Show 'em to me.

PAUL
What's the point? You don't care.

STUART
Are you crazy? I'm not gonna pass up a King's game.

Paul takes out the two game tickets and checks the seats.

PAUL
Let's see... row 17 center court--

Stuart snatches the tickets out of Paul's hands.

STUART
Jesus. Why the hell are we sitting here carving pumpkins like a couple of assholes? These are killer seats.

PAUL
I figured you'd rather go drinking.

STUART
We can drink at the game, right?

PAUL
You can wear your new shirt, right?

Stuart stands up and yowls.

STUART
Then it's fucking game time!

INT. KING'S GAME - MONTAGE - NIGHT

Stuart and Paul are yelling at the teams on the court as a montage of the basketball game follows. The father and son are clearly enjoying themselves, drinking beers, eating nachos and cheering on their home team.

EXT. KING'S GAME - NIGHT

Stuart hobbles along with his cane while Paul sways and feigns shooting imaginary basketballs as they meander down

the sidewalk. They continue to replay the game out loud.

STUART

Man, that was a damn good game!

PAUL

Webber to Christie, back to Webber for the three -- score!

STUART

Stojakovic over and under - score!

PAUL

Draws the foul and rebounds for two! That's game, folks!

STUART

Time for drinks!

PAUL

I thought we just did that?

STUART

The night is young and long, Paul. Young like the girls in my dreams and long like the pickerel in my pants.

PAUL

Then lead the way, Dreamer. And be careful not to trip.

The two ramble down the sidewalk passing an imaginary basketball back and forth, laughing and whooping it up.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Shot glasses clink together followed by Stuart and Paul gulping their whiskeys. Paul winces. Stuart belches and exhales with gusto.

STUART

Whew! I almost forgot how the good stuff tastes.

PAUL

So this was one of your old haunts, eh?

STUART

Many a night and day spent right here

on the stool with a view. Ain't that
right, Greg?

Stuart motions to GREG, the bartender filling a glass.

GREG
Right on, Stuey.

STUART
Best damn shit hole in Sac Town.

GREG
We aim to please. How the hell are you?

Stuart and Greg lock hands, trading a firm shake.

STUART
(motioning to Paul)
My son here's movin' to Seattle.

GREG
Hope you like it wet.

Greg extends a handshake to Paul.

PAUL
Guess I'll find out.

STUART
Hey, you seen Evie around?

GREG
Back in the summer. Yeah. She was in
rough shape. Haven't seen her since.

Stuart reflects on Greg's news; Paul looks on with
curiosity.

GREG (CONT'D)
If you felt like entertaining the
troops I can hit the lights for ya.

STUART
Fuck that. Last time they kept me on
stage 'til last call.

Paul looks at Stuart then to Greg.

PAUL

Whadda ya mean, entertain the troops?

GREG

You don't know about Billy Joel here?

PAUL

Tell me.

GREG

He's a regular *Piano Man* this guy.

STUART

Billy Joel's a faggot. Jerry Lee Lewis could have kicked his ass sideways.

PAUL

You play piano?

GREG

And sings like Joe Fucking Cocker.

PAUL

Bull shit.

Stuart throws a napkin at Greg.

STUART

Remind me to kick *your* ass sideways.

Greg hits the stage lights and makes an announcement over the house speakers.

GREG

Ladies and gentlewomen, we have some unexpected entertainment for you this evening. Give it up for our favorite house drunk - I mean, special guest - Stuart Lancaster.

The crowd breaks into an unexpected applause as the house lights dim. Paul is thrown off by the random situation.

Stuart shakes his head, trying to dismiss the audience. He glares at Greg before making his way to the stage area.

STUART

(to Greg)

Drinks on you.

GREG
(pointing to Stuart)
Don't break your other leg up there.

Greg slides another drink in front of Paul.

GREG (CONT'D)
Don't let him fool you. He'll usually
close the place on a good night.

Perplexed by Greg's comment, Paul takes hold of his drink
and turns to watch Stuart on stage.

STUART
How's everyone doing tonight?

The crowd jeers a bit with raucous comments.

STUART (CONT'D)
Sorry I have to go ruin it for you.

A handful of barflies laugh and whistle.

STUART (CONT'D)
This song is for a certain someone
who's moving up north to the Land of
the Latté. Happy trails, kid. Send
postcards when you can.

Stuart breaks into a bluesy melody that sets a mid-tempo
mood; his deep thick voice permeates the bar. Stuart's
fingers move over the piano keys with grace. Paul can't
take his eyes off the bizarre scene.

When it seems as if the song is slowing to a close, Stuart
hammers the keys, breaking into an upbeat tune that gets
the crowd cheering him on.

Gulping down his drink and ordering another, Paul leans
back and lets the surreal moment wash over him.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Stuart and Paul are slowly making their way through a city
park. Both men are drunk and maudlin.

PAUL
I can't believe you can play like that.
That's amazing!

STUART

Horseshit. I'm a lousy hack.

PAUL

No, really. That was unbelievable back there. You got the whole crowd going. Man. I can't get over it.

STUART

Try.

PAUL

No. You should play more often. You really should. You could record some tracks or something. Maybe find a promoter--

STUART

I said stop it. That's crap.

PAUL

Really Dad. You're good. Not everyone can play like that. I have a few friends in the music scene and they could maybe get you some shows---

Stuart slams his cane against a lamppost to punctuate his frustration then verbally tears into Paul.

STUART

(barking)

Would you listen to me? I don't give a shit about any recording deals and I don't give a shit about your friends or that fucking crowd or nothing. If they weren't feeding me the booze, I'd've told'em to go screw themselves. It's not like you think it is. Christ. You just figure it's like some rock star fantasy, like I can just ham it up, night after night playing like that. If I didn't give a rat's ass about watching out for my own son, what makes you think I give a damn about myself?

Paul stares at his father, searching for the right words.

PAUL

Don't say that. You know you care. I don't believe it for one second--

Stuart pulls Paul in, face to face; both are near tears.

STUART

Are you that numb? Can't you just admit your father's a selfish bastard looking for a cheap drink and the easy way out? Huh? Ain't that the sad truth? Well ain't it? I'm not a man. I'm a heartless ghost waiting to disappear. Let me go, Paul. Just let me go.

Paul breaks into tears and hugs his father. Stuart hesitates before reciprocating Paul's grip.

STUART (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Paul. I'm sorry.

I/E. PAUL'S CAR - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Paul and Stuart are finishing up a conversation.

PAUL

Well, I know you won't take me up on it, but I want you to have this anyway.

Paul reaches for the glove box and pulls out a bus ticket, handing it to Stuart.

STUART

Nice. More King's tickets.

PAUL

Greyhound. One-way.

STUART

You know I won't. But if it makes you happy I'll sell it for beer money.

PAUL

Can't say I didn't try.

STUART

Can't say I didn't warn you.

Paul shakes his head at his father's stubbornness.

PAUL

Take care of yourself. I'll give Maggie a hug for you.

STUART

Don't forget your wife, neither. She's a good woman. Pretty girl.

PAUL

She is.

Stuart looks out the window towards the dark empty park where their day started together.

STUART

Well... time for some shuteye, kid. Hey. Looks like Louie kept his promise. My shit's still there. He's a numb spic, but ya gotta love the guy.

Stuart opens his door and steps onto the sidewalk.

PAUL

Hey. Thanks for today. It was fun.

STUART

Next time it's on me, eh?

PAUL

Sure, Dad. Sounds like a plan.

Both hold a glance. Stuart goes to say something, but changes his mind and turns to leave, whistling on the way back to his blankets and cardboard hovel.

Paul stares at his father until his figure is swallowed by the dark shade of night. He starts the car and drives off.

TIME LAPSE - MONTAGE OF FALL TO WINTER

The pumpkins Paul and Stuart carved are now rotten with mold and caved in. Brown leaves pepper the ground and the sky is overcast. Thanksgiving and Christmas decorations are in store windows and restaurants.

EXT. SIDEWALK MONTAGE - DAY

Stuart is talking to other homeless folks, asking about Evie. They only shrug and point in different directions.

Some swap a cigarette for a light; others are lifeless and sickly looking. Stuart seems to know quite a few of them.

Stuart continues to roam around the back streets of Sacramento in the dirtiest and most desolate locations.

After a full day of searching, Stuart makes his way to an overgrown hedge near a cluster of abandoned buildings. It's apparent he's familiar with this location, as he knows exactly where the entrance is.

STUART

Evie? You in there? You dumb bitch,
where the hell are you?

Stuart leans in and shades his eyes with his hand. He can see a pile of blankets and some boxes. Before giving up, he hunches down and fights through the gnarled branches using his cane, moving towards the cramped living area.

Waving away a rank smell and flies, he kneels down next to the figure under the blankets. Reaching forward with his cane, Stuart rolls the blankets back to reveal Evie's face.

Stuart stares into her gray eyes and open mouth. Looking around at the collection of trinkets, empty liquor bottles, and dirty clothes, he imagines her terrible fate.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Stuart walks along a street towards downtown. He stops outside a Korean grocery store where an OLD WOMAN is sweeping the front stoop.

He approaches the smiling lady and points in the direction he just came from. The Old Woman listens intently then goes inside. She quickly returns with a portable phone, but Stuart is gone. She calls the police.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Sitting, dazed, Stuart's stare becomes frozen. He pulls out some broken cigarettes from his jacket pocket and finds the crumpled bus ticket Paul gave him. This triggers a flood of emotions. Stuart starts to sob, his body shaking.

LONG DISSOLVE

I/E. BUS - DAY

Images of passing fields and highways race by the bus window. Stuart's head is propped against the glass, his eyes fixed on the disappearing California scenery, darting past like ghosts vanishing into memory.