

THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

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FADE IN:

**EXT. A NIGHT SKY**

Star-filled. Brilliant.

WALTER (V.O.)

(calm, zen-like)

The Japanese have a concept called  
mankai. Mankai is the time when the  
cherry blossom is at its peak. It's  
usually thought of as occurring on  
a particular day or days, but if  
you really think about it, true  
mankai is a much smaller moment, a  
split second - less even - between  
when the blossom has not yet  
reached its peak and when it  
begins, ever so minutely, to fade.  
It's an infinitesimally small span.  
Neither before nor after. Only now.

(beat)

But I don't know any of this - yet.

We notice now that the camera has been pulling back and  
tilting down ever so slightly, as it reveals

**EXT. A SUBURB - NIGHT**

Row upon row of roofs, outlined by the glow of light from  
inside each house. Identical roofs. Identical lives. A  
different kind of star field.

Walter's VO was disembodied, but this voice is from the now.  
SFX: Background PARTY SOUNDS.

WALTER (O.S)

Hi, Walter Smooch. I turned fifty  
years old today.

**EXT. ONE HOUSE**

Zero in on one of the many roofs. This is WALTER'S HOUSE.  
CARS line the street nearby, including a lot of MINI-VANS.

WALTER (O.S.)

That's eighteen thousand, two  
hundred and fifty days.

IN THE BACKYARD, a birthday party is in full swing, but it's  
not exactly a shindig.

Clusters of people congregate around the usual appetizers. The conversation is subdued.

Stairway to Heaven (or other quintessential 70's rock song) plays in the background, punctuated periodically by A BUG ZAPPER doing its work. The scene is pure suburbs.

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Four hundred thirty eight thousand  
hours.

Moving through the guests to find the source of the voice - WALTER SMOOCH, average in every respect and a little disheveled. On the verge of defeat.

Walter stands beneath a CHERRY TREE in bloom, speaking to MYACHI (60), a tidy JAPANESE man who seems to listen as he gazes at the cherry blossoms with just the hint of a smile.

Walter pauses to take a slug from the can of beer in his hand.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Twenty six million, two hundred and  
eighty thousand minutes.

He pats his shirt pocket, then his pants.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
I had the seconds written down  
around here somewhere. Trust me,  
it's pretty depressing.

Walter gazes over the Japanese man's shoulder at the YOUNG GIRLFRIEND of another neighbor.

His POV lingers. She's dressed in a tight outfit that displays her youthful attributes all too well.

On Walter, staring, lost in a reverie that might not be very savory, until

His focus drifts past the girlfriend to another woman closer to his age staring darkly back at him. Caught!

This is MALLORY (45), Walter's wife. If looks could kill, Walter's body would be hitting the ground.

Walter snaps his attention back to the Japanese man.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
The thing is, where does the time  
go?  
(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

It's like a roll of toilet paper.  
The more you use, the faster it  
spins.

The Japanese man turns his attention from the tree and nods politely.

MYACHI

Mankai.

WALTER

What's that?

MYACHI

Mankai.

Walter stares at him, then realizes the man hasn't understood a word he's said.

WALTER

Monki. Yes. Thanks very much.  
(mispronounced)  
Ari-gato. Awesome talking with  
you.

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE - LATER**

Mallory is cleaning up. Walter listens to the one ANNOYING GUEST left.

ANNOYING GUEST

If the big bang created the  
universe, what created the big  
bang?

WALTER

(impatient)  
I don't know. God I guess.

ANNOYING GUEST

But then who created God so he  
could create the big bang? Another  
God?

WALTER

I don't know.

ANNOYING GUEST

And then what about that God's God?  
Who created him?

WALTER

I really don't know.

ANNOYING GUEST

Exactly. If you go that route, it's  
Gods all the way down. They call  
that infinite regress.

WALTER

Really.

ANNOYING GUEST

Yeah. But you know who's at the  
bottom?

WALTER

No, who?

The man looks around in case there are sensitive ears to be  
protected, then

ANNOYING GUEST

Us, Walter. We are God's God.

WALTER

(slowly)

...Who created the big bang?

ANNOYING GUEST

...That created the universe!

WALTER

...That created us.

ANNOYING GUEST

Cool, right?

(waits for a response)

Right? Life is just a big old loop.  
Stardust to stardust, man.

(beat)

Happy birthday, neighbor.

He claps him with both hands hard on the shoulders, making  
Walter wince.

WALTER

(deadpan)

Thanks for coming. Really  
appreciate it.

**INT. BATHROOM/BEDROOM - LATER**

In the bathroom, Walter sits on the bowl, leafing absently  
through a PEOPLE or similar celebrity gossip mag.

HIS POV: Photo spreads of frolicking celebrities. The public version of the Hollywood life.

The Beatles song, "I Am The Walrus" has gotten stuck in his head. Probably from the party.

WALTER  
(singing/humming sotto)  
I am he as you are he as you are me  
as we are all together, HMMMMM,  
hmmmm, hmmm, hmmmnn, hmmm.

Walter has seen enough and tosses the magazine on the vanity. He reaches for the toilet paper, but it's the last of the roll. It yields just a few feet, then it's just cardboard.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Oh, c'mon. Really?

He discards the paper, stands and, pajama pants around his ankles, hobbles like a prisoner in chains to the cabinet where toilet paper is stored. Not exactly dignified.

**IN THE BEDROOM:**

Mallory lies in bed, reading another celebrity gossip mag. She's the fan.

SFX: Toilet flushing.

Walter opens the door and stands in the doorway. Now he's got a toothbrush in his mouth and his speech is slurred accordingly.

WALTER  
I was talking to that Myachi guy,  
you know, our new neighbor. I was  
going on for about ten minutes  
before I realized he doesn't know a  
lick of English.

Mallory continues to leaf through the magazine.

**IN THE BATHROOM:**

Walter is at the sink. Spit. Rinse. Repeat. He speaks in between actions.

WALTER

So all he says to me is monki,  
which I figure is some kind of  
happy birthday or something but, I  
Googled it and you know what it  
means?

Finished, Walter checks his physique, sucking in his gut.

It means monkey. Can you believe  
it? The man shows up at my birthday  
party and the best thing he can  
think to do is call me a monkey.  
What's up with that?

He turns one way and then the other, looking for his best  
side. There isn't one. He shrugs, then enters the bedroom.

**IN THE BEDROOM:**

MALLORY

Myachi-san.

WALTER

Huh?

MALLORY

Myachi-san. That's the proper way  
to refer to him. It's like Mister  
Myachi.

Walter pauses to consider the relevance.

WALTER

(shrugging)

Good to know. Ari-gato.

He climbs in the bed from his side.

WALTER (CONT'D)

And talk to me about Frank's new  
girlfriend? I mean, she seems nice  
and all but what could they  
possibly have in common? I don't  
understand that about guys. 'Says  
she's a dancer, you know, like it's  
the Bolshoi or something. I mean,  
hanging off a chrome pole isn't  
dancing, dude.

He rolls expectantly toward Mallory with a big smile.

Mallory looks at him, face unchanged. She closes the magazine and puts it on the night table.

Walter holds his smile, suggestively.

But then Mallory rolls over giving him her back and turning out her light.

Walter's smile disappears.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Um, aren't we forgetting something?

Nothing. Silence.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Umm, begins with a B. Ends with a J. Otherwise known as the B.B.J.?

Mallory continues to ignore him.

WALTER (CONT'D)

What? Are you? Wait a minute, did you think? You thought I was checking her out? Come on, Mal. Don't be ridiculous. She's a child.

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

Reprising the earlier angle. But the people are all gone. No signs there was ever a party. It's history.

WALTER (O.S.)

Seriously, honey. I mean. I was just looking at her dress.  
(feigned outrage)  
You and I both know that was not proper attire for a birthday party. I thought Mrs. Goulden was going to trip over her own jaw.

WIDER on the neighborhood. Most other houses now in darkness. Only Walter's bedroom light is on.

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come on. I love you. You know that.

Walter tries the nostalgic angle.

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(reciting)  
Always and forever, til the end of time. Right?

EXTREME WIDE. Walter's house a distant spec of light, a lone boat adrift on a dark sea. He pleads his case to the universe.

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I can't believe this. It's my  
birthday. That's what the first B  
in B.B.J. stands for.

**EXT. WALTER'S NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING**

Sprinklers wake up, spitting water.

Kids get on a school bus.

Garbage cans are emptied into the truck.

Life goes on.

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

CLOSE as the front door opens and white SNEAKERS emerge.

WIDER. It's Mallory with a light coat over hospital SCRUBS. She marches to the car.

**INT. WALTER'S BEDROOM**

With the sound of the CAR DOOR CLOSING and ENGINE STARTING Walter opens his eyes.

The bed's empty. The birthday's over.

**INT. BATHROOM**

Walter stares in the mirror, bleary eyed. 50. Over the hill. The song is still stuck.

WALTER  
(depressed, to himself)  
...Corporation T-shirt, stupid  
bloody Tuesday. Man you've been a  
naughty boy, you let your face grow  
long.

**INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - LATER**

Walter, hair still wet from the shower, now dressed in a FLIGHT ATTENDANT'S UNIFORM, drags a small CARRY-ON BAG behind him.

He stops at another bedroom door and knocks.

WALTER  
Hey, bud. It's 8:30. What time is  
your first class?

Nothing.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(louder)  
Chris. Don't you have school today?

A GRUNT (O.S.)

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Was that a yes or a no?

An identical GRUNT (O.S.)

Walter considers the translation.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Okay, listen. They've got me on the  
San Francisco run, so I won't be  
back until late tomorrow.

Another grunt.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Okay, so great. So, I'll see you  
later.

He closes the door. Another unsatisfying encounter. He heads for the front door.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
... I am the egg man. You are the  
egg men. I am the Walrus. Goo goo,  
g-choo.

**INT. AIRPLANE GALLEY - DAY**

Walter and FRANCINE (35), a fellow flight attendant, prep the galley prior to take off. Their movements in the tight space are precise, choreographed. They've done it a thousand times.

Occasionally, they turn to interact with GROUND CREW loading in food carts through an open door. They sign CHECKLISTS, prep the COFFEE MACHINES, etc.

FRANCINE

No B.B.J? That ain't right. A body needs a B.J., 'specially on your B'day.

WALTER

Tell me about it.

FRANCINE

(pleased with her rhyme)  
It ain't a b'day, without a B.J.

WALTER

I know, right?

**INT. PLANE - LATER**

The plane is in mid climb. Francine is above looking down and Walter is down, looking up - a world skewed; the villain's lair in Batman.

FRANCINE

This is why I won't get married.

WALTER

And here I thought it was just that Jenny never asked.

FRANCINE

She doesn't want to get married either. Why get involved with an institution proven to deliver misery, and ultimately death.

The cabin begins to level out.

WALTER

I think that's life you're talking about.

FRANCINE

Figurative death. Death of the relationship. Death of the love. Death of the Birthday blow job. It's the first sign. The canary in the coal mine, my friend.

A CHIME Sounds. They both unstrap.

Walter crosses to the galley. As he does so, he takes out his cell phone and taps it off Airplane mode.

CLOSE on the screen shows a missed call from MALLORY. He hits the replay button and holds the phone in his hand as he wrestles a GALLEY CART out of its corral.

Francine picks up the intercom.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, we've now reached our cruising altitude of 38,000 feet. At this time, the captain has turned off the seatbelt sign, indicating that it is safe to move about the cabin.

A BUMP, short but sharp. Francine pauses, looks to Walter.

Off his quizzical reaction, Francine continues warily.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

In just a moment, we will begin our complimentary in flight beverage serv--.

Now a violent LURCH and Francine's face says it all. Everything before was routine. This is not.

The cabin lurches a second time, then turns sharply downward.

Walter is thrown against the opposite galley counter.

PASSENGERS SCREAM (O.S.)

Walter's POV: Everything is suddenly in SLO-MOTION and SUPER HI-DEF.

SOUND is muffled for this hyper reality.

Francine drops the wall phone, which seems to float weightless, as she's hurled against the door to the flight deck, her head slamming it decisively.

More SCREAMS (O.S.) as passengers react.

Francine slides slowly towards the floor.

A COFFEE POT flies across the galley.

SUPER SLO-MO:

The COFFEE emerges from the pot, a giant black amoeba spreading through the air.

The galley cart bounces off the opposite wall of the galley.

On Walter: Eyes wide. Amazed at the DAZZLING CLARITY of what's happening.

An open LAPTOP floats past. On its screen, a video game plays. The speed of events slows further. It's as though Walter can choose the next move

The computer is closely followed by a BRIEFCASE.

The laptop just misses Francine's slumping body bouncing off the door and deflecting the briefcase, which spins and caroms towards Walter's head.

Effortlessly, Walter moves his head to the side and follows the briefcase as it glides past him and slams into the release handle for the EXIT DOOR.

The handle flexes, but holds.

Walter turns back to Francine, now crumpled on the floor across the aisle. She's down for the count.

A woman's SHOE and a man's HAIRPIECE float past, also coming from the cabin, followed by more ITEMS UNMOORED.

Walter's POV: The KEYPAD for the cockpit door.

Now AT THE KEYPAD. Walter's fingers, still slo-mo, press the number sequence. The lock releases.

Walter enters the cockpit.

SOUND UP: A ROAR of rushing air, and a concert of INSTRUMENT WARNINGS - urgent BEEPS and CLAXONS.

Walter sees clearly the following:

- a cockpit window has blown out.
- Both pilots are slumped forward, strapped in their seats, unconscious.
- Oxygen masks dangling.
- Gauges spinning, Lights Flashing.

With a surprisingly practiced hand, Walter releases the pilot's harness and pulls the body away from the controls.

He jumps into the seat, pulls the oxygen mask to his face with one hand, and pulls back the YOKE and Control Wheel with the other.

Gradually, the cockpit levels out.

The plunging altimeter slows, then steadies around 9,000'.

Walter pulls the oxygen mask away and takes a deep breath.

On the breath, the super slo-mo stops. The HD clarity recedes. Everything returns to normal.

Walter flicks on the intercom.

WALTER

Ladies and gentlemen. From the flight deck. We're all going to be okay.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM**

Mallory, in her scrubs, with a paper cap on her head and gloved hands, is framed by the V of a woman's legs.

WOMAN GIVING BIRTH (O.S.)

(a primal scream)

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagggggggghhhh.

MALLORY

That's it. That's the one. Here ...

(looks to confirm gender)

He comes.

A much younger ASSISTANT is there for the hand-off, as Mallory grabs a waiting SCISSORS and cuts the umbilical cord (O.S.).

**INT. STAFF LOUNGE**

Standing at A SINK, Mallory and her assistant strip off their gloves and hats.

MALLORY

How does the rest of the day look?

ASSISTANT

Three definites and two may-pops.

MALLORY

(sarcastic)

Ah, the miracle of birth. Welcoming new lives into the world. It just never loses its magic.

ASSISTANT

Uh,oh. Somebody didn't get her boom-boom last night.

MALLORY

What is it with you young people?  
It's always about sex.

ASSISTANT

Who said anything about sex? I was talking about that new show on Net--

STAFFER (O.S.)

Hey, check this out.

Mallory and her assistant turn to a hospital STAFFER watching a TV up on the wall. The staffer uses a REMOTE to boost the VOLUME.

ON-SCREEN

CNN ANCHOR

We have breaking news now. A Trans World Airliner has made an emergency landing in Chicago.

Mallory stiffens at the mention of Trans World and her Assistant darts a knowing look at her.

CNN ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Trans World Flight 2343 originated from Cleveland's Hopkins International airport and was bound for San Francisco when the accident occurred.

The flight reference gets Mallory's attention.

MALLORY

Hopkins?

CNN ANCHOR

Early reports say a sudden depressurization in the cockpit rendered both pilots unconscious. An alert flight attendant managed to gain entry to the flight deck and right the plunging aircraft! It's an incredible story!

ASSISTANT

Is Walter flying today?

**INT. CLASSROOM - SAME TIME**

A teen lies asleep, head down on his desk. A slight bit of DROOL making its way from his open mouth to the desk. This is Walter's son, CHRIS (16).

Somewhere in the background, a teacher's LECTURE drones on.

CLASSMATE (O.S.)  
Dude, isn't your old man a flight attendant?

CHRIS  
Ugh.

Reverse finds the classmate, a teenage friend of Chris.

CLASSMATE  
Check this out.

He places his smart PHONE on the desk, inches from Chris' face. Chris' eyes open.

His POV: The CNN Anchor. But because he's laying on the desk, the image, to him, is sideways. Skewed.

CNN ANCHOR  
We're still trying to get confirmation on this, but we believe the name of this flight attendant, this hero - and that's the only word one can use to describe him - who singlehandedly rescued a plane load of passengers and his fellow crew, is Walter Smooch.

Walter's picture appears over the anchor's shoulder. It might have come from his airport ID. It's not the most flattering.

Now Chris' eyes widen.

CHRIS  
Dad?

**INT. LOS ANGELES - BIG G PRODUCTIONS - BIG G.'S OFFICE**

CLOSE as a pen scratches a signature: G.O'Donnell, but the way the pen trails off after the capitals, it might as well say GOD.

GEORGE O'DONNELL, aka Big G, 50's with a bulldog's jowls and temperament. He's the classic hard charging Hollywood producer, right out of central casting.

PETER, his officious 30-something assistant is efficiently shuffling the papers, taking those signed and issuing new ones to sign.

Reveal the OFFICE is sleek and well-appointed. Its bank of TELEVISIONS, tuned to different networks, ring the room like crown molding. Add a plate of wings and it's a sports bar.

BIG G.  
Did you call Fox?

PETER  
Message.

BIG G.  
What about Jonathan at Sony?

PETER  
Message.

BIG G.  
Liz at Universal?

PETER  
Message.

BIG G.  
Huh?

PETER  
She was out for a massage. I left a message.

CLARICE (O.S.)  
Did y'all hear about that plane?

Both men look over at the door, where a very tall, broad shouldered black woman (late 30's) stands with the presence and accent of a SOUTHERN BELLE. This is CLARICE.

BIG G.  
Peter, you are my gatekeeper. Who is that at the gate?

PETER  
Oh, this is our new intern, um, Clarice.

Clarice strides confidently to Big G.'s desk and offers her right hand.

Big G.'s POV: A Super Bowl Ring on Clarice's ring finger.

BIG G.  
Is that...?

CLARICE  
Number thirty eight. The one with  
the wardrobe malfunction.

Now we see clearly that Clarice, as beautiful as she is with  
long hair, makeup and great dress, is actually a man.

BIG G.  
You were, er, -

CLARICE  
Clarence James.

Big G nods in recognition.

BIG G.  
Wide receiver. Best hands in the  
game.

CLARICE  
But now I'm just Clarice, the new  
intern.

BIG G.  
You're a little older than most of  
our interns.

CLARICE  
I had another life.

BIG G.  
Of course. And now it's on to Act  
II. I like that. I like that a lot.

CLARICE  
Thank you.

Awkward silence.

PETER  
Thank you, Clarice.

He offers a subtle eye shift towards the door.

CLARICE  
Oh, I am sorry. I'll just leave you  
two be.

Clarice begins to back out.

BIG G.  
Did you say something about a  
plane?

CLARICE  
(remembering)  
Oh, yes, the plane. There was this  
accident. Well, not an accident. It  
could have been a --

PETER  
Combine subject, verb and object  
into a complete sentence, please.

Clarice glances up at the TV's

CLARICE  
Well, there. See?

The others' follow.

ON SCREENS, one after another, the news shows are cutting to  
remotes at the airport, a Transworld jet in the background.

Big G. taps a CONTROL PAD next to his phone.

On the center television, a CNN-type network standup.

CNN REPORTER  
We're getting word now that Mr.  
Smooch and his flight crew are  
based out of Cleveland and are now  
safe in a hotel in Chicago,  
awaiting the arrival of NTSB  
investigators. This is a developing  
story.

CLOSE on Big G.

BIG G.  
(to Peter)  
Who do we have who can do this?

PETER  
I don't know. Don's in Hawaii  
shooting the one about the  
astronomer. Clark is somewhere on  
the South China Sea doing God knows  
what for the Story of Mao.

Big G. considers this for a BEAT.

BIG G.  
Clarice?

CLARICE

Yes sir?

BIG G.

Ready to earn your wings?

**INT. HOTEL SUITE**

The double doors swing open and Walter is led into the spacious suite by the HOTEL MANAGER.

HOTEL MANAGER

Welcome to our Presidential Suite.

Walter enters, wide-eyed. He's never seen anything like it.

He is followed by two smiling BELL-HOPS, one on each end of a gold BELL CART, on which Walter's lone carry-on bag stands perched in the middle - tiny.

The manager sweeps sheer curtains back, revealing a wall of floor to ceiling glass, and a view from high above of the city and the lake stretching out beyond. It's spectacular.

WALTER

Wow.

HOTEL MANAGER

On behalf of the Intercontinental,  
let me say welcome.

WALTER

Thank you. But I don't know. We,  
um, we just get a per-diem, you  
know. I'm not sure I can --

HOTEL MANAGER

Not to worry. This is all on the  
house.

WALTER

Really?

HOTEL MANAGER

Really.

WALTER

Thank you.

HOTEL MANAGER

No, thank you. It's not often we  
get to host a true American hero.

WALTER  
(demurring)  
Oh, well, that's, I mean , I'm not  
...

HOTEL MANAGER  
No, that's exactly what you are,  
Mr. Smooch. You're going to have to  
get used to it.

Two more bellhops sweep in, one with a large FLORAL BOUQUET and the other with a giant STUFFED FRUIT BASKET, placing each on its own table in the gigantic living room of the suite.

HOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)  
And, as befits a hero, please  
accept these, also with our  
compliments, from all the staff and  
management of the Intercontinental  
Hotel Group, worldwide.

WALTER  
Wow. Well, this is... it's all a  
little overwhelming.

HOTEL MANAGER  
(smiling)  
Believe me, I'm pretty sure this is  
just the beginning.

**EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT**

A PRIVATE JET touches down.

**INT. PRIVATE JET**

From the passenger cabin, Clarice looks out her window at:

A TRANS WORLD JET, bathed in the hot white glow of portable construction lights. Emergency workers, NTSB jacketed inspectors, etc.

Several ENG News teams also move about the perimeter of the jet.

NEWS VANS stand to the side, their satellite transmission masts raised to the sky in salute.

A STEWARD emerges from the galley.

STEWARD

We'll be at the terminal in just a minute, Miz James.

CLARICE

Thank you.  
(glancing at the window)  
Is that it?

STEWARD

(nodding)  
They say he landed it all by himself. If so, He's one helluva flight attendant.

**EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE**

A cab pulls up and Clarice steps out.

**INT. RECEPTION DESK**

Clarice approaches. The Hotel Manager looks her over warily.

HOTEL MANAGER

Can I help you?

CLARICE

Yes. I am here to see one of your guests, a Mister Smooch.

The man looks Clarice over warily.

HOTEL MANAGER

Are you a member of Trans World Management?

CLARICE

No.

HOTEL MANAGER

I see. And you are not a member of the immediate family, I presume.

Clarice looks back at him. D'uh.

HOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

No. I didn't think so.  
(Nodding towards the bar)  
Get in line, er, miss.

Clarice follows his nod and sees:

THE BAR AREA, packed with NEWSIES of all stripes and ringed by SECURITY GUARDS making sure they stay put.

**INT. HOTEL BAR**

Clarice sits in the corner, jammed between the service bar and the wall. She eyes

The scrum of young go-getters, all on cell phones. Several camera crews are also there.

A BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER  
What'll it be?

CLARICE  
Just a club soda, thank you.

The bartender grabs a glass of ice and the soda gun.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Quite the crowd.

BARTENDER  
Parasites. Can't wait to get their mitts on him.

CLARICE  
Who's that?

BARTENDER  
The plane guy. 'Gonna chew him up and spit him out. He'll be the flavor of the week, and then he's history.

CLARICE  
They're not all bad, are they?

The bartender stops in mid squirt as it dawns on him.

BARTENDER  
You're one of 'em?

CLARICE  
Well, I ...

He continues pouring.

BARTENDER  
'Wouldn't have figured that. You don't have the look.

CLARICE  
I'm new to the game.

BARTENDER  
What's your plan? To get to him, I mean.

CLARICE  
I don't have one.

The bartender smiles.

BARTENDER  
Wow. You really are new.

**INT. HOTEL SUITE**

Walter is on the phone.

WALTER  
I don't know. I didn't think about it. It was like I was on autopilot.

He looks at himself in one of the GIANT MIRRORS, pleased with his joke.

BEAT, as the person on the other end of the line responds.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
I'm proud of me, too. 'Pays to play those video games, doesn't it?

Another BEAT, then

WALTER (CONT'D)  
There's all kinds of media people who want to talk to me.  
(beat)  
Yeah, I talked to Jim but he said he's just a wills and estates guy. He said what I need to get is an entertainment law-  
(beat)  
No, I know. I'm not going to do anything until we talk about it.

Walter continues to check himself out in the mirror. He sucks up his middle aged paunch and takes a look at a newly minted hero. He's unsure about what he sees, but then perks up.

WALTER (CONT'D)

It's alright, honey. When we get home, there will be plenty of time to make it up to me. Hah.

(play acting)

But can we skip the written test and go right to the oral exam, Mrs. Smooch?

A KNOCK on the door.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Oh, there's someone at the door. Another super model wanting to have sex with me. Or a fruit basket. Probably a fruit basket. Okay, Mal. 'Talk to you later. Love you too.

A second knock.

Walter crosses and opens the door to find

Clarice, now in a maid's uniform, is holding a folded towel with a chocolate mint on it.

CLARICE

Your turn down service, sir.

WALTER

Right. Of course. Come in.

Walter steps aside as Clarice passes and heads for the bedroom. Walter follows and watches from the doorway.

Clarice makes to turn down the bed.

Walter's eyes look Clarice over from head to foot.

HIS POV: Clarice's attractive figure, stopping abruptly on her shoes. High heels. Not what hotel maids wear.

Clarice looks up and sees Walter staring at her feet.

Walter looks over at the towel on the bed. Laying beneath it is clearly a manila folder with a label.

Clarice follows his eyes to the folder.

It reads: LIFE RIGHTS.

Walter looks back at Clarice.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You're not here for the turn down service.

Clarice is caught, silent.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You're not a maid.

Clarice, still silent.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You're not even a woman.

Clarice reacts.

CLARICE

I am transitioning. And I can explain.

WALTER

No need. I understand transitioning. I'm very liberal that way. Live and let live. Go Caitlyn.

CLARICE

You are going to be transitioning too.

WALTER

I am?

CLARICE

Your life is about to change in a big, big way, Mr. Smooch. Can I call you Walter?

Her southern accent makes it Walt-uh.

WALTER

(warily)

O-kay.

CLARICE

And all those people downstairs? They are not after your best interests, Walter.

WALTER

But you are?

CLARICE

We are.

WALTER

Who's we?

CLARICE

I work for the producer, George O'Donnell. Big G. Productions. He specializes in biopics. Life stories. "Breakfast at Rikers, the Bernie Madoff Story"?

WALTER

I saw that. It wasn't bad. I always wondered how he got George Clooney to play Madoff?

CLARICE

Relationships. He knows everybody.

Walter's eye returns to the manila folder.

WALTER

What's in the folder?

CLARICE

A contract. Mr. O'Donnell wants to make a movie about your life.

WALTER

A movie?

CLARICE

Yes.

WALTER

About my life?

CLARICE

Yes.

WALTER

(back to earth)

Well, look, I gotta get a lawyer and there's all those other guys in the lobby. I gotta hear what they have to say. And there's the little matter of your coming in here under false pretenses.

Clarice sees she's going to lose this guy.

CLARICE  
We're talking to Brad Pitt to play  
the lead.

SWISH PAN TO:

**INT. WALTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Walter stands in the kitchen with Mallory.

MALLORY  
(skeptical)  
Brad Pitt?

WALTER  
It's all about relationships.  
The big G. knows everybody.

Walter looks over to

REVEAL Clarice, standing off to the side, nodding.

CLARICE  
Everybody.

Mallory looks from one to the other, still skeptical.

WALTER  
Google him. The man is a god when  
it comes to bio-pics.

MALLORY  
Bio-pics?

WALTER  
(talking like a pro)  
Biographies. Life stories. Remember  
that Bernie Madoff movie?

MALLORY  
The one with George Clooney?

WALTER  
Exactly.

MALLORY  
What about Francine?

WALTER  
Francine?

MALLORY  
From your flight crew? You know,  
your best friend? How is she doing?

Walter suddenly realizes he hasn't even considered her or the other plane crew.

WALTER  
Oh, um, ah--

CLARICE  
Francine is fine. A little shaken  
up. A few stitches where she hit  
her head.

Walter's reaction: surprised then grateful that Clarice at least has thought to find out. Wow, she's good.

WALTER  
(to Mallory)  
Yeah, fine. She's fine.

A BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT suddenly shines in through every piece of glass, crack in a curtain, key hole in a door.

MUFFLED VOICES, SHOUTS. WALKIE TALKIE Back and forth. It sounds like Seal Team 6.

MALLORY  
Oh my God.

Clarice moves to a window while using a hand to hold them back.

WALTER  
What is it? What's going on?

She turns to them.

CLARICE  
They're here.

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

The local NEWS MEDIA, with TRUCKS, GENERATORS, LIGHTS.

SATELLITE MASTS extend as hordes of TECHNICIANS scurry about, running CABLES, slapping up TRIPODS, firing up more lights as REPORTERS ready themselves to do stand-ups in various places across the yard.

**INT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

Walter and Mallory are peering out from behind a slit in the curtains.

CLARICE

This is nothing. You should see  
media week before the Super Bowl.

WALTER

What should we do?

CLARICE

Mr. O'Donnell wants you in NY for  
the morning and late night shows.  
Then LA so we can start prepping  
the movie.

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

REPORTER 1 stands in front of a camera

FEMALE REPORTER 1

We're told that Mr. Smooch returned  
here to this modest suburban  
Cleveland home for the first time  
since the incident, to connect with  
his wife and teenage son.  
Yesterday, he was an anonymous  
flight attendant. Tonight, an  
American hero. Ashley Roberts,  
reporting live. Back to you Jim.

Find MALE REPORTER in mid stand-up.

REPORTER

...Just one day ago, a nobody.  
Today, a true American hero. Jill?

Find FEMALE REPORTER 2.

FEMALE REPORTER 2

... a genuine American hero.

MALE REPORTER 2

... American Hero.

FEMALE REPORTER 3

... Hero.

**INT. WALTER'S BEDROOM**

Walter stuffs clothes in a duffle.

MALLORY

Are you sure?

WALTER

I've served a lot of big shots in first class, but now it's gonna be me. You should see his jet, Mal. I've never been in a private jet before.

MALLORY

But what about a lawyer? Like Jim said. To be sure these people are going to do what they say.

WALTER

They're spending about ten grand an hour to fly me around. That's putting your money where your mouth is.

MALLORY

I know, but don't sign anything until we get someone to look at the contract.

WALTER

Absolutely. I'm totally good with that.

He zips up the bag and slings it on his shoulder.

MALLORY

And what about... you know, your birthday thing?

This gets his attention.

WALTER

I am an American hero, you know.

He glances at the door, then slips the bag off his shoulder.

Mallory goes below the frame and we hear

HIS ZIPPER

Walter lets out a preliminary MOAN that's interrupted by

A KNOCKING ON THE WINDOW.

REPORTER 1

(calling in)

Mr. Smooch? Mr. Smooch? Can we get  
a picture with you and your wife?

A FLASH from outside.

WALTER

Shit.

Mallory scrambles for cover. Walter zips up.

Now A KNOCK on the door.

CLARICE (O.S.)

Walter? I just heard from the  
pilot. We've got to move.  
Something about flight plans, low  
ceilings and late arrivals.

WALTER

Damn, I gotta go.

He grabs his bag and is heading for the door, only to be  
caught by Mallory's stare.

Walter puts the bag down and crosses to her, placing his  
hands on her shoulders and looking deep into her eyes.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Mal. I love you. What I'm doing  
here is for us. I don't want to do  
it. I'd rather everything just  
returned to our boring, day to day,  
soul crushing routine.

(smiley face)

But we've got a shot at cashing out  
here and I think we should take it.

Mallory's reaction: She's not sure whether to believe him,  
but the cashing out part is hard to argue with.

#### **THE HALLWAY, OUTSIDE CHRIS' DOOR**

Walter knocks.

CHRIS

Entre, si'l vous plait.

The French strikes Walter as odd. He pushes open the door.

**IN THE BEDROOM:**

Chris slips a pair headphones off.

CHRIS  
Bon soir, mon pere. Comment sa va?

WALTER  
Um, Ah, great. What's with the French?

CHRIS  
New girl in class. Transfer student. Totally hot.

WALTER  
And totally French.

CHRIS  
Absolument.

WALTER  
Listen, I know we haven't had a chance to talk and there's all this craziness because of what happened.

CHRIS  
Yeah, no worries. I get it.

WALTER  
Your old man's made quite a stir.

CHRIS  
(distracted)  
Um, um.

WALTER  
So, I've got to go away for a little bit. I'm going to Hollywood. On a private jet. They're gonna make a movie of my life.

CHRIS  
Um, um. Cool.

WALTER  
They're talking to Brad Pitt.

CHRIS  
Um, um. Great. Listen, Dad, there's something I want to tell you.

WALTER  
(perking up)  
Yes, son?

CHRIS  
I gotta, kinda get back to my  
studying.

WALTER  
Oh. Yeah, sure. I understand.  
Studying is important too.

No response. Chris has his headphones already back on.

CHRIS  
Quel est votre signe astologique?  
Sagittaire? Moi aussi. Magnifique.  
Tres bien, tres, tres bien.

Off Walter's reaction. Not even a hero cuts this mustard.

**INT. ED SULLIVAN THEATER**

On stage, with Steven Colbert.

COLBERT  
So you're going down and you're  
thinking, what? Did the woman in 3B  
want two creams or one with her  
coffee?

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER

WALTER  
Actually, it was kind of like that.  
Everything slows down. Like super  
slow motion.

COLBERT  
Did your life pass in front of your  
eyes?

WALTER  
Actually no.

COLBERT  
Are you sure? Because, you know,  
like you said, you're just a  
regular guy with an ordinary life.  
How do you know you didn't miss it?

LAUGHTER

WALTER

Yeah, no.

(thinking about it)

It was more like everything that was happening was crystal clear. Like some kind of ultra High def TV, you know? Super hi-def. I mean, I could read the serial number on a laptop as it flew by me. I saw that my friend, Francine - one of the other flight attendants - I could see where her fingernail polish was chipped on her left pinky.

COLBERT

And then you're thinking, God, I wish I wore clean underwear, like my mother told me.

MORE LAUGHTER

**INT. STUDIO 3-B/THE TODAY SHOW**

HOST

This morning we have American hero, Walter Smooch, who single handedly rescued that plane load of passengers and crew two days ago. Mr. Smooch, welcome.

WALTER

Thank you. Glad to be here. No, really glad to be here!

Walter's getting the knack of this celebrity thing.

**INT. ANOTHER STUDIO DAYTIME SHOW**

HOST

How did you have the presence of mind to pull this off.

WALTER

Well I've messed around with flight simulation games on my son's Nintendo.

**INT. ANOTHER STUDIO, ANOTHER SHOW**

CO-HOST

But from games to landing a wide  
body jet?

WALTER

Everything was so, I don't know,  
clear. The truth is, it wasn't that  
hard.

Walter is almost as amazed by the idea as the show host.

**INT. ANOTHER STUDIO, ANOTHER SHOW**

And another host. HOST #3 is flanked by Walter and DR.  
SBIGNEW SVANSKI, a scientist renowned for his brain and his  
WACKY TIES, not necessarily in that order.

HOST 3

(in mid-intro)

Dr. Svanski is a world renowned  
neurobiologist here with Walter  
Smooch, the hero of what's being  
called the Miracle in Mid-air.

SVANSKI

Ze experience of Mister Mooch is  
not uncommon. In stressful  
situations -

Walter winces at his mispronounced name.

HOST 3

Like life and death.

SVANSKI

Yes. In zis situation, our brain's  
neurons and our body's nerve  
endings open wide because zey know  
it's do or die, time, no?

HOST 3

And time slows down.

SVANSKI

Ahh! Time is zee same. But time  
seems like is slow down. Ze brain  
is slowing ze time down. Is called,  
Time Di-lation. Zee brain, zis eez  
an amazing organ.

WALTER  
(interjecting)  
Ah, that's Suh-mooch.

**EXT. NY STREET**

Leaving the building after the show, a gaggle of camera crews and reporters rush Walter and Clarice, who uses her large frame and strength to shield him.

VARIOUS REPORTERS  
Mr. Smooch. Walter. What's your next move? Have you spoken to the NTSB?

**INT. PRIVATE JET**

Clarice and Walter sit facing each other. The Steward offers Walter elaborate hors d'oeuvres. It's everything Walter was hoping for.

WALTER  
I think I read about you, you know.

CLARICE  
Really?

WALTER  
Yeah, it was in Sports Illustrated.

CLARICE  
Not the swim suit issue. Not yet, anyway.

WALTER  
(uncomfortable)  
What made you, you know, decide to, you know?

CLARICE  
(teasing)  
Trade in my bat and balls for a catcher's mitt and a pair of floaties?

WALTER  
Um, well...

CLARICE  
I'm just teasing you, honey. The fact is, I've always been feminine, or at least felt feminine.  
(MORE)

CLARICE (CONT'D)

But I liked playing football and I knew they wouldn't let me play if I identified as anything but a man.

WALTER

And then?

CLARICE

Then last year they told me one more hit to the helmet and I'm toast. So, here I am, all hormones and panty hose, just waiting for the docs to give the go ahead for my operation.

**INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATOR.**

FLOOR LIGHTS ping. Going up.

Clarice and Walter, side by side.

WALTER

It must be hard to go from a big time pro to just an ordinary ...

CLARICE

Woman?

WALTER

Yeah, woman.

CLARICE

Not really. The way I see it, it's just trading in one adventure for another. And I get to help people like you transition.

WALTER

You mean like from a regular schmo to a celebrity.

CLARICE

Yes. Very much like that. And Lord knows, you are going to need help. I mean, you have no idea, child. No idea, what-so-ever.

**INT. OFFICE BUILDING - TOP FLOOR**

The ELEVATOR DOORS slide open.

REVERSE shows the entrance to Big G Productions. The name etched on floor to ceiling glass panels.

Built-in displays full of EMMY and OTHER AWARDS and PLAQUES flank the entry, which is dominated by a large RECEPTION DESK.

Phones ring. People scurry. Two receptionists with headsets field calls.

Walter is impressed.

Clarice smiles.

CLARICE

Right this way, sweetie.

She leads and Walter follows.

Beyond the reception desk, lots of CUBICLES.

The walls are lined with MOVIE POSTERS - the many successes of George "Big G" O'Donnell. All Biopics. True Life stories.

Clarice approaches the desk that guards the door to Mr. O'Donnell's office. Peter is busy with papers and doesn't look up.

PETER

He's not seeing anyone. I don't care if --

CLARICE

Peter, this is Mr. Smooch.

PETER

I don't care if he's Ghandi with the rights to the Mother Theresa story, he's not seeing--  
(stops, looks up)  
Mr. Smooch. Mis-ter Smooch.

He jumps up, rounds the desk and shakes his hand.

PETER (CONT'D)

Right this way. Mr. O'donnell has been expecting you.

A quick officious smile at Clarice, who watches, bemused. But when she begins to follow Walter through the door, Peter puts up his hand.

PETER (CONT'D)

Just Mr. Smooch for Mr. O'Donnell.

Walter is about to object.

CLARICE  
It's okay, honey. I'll be right out  
here waiting for you.

**INT. BIG G'S OFFICE**

O'Donnell stands at the window, silhouetted, surveying LA stretched out below, like it belongs to him.

BIG G.  
Nintendo, huh?

WALTER  
Um, yeah.

BIG G.  
Heck of a story.

WALTER  
Yeah. Yes sir.

O'Donnell spins and strides to Walter, hand out.

BIG G.  
George. George O'Donnell. No need  
for sir, here. We don't stand on  
ceremony. Not when we're going to  
make a movie together.

Peter enters with a folder - the Life Rights contract - and  
whispers in O'Donnell's ear.

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
(sotto)  
What's that? Oh, I see.

George takes the folder and sits, opening it on his clear  
desk.

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
Sit, Walter. Sit.

Walter sits.

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
You haven't signed the agreement.

WALTER  
Well, I--

BIG G.  
Is there a problem?

WALTER  
No, no prob--

BIG G.  
Other offers?

WALTER  
No, it's not that--

BIG G.  
You're not going to find a better deal. Check around. For all practical purposes, we're really the only game in town.

WALTER  
I'm sure, it's just that I kind of promised Mallory--

BIG G.  
She's your agent?

WALTER  
She's my wife.

BIG G.  
She's your agent. That's good. She's looking out for your best interests.

WALTER  
Well, yeah--

BIG G.  
But see, this is your life we're talking about here, Walter. At the end of the day, only you can make this deal.

WALTER  
Yes, but--

BIG G.  
Can you make this deal, Walter? Because if you can't make this deal, I have to call Brad and give him the bad news.

WALTER  
Really? He's... him? Already??

George nods and his eyes tilt to the contract.

Walter follows.

BIG G.  
It's do or die time, Walter.

**EXT. SPECTACULAR HOME**

High in the Hollywood Hills. MUSIC THUMPS. GORGEOUS PEOPLE mingle. A few dance. Maybe some A-LIST cameos.

Clarice is at home with this scene, weaving through it with ease. Walter follows, head whipsawing this way and that, gobsmacked.

Another famous or beautiful face walks by. Walter does a 360 following.

Clarice smiles.

WALTER  
(to Clarice, sotto)  
It's just like in those magazines!

CLARICE  
Don't you worry. It gets old pretty quick.

WALTER  
Not to me, it won't.

A WAITER passes with a tray of champagne flutes. Clarice takes two. Handing one off to Walter, she raises her glass.

CLARICE  
To America's newest hero. May he remain so at least until we get the movie made.

Walter raises his glass with a smile, but before they can toast...

An A-LISTER approaches

CAMEO 1  
(to Walter)  
Hey, aren't you...?

CLARICE  
None other.

CAMEO 1

Wow, let me just say, that was amazing, what you did. Can I say that?

CLARICE

You just did.

CAMEO 1

Really, really great.

Off Walter's modest reaction.

Another star stops by.

CAMEO 2

Hey.  
(pointing)

CAMEO 1

Yeah, that's him. That's the guy.

CAMEO 2

Who did that thing with the thing.

CAMEO 1

Yeah.

CAMEO 2

Unbelievable.

CAMEO 1

I know, right?

CAMEO 2

Can I get a selfie?

CAMEO 1

Me too. Can I get one, too?

They fumble for their cameras. Then, with variously exaggerated poses.

First Cameo 1. FREEZE FRAME of pic.

Then Cameo 2. FREEZE FRAME of pic.

MONTAGE

Now A SERIES OF FREEZE FRAME and VIDEO selfies, from wide to close and everywhere in between.

They all feature Walter and Clarice and the party becoming gradually more inebriated and crazy. Water sports, furniture in the pool, Twerking contests.

Walter is in the middle of it all - the toast of the town. He tries gamely to fit in, but no fish has ever been further from the water.

**INT. KARAOKE BAR - LATER**

Clarice watches as Walter is surrounded by hangers on - cute star fuckers attracted to Walter's newfound gravitational force.

They sing along to the Stones' (or similar).

WALTER AND GAGGLE

(singing)

Tiiiiime, is on my side, yes it is.  
Time, time, time, is on my side,  
yes it is...

Clarice smiles. Poor guy. He has no idea what's in store.

**INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - A SUITE**

Oversized, like in Chicago.

Find Walter, face down, fully clothed on the still-made bed. He didn't quite make it.

He stirs, groggy, and looks up to survey the unfamiliar surroundings, his eyes finally landing on the other side of the bed.

A WOMEN, we recognize her from the Karaoke crowd. She appears to be completely NAKED.

Walter leaps off the bed with a start, as though she's a snake. He backs out of the room, groping a table for his cell phone.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Walter peers out across the suite to the bed, phone pressed to his head. From the phone, we hear Clarice's voice but can't make out her words.

WALTER

Clarice? Yes, hi. Walter here. Yes,  
Walter

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(looking out at the bed)  
... your hero.

**LATER**

Walter is getting out of the shower.

A KNOCK at the door.

Walter, in just a towel, runs to the door, checks the peep hole, then opens it.

Clarice steps in, taking time first to observe Walter's state of undress. Off her look.

WALTER  
I was in the shower.

CLARICE  
Is she still here?

WALTER  
(whispering)  
She's in bed. She hasn't moved.

CLARICE  
Is she alive?

WALTER  
What? Of course she's ... I think she's... Oh, my God, what if she's -

CLARICE  
(interrupting)  
Walter, honey. Go down on to the patio and order breakfast, er lunch. I'll take care of this.

WALTER  
Patio. Lunch. Okay.

He starts to leave.

CLARICE  
Walter.

He stops and turns.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
You might want to get dressed first.

**EXT. HOTEL PATIO**

Walter scans the area. More BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.

His eyes follow a GIRL who's all legs in one direction, then ANOTHER GIRL in the other direction.

PHONE RING (O.S.)

Walter looks down at the table like he's been caught in the act.

And he has. On his phone screen: MALLORY

He picks it up hesitantly, debating whether to let it ring through. Then he hits the button.

WALTER  
(upbeat, forced)  
Hey, Mal.

Mallory, rapid fire but inaudible. Walter's forced smile disappears.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Wait, hold on. What? How, how did  
you find out about that?

Mallory responds.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Really? Already?

Mallory has more to say.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
I know we talked about it.

And still more.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Well, I didn't have a lawyer at  
that moment and I had to make a  
decision.

A PERSON at the next table notes Walter's tone and volume. Walter drops down a few db's.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Besides I like these people. I  
think they're going to do the right  
thing.

Walter looks around. Several others have noted him. At another table, a guest nods towards Walter.

Meanwhile, Mallory has said something further.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(louder now)

Yeah, I know you're my wife and you get a say. But guess what, Mal. I'm the one who landed that plane, not you.

Various reactions: People are really taking notice. The focus turns toward Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)

What? No, this is not about the blow job.

The chatter and splashing that had been going on before has ceased. Nothing but CRICKETS and maybe a COUGH.

Walter is acutely aware that everyone is watching him.

Slowly, quietly from the back, a lone CLAPPING. This is joined by a few more hands. Then still more as the crowd breaks into SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE.

Now a few stand. Followed by others. Then it's unanimous. A STANDING OVATION.

Walter has gone from embarrassed to proud, maybe even righteous. He looks at the phone and decisively hangs up, tossing it on the table.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you very much.

ANGLE on Clarice, now on the patio, weaving around the tables and past the standing patrons and their sustained applause. She reaches Walter and pulls up a chair.

CLARICE

Keeping a low profile, I see.

WALTER

I didn't do anything. They just, I don't know, started.

CLARICE

I see.

WALTER

And upstairs ... I want you to know, I didn't do anything there, either.

CLARICE

Walter, dear. You are a grown man. I'm not here to judge you. I'm here to guide you and to guard you.

WALTER

Guard me? Guard me from what?

CLARICE

Honey, how many presidential suites have you been comp'd lately?

Off his reaction.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

And how many times have you gone to a party and had people killing each other to get a picture with you?

Walter's starting to follow, but Clarice isn't done.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

And how many times in those comp'd hotel suites did you wake up with a beautiful naked girl next to you who was not your wife?

WALTER

I swear, I didn't do anything.  
(beat)  
I don't think.

CLARICE

You're missing the point. My boss is paying for the rights to your story and that investment needs to be guarded. Right now, you are fresh meat. The flavor of the week. And we need to keep you tasting good. Walter, dearest, you are trending.

WALTER

I am?

CLARICE

With your own network, boyfriend!

**INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - WALTER'S SUITE**

CLOSE on a SCREEN. We don't know where we are yet.

TMZ LIVE is on. Host HARVEY LEVIN is in the bullpen at the TMZ studio. Per the show, we bounce from one correspondent to another at different desks and remote locations.

A motion graphic plants a kiss across the screen.

SFX: A big wet smooch.

HARVEY LEVIN

Okay, the latest "impression" from  
The Big Smooch, the Walter Smooch  
show.

A series of STILLs or short VIDEOS in TMZ style, depict Walter (with Clarice always nearby) out on the town, dodging paparazzi, etc.

TMZ CO-HOST

Smooch was last seen dodging the  
Paps with a rep from Big G  
Productions.

HARVEY LEVIN

They're doing the movie, right?

TMZ CORRESPONDENT

A Movie? Already?

TMZ CORRESPONDENT 2

Word is they're close to signing  
Brad Pitt.

TMZ CO-HOST

'Looks just like him. NOT.

TMZ CO-HOST (CONT'D)

He's got fifteen seconds. Then he's  
back to anonymous loser.

HARVEY LEVIN

You mean fifteen minutes.

TMZ CO-HOST

Fifteen seconds is the new fifteen  
minutes. Times they are a changing--

Clarice's hand has reached in and closed the screen. We were watching on a laptop.

Walter stares at the closed laptop.

WALTER

What do they mean, close to signing? I thought Brad Pitt was a done deal.

Clarice waves him off.

CLARICE

Just a little thing about gross versus net points. Inside Baseball, sweetness. Don't you worry your pretty little head about it.

**EXT. A NIGHTCLUB**

Walter and Clarice emerge from a stretch.

People on line notice. They variously CALL or CLAP for him. Then a cheer goes up.

CROWD

Smoooooooooooooooooch.

Walter acknowledges them with wave. He's getting good at the celebrity game.

The DOORMAN/BOUNCER opens up the velvet rope line to allow the VIP's in, but

Walter notices a HOMELESS MAN slumped in a nearby doorway. He stops, caught by the man's piercing stare. He steps over to him.

Clarice observes.

Walter offers his hand.

WALTER

Hi. I'm --

HOMELESS MAN

Walter Smooch.

WALTER

Wow. Even you know me, huh?

HOMELESS MAN

I know everything about you.

WALTER

You do?

HOMELESS MAN

It is time to repent. Time to get  
right with your God, Walter Smooch.  
Because your time is near.

WALTER

You got the wrong guy. I'm  
trending, dude. My time has just  
come.

HOMELESS MAN

Beware of reality as it is  
presented to you for it is a lie.

WALTER

What, this isn't really happening?  
I'm home in bed with my wife still  
waiting for my birthday hoover?  
Ummm, I think I like this better.

Walter pulls out his billfold and peels off a couple of 20's.

The crowd in line: more CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

Clarice observes. It's like Walter can do no wrong.

Walter proffers the bills to the homeless man.

HOMELESS MAN

I don't want your money.

WALTER

(leaning in, sotto)  
Take it. It's not really even my  
money. They just give it to me and  
tell me to spend it on whatever I  
want!

HOMELESS MAN

It's blood money.

Walter looks around and spies a PLASTIC CUP the man uses for  
donations. He stuffs the bills.

WALTER

You're wrong. It's no-blood money.  
Because there was no blood. No  
crash. I saved lives. That's what  
this is all about.

He stands, rejoins Clarice and they step to the entrance of  
the club.

HOMELESS MAN  
(after him)  
The life you need to save is your  
own.

**INT. A NIGHTCLUB**

Through pounding music and pulsating strobe lights we find Walter partying like it's his last night on earth. Once again, he's surrounded by beautiful women and other sycophants.

From a quieter, adjoining room, a bored Clarice keeps one eye on Walter and the other on a FOOTBALL GAME on the TV over the bar.

CLUB BARTENDER  
Another club soda?

CLARICE  
I suppose.

The bartender moves off to pour the drink.

A MAN approaches with all the manners of a PLAYER.

PLAYER  
You like football, sweetheart?

Clarice sizes him up.

CLARICE  
I like all kinds of balls,  
handsome.

The player brightens. Paydirt.

PLAYER  
Really. Well, I'll show you mine if  
you show me yours.

CLARICE  
(coquettish)  
You naughty thing, you. Right here  
and now?

PLAYER  
Why beat around the, um, bush, so  
to speak?

CLARICE  
You sure do know how to sweet talk  
a girl.

PLAYER

I believe in getting to the point.

CLARICE

Well you're in luck, sailor,  
because so do I.

The bar blocks our view, but Clarice makes a move that hikes up her dress.

The player follows her hands and the shifting skirt, nearly drooling with anticipation until his glee turns to horror.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Yes. On second thought, I believe  
it might be better if you just go  
fuck yourself.

The player backs away, freaked.

The bartender has returned with the drink. He nods, impressed.

CLUB BARTENDER

Well played.

**EXT. THE AIRPLANE**

A PASSENGER JET hurtles past us in a nose dive.

**INT. AIRPLANE GALLEY**

We're back in the crashing plane. Time is moving at a crawl. The coffee floats in mid-air. The briefcase drifts by Walter's head. Francine is on the floor. Her fingernail polish is chipped.

Walter sees it all, amazed. Then his gaze falls on:

POV: The Keypad on the cockpit door.

**EXT. THE AIRPLANE**

NEW ANGLE: The jet has passed us and is heading straight for the ground.

**INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - WALTER'S SUITE**

Walter, passed out on the bed again, awakens and sits up with a start, reacting to the dream.

WALTER  
(shock)  
Uhhhh.

Now to the hangover.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(pain)  
Aaaaaaaagh.

He grabs his head and falls back on the pillow.

CLARICE (O.S.)  
Walter, dear. I was beginning to  
think you were dead and gone.

Clarice is sitting off to the side on a couch, looking rested  
and, as always, impeccably dressed.

WALTER  
Ouch. I wish I was.

CLARICE  
Now, now. Let's not go there. Not  
yet anyway.

Walter slowly swings his feet to the floor, and sits up,  
clutching his head.

WALTER  
I had the weirdest dream.  
I was back in the plane. We were  
crashing.

CLARICE  
Sounds like one of those what-do-  
they-call-them, PTSD nightmares?

WALTER  
Yeah. Definitely, but...  
(trailing off)

CLARICE  
But what?

WALTER  
Well, it was scary, for sure, but  
that whole time thing. That was  
there too. Time was crawling again.  
Almost frozen.

CLARICE  
(wary)  
Yes?

Walter looks up, wincing from the headache but also invigorated.

WALTER  
God, I love that feeling.

He stands.

CLARICE  
(more wary)  
Walter?

He moves towards the door.

WALTER  
I need more of it.

Clarice moves to intercept him.

CLARICE  
I don't think that is such a good idea.

Walter opens the door.

WALTER  
No, it's a great idea.

Clarice pushes the door closed.

CLARICE  
But you're already famous. A hero.  
A celebrity.

WALTER  
Don't forget trending.

He opens the door. Clarice closes it.

CLARICE  
Isn't all that enough?

Walter opens the door as it dawns on him.

WALTER  
No.

Clarice closes the door, and keeps her hand pressed against it.

CLARICE  
What more do you want?

Walter looks at her hand and Clarice is forced to relent. She cannot keep him prisoner.

She drops her arm from the door. Walter opens it and looks Clarice in the eyes.

WALTER  
Everything that's coming to me.

He exits.

Clarice scrambles to get her bag and give chase.

CLARICE  
(to herself)  
Oh, you are definitely going to get that, Walter Smooch. You are definitely going to get that.

She exits after him.

**INT. HOTEL HALLWAY**

Exiting the room, Clarice stumbles in her heels. She regains her footing, looks down at her footwear and makes a decision.

CLARICE  
(man voice)  
Fuck it.

She slips off the heels, and sprints off.

**EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE**

The valet holds open the door of a convertible PORSCHE or similar sweet ride.

WALTER  
Thank you, my good man.

VALET  
Thank you, sir.

Clarice bursts out the entrance door.

CLARICE  
Walter, wait!

Walter sees her, smiles and puts the car in gear, revving the engine.

Clarice, with great athleticism, pumps in one hand, hand bag in the other, leaps like a high jumper, over the side of the door and slips into the seat.

Walter releases the clutch and

The car roars off.

**INT./EXT. A CONVERTIBLE ON US 1**

The sports car guns up the Pacific Coast highway.

INSIDE, Walter is relaxed behind the wheel, having the time of his life. But Clarice holds tightly to the windshield and dashboard, the straps of her pumps still looped around a thumb.

CLARICE

You put this on your room? The Big G's account?

WALTER

He said mi casa es su casa. I don't speak Spanish but I think he wanted me to enjoy myself.

CLARICE

I'm not sure this was in the budget, so I'd appreciate it if we can get it back on time and in one piece. Which goes for us, too.

WALTER

Time is relative, Clarice. That's the whole point. Time is relative.

Walter shifts gears. The Porsche kicks forward. Afterburners.

CLARICE

Walter, you're scaring me.

WALTER

Am I? That's good. I'm adding seconds to your life.

CLARICE

No, you are not. You most definitely are not.

**INT. TRUCK CAB**

A DRIVER's POV as the truck winds its way in the opposite direction, entering a straight section of the highway. In the distance, the sports car rounds the corner, entering the same straightaway.

INTERCUT with Walter and Clarice in the car.

Walter puts his hands behind his head, the picture of relaxation. Despite its fine tuning, the car begins to drift into the oncoming lane

CLARICE  
(alarmed)  
Now, what are you --?

No answer. Just smiling.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Put your hands on the wheel,  
Walter.

Still smiling.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Walter?

The Truck is a TRACTOR-TRAILER and it's closing fast.

AIRHORN.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Walter?

Clarice reaches for the wheel, but Walter intercepts her with his right arm, holding it fast.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
What in the name of God ...

Suddenly her voice SLOWS as the action SLOWS with it.

arrre youuuu doooooing?

Walter stares at Clarice, doing his best Charlie Manson impression - wide eyes, freaky smile.

AIRHORN again.

Seconds to impact.

Clarice's POV: The truck looming, filling the frame, then Walter's left hand moving slowly to the steering wheel, and jerks it right.

Back to real time:

The Porsche misses the oncoming tractor-trailer by inches.

The AIRHORN dopplers past.

Walter jerks the wheel to his left as the truck passes and puts the car into a power skid, stopping at the edge of the guard rail.

For a moment, there's just the sound of waves crashing on the rocks 100' below. Then

WALTER  
(primal)  
Whoooooo, hoooo. Did you feel it?

CLARICE  
Feel it? I'll tell you what I fel--

WALTER  
You felt it. You did. I know you did.

CLARICE  
(angry, but settling)  
Felt what?

WALTER  
Time. It stopped. Or it slowed down. That's what it was like. In the plane. That's what it was like.

Off Clarice's concerned reaction.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
God, I love that feeling.

#### **EXT. A BRIDGE**

Over a RIVER GORGE. Huge drop.

Walter finishes attaching a bungee cord to his ankle. Clarice stands nervously to the side.

CLARICE  
Look, I get what you are going for here, but I'm also supposed to be keeping an eye out for you.

WALTER

Relax. This is all good material  
for the movie.

Walter climbs up on the railing.

WALTER (CONT'D)

This is the part where Walter goes  
off the deep end after having the  
presence of mind to save a  
planeload full of people.

CLARICE

I don't think that's the kind of  
movie Big G wants to make.

WALTER

Why not? It's real life.

CLARICE

I... please, just don't--

WALTER

And you don't know what's going to  
happen. That's the suspense part,  
right?

Walter leaps, arms out, a swan dive

POV - the river rushes up to the point where Walter can see  
the individual water droplets that make up the wave breaking  
over a rock, and then he and it seems to freeze.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(ecstatic)

Aaaaaaah!

RESUME real time as Walter is yanked away by the recoil of  
the bungee cord.

He springs skyward and gets close to the level of the bridge  
where he makes eye contact with an impatient Clarice.

CLARICE

Are you happy now?

WALTER

Getting there.

He falls away again for the second bounce.

**INT./EXT. MONTAGE**

Now in rapid succession:

**- SKYDIVING**

Walter, with Clarice strapped to his back, leaps out of a plane at 12,000'.

CLARICE  
Ohhhhh, nooo!!

Now in freefall, shouting over the rushing air.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
I didn't know you knew how to sky  
dive.

WALTER  
I don't.

CLARICE  
But you told the instructor you had-  
-

WALTER  
Over a hundred jumps. I know.  
Which one is the rip cord again?

They drop sharply out of frame.

**- WATER SLIDE**

An amusement Park. The world's biggest water slide.

Walter slides past in a slow motion blur

WALTER  
Aaaaaaaah!

Clarice slides past behind him, bug eyed with fear.

CLARICE  
Aaagggh!

**- ZERO GRAVITY FLIGHT**

In the empty fuselage of a jet doing parabolic maneuver.

Walter floats, having the time of his life.

Clarice floats, but clutches a VOMIT BAG to her face. She heaves and then her eyes say it all as she experiences the unparalleled excitement of weightless puke. Ugh.

**EXT. CLARICE'S BACKYARD**

CLOSE on Clarice, sitting in what appears to be a lawn chair.

CLARICE  
You promise. This is the last one.

WALTER  
(not)  
Absolutely.

WIDER reveals the armchair is strung to 100 industrial-sized multi-colored HELIUM BALLOONS. Walter is fiddling with a rope tied to a stake.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
We'll just finish with this  
release knot here, and I'll be good  
to go.

CLARICE  
The others were bad, but this seems  
completely insane.

WALTER  
Not to worry. Disney did it with a  
whole house.

CLARICE  
That was a cartoon.

WALTER  
Details.

He stands up, holding the end of the knotted rope.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Okay, so I'm going to sit where you  
are and then you're gonna just give  
this baby a little yank, like this  
(demonstrating)  
And I'll be free to fly---

But Walter has accidentally released the knot and it is Clarice who is floating up and away.

CLARICE  
Walter, dear. This is not funny, do  
something.

Walter, holding the rope, attempts to restrain the apparatus, but the balloons lift him off the ground as well.

WALTER

I can't.

CLARICE

Why not?

Now dangling some six to eight feet off the ground, Walter let's go of the rope and falls back to the ground.

Walter channels the balloonist from another movie with a sheepish shrug.

WALTER

I don't know how it works.

Clarice floats away on the absurd contraption.

CLARICE

(calling)

Help! Someone. Anyone? Help!

**INT. BIG G PRODUCTIONS**

Peter works at his desk. Clarice and Walter sit in chairs next to each other. Clarice is BANDAGED, as from a big fall.

They look like they're waiting to see the principal. Clarice appears nervous, but Walter seems unconcerned, fiddling with his cell phone.

Peter looks down at his work, shuffling papers.

PETER

I gather you were not aware that interfering with air navigation is a crime punishable by a fine and or imprisonment for up to five years.

CLARICE

I tried to --

Peter puts up his hand.

PETER

Talk to the hand.

Clarice deflates.

CLARICE

Is the big G., you know, angry?

PETER

Mr. O'Donnell doesn't get angry. He gets even. He calls it Karma.

Walter, fiddles with the phone, moving it to the left and right. He cocks his head like a curious dog.

WALTER

Anyone know why I can't get any bars?

A BUZZER interrupts and Peter picks up the phone.

PETER

Yes sir.

(beat)

No sir.

(beat)

Yes, they're right here.

(beat)

No, I don't think so.

(beat)

Yes, of course. Right away, sir.

He hangs up the phone.

PETER (CONT'D)

(to Walter)

The Big G. wants to talk to you.

Walter stuffs the phone in his pocket.

WALTER

Good. Because I want to talk to him. I have some ideas about my story.

Walter strides to the door disappears inside the office.

Peter and Clarice react to a Walter Smooch who now has ideas.

PETER

Obviously, you haven't told him.

CLARICE

Not yet.

PETER

May I ask why not?

CLARICE

I thought I would let things run their course.

PETER

There's a reason we do things the way we do, you know. Keeping our clients informed has always made the eventual reality of their movie more understandable.

Clarice lifts his bandaged arms, noting his wounds.

CLARICE

I'm starting to get that.

PETER

Good. Better late than never.

CLARICE

I am a little concerned about what's going to happen, when he does find out.

Peter nods.

PETER

Well, time will tell. Time will definitely tell.

**INT. BIG G.'S OFFICE**

Again, Big G. stands at the window, silhouetted.

Walter is casually draped across the chair in front of the desk, insouciant.

Big G. begins to CLAP. Slowly, then building up steam. He turns to face Walter, a big smile on his face.

A little unsure, Walter smiles back.

The Big G.'s clapping abruptly stops.

BIG G.

Do you know what an NDE is, Walter?

WALTER

NDE?

BIG G.

It stands for near death experience.

WALTER

Ah, No. I didn't--

BIG G.

You don't realize it but that's what you're experiencing - the effects of a near death experience. A lot's been written on the subject, so I know what you're going through. Believe me, I do. It's my business to know. But you know what else I know? Life is a near death experience, Walter.

Big G pauses to let that sink in.

BIG G. (CONT'D)

Because, when you think about it, no matter what point we are at in our lives, we're always heading towards "The big D." Do you know what that is?

WALTER

Ummm, let me guess... death?

BIG G.

(ignoring the sarcasm)

Death indeed. At any given point, death could be right around the corner, am I right?

WALTER

Sure. I mean, of course.

BIG G.

Of course. So I applaud your actions. The problem with most people is they wait too long before realizing that life is a near death experience. They wait too long to start living.

Walter is pleased to be given still more credit for being who he is.

WALTER

They do, don't they?

BIG G.

They do, indeed. And then, before they know it, time has run out.

WALTER

I know. It's crazy, right?

BIG G.  
Crazy, indeed.

The Big G. smiles, then abruptly spins back around and resumes his silhouetted oversight of LA.

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
Clarice is going to take you over to the lot. There's something there you need to see.

**INT. CAR**

An LA street. Clarice drives. Walter rides shotgun.

CLARICE  
NDE, uh?

WALTER  
It stands for Near Death Experience. He said that's what happened to me and that's why I was doing what I was doing.

CLARICE  
And did he tell you life was a near death experience?

WALTER  
Yeah. How did you know?

CLARICE  
I'm told he says that to everyone. Apparently it's a go-to line. Part of his standard playbook.

Walter's face falls.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
(noticing)  
Don't worry, sweetie. You're still special. No matter what, you're still my hero and don't you forget it.

**EXT. STUDIO GATE.**

It could be Warner's lot, Paramount, or some other.

NEW ANGLE. A CAR pulls up, with Clarice at the wheel and Walter riding shotgun.

CLARICE  
Hello Charlie.

GATEKEEPER  
Well, hello there Mizz Clarice.  
(sotto)  
Who do you like this Sunday?

CLARICE  
I like the Saints. The Titan's  
offensive line is a bunch of  
bandaids and that rookie QB is ripe  
for a beating.

GATEKEEPER  
Vegas has them with three points.

CLARICE  
I take that bet all day, Charlie.

GATEKEEPER  
Alright, then.

They pull through.

**EXT. THE STUDIO LOT**

Walking now, Walter is wide-eyed like he was at the first party, turning this way and that at signs of the movie production business. Having the time of his life.

- a grip rolls a giant 10K down the road.
- Golf carts whiz to and fro.
- COSTUMED ACTORS - Cowboys, cops, gladiators, ballerinas, etc.

As they walk past a row of low production bungalows...

CLARICE  
'Lotta history here. Did you know  
the Epstein twins wrote Casablanca  
in there?  
(gesturing)  
Over in that one, Coppola spent  
eight hours on the phone trying to  
convince Brando to show up for a  
recording session.

WALTER  
Wow.

Now they pass several large soundstages, their elephant doors open revealing half-built sets and others being LIT.

CLARICE

Mr. O'Donnell has invested a lot in you, as he has with all of his subjects.

Turning a corner, marked with a giant STAGE 3 on the side,

NEW ANGLE, from inside a stage looking out the giant STAGE DOOR, which frames and dwarfs a silhouetted Walter and Clarice.

SFX: HAMMERING and AD-LIB call and response of CREWS WORKING.

CLOSE as Walter's eye's widen.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

You don't get to be king of the biopic without that.

WALTER

Oh my God.

CLARICE

Exactly.

REVERSE shows Walter's POV: a half-built fuselage of a TransWorld Jet.

WALTER

They're already building sets?

CLARICE

Time waits for no man, Walter.

WALTER

But is there a script?

CLARICE

It's being written as we speak. Plus, we already know where most of the story takes place, right?

Walter marvels at the sight of the giant half-jet.

Clarice give him a tug.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

But since you asked.

**EXT. WRITER'S BUILDING**

A squat, cinderblock structure, more Dept. Of Motor Vehicles than classic studio bungalow.

Clarice and Walter enter.

**INT. WRITER'S BUILDING.**

They cross a drab lobby, footfalls echoing. Clarice opens a large metal fire door, revealing:

A MASSIVE INTERIOR space, with row upon row of steel office DESKS. The very antithesis of creativity. A corporate secretarial pool circa 1950.

Each desk features a PERSON at a TYPEWRITER, a stack of white paper to one side and typewritten pages on the other.

The CLATTER of the typewriters is so loud, Clarice and Walter must raise their voices to communicate.

CLARICE

Welcome to the sausage factory.

Walter is taken aback.

WALTER

This is where you write?

Clarice leads Walter along the perimeter of the maze of desks. She clarifies with mock gravity.

CLARICE

This is where we breathe life into your times, Walter Smooch.

Off Walter's dismayed reaction.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Is there a problem?

WALTER

It's just ... typewriters?

CLARICE

They worked for the Epsteins. Plus it lowers our carbon footprint. Green is the new black, you know.

WALTER

Yeah, but... it seems so, I don't know, sterile.

CLARICE  
Have you seen a Hollywood movie  
lately?

Walter winces, but not in answer to the question.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
(not exactly surprised)  
What's the matter?

WALTER  
I ... I think I need to sit down.

Clarice hustles Walter into a

**PERIMETER OFFICE**

Similarly sterile and dated, There's an empty desk and a  
COUCH. Clarice guides Walter to the couch and helps him sit.

She eyes him, as much curious as concerned.

CLARICE  
Are you okay?

WALTER  
Maybe if I just lie down for a sec.

CLARICE  
Of course.

Clarice helps him to get prone.

Walter's POV: Clarice looking down at him, not exactly  
worried. More like expectant. As though she's been waiting  
for this development.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
It's okay, Walter dear. You rest.  
Take your time.

His POV: as Clarice FADES TO BLACK.

**INT. AIRPLANE GALLEY**

The airplane is in its nose dive. Time is moving at a crawl.  
The briefcase flies by Walter's head. Francine is on the  
floor.

Walter's POV: The Keypad on the cockpit door.

**EXT. THE AIRPLANE**

The jet hurtles past us, heading straight for the ground.

**PERIMETER OFFICE**

Walter, on the couch, awakens with a start and sits up.  
Clarice sits in a nearby chair.

CLARICE  
Everything okay?

WALTER  
No.  
(looking around)  
I... I had that awful dream. Again.

CLARICE  
What dream?

WALTER  
I was back in the plane. Only I  
couldn't get to the keypad. I  
couldn't unlock the cockpit door. I  
couldn't get to the controls.  
And...

CLARICE  
And?

WALTER  
And even if I could, I... I  
realized, I don't know how to fly a  
plane!

CLARICE  
What about the video games?

WALTER  
(realizing)  
I've never played a video game in  
my life.

CLARICE  
I see.

WALTER  
You do?

CLARICE  
(a sympathetic nod)  
Yes. I do.

WALTER  
(dawning)  
Wait a minute? Am I ... dead?

CLARICE  
No, of course not.  
(beat)  
Not yet.

WALTER  
What do you mean, not yet? Not yet  
as in "Life is a near death  
experience" or not yet as in not  
this second.

CLARICE  
Not this second.

WALTER  
How many seconds do I have?

CLARICE  
Mmmm, not that many, I'm afraid.

WALTER  
But then ... why isn't my life  
flashing before my eyes?

CLARICE  
It doesn't always work like that.

Walter stares at Clarice, eyes darting, like a caged animal.

He leaps to his feet, pushes past Clarice and runs for the  
door they entered.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Walter wait...

But Walter's not waiting for anybody. He's running. As he zig-  
zags between desks and sprints down rows, he spies

A SECURITY GUARD at the entrance.

Changing direction, Walter sprints towards another door.

SECURITY GUARD  
(Into mic on his chest)  
We've got a runner. Code six.

As he runs through the factory floor of writers, none react.  
It's all business as usual.

As Walter nears the far end of the giant room, ANOTHER SECURITY GUARD appears.

Walter hangs a hard right.

Now a THIRD GUARD.

Walter heads back towards the original entrance. The first guard is waiting. To avoid the guards now giving chase,

Walter steps on a chair and then hopscotches from desk to desk, tip-toeing to avoid the typewriters and typists, an impressive dance that can't last much longer.

He firmly plants his FOOT across the top of a machine, leaving a dirty sole print on the paper.

WALTER

Sorry.

HOLD on the paper after his foot leaves the frame as the anonymous writer keeps working and the following WORDS TYPE ONTO THE PAGE:

CLOSE as Walter's foot steps on a typewriter carriage and leaves a dirty imprint behind.

WIDE AGAIN as security guards track Walter from the periphery. But Walter leaps into an aisle and now there's just one guard between him and the entrance.

As Walter runs at him, the guard crouches, arms out and ready to make the tackle.

But Walter puts on a DOUBLE HEAD FAKE and then a spin that leaves the guard grasping for air.

Clarice watches, impressed.

CLARICE

Nothin' but end zone now.

Walter bursts out the doors, into the lobby, but more guards arriving at the main door send him sprinting up a stairs.

#### **EXT. ROOF**

A door bursts open and Walter emerges onto the roof, blinded by bright sunlight.

As his eyes adjust, he's surprised to find Clarice is, somehow, already there.

CLARICE

Now, Walter. Calm down.  
Everything's going to be al--

Walter sprints towards the end of the building, scrambling up on the knee wall that wraps the edge, nearly falling off. Waving his arms, he catches his balance.

Clarice is behind him.

Walter turns.

WALTER

Stay back!

CLARICE

Walter Smooch. Stop this and come down from there this instant.

She reaches out a hand.

WALTER

Don't touch me.

Clarice stops.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You're... you're not. This can't be real. This isn't happening. It's some kind of nightmare, right?

CLARICE

It doesn't have to be. It all depends on how you approach it.

Clarice reaches for him, but again stops on his command.

WALTER

No! This is a dream. If I just step off, when I'm falling, I'll wake up.

CLARICE

You don't wanna do that. Let me help you.

Clarice reaches again, but before she can get to him, Walter closes his eyes and steps off.

Clarice leaps forward and manages to catch Walter's arm, stopping his descent and slamming him into the side of the building.

WALTER

Ow. Let me go.

CLARICE

I'm not going to let you go. It's my job.

WALTER

I don't care. Let. Me. Go.

Walter uses his other hand to peel Clarice's fingers back to release her hold.

CLARICE

Walter, don't. It's a long way down.

Walter's eyes lock with Clarice's.

WALTER

No it isn't. This is not real. It can't be. I'm... I'm the hero.

He pulls the last of Clarice's fingers that allows her to grip. Down he goes.

Clarice's POV: Walter falls the twenty feet and lands hard.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Ooowwww! Arrrgh.

He writhes in pain.

His POV: Clarice looking down from above.

CLARICE

I told you. It doesn't work that way.

Walter's fear energizes him. He rolls over, struggles to his feet, and begins limp/skipping away. Quasimoto with a mission.

Clarice watches him go with a knowing and sympathetic smile.

**EXT. STUDIO LOT**

Walter, looking behind him like a hunted animal, continues to limp his way towards the front gate. As he passes

STAGE 3, he stops and stares inside, this time noting:

SET PAINTERS on a scaffold, painting JAGGED LINES on the fuselage, making it appear as a reassembled fuselage from an NTSB investigation.

Walter is horrified. He scurries onward.

**EXT. THE LOT**

A golf cart whizzes by.

Find Walter hanging on the back.

As it passes the short road to the exit gate, he steps off, struggling to keep on his feet.

He ducks behind a large equipment trailer stopped at the exit and creeps along the side of the trailer, using its length as interference.

The trailer suddenly starts up. Walter tries but fails to keep up with it.

He's left exposed right at the gate house. He flattens himself against the wall, then crouches to cross underneath the window sill.

The gatekeeper is chatting with someone who's entering on the other side. Walter freezes, recognizing the voice.

GATEKEEPER

Congrats on Brad Pitt for your new airplane project.

BIG G.

And we signed ... [ID's the actor playing Walter].

GATEKEEPER

Oh, it's a buddy picture?

BIG G.

N'aagh, it's kind of like a movie within a movie thing. [Actor] plays the hero and Pitt plays [Actor] playing the hero, who's having the time of his life until he realizes there's something more to the story than what meets the eye.

GATEKEEPER

Sounds like fun.

BIG G.  
From your lips to God's ears,  
Charlie.

Big G. continues onto the lot, the gatekeeper watching him go then returning to the SPORTS PAGES splayed in front of him on his desk. He doesn't notice as

Walter hobbles out towards the boulevard.

**EXT. AN L.A. BOULEVARD**

Walter limps along, shirt tail partly out, a tear in his pants, hair decidedly out of place and a cut on his forehead. A Frankenstein-like rivulet of blood runs past his ear.

WALTER  
(mumbling)  
It's a trick. It's some kinda weird  
L.A. thing. A drug! They must've  
slipped me something.

Now Walter is crossing the street at an intersection. Other pedestrians observe his disheveled appearance, the cut on his head, and incoherent mutterings, and give him a wide berth.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(a steady stream)  
Movie people. Lala land. Mal warned  
me. She said I shouldn't just jump  
in and...  
(realizing)  
Mallory!

He stops in mid-stride and fishes around in his pocket, finally pulling out his cellphone.

CLOSE as he activates it and we see the screen picture of Mallory has been cracked - like the fuselage of the plane.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Shit.

But then he spies BARS.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Bars. I've got bars. Hallelujah  
thank you Jesus, Mary and the baby  
Joseph.

WIDE shows Walter in the middle of the intersection. Traffic is now moving, slowly to his left and right. The cars give him a wide berth as well.

Gingerly, he swipes to open the phone. It seems to be working. He taps in the number.

MALLORY (V.O., FILTERED)

Hello...

WALTER

MALLORY! Mal, please, you gotta help me. Something's happened. I don't know what's going on but --

It's a message.

MALLORY (V.O., FILTERED)

This is Mallory Smooch of County Health's Midwifery Services. I'm away from my desk, but if you leave a message I will "deliver" a response by the end of business today.

WALTER

No, no, Mal. I can't ... that won't... There's not enough...

MALLORY

(message continues)

If this is an emergency, Please call 911.

WALTER

Yes, this is an emergency. This is a serious emergency.

A police car has pulled up directly behind where Walter stands in the crosswalk and at this moment, SQUAWKS him with lights and siren.

Walter jumps, drops the phone and then scrambles after it on hands and knees.

When he picks it up, it appears to be intact.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Oh, thank God. Christian. I'll call Christian.

But when he taps the button to activate it, the entire back of the phone drops out and falls to the pavement, breaking into several pieces.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Aaagh.

All Walter is holding is the cracked glass of the screen, which itself now crumbles, the pieces falling out of his palm, one by one.

WALTER (CONT'D)

NO! No. No, no, no. This is not happening.

The COP has emerged from his cruiser.

POLICE OFFICER

Is there a problem, sir?

By now, Walter is wide eyed, tin foil hat material.

WALTER

What? Oh, Yes. Yes, officer,  
There's a problem, a REAL problem.  
(looking around, haunted)  
Something funny's going on. I've  
been drugged, I think. There are  
these people trying to make me  
think I'm dead.

POLICE OFFICER

Dead?

WALTER

Yeah. Well, no, not dead. But  
dying.

POLICE OFFICER

Dying.

WALTER

Yeah. Like I'm gonna be dead any  
second. But not like the seconds  
you and I know but like other  
seconds. Longer ones.

POLICE OFFICER

Longer seconds. Like minutes?

WALTER

No, hours. Days even!

POLICE OFFICER

Days.

WALTER

Yeah. See, they're saying I'm like  
in the middle of a plane crash, but  
I'm not.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

I saved that plane from crashing.  
And then they put me up in a big  
hotel. And flew me out here.

(looking around)

I mean, why else would I be in Los  
Angeles? And they're gonna make a  
movie about my life. And, and Brad  
Pitt is gonna star in it.

POLICE OFFICER

Brad Pitt.

WALTER

Yeah, yeah. That was the deal. I  
signed this paper. I gave them my  
life rights and, and they said it  
would be the time of my life and...

(trailing off)

The absurdity has caught up Walter. Even he can't believe  
what he's saying.

POLICE OFFICER

Why don't you hop in the car and  
we'll take you over to the  
hospital. 'Have that cut on your  
head checked out.

Walter notices his bleeding forehead for the first time.

WALTER

I fell.

POLICE OFFICER

But you're not falling.

WALTER

Huh?

POLICE OFFICER

You fell. The crash. It's over,  
right?

Walter shakes his head, trying to figure it out.

WALTER

The crash. The crash. The crash.

**INT. HOSPITAL ER**

Walter sits on the side of a bed, waiting. A CUTE INTERN  
pulls back the curtain. She consults his chart while pulling  
on a fresh pair of gloves. She's an immigrant, Indian maybe.

INTERN  
So Mister Walter, how did you cut  
yourself?

The curtain that surrounds them remains slightly open.

A FILM CREW is moving equipment past - rolling HAMPERS,  
LIGHTS on stands. A DOLLY. PA's with clipboards, wearing  
HEADSETS.

WALTER  
(wary)  
I, um ... It's a long story.

The intern examines his cut.

INTERN  
I have time.

WALTER  
Lucky you.  
(regarding the commotion)  
What's with all the people?

INTERN  
Oh, they're shooting a movie. Or a  
TV show. Not sure which. It happens  
a lot.

The intern straightens up, her exam finished.

INTERN (CONT'D)  
Okay, so you will need a few  
stitches. I will get a kit and be  
right back.

WALTER  
I'm not dying?

She laughs.

INTERN  
From this little cut? No, Mister  
Walter. You are not dying.

She exits.

WALTER  
(after her)  
From your lips to God's ears, doc.

TWO NURSES are paused a few beds down.

NURSE 1  
Brad Pitt? Here?

NURSE 2  
He's outside in his trailer.  
They're getting the scene ready.

Walter hears this, slides off his bed, and peeks out past the curtain.

HIS POV: A big CAMERA is on the dolly. Giant SOFT LIGHTS, GRIP STANDS with FLAGS, etc.

A CINEMATOGRAPHER uses a LIGHT METER to survey the area around another bed, just like the one Walter was on. A boom mike on a stand arcs in from behind the camera setup.

TECHNICIANS busy themselves with the set-up.

Walter is newly panicked. He turns to run, but bumps into a PA with a headset who is leading none other than BRAD PITT in the other direction.

Walter bounces off the PA and straight into Pitt.

BRAD PITT  
Whoa, easy there, big fella.

Walter looks at Pitt, stunned.

WALTER  
You!

BRAD PITT  
Most of the time. Unless I'm playing someone else.

WALTER  
There's a script?

BRAD PITT  
(warily)  
Yeah.

WALTER  
Have you read it?

BRAD PITT  
Of course.

WALTER  
How does it turn out?

Brad claps him on the shoulder, which causes Walter to wince.

BRAD PITT  
'Can't tell you that, bud. You're  
gonna have to buy a ticket just  
like everyone else.

The PA gently urges Walter aside and guides Brad towards the waiting set up.

As Walter watches him go, Brad tosses a last word over his shoulder.

BRAD PITT (CONT'D)  
But it's got a great twist. You're  
gonna like it.

Any calm Walter had gained has completely drained from his face. He scrambles for the exit only to run into TWO BIG ORDERLIES.

Inadvertently, Walter has slipped right into an outstretched straitjacket.

ORDERLY 1  
Walter Smooch?

WALTER  
Yes?

ORDERLY 2  
You're late for surgery.

WALTER  
Surgery? What surgery.

The two orderlies secure the straps that immobilize Walter.

ORDERLY 1  
(sing-song)  
Is that a bottle in front of me...

ORDERLY 2  
(finishing)  
... or a frontal lobotomy!

Orderly 2 pantomimes a lobotomy using his hand and index finger as a drill, as Orderly 1 mimics the SOUND.

Horrified, Walter tries to run, but is easily tripped by Orderly 2, and without the benefit of his arms, goes down hard.

WALTER  
Owwwww!

The orderlies grab the straps of the jacket and hoist Walter to his feet.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
 (yelling)  
 Help! Please, help! Anyone. There's been some kind of mistake. They're doing this against my will. I'm Walter Smooch. THE Walter Smooch. Miracle in Mid-air...

As the orderlies guide Walter past, patients, nurses and doctors all stop to see what's happening.

ORDERLY 1  
 (explaining)  
 Delirious.

ORDERLY 2  
 (explaining)  
 Delusional

A doctor leans against the nurses station, where there's a pizza in the box. Several nurses and Walter's intern are partaking.

DOCTOR  
 Digiorno?

ORDERLY 1  
 No thanks. I'm on duty.

Walter's intern appears.

INTERN  
 (to Walter)  
 You like some pizza, Mister Walter?

Off Walter's reaction: It's like a loony bin, which makes a certain sense.

WALTER  
 You're all nuts!

Everyone in the room stops for a BEAT, exchanging looks.

ORDERLY 1  
We're all crazy.

Everyone bursts out LAUGHING.

The elevator doors open, revealing two other orderlies with a PATIENT who looks distinctly like HANNIBAL LECTER - leather mask, bound to a HAND TRUCK, the whole deal.

Walter's orderlies lead him on board, and all turn to assume the position of staring back out while the door closes, Walter's stares warily at the masked man bound next to him.

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

Walter, now beyond the pale, looks Lecter over.

WALTER  
You're not real.

HANNIBAL LECTER  
You'll forgive me if I decline to gauge my sense of self on your say so.

WALTER  
But you're a character. From a movie.

Lecter swivels his head to Walter.

HANNIBAL LECTER  
On the contrary, Walter. I am a character from your movie.

The elevator arrives at its floor and doors slide open. Lecter is wheeled out.

HANNIBAL LECTER (CONT'D)  
Say hello to Clarice for me, won't you?

**INT. HOSPITAL - BASEMENT HALLWAY**

Walter is now strapped to a gurney, while a nurse shaves the front of his head.

Another gurney is wheeled up, coming from the Operating room.

Walter looks over and sees:

POV: Clarice. Groggy. There's an IV attached to her gurney.

WALTER  
Clarice? What are you...? You had your surgery?

CLARICE  
(high as a kite)  
Um, hummmm.

The nurse finishes and steps away.

WALTER  
You've gotta help me.

CLARICE  
Thanks. From what I can no longer  
feel, it went well, I think.

WALTER  
They're about to drill into my  
head.

CLARICE  
And I just lost some body parts.  
Your turn.

Walter has an idea.

WALTER  
But I'm the hero, right? This is my  
movie.

This cuts through Clarice's stupor and she looks at Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Are you going to help me?

Either the moral argument or Walter's pitiful tone forces  
Clarice to give in.

Defying reality, she sits up and looks around.

Her POV: Nurses are busy attending to other matters as  
gurneys are wheeled in and out of various Operating Rooms.

Clarice sluggishly tugs at the straps, but a NURSE approaches  
and stops her.

CORRIDOR NURSE  
Now, now, Clarice. You know you're  
not supposed to be up.

The nurse helps her to lie back down.

CLARICE  
(mumbling)  
Bad, bad boy. I mean, girl.

WALTER  
Wait, no. Don't take her.

But the nurse ignores him and wheels Clarice away.

Now ANOTHER NURSE approaches and wheels Walter in the opposite direction, into the OR.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(attempted calm)  
Okay, enough's enough. All this stops here and now. I don't think you realize just who I am. I'm Walter Smooch. A hero who landed a planeload full of people...

But existential doubt creeps in.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(weakly, pleading)  
I think.

Walter's POV: As he's wheeled into position, staring up at a big light, and several masked heads lean in.

DOCTOR  
Hello, Walter. This won't hurt a bit.

The DOCTOR, a man, holds up a big, CONSTRUCTION DRILL and revs it.

ANGLE on Walter's one free hand, slipping off the gurney and between the doctor's legs.

WALTER  
Neither will this.

CLOSE on his fist as he squeezes.

DOCTOR  
eeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaagh.

The doctor collapses and the others attending rush to his attention.

Walter finishes the work Clarice started, pulling away the straps and slipping off the gurney, which he then drags behind him and fits across the door to the OR, effectively blocking them.

ATTENDING 1  
He's getting away.

ATTENDING 2  
Wait, come back.

**EXT. HOSPITAL - SERVICE ENTRANCE**

A litter strewn lot with a giant DUMPSTER and big air conditioning UNITS. No man's land.

An EXIT DOOR opens and Walter emerges, blinking back the bright light. He's wearing only a hospital gown and paper slippers.

He hobbles off, gown open and bare-assed, but

A GIRL calls out to him. She's stands next to a Town Car.

PA DRIVER  
Mister Smooch?  
(louder)  
Mister Smooch?

Walter stops, suddenly noticing a shiny car where none should be.

PA DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Do you want a ride?

Looking around, wide-eyed, like a crazy person.

WALTER  
Who are you?

PA DRIVER  
I'm your driver. You know, for the production.

Logic has long since left the station. Walter decides to catch the ride.

WALTER  
Can you take me to the hotel?

PA DRIVER  
Of course. C'mon, hop in.

Walter moves to the car, still wary. The driver opens the door for him.

PA DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Nice coat.

Walter climbs in the car.

INSIDE

WALTER  
(to himself)  
It's the drugs. It's gotta be the  
drugs.

The driver climbs in front.

PA DRIVER  
Chateau Marmont, right?

WALTER  
Uh? Yes., Yes, please.

**EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT**

At the entrance. The doorman opens the car door and greets Walter as he emerges, giving a curious once over to his outfit. But then again, he deals in a world of eccentricity.

DOORMAN  
Good afternoon, sir.

WALTER  
Do you know me?

DOORMAN  
Of course, sir. You're Mister  
Smooch.

WALTER  
Why am I here?

DOORMAN  
Sir?

WALTER  
I mean, did you know me before I  
got here. Like, am I famous or  
anything?

DOORMAN  
Well, you did save that airplane.

WALTER  
I did, right? Oh, thank God. I knew  
I did. Thank you.

DOORMAN  
It's quite alright, sir.

WALTER  
(deeply relieved)  
Thank you very much.

A COUPLE emerges from inside. They give him a wide berth.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
(to the couple)  
Thank you. Thank you.

Walter heads inside, still bare-assed.

NEW ANGLE as the driver has emerged from her side of the car. She and the doorman watch as Walter disappears inside the building.

Both are smiling, holding their positions for an EXTRA BEAT. As are the couple, all staring at the doorway Walter just disappeared into, then

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Cut!

The doorman, driver and the couple all break their poses.

Crew members scurry out from behind bushes - MAKEUP and WARDROBE with kits. A sound BOOM encroaches on the frame, as other production action is revealed around the edges.

Now a PA with a DIGITAL SLATE steps in CLOSE, holding it upside down and nearly obscuring the picture.

CLAPPER PA  
Time of Your Life. Tail Slate.  
Scene 102A. Walter thinks he  
understands.

As he claps the sticks.

**INT. CHATEAU MARMONT**

THE BAR is empty, but for Walter and one other CUSTOMER at the far end. Walter is now dressed in street clothes.

ON THE TV (Background) "It's A Wonderful Life" plays. George listens to Clarence Odbody explain how he's an AS-2: Angel, Second Class. The Tollhouse Keeper falls off his chair.

Walter finishes a drink with a decisive pull and places the glass back on the bar.

BARTENDER  
Same again?

WALTER  
Absolutely. After all, I'm a hero.

The bartender has seen it all.

BARTENDER  
Yes sir. Of course.

He serves up the new drink.

The other customer speaks up.

CUSTOMER  
Hero, huh?

WALTER  
That's what they say.

Walter raises his new glass.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Walter Smooch.

The other customer responds with his glass.

CUSTOMER  
Nice to meet you.

WALTER  
You haven't heard of me?

CUSTOMER  
Should I have?

WALTER  
I'm the guy who saved that  
Transworld plane a couple of weeks  
ago. They're making a movie about  
it. That's why I'm here.

CUSTOMER  
Oh, yeah? No. Didn't see that.  
Congratulations though.

WALTER  
Yeah, thanks.

CUSTOMER  
You don't seem very happy.

WALTER  
Huh?

CUSTOMER  
For a hero and a movie star, I  
mean.

WALTER

It's just that, I'm not sure.

CUSTOMER

Not sure of what?

WALTER

Not sure I did what I think I did.

CUSTOMER

What else could you have done?

WALTER

I could have killed everyone.

CUSTOMER

So, you're either a hero or a mass murderer. Either way, they still make the movie.

WALTER

No, I mean, I could be just dying along with everyone else. And this here, you and all this, is just some kind of fantasy. Like, you know, the way your life is supposed to flash before your eyes?

CUSTOMER

You saying your life doesn't pass before your eyes?

WALTER

Not mine, apparently. It's probably just as well. My life wasn't much of anything anyway.

CUSTOMER

And now you're dying? Right here, right now?

WALTER

Apparently.

CUSTOMER

You wanna know my theory about dying? You know that white light you're supposed to go to, the long corridor with the bright light at the end?

WALTER

Yeah?

CUSTOMER

I think the big secret to life, the thing they don't tell you, is: that light?

(pausing for effect.)

It's a bug zapper!

(making the effect)

Zzzzzzzt. We're bugs. That's what this whole thing has been about. You're nothing more than a bug.

WALTER

Thanks. I'm feeling much better now.

CUSTOMER

Don't mention it. You might want to think twice before telling somebody they're just a figment of your imagination, you know what I'm saying, pal?

CLARICE (O.S.)

There you are.

Clarice slips onto the stool next to Walter.

Walter gets off his stool with a start, but Clarice grabs his arm - gently but firmly.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Remember what happened the last time you tried to get away from me?

WALTER

But you were in the hospital?

Off Clarice's quizzical reaction.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Weren't you?

CLARICE

What you are going through can be a little disorienting. We understand that.

WALTER

What am I going through?

CLARICE

You know, all this.

WALTER

All I want to know is how does it end?

CLARICE

That, I'm afraid, is above my pay grade. You want to talk about the ending, you have to speak with the big G. But he's busy. You cannot see him. Absolutely no way, no how.

Walter is suddenly aware of something in his pocket. He reaches in and is surprised to pull out A GUN.

CLARICE (CONT'D)

Where did you get that?

WALTER

I have no idea. It's not mine.

CLARICE

(hands up)  
Calm down.

WALTER

I am calm.

CLARICE

Don't shoot.

WALTER

I'm not going to shoot.

CLARICE

I'll take you to him.

Off Walter's astonished reaction, MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. LIFE'S EDIT SUITE**

Walter's astonished reaction as he takes in suddenly new surroundings.

REVEAL they are standing at the rear entrance to a massive auditorium, with dozens of CONSOLES, each with AN EDITOR - a mix of genders and types.

It's part IMAX theater and part NASA MISSION CONTROL

The rows of consoles are set on different levels, like stadium seating, all arcing around one giant screen.

ON SCREEN, there are thousands of smaller squares of images, each with a time code embedded on their lower third.

As Walter takes it all in, CLOSE on some of the boxes. They are individual scenes of people's lives - some frozen, some in motion.

But looked at from afar, they appear as a GORGEOUS MOSAIC.

Big G. is in a central chair, directing the different editors at different consoles.

BIG G.  
Roger, I don't like that transition. Can we tighten it up?

ROGER  
You got it.

BIG G.  
Jill, is that a scratch track?

JILL  
Yeah, Big G. There's a Voice Over session for the final tomorrow.

BIG G.  
Good, 'cause that voice is killing me.

Clarice and Walter are on the uppermost tier, and now Clarice nervously steps forward.

CLARICE  
Ah, excuse me, Big G. I've got Walter here.

BIG G.  
Jesus Christ, do I look like I've got time for this? I thought I told you to go through Peter. He's the gatekeeper, remember?

CLARICE  
Yes, I am aware of that, Big G. But he's um..., he's got a gun.

BIG G.  
A gun?

WALTER  
I don't have a gun.

Walter looks in his hand, where he still holds the gun.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I mean, I have one, but I don't know where I got it and I have no intention of using it.

He places it on a nearby console like it's radioactive.

BIG G.

You want to know where you got it? I gave it to you. Well, I had the props department do it. 'Thought it would spice things up a bit. Plus it helped get you from there to here, right?

WALTER

I guess...

BIG G.

As for using it. You're right. If you were going to use it, we would have had to introduce it in Act I.

Big G. turns to the many editors in the room.

BIG G. (CONT'D)

Hey folks, could you give us a minute, here?

AD-LIB - Okay, Big G. You got it.

The editors stand and shuffle out of the auditorium. As they do, Big G walks around Walter, surveying him, then putting his hands on his shoulders and giving him a shoulder rub.

Walter is clearly uneasy.

BIG G. (CONT'D)

Now, Walter. You see all those little boxes with the numbers inside them.

WALTER

Yeah.

BIG G.

That's called time code. Those numbers represent hours, minutes, seconds and fractions of a second, 24 to be exact. Why?

(MORE)

BIG G. (CONT'D)

Because good old Tommy Edison realized that if he took individual pictures and showed 24 of them each second, our brains would do the rest and make it look like it's real life in real time. But do you know how much time is really inside those seconds?

WALTER

(confused)

Um, I don't... No.

BIG G.

More! Much, much more. Microseconds, milliseconds, Nanoseconds, picoseconds, femtoseconds, yoctoseconds - yeah, there really is a yoctosecond. It's one septillionth of a second.

(shrugs)

The point is, there's plenty of time in the universe. But until you understand that, I mean, really understand that, you're doomed to waste it.

WALTER

What I want to know is, how much do I have left?

BIG G.

How much do you need?

WALTER

A lifetime.

BIG G.

Whose lifetime? The mayfly lives less than an afternoon. A quark exists for one trillionth of a trillionth of a second. The earth, on the other hand, is 14 billion years old and counting. If you think about it, this time, here and now, and all the time of your life - is incredible. You were born! You've lived for fifty years - eons to the Mayfly, a septillionth of a second to the bedrock we're standing on. In either case, a phenomenon as miraculous as the universe itself. Fifty years ago, you won the lottery, Walter Smooch.

(MORE)

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
Every second since has been a  
bonus.

As Walter considers this, Big G. reaches in his pocket, takes  
out a folded PIECE OF PAPER. He offers it to Walter.

WALTER  
What's this?

BIG G.  
It's yours. I think you lost it.

Walter unfolds it.

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
For Myachi.

Seeing the contents, Walter nods.

WALTER  
Myachi-san.

BIG G.  
Huh?

WALTER  
Doesn't matter.

He puts the paper in his top pocket.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
So, ... are you God?

BIG G.  
Me? Heavens, no. I'm from your  
imagination.  
(singing)  
I am he as you are he as you are me  
as we are all together.

WALTER  
I love that song.

BIG G.  
I know.

WALTER  
But is this my life, the movie of  
my life or the movie about the  
movie about my life?

BIG G.  
What's the difference? It's life  
all the way down. Infinite regress.  
(MORE)

BIG G. (CONT'D)  
And you already know what's at the  
bottom.

WALTER  
(remembering)  
Us... We are God's God.

Walter turns to Clarice.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
And you. From my imagination, too?

CLARICE  
Or your Sports Illustrated.  
(imitating the talk show  
doctor)  
Zee brain, zis eez an amazing  
organ.

She smiles.

Walter nods, getting it. Maybe.

He turns back to the Big G.

WALTER  
Too bad. I didn't turn out to be a  
hero, did I?

Big G. claps him on his shoulders.

BIG G.  
Au Contraire, Waltaire. It's your  
movie. The time of your life. By  
definition, you are the hero.  
You've always been the hero.

Walter turns to Clarice.

She puts our her arms and they hug.

CLARICE  
Goodbye, Walter, dear.

WALTER  
Goodbye Clarice. Thank you for  
taking such good care of me.

They release.

CLARICE  
No. Thank you!

She is from his imagination, after all.

Walter turns to leave, but stops at Clarice's question.

CLARICE (CONT'D)  
Where will you go now?

WALTER  
Where I belong. Where I should have  
been this whole time.

CLARICE  
They won't be there, you know.

WALTER  
Where are they?

CLARICE  
Well, Christian's in school. And I  
think Mallory is about to deliver a  
baby.

Walter pauses, then gets more of it. The whole time shift  
thing. It's all been just seconds.

WALTER  
Still, there's no place like home.

Clarice and the Big G nod and smile. Of course. We learned  
that in another movie.

Back to Walter as we

MATCH CUT TO:

**EXT. WALTER'S HOUSE**

Walter standing in his front yard looking at his house.

POV: The house is the same, but as if it's new. Paint.  
Flowers. Walkway. Front door. Even a PICKET FENCE. The image  
has that Ultra High Def quality. Perfect.

The NOISE OF A LAWNMOWER intrudes and Walter spies his  
neighbor, Myachi, riding a lawn tractor over his finely  
manicured lawn next door.

He remembers something, and fishes the piece of paper Big G.  
gave him out of his pocket.

Myachi stops and turns off the mower as Walter approaches.

WALTER  
(reading from paper)  
One billion, five hundred and  
seventy six million, eight hundred  
thousand.

He shows Myachi the number, as written.

WALTER (CONT'D)  
Fifty years. So many seconds. I  
found them.

MYACHI  
Mankai.

WALTER  
Why is it that every time I talk to  
you, you call me a monkey?!

Myachi cocks his head to the side, trying to understand.  
Suddenly, his eyes light up.

MYACHI  
No Monki. Man-kai. Mankai.

Now it's Walter's turn to be confused.

Myachi steps off the lawn tractor and walks towards Walter's  
back yard. He gestures for Walter to follow.

ANGLE as they approach the cherry tree where the party took  
place - what seems like a million years ago.

NEW ANGLE, with a fully bloomed cherry blossom in the  
foreground.

Myachi and Walter stare up at the blossom. Myachi nods and  
smiles as he gestures to the blossom.

MYACHI (CONT'D)  
Mankai.

But Walter still doesn't understand and his face shows it.

WALTER  
I'm trying to explain the time of  
our lives. What does that have to  
do with a cherry blossom?

Myachi sees his wife, working in the garden and calls out to  
her.

Mrs. Myachi dutifully approaches.

Myachi points to the flower and says something in rapid-fire Japanese.

Mrs. Myachi listens, then turns to Walter. She speaks animatedly, as much with her hands as her mouth.

MRS. MYACHI

He say please to explain Mankai.  
Mankai when cherry blossom in full  
bloom. Perfection. Not one day  
before.

WALTER

Or one septillionth of a second  
after.

MRS. MYACHI

Please, mister?

But Walter's attention is drawn overhead to an airliner traversing the sky.

#### **INT. AIRPLANE**

Walter is leaning against the bulkhead. The amoeba like coffee floats by. Then the computer with the video game in mid-animation, the briefcase caroms and Walter sidesteps it.

His eyes fall upon the locked cockpit door. No time. And if there was, he wouldn't know what to do with it. He glances at the phone still in his hand and places it to his ear.

MALLORY (V.O., FILTERED)

...for leaving this morning without  
saying goodbye. I was mad at you. I  
still am. But I want you to know,  
... I love you.

Walter smiles, mouthing her next words as she says them.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Always and forever, til the end of  
time.

A beatific smile. Walter is at peace.

WALTER

Mankai.

IMPACT. The jet hits the ground.

BLACKOUT:

FADE IN:

A black screen with a tiny white light in the center. The light begins to grow.

We hear BREATHING. Then FOOTSTEPS.

Getting closer. It's Walter's POV, heading towards the light. It gets bigger and bigger, the sound louder and louder, until it almost fills the frame, then

WALTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Oh, shit.

SFX: Zzzzzzzzzzt. (the unmistakable sound of a bug zapper).

FLASH FRAME TO:

BLACK

A BEAT, then still over BLACK:

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
And... cut! Wrap it. Thanks,  
everybody. We're done here.

SFX: LONG BEEP TONE of an audio tail slate.

MUSIC UP and TITLE CARD:

- A Big G Production

TITLE CARD:

- EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
George O'Donnell

CREDIT ROLL:

(real credits begin)

THE END