

HELL OF A DEAL

Original Screenplay

Based on a Novel by

Joe Giambrone

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE SUITE "SANCTUARY" - DAY

This marble and glass two-tiered penthouse overlooks Hollywood. Posters of films past line the walls in gleaming frames. "The Movement," was a Hippie romp. "Fight 'Em Over There," a blood and guts combat picture. "Driven to Reckless" features a torturer.

A gym in the corner. A lone silhouette trudges forth on a sleek treadmill. He stares ahead into a large plasma wall monitor. This is CEO "BIG" AL SMITH (73).

A tunnel of light sucks him in. Web pages of "Living Wills" and "Trusts" show.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Al pounds down on the table.

AL

Why am I not seeing those projects? I'm not seeing it, and I'm very disappointed.

Al stumbles. His fingers fumble to retrieve a nitroglycerin tablet from a pill bottle. They wait silently.

AL

I don't want any more canned heroes. Carbon-copy villains. The next motherfucker who brings me that is fired.

Al collapses back into his chair. They rush to dispense aid. He flails and pushes them away angrily.

AL

Don't waste my time. I don't have it.

INT. OFFICE SANCTUARY - DAY

Al multi-tasks on his treadmill. Family photographs hang adjacent. Al's wife LISA NAMID (20) is Ojibwe with long

black hair. Al's happy family life contrasts with now as
PHOTOS COME TO LIFE:

LISA'S DANCE STUDIO: Lisa stretches at the balance bar. Al
(30) snaps a covert photo with a long lens.

BEACH: Al (35), Lisa (25) and daughter VICTORIA SMITH (5)
pose for a photo snapped by a JOGGER with a DOG.

Al's footsteps are out of gas. Sees a photo of young Lisa.

INTERCUT: HOSPICE - Al gazes at Lisa (61), and he holds her
hand. Lisa is connected up to tubes and machines.

Al lowers the treadmill speed, panting. Al's Bluetooth
earpiece flashes. The BEEP jolts him.

ANNA HOLT (V.O.)
Shockley's complaining about
the cut.

AL
Which one, darling? Refresh
me.

ANNA HOLT (V.O.)
The head exploding.

Al gazes into a magnifying mirror. Catches his breath.

AL
The cut stays. If it was the
bad guy, you could blow his
head up, but this is just
some innocent kid the bad guy
randomly shoots. It's bad
taste.

ANNA HOLT (V.O.)
I'll tell him.

Al grabs the handrails. Swoons. This could be it.

AL
Is that all? ...Anna? Any other
storms brewing?

Behind Al and off to the side of the office-gym, a large mahogany door swings open.

LOU SEAFORD, a young, attractive salesman steps inside. Crooked smile, sharp suit and a briefcase.

AL

Anna?

LOU

Mister Smith?

AL

Who let you in here?

LOU

Your lovely assistant, Al. Do you mind if I call you Al?

AL

Anna? Anna?

LOU

I only need a minute of your time, sir.

AL

Oh fabulous. What are you selling, sir?

LOU

It's more about what I'm giving.

AL

Call it what you like, but make it fast.

Al gulps vitamin water. Takes a panic button in hand.

LOU

Well Al, I'm Lou, and I've got what you want most.

AL

Which is?

LOU

Youth.

Lou raises a vial of clear liquid.

AL

What are you trying to say?
Youth?

LOU

Medical nanotechnology, Al,
guaranteed to reverse the
effects of aging. No bull.
Guaranteed results.

AL

A Fountain of Youth? In a
bottle.

LOU

Exactly.

Lou places the small vial on Al's massive desk.

AL

That's not possible.

LOU

Isn't it?

AL

I've researched this. There's
nothing like that.

LOU

Well, Al, are you a
scientist? Obviously it's
brand new technology. I don't
get off on wasting people's
time. If you want me to go,
just say the word.

AL

You got five minutes, kid.

Al prances to his big chair. Lou flips open a brochure. Al
sits on the other side of his desk. Faces Lou.

SERIES OF SHOTS: Al loses himself in the sales pitch. Daydream regained vitality. Lou's mouth, eyes face...

LOU

... power of stem cells to the nuclei ... Nano-machines ... Clinical trials ... Some say it penetrates all the way down to your soul. Have you seen our website, Al?

Lou hands a business card: "Louis Seaford, Sales Director..." Al types an address. VIDEO plays.

INSERT VIDEO: INT. CLINIC

Sizzling NAUGHTY NURSE (KATYA STONE, 20s) injects an old mangy MUTT. The dog transforms into a puppy. She fondles the puppy nastily.

AL

That's impossible! You're using visual effects!

LOU

That's your area, Al. Not mine. Besides it's guaranteed.

AL

In writing?

LOU

Everything we do is in writing. You don't think I'd try and fool an old pro like you Al? How could I get away with something like that? Impossible.

AL

So? How much is it?

LOU

How much?

AL

Yes. I'd like to sample.

LOU

Ah. There are no samples.
It's either in or out. Yes or
no. Green light, or get the
fuck out. Capiche?

AL

You're pretty confident in
your stuff, huh?

LOU

It's the only game in town,
Al. You don't mind if I call
you Al?

AL

It's fine. So, ...how much?

LOU

Oh, Al. You can't cheapen
what I'm offering you with
talk of money. Dirty, filthy
money.

AL

You can't?

LOU

Of course not. I want money,
I go to a bank. I come to
you, Big Al Smith, the king
of Hollywood, and of course?

AL

You want to make a movie.

LOU

Of course I want to make a
movie, Al! It's the American
dream!

Al breathes out a long sigh.

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Private section, a table full of LAWYERS with laptops. Al, Lou and Katya. WAITERS carry trays of food.

AL

The studio has certain requirements about how they invest their money.

Lou drops his gaze. Shakes his head.

LOU

I don't like conditions when it comes to my movie, Al.

AL

The film cannot go beyond an 'R' rating. Nothing pornographic. No male genitalia. No mutilation.

Lou drums on the table, often.

LOU

No mutilation? What about your last horror film, Al? Bled all over the place?

AL

If you can convince the board that it's necessary then more power to you. We just care about the rating.

LOU

Fair enough.

Katya sucks ranch dressing from a carrot. Al loses his train of thought. Turns slowly toward her.

LOU

And!

AL

And, you must remain within budget.

AL (Cont'd)
Which is an unbelievably
generous twenty m--

LOU
One hundred and fifty
million.

AL
Are you out of your mind?
Forty mil.

LOU
One hundred forty.

AL
I can go sixty. And not a
penny--

LOU
One thirty.

AL
This isn't working out.

Al sips. The Lawyers turn their faces down to computers.

AL
Seventy five.

LOU
One hundred twenty.

AL
I guess I see where this is
going.

LOU
Then, say it.

AL
You get a hundred million to
play with. Don't come looking
for more.

LOU
I wouldn't dream of it, Al.

LOU (Cont'd)
You're a stand-up guy.

Lou strokes his finger along an antique pen in a case. Al blots his forehead. Lawyers type. Katya smiles.

AL
And the studio retains final cut on the film.

LOU
Are you senile? Old man?

Lou jumps up from his chair.

LOU
I'm sorry for wasting your time. Come on Katya.

AL
What are you doing? I just offered you a hundred million dollar deal. Nobody walks away from that. Nobody!

LOU
Nobody but me, Al. I've got other clients to see. Some right here in town.

Lou pulls Katya to the door.

AL
Fuck! Wait! Wait! We can talk!

Lou's palms gently push the door glass. Katya grins.

LOU
Don't yank my chain, big guy. This is my movie, one hundred percent. There is no compromise on that.

AL
I don't even know what the hell your movie's about, Lou.

AL (Cont'd)
That's not the way I do
business. That's not the way
the studio does business.

LOU
No? You offered three picture
deals, five picture deals to
all sorts of folks.

Lou and Katya sit back down.

LOU (Cont'd)
You didn't know what they
were doing either. But you
signed.

AL
I never signed away control.

LOU
So, wait a minute. You had
control of all those movies?

AL
Of course I did. I wouldn't
be here today if I let every
film school moron and art
faggot do whatever they
wanted with our money.

LOU
So they did what you wanted?

AL
In a sense.

LOU
Al? You're the maestro.
You're responsible for all
those great, wonderful
movies. Aren't ya?

AL
Of course I am.

Katya leans in, licks chocolate sauce from her finger.

KATYA

That's very sexy.

AL

Okay miss. Could you please let us conduct our business?

KATYA

Oh? You don't like me, Big Alfred?

AL

I like you well enough darling. We're negotiating important matters right now.

LOU

She's got a weird thing for older guys, should be aware.

AL

Stop fucking with me. Are we going to do this or not?

LOU

That's why I'm here, baby.

AL

This picture have a working title?

LOU

Terra.

AL

Terror?

LOU

Yes and no. It's Terra and Terror, a merging of the two big concepts.

AL

Terra, the world? The earth?

LOU

Exactly, Terra under terror.

AL
Sounds a bit high-brow. The
public might not get it.

LOU
Oh, they'll get it. I'm not
going for subtlety, Al.

AL
(to Lawyers)
Print it.

RESTAURANT MANAGER carries the pages on a tray. WAITER
distributes glasses of brandy. Al snatches his pen, no ink.

LOU
Here, maestro. Try mine.

Al signs with the antique. The lights seem to dim.

AL
It's red. Blood red.

LOU
Makes an impression. We're
going to change the world,
big guy.

AL
It's just a movie, Lou. When
can I begin the treatment?

LOU
Tomorrow, buddy. I cleared
the schedule just for you.

Katya offers her hand, entices Al.

KATYA
It's nice to have met you,
Big Alfred.

AL
I'm sorry for getting terse.

KATYA
Maybe next time I get terse.

Katya squeals. Lou tickles her. Al stumbles, grabs a chair.

AL
Breathe.

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT (DREAMY)

AL'S POV: Katya pushes Al underwater. Lou exhales cigar smoke, and he directs a camera. Bright floodlights glare. Katya pushes Al's face under, and all turns crimson.

INT. AL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

In bed, Al grabs his chest. Gasps. Drops pills all over the bed. PHONE RINGTONE. Al reaches and answers it.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
Daddy? You there? Hello?

AL
Vee. I'm not doing too good.

VICTORIA (V.O.)
I'll be right over.

MINUTES LATER

Victoria Smith (40) charges into the bedroom.

VICTORIA
You cannot go in today.

Victoria lifts Al's head, slides a pillow under.

AL
I'm not. I've got treatment scheduled.

VICTORIA
Oh, thank God. What kind?

AL
Something new.

VICTORIA
Okay. I love you dad.

AL
Oh, I love you too, angel.

They hug. DOORBELL CHIMES.

EXT. AL'S BEVERLY HILLS HOME - DAY

EMTs wheel Al on a gurney. Victoria holds Al's hand.

VICTORIA
Are you going to be okay?

AL
It's fine. I'm in good hands.

VICTORIA
Are you positive? I could
reschedule my shoot.

AL
No. I'm gonna be fine.

VICTORIA
I'll come by later.

The muscular EMTs lift Al into the ambulance.

AL
You have a great day, angel.

Door closes. Victoria turns away. She steps to her car, and she watches the ambulance light up and speed off.

INT. TREATMENT CENTER - LONG CORRIDOR - DAY

Overhead lights flash past. Al is pushed in a wheelchair, head flopping. Turns corners.

TREATMENT ROOM

Al focuses. Lou Seaford in lab coat pushes a cart over.

LOU
Big guy! Al, baby, stay with
me!

Katya teases with a scalpel. Lou snaps his fingers.

LOU (Cont'd)
 Don't you die on me yet, you
 old fuck! Al! Stay with me!

Manhandling Al's face, Lou comes in close.

LOU (Cont'd)
 How old do you want to be?

Lou waves his hands over the drugs. Al can't speak.

LOU
 Come on! I need an age!

Al's eyeball -- ROCKET back to a less complicated time.

EXT. HAIGHT ASHBURY - DAY (1967) - ESTABLISHING

Al (30) leads his little group of film school students.
 FRANCOIS "FRANK" LUMIÈRE (20) holds Bolex. A KID (18)
 carries a tripod and reflector. Pass HIPPIES, peace signs.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

A CONCERT in progress. TEENAGERS in face paints, carnival
 attire, drum circle, amplified GUITARS, thundering DRUMS.

FRANK LUMIÈRE
 How do you want it, Al?

AL
 Just make it beautiful. And
 get that girl.

Al points at Lisa Namid (20) who dances at a DRUM CIRCLE in
 a deerskin jacket. Lisa notices them, and she walks over.

AL
 Shit. She saw us. Cut.

LISA
 Excuse me? Why are you
 filming us?

LISA
 Hello?

AL

Can I help you?

LISA

Can you help me? Why are you filming these people?

AL

It's a free country, right?

LISA

Are you from the government?

AL

Government? No. We're independent filmmakers.

LISA

These people are not some kind of fish tank or a zoo for your amusement.

AL

I don't see your point.

LISA

You did not ask them for their permission, if they want to be included in your filming. You certainly did not ask my permission.

AL

Well the truth is I thought you looked very pretty dancing there, and I wanted to capture that. Now, if I had gone over and interrupted the song to ask permission, wouldn't that have been a bummer?

LISA

I suppose.

AL

You see?

AL (Cont'd)

If we alert everyone we're filming first, it won't be natural. Right?

LISA

The people are tired of tourists coming in and photographing and pointing as if they were on display.

AL

I see. Would you like to go get some lunch and talk about this some more?

Francois looks confused. Returns to his viewfinder, and he captures a GROUP OF TEENS exhaling cannabis into the sky.

LISA

There is a vegetarian café on Clayton Street which I like.

AL

Vegetarian?

LUMIÈRE

Al? Al? I thought we were filming?

AL

Excuse me. One minute.

Al pulls Francois out of Lisa's hearing range.

AL

I'm gonna go get lunch. I want you to keep looking.

LUMIÈRE

What are we looking for?

AL

I want girls with their tops off, or a police riot! That's it. Sex and violence. Don't waste film otherwise.

LUMIÈRE
Sex and violence?

AL
Money in the bank. I'll catch
up later.

INT. THE MAGIC DRAGON CAFÉ - DAY

Collective eatery is not up to health codes. Lisa gobbles
her stir-fried vegetables.

AL
How long have you been a
Hippie?

LISA
I am not a Hippie.

AL
You're not?

LISA
I am not hip at all. I do not
even know what it means.

AL
What are you doing here,
then?

LISA
Exploring.

AL
Isn't that what Hippies do?

LISA
I cannot speak for others.

AL
Well, where are you from?

LISA
My people are the Ojibwe.

AL
No shit? Like Indians?

LISA

Yes.

AL

Why California?

LISA

To see with my own eyes if
there is a spiritual
awakening and a new age of
love beginning in the world,
as they say.

AL

So you're here for the love?

LISA

Yes.

AL

Groovy.

LISA

Yes. Love is groovy.

AL

I'm not digging this rice,
though. You want it?

LISA

Yes, please.

Al slides his plate across. She's hungry.

AL

So you're not a Hippie. You
just want the spiritual love
awakening?

LISA

Are you being negative?

AL

Not at all. I love love. Love
is great.

Lisa reaches into her deerskin purse, pulls out two tabs.

LISA
I was given this.

AL
What?

LISA
White lightning. From the
Acid King himself, the woman
said. The purest of the pure.

AL
(whispers)
LSD?

LISA
I do not know what to do with
it.

INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Lisa faces Al.

LISA
Do not assume that I will
have sex with you.

AL
Of course not.

She retrieves the acid tabs.

LISA
Have you prepared yourself
for this?

AL
I'm always ready.

LISA
This is powerful magic. More
powerful than you can
imagine.

AL
Banzai! That's Japanese for
let's rock and roll.

She grins, and she places the tab onto his tongue.

TWO HOURS LATER

Al and Lisa huddle on the couch.

LISA

It is all so beautiful.

AL

You're beautiful.

LISA

You are beautiful too. The world is full of beauty, dazzling colors. What should we do now?

AL

Maybe take off our clothes to be free? Take a shower to feel the warm water on our skin?

LISA

That is a wonderful idea.

AL

You think so?

LISA

I do. But I should really know the name of the man I am going to do that with.

AL

Al Smith. My name's Alfred Smith.

LISA

I am Lisa Namid. It means Star Dancer.

Lisa slides off of the couch, and she straightens up tall above him. Feeling the air with her hands and fingertips, she spins gracefully.

LISA
 My dodem is Baswenaazhi, the
 Crane, the maker of echoes.

Al jumps to his feet after her.

AL
 Far out.

NEXT MORNING

The room is rearranged. Lisa plays with glowing fireflies,
 naked. In bed, Al watches Lisa in a spinning movie set.

LISA
 (sings)
 Waawaatesi, waawaatesi...

Lisa's hands caress the air. She glides over to see Al.

LISA
 We share a bond, now, Alfred
 Smith.

Al nods, and he opens his arms. Lisa dives in. Spooning,
 but Al has gone cold and frightened.

AL
 Lisa?

LISA
 Yes?

AL
 How are you now?

LISA
 I fly with the fireflies. And
 you?

AL
 I want to see you again.

Lisa squirms, and she twists to face him.

LISA
 I am not invisible!

AL
I mean, I want to marry you.

LISA
Marry?

AL
Yes.

LISA
I will consider your
proposal.

INT. CLINIC TREATMENT ROOM (RETURN) - DAY

Lou smacks and smacks at Al (73) in a rage.

LOU
How old? Say it! Say it!

Al, with a burst of adrenalin—

AL
Thirty!

Al fades to unconsciousness. Flames flash.

INT. BACK OF LIMOUSINE - AL'S POV - DAY

Opens his eyes and sees Katya shining a pen light at him.

LOU (O.S.)
Success, as usual. Champagne?

AL YOUNGER VOICE (O.S.)
Where are we?

Al sees his younger hands.

AL (O.S.)
Hey! What the hell is going
on?

LOU
We're busting open the
champagne, bud.

AL (O.S.)
Gimme a mirror!

Al fidgets left and right, searches for clues.

LOU
They all want a mirror. Why
don't you take a minute and
savor the champagne, Big Al?
Or should I call you Little
Al now?

AL (O.S.)
I don't want champagne. Stop
the car!

LOU
What, here?

AL (O.S.)
Stop the car! Right here!

Al jumps out of the door and into the sun glare.

EXT. L.A. AVENUE - DAY - AL'S POV CONTINUOUS

Al sees his reflection off the car. Twists. Sees a row of
mirrors in the shape of dancing girls, which line the walls
of "Las Diablas" strip club. Al runs to them. Al sees
himself. He is now thirty again, and it's a shocker.

SIREN VOICE
Alfred.

Al steps toward the door. Lou and Katya march over.

LOU
You like the work?

AL
That stuff's too good to be
true.

KATYA
I think you look hot!

Katya clamps onto Al's wrist, yanks him into the club.

INT. LAS DIABLESAS STRIP CLUB - CONTINUOUS

It's dim and red, with a fiery hell motif. Naughty YOUNG LADIES strut past in demon themed costumes. Al, Lou and Katya sit at a table, the only customers.

AL

I'm feeling very confused,
Lou. What happened to me?

LOU

You got what you wanted. Now
it's my turn.

AL

That's not good enough. I
want to know what you did to
me.

LOU

Let's just stick with the
contract, Little Al. You got
yours. I get mine.

Katya grabs the bottle, and she guzzles nastily.

KATYA

Dance with me Alfred!

Katya yanks Al up to his feet. She dances with him like a
savage sex monster, as they share the booze.

SERIES OF SHOTS: Dancing, drinking. GIRLS entertain them.
Al sloshed. Al zones out in his club chair.

LOU

There's going to be problems
with your new identity.

AL

I'm Al Smith, executive
producer, president and CEO
of The Smith Company.

LOU

Well, I know that, but nobody
else is going to believe you.

AL
I'm still me.

LOU
Well 'me' is seventy-three
and about to kick it. You
don't look seventy-three
anymore, buddy.

Katya places a laptop computer in front of Al.

LOU (Cont'd)
Tell Anna you're too sick to
continue as CEO, but your
son, Little Al Smith is
taking over the business,
etcetera, blah blah.

AL
I don't have a son. I have a
daughter.

LOU
You are the son.

AL
Oh. Anna knows I don't have--

LOU
Anna knows whatever you tell
her.

AL
What about me? Big Al? What
about Victoria? She's
expecting to see me tonight.

LOU
Victoria could be seeing you
in a coffin. I'm not sure
what you think the problem
is, but you're delaying my
film with this juvenile shit.
Write the email.

Al's hands hover over the keys.

AL
Okay. I'm my son.

LOU
Perfect.

AL
She's not going to believe
it. Anna's sharp as a razor.
Nothing gets by her.

Lou and Katya lean in, deadly serious.

LOU
She better believe it. You
better make sure she believes
it, for her sake.

AL
What's that mean?

LOU
Nothing and no one is going
to interfere with my movie,
Al. Not you. Not some
assistant. Not the president
of the fucking United States.

Al, chilled, types the email carefully.

INT. SMITH TOWER - LOBBY - DAY

Lou, Katya and Al enter. Pass by SECURITY. The New Al Smith Jr. pauses in the center, as if for the first time. Lou calls Al to the elevator, and Al steps inside. The elevator door closes.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT (20 YEARS AGO)

Al (53) at the Cannes screening of his slasher film in progress. Lisa (43) cringes as blood splatters the screen. She rises up to leave. REPORTERS sits behind them.

AL
(whispering)
Sit down. What are you doing?

LISA

I am not going to watch any more of this gore.

AL

It's not that bad.

LISA

What happened to 'Make Love, Not War?'

The film above her flings body parts. A relentless PSYCHO hunts terrified VICTIMS.

LISA

Al, I am leaving. Move your feet, please.

Reporters stir as the screen washes over with organs. Lisa cringes, and she kicks at Al's legs.

AL

We have to support the picture, no matter what. It's just business.

LISA

Your business. Not mine. Are you going to move your legs?

Al turns back to see the Reporters.

AL

Okay honey, I hope you feel better.

When Al turns back, Lisa is already gone. He sees her storming up the opposite aisle.

AL

Shit.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Al enters. Lisa emerges from the bathroom in a white robe.

LISA

I am not going to any more of your premieres. I thought you cared about making decent movies? What happened?

AL

I bet you a dollar that film turns a profit.

Lisa pulls away, shakes her head.

LISA

I hope not. Can't you tell better stories?

AL

We do, honey. But the audience is evolving. They like it edgier now. They want to see the knife go in.

LISA

For God's sake, why?

AL

That's just the way it is. Blame video games.

LISA

Yes, well I am in the audience too, and I think that is just crap.

AL

Fine. But could you not say it in front of half the world's press?

LISA

Hence, I am skipping your premieres from now on. Victoria and I can go watch something we want to see while you splatter your viewers with innards.

AL

It was just one scene! In one movie! Give me a break!

INT. SMITH TOWER - ELEVATOR - DAY (RETURN)

Al (30) Lou and Katya arrive at the top floor. Elevator opens. Anna Holt stares wide-eyed in disbelief.

ANNA HOLT

Oh my God.

AL

I'm, ...Al Smith, Junior.

ANNA HOLT

I can see that. Where have you been all these years?

AL

Um. That's a long story, Anna. And I've got a mess of work to get started on.

ANNA HOLT

Of course, Mr. Smith.

AL

Please, please call me Al. These are the new producers of Terra, which you must have seen the paperwork?

ANNA HOLT

I did indeed. And it came way out of left field! We're still in shock around here. Stalling the press all day.

AL

My manners? Here, meet Louis Seaford, and Katya Stone.

ANNA HOLT

Welcome.

Lou smiles, shakes Anna's hand.

LOU

The pleasure's all ours.

AL

Anna, can you send over our current A-list, screenwriters?

The group pursues the fleeing Al Jr.

ANNA HOLT

Mister, Mr. Smith? Your father? How is he?

Al winces, and he turns back around.

AL

He's great. He's resting. He's gonna be fine. He's taking a vacation. Doctor's orders. I'll be taking over his duties in the interim.

Al marches quickly to his sanctuary door. Lou and Katya walk slowly together, movie royalty, past the curious VICE-PRESIDENTS and ASSISTANTS.

SANCTUARY - DAY

ANNA

Terra? Do you have a quote for the press release?

Al turns to Lou. Anna jots notes.

LOU

Tell them that The Smith Company has had incredible foresight, and isn't afraid to put it all on the line in the pursuit of greatness. Terra is going to blow away audiences and mark the end of an era of mediocre, vanilla filmmaking. Expect to be challenged. Expect more.

ANNA
That's very good.

LOU
You're damned right.

Anna leaves, and Al closes the door, strolls back to Lou.

AL
Lou, I need some rough idea
of where we're going with
this picture.

Al removes his jacket, hangs it up. Walks his treadmill.

LOU
We'll open with a nuclear
blast in a U.S. city, the
biggest act of terror since
Shock and Awe.

INTERCUT: An atomic bomb blast.

LOU (V.O.)
The nation responds. The
tears, the resolve. We will
strike back.

AL
That's a good hook. I like
that.

LOU
Knew you would, Al. We got
something, simpatico. So, the
Supermen of the Homeland--

AL
Supermen?

LOU
Like the Nietzsche
Übermenschen. Overmen. The
heroes.

AL
Heroes. Of course. Go on.

Katya sharpens her nails, yawns.

LOU

The Supermen rise up to
defend civilization.

AL

Against whom?

LOU

The terrorists, Al. There's
millions of them, everywhere.

AL

Who are these terrorists?

LOU

Doesn't matter. They're
terrorists.

AL

You're not going to work out
a back story?

LOU

Did *Fight 'Em Over There!*
have a back story?

AL

Not a lot, but a little.

Lou indicates Al's movie posters.

LOU

Okay Al, did *Shock Troops 4*
have back story? Or 3? Or the
first one for that matter?

AL

Okay, okay. Let's move on.

LOU

Our Supermen join up for
payback. They're glorious.
Musclemen. Chiseled stone
faces.

INTERCUT: Fascist imagery of BLACK SUPERMAN (ICED BENZ), WHITE SUPERMAN (ZACH ZANE), LATINO SUPERMAN, ASIAN SUPERMAN, ARAB SUPERMAN and INDIAN SUPERMAN; harsh light, up above they spin slowly on turntables.

LOU (V.O.)

I want a White one, a Black, a Latino, an Asian, an Arab and an Indian.

AL

An ensemble piece.

LOU

The ultimate ensemble. They're going to band together like brothers, and bring the terror back to the terrorists.

AL

It's a revenge story?

LOU

It's more than a revenge story. It's a paradigm shift.

AL

Well, what happens next?

LOU

A crowd of dirty Hippie pacifists, they want peace--

INTERCUT: EXT. AVENUE - PROTEST - DAY: Thousands of PEACE ACTIVISTS, but they're Lou's variety, rioting.

LOU (V.O.)

--they say, but they're just interested in betraying us.

The six Supermen form a line across the avenue, each with an assault rifle held pointed in the air.

LOU (V.O.)

The Supermen stand against the protestor scum.

LOU (V.O.)

They stand down the freaks.
Sixty thousand against six.

A HIPPIE KID (12), with a purple peace T shirt and long hair, throws a rock and blinds the White Superman.

LOU (V.O.)

The boys are ready to fire on the crowd for betraying our values. Even the Hippie kids go after the Supermen. Spit at them. The boys suffer bruises. The white one loses an eye. He's going to need an eye patch from now on. But they won't budge!

Katya yawns, twists open red nail polish.

AL

So what do they do?

LOU

They fire in the air!

INTERCUT: The Supermen spray their machine guns at the sky, causing a panic. The Protesters flee en masse.

LOU

Chicken shit Protestors run away. Huh?

Lou reaches into his jacket pocket.

INTERCUT: TV REPORTERS film the Supermen.

LOU (V.O.)

But, the TV cameras show the world that these guys mean business. The Supermen get on the radar.

AL

I'm impressed, Lou. You've thought about this.

LOU
Of course I have.

Lou bites off the end of a cigar. Spits it.

AL
Have you considered a
director?

LOU
Absolutely.

Lou lights up the cigar.

AL
Who?

LOU
Me.

INT. CANDYLAND NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

LOUD club features giant plastic candies. Lou marches through the DANCING CROWD as Katya hangs on his arm. Al follows nervously, a small dog in its owner's shadow.

KATYA
Did you ever fuck right in
the middle of the dance
floor, Alfred? It's so hot.

LOU
Hey! Business! Where's this
asshole screenwriter?

AL
He's coming.

The three drink at a booth.

LOU
There we go. Yummy.

Lou WHISTLES LOUDLY, and TWO GIRLS look over.

LOU
Come on. Right over here.

Lou waves at them. The first girl starts to take the bait, but her girlfriend panics. They flee.

LOU
Catch you next time.

AL
Your movie, where does it go next?

INTERCUT: MILITARY HELICOPTER, The Supermen fly over a demolished city. Bomb flashes form lines of fire.

LOU (V.O.)
The boys are in a transport helicopter, and they're gently floating over what's left of Central Asia.

AL
What's left?

LOU
The cities are like moon craters. It'll be very beautiful.

AL
Are there bodies?

LOU
Not from this altitude. It's poetic.

Al answers his PHONE.

AL
Bob, we're in a booth. Across from the bar. He's here.

BOB STROHMEYER (30s), heavy set, bald in a black baseball cap, takes his seat.

AL
This is Bob Strohmeier, one of the sharpest guys in town.

More drinks. Katya's hand wanders to Al's thigh. They struggle quietly.

LOU

So, you've got a group of guys, misunderstood. Some say they went too far. They killed a lot of people. A lot of innocent people. Raped a few too.

Al spits out his drink.

AL

Raped?

LOU

A few.

AL

Raped, a few? That's not a good thing, Lou. These guys aren't heroes then.

LOU

Don't you try and fucking tell me what my heroes are or aren't. Of course they're heroes.

BOB

You want me to redeem these guys, although they've been through some bad karma.

Lou hammers the table with his fist.

LOU

Yes! Lock and load. That's what I'm talking about.

BOB

It's doable.

LOU

I like this guy, Al. I like this guy.

AL
He's pretty sharp.

Toasts all around.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

Al awakens in a daze, two ACTRESSES in bed next to him. Room is a disaster. He stumbles out.

HOTEL BATHROOM

A COUPLE lies in the bathtub asleep. Al pees.

LOU'S HOTEL ROOM

Still dressing, Al sneaks to the door. PEOPLE lie passed out. Lou screws an UNCONSCIOUS GIRL on the floor.

AL
I gotta go.

LOU
I'll be right along buddy, ha
ha...

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Al sleeps on his couch. A female hand reaches to his shoulder, jerks him to consciousness. Blurrily, Al looks up to see Victoria Smith.

VICTORIA
Who are you?

AL
Vee!

VICTORIA
Don't you call me that! Where
is my father? And what are
you doing in here?

AL
It's okay. It's all okay.

VICTORIA

Like hell! I'm calling the police.

AL

Victoria, no. I believe dad sent you an email explaining.

VICTORIA

Get him on the phone. You've got thirty seconds.

Victoria retreats toward the big desk.

AL

He's at a, a spa. You'll have to talk to them.

VICTORIA

Them! Who?

AL

What he said in the email.

VICTORIA

You tell me who the hell you really are, or I'll have the FBI down here for kidnapping.

AL

FBI? I'm your half-brother, Al Smith, Junior.

VICTORIA

Bullshit! Who's your mother? Where's your birth certificate?

AL

Do you carry around your birth certificate in your wallet, Victoria?

VICTORIA

That's it. I'm calling the cops. What have you done with my father?

AL
Don't do that.

VICTORIA
Get the hell away from me!

AL
If you put the phone down,
I'll explain.

Victoria slides around to the opposite side of Al's desk.
She reaches into her bag for a giant can of pepper spray.

VICTORIA
Explain faster. Hello? I need
to report a disappearance,
and a possible kidnapping.

AL
That's ridiculous! Vee, just
stop this.

VICTORIA
Don't you call me that! You
fraud. You impostor!

Victoria blasts pepper spray. Al doubles over. She runs
out, tosses the can behind her where it fogs the air.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

MOTORIZED GATE CLANKS. Al appears, his hair and clothes
disheveled. He gazes through the PASSERSBY. Lou, Katya,
Bob and a new YOUNG GIRL (18) wait for Al. Bob props up the
drunk Young Girl.

LOU
Freedom tastes good, huh
baby?

Lou wafts a bunch of papers. COPS walk past.

AL
You got me sprung?

LOU
I did indeed.

Lou opens his arms, and he gives Al a big hug. Katya applies lipstick, and then she snorts covertly from the bottom of the lipstick container. Lou flips papers.

LOU

Birth certificate. Grammar school. High school. Junior college. Sorry no University for you. And, of course, you are licensed to drive a motor vehicle in the State of California, my man.

AL

This is amazing. Is this license number real?

LOU

Best that money can buy.

Katya snorts, again.

KATYA

Let's get the fuck away from these pigs!

LOU

I think we've overstayed our welcome.

EXT. POLICE STATION - STAIRS - DAY

They bust through the doors and descend to the avenue.

LOU

Bob Strohmeier's fantastic. He brings the pain.

AL

Yeah. He's pretty sharp.

INT. LIMOUSINE - (MOVING) - DAY

Katya grabs vodka and shot glasses.

AL

Who's the girl?

LOU
I don't know. You want to
dump her?

Lou sneers at the sleeping Young Girl.

AL
Yeah. Get rid of her. Is she
underage?

Al closes his eyes, but the car JERKS to a stop.

AL
Whoa. What's going on?

Lou rips the Young Girl from the Limo, and leaves her on
the curb outside. He spits right in her face.

Lou climbs back in, as Katya giggles. Lou presses a button,
and the car takes off again.

AL
What the hell was that?

LOU
I did what you told me to, L.

Lou raises his glass, Bob too.

AL
I don't want anymore.

LOU
Suit yourself. Life's a
party, right? Right?

BOB
Oh yeah.

Al stares off, away from them.

INT. AL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DOORBELL. Al moves to the door, sees Katya in peephole.

AL
Who is it?

KATYA (O.S.)
Alfred, it's me.

AL
What do you want?

KATYA (O.S.)
I've been a fool.

AL
Really? Why?

Al opens the door. Stands fast.

KATYA
Are you going to let me in?

AL
It's very late, Katya. We'll
talk tomorrow.

KATYA
There is no tomorrow.

AL
All right, what's bothering
you?

Katya nods, and Al steps back to let her in.

KATYA
I've had it with Lou. He's a
bastard. Not like you,
Alfred. You're a nice guy.

AL
Okay, but, I'm not ready for
some kind of a relationship
right now.

KATYA
Make love to me.

AL
Katya, I don't want to
mislead--

KATYA

I want to fuck you, Al.

Katya snatches Al's arm.

BEDROOM

Katya pushes Al back onto the bed. Drops her large purse. Undresses, down to a red teddy. Al lies in a daze.

Katya pulls out a massive red strap-on dildo, which she proceeds to strap on.

AL

What the hell is all that?

KATYA

Shh. Lover.

AL

Hold on. No. That's not what I had in mind.

Katya rips his shirt open, and she wrenches off his leather belt. She pulls off his slacks.

KATYA

You love it.

AL

Katya. Just calm down.

Reaching down, she jerks on her appendage. Al scoots back away. She playfully follows him.

AL

Stop it! None of this!

KATYA

Sure, okay.

AL

Take that thing off.

With great strength Katya flips Al over onto his stomach, and she laughs creepily.

FOYER - FRONT DOOR

Unlocked with a key, Victoria Smith steps inside. Hunts.

KITCHEN

Victoria sneaks in, looking for an intruder.

AL (O.S.)

Aaaaaa! Stop it, you crazy
bitch!

Enraged, Victoria grabs a knife. Charges forward.

HALLWAY

Photo flashes. Victoria holds the knife in front.

KATYA (O.S.)

Smile bitch. Come on.

BEDROOM

Victoria steps into view, and she becomes sickened.

VICTORIA

Oh my God. You fuck! Get out
of this house! Get out!

Katya smiles back over her shoulder, and she thrusts a few
quick strokes.

KATYA

Smile, bitch.

Katya flashes a photograph. She and Al toss over in a heap.
Al hides. Katya un-straps and dresses.

VICTORIA

Get out of my father's house!
you sick perverted freak!

Al shivers under the covers.

Katya saunters toward Victoria and the door.

KATYA

Thanks, baby, I needed that.
Call me, Alfred. We'll party
some more.

Katya pauses at Victoria's blade.

KATYA

Ciao.

Katya blows a kiss at Victoria, and she struts off.

AL

It's my house now! You leave.

VICTORIA

I've got my own detective on
your ass, which is apparently
how you like it. But you're
not going to like what he
finds out about you, fucker.
You're going to get that kind
of action every night, locked
up in prison!

Victoria turns, and she storms off.

VICTORIA (Cont'd)

I'm coming back, and you
better not be here ever
again!

The front door SLAMS. Al lowers the sheet.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Lou spins around with a bottle of tequila, barks orders at
typing Bob.

LOU

The squad's in Fallujah, and
they grab this Arab guy, and
it's gonna be a hilariously
funny torture scene.

AL

Funny? Funny torture?

INTERCUT: BOMBED OUT HUT, The bound, naked ARAB PRISONER surrounded by the Supermen.

LOU

They got the rag head tied to a chair, naked. Huh? And they cut off his pinky finger!

AL

Wait a minute. You're playing with fire. You could lose the aud here.

LOU

They'll be too busy laughing to give a shit.

AL

Why? What's funny?

INTERCUT: The bloody finger in the Arab Prisoner's mouth.

LOU (V.O.)

They tell him to eat it!

AL

That's supposed to be funny?

LOU

If he doesn't eat it, they're gonna cut off his pecker!

Bob laughs out loud. Lou guzzles tequila, and he shoves the bottle to Bob.

AL

I'm not finding it funny.

LOU

Wait for the punch line, L. When they start to slice into his dick and he screams, Allah! Priceless!

AL

Making a guy eat his own finger can't be made funny.

LOU
Sound effects make it
crunchy.

Bob bangs out "C-R-U-N-C-H-Y."

INTERCUT: Arab Prisoner suffocates.

LOU
The bones are too much. It
jams down in his throat. He's
turning purple. Eyes popping.

AL
Does the guy die?

LOU
No. The black Superman saves
him with a Heimlich maneuver.

INTERCUT: Prisoner spits the finger across the room.

AL
All right.

LOU
So, the boys figure he can't
swallow the next digit,
unless he has something to
wash it down with!

INTERCUT: Latino Superman grabs a cup and unzips.

LOU
So the Latino Overman fills
it up!

BOB
Ha! That's fucking
hilarious!

Bob and Lou turn to watch Al, who walks over to his
treadmill, numb. Al puts on sneakers.

AL
So they, they have a ticking
time bomb, and this guy has-

AL (Cont'd)
-the key to saving everybody?

INTERCUT: EXT. IRAQI MARKET - DAY - Squad comes upon graffiti. They grab the nearest shopkeeper (Arab Prisoner).

LOU (V.O.)
Nah. Somebody spray painted,
'Fuck America, Go Home,' on a
wall. So this guy they
grabbed probably knows who
did it.

AL
That's the reason?

LOU
They're gonna get him to give
up the artist, so they can
really deal some payback.

Al treads on his machine. Lou and Bob continue with script.

LATER - NIGHT

Al still treads. Room is empty. Al looks around, stops.

TOP FLOOR LOBBY

It's dark as Al leaves. Al enters the elevator.

ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Al plummets, but the numbers remain static. RUMBLING,
SCRAPING, DEMONIC LAUGHTER from outside. Al tosses about.
Falls faster. Temperature cooks. Hot button singes finger.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
Al, your time is near.

Flames spread across the floor. Al stretches for the escape hatch above. The grate opens. A clawed, muscular arm slides down. Jagged black fingernails and leathery inhuman skin. More arms rip at the air, flames below.

Al screams and cowers in the corner like an infant.

AL
 AAAAAAAAAA!

Door opens. A SECURITY GUARD races over with a handgun.

SECURITY GUARD
 Hey! What's the matter?

AL
 Did you see them?

SECURITY GUARD
 Who?

AL
 Up there, in the elevator
 shaft?

The Guard aims. Everything's normal.

EXT. SMITH TOWER - NIGHT

Al busts out through the door, stumbles to his car.

AL
 I'm Al Smith. I'm Al Smith.
 I'm not crazy.

INT. BLUNT FORCE PICTURES - DAY (1983)

Al (46) has the floor. A standee promotes "The Rice Fields," his Vietnam War pseudo-epic. Lumière (36) sits adjacent. SHARK PRODUCERS. OLD MAN COHEN sits at the head of the conference table.

AL
 My contact at the Army,
 Lieutenant Colonel Jacoby has
 made us an open-ended offer.

LUMIÈRE
 Army?

AL
 Talking tanks, planes, jeeps,
 helicopters, those trucks-

AL (Cont'd)
-with a dummy missile on top.
Whatever they're called.

LUMIÈRE
What does he want in
exchange?

AL
That's a good question Frank,
and it's important.

LUMIÈRE
He wants a big commercial for
the Army. That's what he
wants. No?

AL
No. Just a few things. The
hero has to be American. The
enemy should be foreign,
Vietnamese, Arabs, North
Koreans. He also gave me a
superb idea, Narco-
Terrorists. Drug lords.

The group sits up attentively.

AL
I see a whole slate of high-
octane action pictures. Blunt
Force will make action our
niche.

LUMIÈRE
No thank you.

Old man Cohen frowns.

AL
The Army wants to hand us
millions of dollars worth of
production value, free of
charge.

LUMIÈRE
With strings.

AL

With a few little strings. So what?

LUMIÈRE

Is that the sound of the revolution dying? So what?

AL

For everyone besides Frank then, my Colonel will provide us at the snap of a finger, a few thousand troops, with weapons, in uniform, and a base to shoot at. And locations to stage a mock battle. We'd be fools not to consider Colonel Jacoby's generous offer. ...We don't even have to feed the soldiers!

Old man Cohen CLAPS, followed by all, except for Lumière who jumps up in disgust.

LUMIÈRE

Yankee power!

Al watches Lumière exit for good.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY (RETURN)

Al (30) sits at the big desk. ICED BENZ (30s) African American, muscular, deadly, enters. Benz removes his futuristic sunglasses.

BENZ

You summoned my agent, and he summoned me. So here I am.

AL

That's great. Iced. Mr. Benz?

BENZ

Just B. Let me, let me put on the table my concerns.

AL

Please do, B.

BENZ

They say this is a risky movie. Nobody knows what it is. New director, nobody ever heard of. I got a image to maintain. That's my bank.

AL

Completely understand.

BENZ

So maybe this Seaford guy is a maverick. Maybe he's a clown, a punk. My concern is what is this thing? Where's the script?

AL

Let me say it's a different kind of project. A little risky, but you're not going to come off looking weak, or anything that you would strenuously object to.

BENZ

I understand, but--

AL

It's a war movie. We need a warrior. Tough, strong, determined. The kind of qualities you're naturally inclined to give the audience.

BENZ

All right. Go on.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. AL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Al's PHONE awakens him. He fumbles.

AL

What?

BENZ (V.O.)

Hey Al, I can't be
participatin' in no gang
rapin'!

AL

What?

Al switches on a bedside lamp.

BENZ (V.O.)

Gang rapin' some Iraqi girl,
man, that ain't cool.

AL

Hold on. Who told you that?

BENZ (V.O.)

I got the script.

AL

You do? I don't even have the
script.

BENZ (V.O.)

I can't be havin' girls think
I'm some kind a rapist!

AL

B. Let me talk to the
director, and sort this out.

BENZ (V.O.)

It's very uncomfortable. This
whole film. Director's a kind
a freak.

AL

Don't worry. I'm on it.

INT. LOU'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Al lets himself in. Lou sits eating breakfast, smokes
cigar, reads Variety.

AL

You guys finished the script?
And you sent it out to
artists, without letting me
read it first?

LOU

So?

AL

So, Iced Benz just backed
out. Your plot scared him
away pretty good.

LOU

He'll be back. What's his
problem?

AL

Gang rape. Tell me what
happens exactly.

Lou smiles.

INTERCUT: EXT. MIDDLE EAST WAR ZONE - DAY, The Supermen
shoot up a house, kill goats, dogs, FARMERS, CHILDREN.

LOU (V.O.)

The squad, they can't tell
who the terrorists are in
this town. So they put
themselves in the line of
fire.

IRAQI GIRL runs out of the house wielding a kitchen knife.

LOU

Then this little bitch comes
running out with a big
mother-fucking knife.

Lou brandishes his butter knife.

INTERCUT: The Supermen turn with their guns, pause as the
Iraqi Girl runs up. Butt her unconscious. Indian Superman
mouths the words.

LOU (V.O.)

So anyway the Indian Overman
is like, 'Well we gotta teach
this rag head bitch a
lesson.'

Al listens, nervously.

LOU

If she ran up like that on
any other unit, they would
have just smoked her ass. You
see? It's for her own good.

AL

That's not going to justify
the other thing, in the minds
of the audience.

LOU

She can't stand up like that
to us. Gotta make an example.

AL

You are so out on a limb
here, Lou, I can't help you
sell this to Iced Benz. He
just didn't like it.

LOU

Everyone's replaceable, even
Mr. Iced Benz. You want a
Cuban?

Al shakes his head.

LOU (Cont'd)

Now, you and Mr. Benz have
got to understand that this
bitch. She's a terrorist! The
old rules don't apply.

AL

How old is she?

LOU

Fourteen.

LOU (Cont'd)

You're never too young to be a terrorist.

AL

Jesus. You're scaring me Lou. You're playing with fire again.

LOU

What did you think I'd be playing with? Myself? I'm playing with the whole fucking world, right? This is the movies.

AL

I want to bring in another screenwriter.

LOU

I like Bob. He's giving me exactly what I want.

AL

Can I work with you and Bob on this aspect?

LOU

More the merrier, that's the gang-bang ethos. Right?

AL

So how does it happen?

LOU

They strip her off, and they all fuck the hell out of her right there in the sand.

Al sighs in desperation.

INTERCUT: IRAQI MAN with a video camera, covertly films.

LOU

But, of course one of these camel fuckers has a-

LOU (Cont'd)
-camcorder. So later there's
an international incident.
Cover-up, court-martials.
They'll vilify these guys,
turn them into disgraces.

AL
It is disgraceful.

LOU
Not to her!
(jumps up)
It's therapeutic. Best thing
ever happened to her.

AL
What?

LOU
She wakes up in the middle of
all these guys going to town
on her. She can't believe how
good it is. I mean, these are
hot guys.

Al, shocked, drops his face to his hands.

AL
Oh. You're not serious.

INTERCUT: Iraqi Girl with a hidden weapon sneaks into a
TERRORIST BASE. Supermen scoot around for an ambush.

LOU
They heal her. She's cured.
She's gonna go undercover for
the squad and expose terror
cell safe houses. It's a
complete story twist.

AL
Can you make her eighteen?

LOU
No.

AL

Can you just cut this scene?
Do something else?

LOU

No.

AL

Will you take any of my
advice at all?

LOU

No. That's war, Al. You ever
been to war?

AL

Me? Personally? No.

LOU

Well. That's war.

AL

That may be so.

LOU

It is so.

Katya emerges from the back bedroom wearing black leather lingerie, walking a hotel BELLBOY on a leash, in his underwear. The Bellboy pants. She yanks the leash.

KATYA

Heel, shit-head. ...Hi Alfred.
Did you miss me darling?

Al flees to the door.

AL

Lou, come by the office, and
we'll continue this.

LOU

Do we have to? ...She's quite
harmless, buddy.

Al opens the door.

AL
One more thing. I need you to
send me that script file.
Right away.

Katya charges up to Al's face with the hotel Bellboy.

KATYA
Speak, boy.

AL
Good bye!

The Bellboy snarls and BARKS at Al, as Al slams the door on his way out.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Al pushes his treadmill faster.

AL
Fuck it!

Runs fast, to the max. speed, his legs a blur.

EXT. SMITH MOVIE LOT - DAY

Al pokes around craft services, enters a door.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Filming in progress, a BUMBLING COMEDIAN stumbles through a GUN STORE discharging numerous rounds accidentally. Al's CELL PHONE blares a dance song. DIRECTOR explodes in rage.

DIRECTOR
What the! Cut! Who the hell's
got their phone on on my set!
Son of a bitch!

EXT. SMITH MOVIE LOT - DAY

Al flees out the door, smiling. Around a corner.

AL
This is Al.

ANNA HOLT (V.O.)
It's Zach Zane for you.

AL
Really? Great. Send it. ...This
is Al.

INTERCUT: (PHONE CALL) SKYDIVING PLANE, ZACH ZANE (25), a
steroid-enhanced pretty boy in a bright jumpsuit.

ZANE
Hey guy. It's Zach.

AL
Great to hear from you.

ZANE
I got Terra.

AL
You read it?

ZANE
It's fucking hard core, man.
I gotta make this movie.

AL
You like it?

ZANE
I fucking love it.

AL
Whew. That's quite a relief.
Where are you now?

ZANE
On my way to a drop zone. I
only got a minute, but I
remembered I had to call,
make the deal.

AL
So, you're ready to sign?

ZANE

Send papers to Rocky. Gotta jump.

INT. SMITH TOWER - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Al races over to Anna's desk.

AL

Anna, we've hooked Zach Zane for Terra.

ANNA

No?

AL

Yes. His manager's Rocky?

ANNA

Rocky Brillstein.

AL

Get the papers out, and task someone to draft a press release.

ANNA

I'm on it. This is exciting.

AL

Good stuff. All that before lunch. I'm back.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Al in a sharp suit. Phone blares a DANCE SONG.

AL

B? You've got news for me?

BENZ (V.O.)

Yes I do. We've gone over the Terra script real careful. Line by line as a matter a fact. And we worked out a compromise.

AL

I'm all ears.

BENZ (V.O.)

Yeah. Like a morality clause, on things like the rapes and stuff. My character doesn't have to do that.

AL

I haven't seen a morality clause in-- Can you fax me exactly the wording you would like in the contract?

BENZ (V.O.)

Yeah. We had the lawyer draw it up.

AL

Why don't you write your concerns in marker pen, right on the script, and fax me the whole script, so I can see it from your perspective?

INT. AL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Al blends Margaritas as he reads the faxed script.

AL

Oh, no. Oh! You can't be serious!

AL'S SUNROOM

Al activates his hot tub. Drink and script down. Climbs halfway into the tub, but the DOORBELL rings.

AL'S FOYER

Al checks the peephole. Two strange men in sunglasses wait, AGENT WORCZEK (36) and AGENT HONG (25). Al opens cautiously, still wearing his bathing suit.

AL

Yes?

AGENT WORCZEK
I'm special agent Worczek and
this is agent Hong. We're
from the Federal Bureau of
Investigation.

AL
Oh my.

AGENT WORCZEK
Is this your house?

INT. AL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Al dashes in a panic. Dials his phone.

AL
Oh fuck. Oh fuck... Lou, we
need to talk about the
documents.

LOU (V.O.)
What documents?

AL
You know. I can't talk on the
phone.

LOU (V.O.)
I'm busy tonight.

AL
This is important.

LOU (V.O.)
You'll have to come by the
set then.

AL
You're filming?

INT. AL'S CAR - NIGHT

Al parks at a sleazy house with many cars in front.

INT. S&M HOUSE - NIGHT

SCREAMS and MOANS from the cellar. Al steps in.

STAIRWELL

Al descends past CREWMEN. SHRIEKS are louder.

DIRTY BASEMENT

MEN ogle. Al sees Lou in a black robe carving a careful pentagram into the belly of a tied up spread eagle BLONDE on an altar. Lou waves the VIDEOGRAPHER closer. Black robed MEN engulf the Blonde.

Lou wipes his blade. Strolls to Al. Arm on shoulder.

LOU

Hey buddy? What's the latest?

They ascend the stairs, leaving the scene behind.

AL

Is this a porn?

LOU

Classic S&M. I think Torture
the Blondes, Volume 26 is
what they're at.

FIRST FLOOR

Flood of work lights. Lou checks a wooden torture rack.

LOU

Oh, that's good and painful.
So what's your problem?

AL

I'm having to authenticate
those documents. Where did
they come from?

LOU

I've got a guy. Umberto.

AL

Is your guy able to hold up
to scrutiny?

LOU

He's very, very good. And
he's well paid. He knows if
he fucks up what the
consequences are.

AL

I'm talking the FBI. They're
going to double check every
single fact!

LOU

I wouldn't worry about it.

THREE CREWMEN carry the unconscious cut-up Blonde from the
stairwell, in a blanket.

LOU

Give her another fifty bucks
for bandages. That's fair?

AL

Um. Where was I?

LOU

How did it go with Benz?

AL

It went well.

LOU

He's back?

AL

Possibly. He's come up with a
different take on page fifty
four.

LOU

I'm sure he has.

INTERCUT: The Supermen gather around the unconscious Iraqi
Girl. Iced Benz storms off by himself with his rifle.

AL (V.O.)

Instead of participating in the sexual aspect, Benz wants to storm off and keep watch for snipers.

LOU

Sounds good. Look, I got another scene cued up. Gotta turn some screws.

Lou heads back toward the stairwell.

AL

You're okay with the change?

LOU

It's fine.

AL

I thought you'd be furious. It's like a compromise.

LOU

No. It isn't. The scene plays exactly the same. Benz doing his duty keeping watch is like an additional layer. It's perfect.

EXT. S&M HOUSE - NIGHT

Al quickly climbs into his car, and he locks the doors. Looking In the rear view mirror Al sees a STRANGE GIRL.

AL

Oh my God, I didn't see you there miss.

The Strange Girl's face melts, and her eyes flame. Magma-like, she lunges forward at Al.

Al dives away. The otherworldly SHRIEK terrifies him. When Al uncovers, he's alone. He checks the car. It's empty.

AL

I'm on drugs. I must be.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Al studies spreadsheets. Victoria appears in the doorway in silhouette. She saunters in.

VICTORIA

You may have fooled the FBI, *junior*. I'm still suing for control of the studio.

AL

You're going to sue me?

VICTORIA

Abso-fucking-lutely.

AL

I thought you didn't even like the studio, the dreck we pump out?

VICTORIA

Who the hell do you think you are? Yeah. I'm suing, and I will win, at least a fifty percent interest.

AL

How about if I just give it to you?

VICTORIA

What?

AL

I'll give you the fifty percent interest.

VICTORIA

Fuck you. I'm taking it all. You're nobody. You're a flimsy fake, and I will prove it.

AL

I'm trying to do the right thing, Victoria.

She stalks closer to intimidate him. Claws out.

VICTORIA
Are you really?

AL
I just want to make it right.

VICTORIA
Where the fuck is my father?

AL
All I know is what he sent
us.

VICTORIA
(trembling)
You're a really bad liar, and
you're going to pay.

Victoria whips away, and she marches out. Anna Holt pops her head in.

ANNA HOLT
Is everything all right?

AL
Anna, I thought I told you
not to let her in here again?

ANNA HOLT
She must have snuck in while
I was at lunch.

EXT. SMITH TOWER - DAY

Al exits the building, and he heads to his car. A big BEARDED MAN accosts him.

BEARDED MAN
Al Smith, Junior?

AL
Yes?

Bearded Man pushes a stack of papers into Al's chest.

BEARDED MAN
You've been served.

Bearded Man snaps a bunch of photos. Al reads.

EXT. VICTORIA'S BEL AIR HOUSE - NIGHT

Al carries the papers up to the door. KNOCKS.

VICTORIA (O.S.)
Just a minute.

Al waits patiently. She opens up.

VICTORIA
Step right in. You're good at
that.

INT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Al turns to face Victoria.

AL
I think we should start over.

VICTORIA
That's my idea too.

She smiles. He smiles. She reveals a small feminine pistol from behind her back.

VICTORIA
Back to the kitchen. Hands
up.

AL
What's wrong with you? I'm
here to apologize if I did
anything to offend you.

VICTORIA'S KITCHEN

VICTORIA
You'll recall dad's film
Driven to Reckless, and the
creative usage of duct tape?

AL
That's not funny, Victoria.

VICTORIA
Sit down, asshole.

She aims at his head. Al sits.

AL
I didn't think you watched
dad's movies.

VICTORIA
Well you wouldn't know the
first thing about me, or my
family, would you?

She wraps tape around Al's hands, behind his back. Around
his waist. It sticks him to the chair.

AL
Take it easy. You saw Driven
to Reckless?

VICTORIA
I've seen every one of my
father's films, you petty
grifter. Now shut the fuck
up.

SERIES OF SHOTS: She sterilizes pins on the stove flame.
They talk. She turns his chair around. She jams a pin under
his fingernail. She twists it, and he screams out.

VICTORIA
Where is he?

AL
Don't you know that torture
is wrong?

VICTORIA
Well that's your opinion, and
if I was in your position I'd
probably have the same
opinion.

AL
It's wrong, Vee.

VICTORIA
Now what did I tell you about
calling me that?

Victoria bends Al's middle finger up behind him.

AL
Owww! Victoria! Have mercy!

VICTORIA
Sorry cockroach, my father
matters. You don't. Are you
going to tell me where he is?

AL
I can't. I don't know.

VICTORIA
You know how I know you're
lying? Your lips are moving.
Scumbag.

She jabs a needle up under Al's fingernail.

AL
It's wrong, Vee. Stop it!

VICTORIA
I think you want to talk.

AL
Is this what you want to be,
a, a torturer? For the rest
of your life you're going to
have to live with this.

VICTORIA
All you have to do is produce
my father. I know you know
exactly where he is. Did you
kill him?

AL
No! He's alive.

VICTORIA

Then how do I get him back?
...Are we back to square one,
little brother?

AL

Victoria, no! I need a way to
explain!

She jams the pin in deeper.

AL

Owwwwww! Stop it! Stop it!
Stop!

Al flails and passes out.

CUT BLACK.

A SPLASH of water, and Al re-awakens.

AL

What the fuck? What's going
on?

VICTORIA

We're still at a standstill.
Is it going to take something
hot and burning?

AL

No. No, Victoria! I'm, I'm
him.

VICTORIA

Him who?

AL

It's me, daddy!

VICTORIA

Wow. Psychological breakdowns
come pretty quickly.

AL

It's me. I'm your father.

VICTORIA

I need a better set of questions. When did you see my father last?

AL

No. I am Al Smith. It's me.

Victoria storms out to the living room, and she returns with a recent photograph of Al (70).

VICTORIA

This is Al Smith. Do you remember now? When is the last time you saw him?

AL

The eighteenth, at the treatment center.

VICTORIA

Good! Now we're getting somewhere. I should have known. This is good. Do you want a drink of water?

AL

No. Let me go. Untie me.

VICTORIA

Yeah, right. All right, baby steps. You saw my father at the treatment center building, in downtown L.A. on the eighteenth. Correct? What were you doing there?

AL

I'm. I'm your dad. They made me young again. That was the treatment.

VICTORIA

Oh, shit.

She fills a pan with water and boils it on the stove.

AL

Are you making hot chocolate or something? You love hot chocolate, right?

VICTORIA

Go on about the eighteenth.

AL

What's the water for, Victoria?

VICTORIA

The eighteenth!

AL

Think about what you're doing. This is already a felony, criminal acts. You could be sent to prison if someone came in here.

VICTORIA

You mean I had to get rough with an intruder who broke in to terrorize me?

AL

But I did no such thing!

VICTORIA

Your word against mine. Whose house is this?

AL

Vee, when you were five years old in kindergarten, I backed my car into you, and you went flying back, in the driveway behind me. Do you remember?

VICTORIA

How would you know something like that?

AL

And when you were about -

AL (Cont'd)

-twelve, and we went up to the cabin, and you got stuck in the tree. And I had to climb up and bring you back down. You remember?

VICTORIA

How do you have this information?

AL

I tell you, it's me, Vee.

VICTORIA

All right, Al, dad, what was my first boyfriend's name?

Al sinks into despair.

AL

Which one? The first boy? There were so many. I don't remember that.

VICTORIA

This is absurd. ...Huh! You've been torturing my father to get these anecdotes to use for your sick mind games!

AL

What? No! Hey! I have DNA. I have fingerprints. I am Al Smith! I'm just younger now.

VICTORIA

I think this intruder was killed in self-defense.

Victoria snatches the handgun.

AL

What?

VICTORIA

Tell me where he is.

AL
That's not possible! I'm
right here!

Victoria steps forward, the gun aimed at Al's forehead.

AL
Victoria. Mercy. This isn't
you. You're not a monster!
You can't be.

VICTORIA
I'm going to count to three,
Little Al, and you better
produce Big Al, or the show's
over.

AL
You would throw your soul
away like this?

VICTORIA
One.

AL
I can't give you your father
if I am your father.

VICTORIA
Two.

AL
If you shoot me, you won't
ever find him!

VICTORIA
Three!

Al freezes in time.

AL
Louis Seaford! He knows! Call
Lou! He's the link!

Victoria drops the gun to her side. Stumbles back to a
chair. Places the gun down. Won't look at him.

VICTORIA
There. That wasn't so bad.
What's the number?

EXT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Victoria opens her front door a crack.

VICTORIA
Come on in.

LOU
What? Like that poor stupid
bastard you've been torturing
all night? I don't think so.

Lou backs up. She displays the handgun, follows.

LOU
Are you going to shoot me,
right here on your front
lawn?

VICTORIA
Maybe.

LOU
Not too smart, but I like it.
Big balls.

VICTORIA
Your lackey gave you up. It's
just a matter of time, once I
tell the FBI this brand new
information.

LOU
You really think so?

INT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sliding door POPS. Katya throws down a crowbar, and she
steps inside holding a large handgun.

KATYA
Glad to see me now?

AL

Katya. No. Put the gun away,
and get me out of here.

KATYA

That bitch is on my nerves.

Katya chomps a stick of chewing gum.

AL

Leave her alone.

KATYA

Well, what are you offering?

AL

Offering?

KATYA

Mmm. Alfred. You gave Lou a
movie deal. What about me?

AL

Fine. You got it. Help me!
Quick.

Katya strolls away to survey the living room.

KATYA

For that kind of service, I
think maybe I want a movie
studio instead.

AL

A studio!

Katya sashays back to him. Al jerks.

AL

Listen, Katya. Let's make a
deal?

KATYA

I love to make deals, baby.
What's on your mind?

AL

Get this tape off me. We'll talk it over in the car.

KATYA

But I so prefer you this way, Little Big Alfred.

AL

Your own studio. A hundred million seed money. Katya Pictures. Whatever.

KATYA

Oooh. You're starting to make me horny. But you already gave Lou a hundred million. I'm thinking two hundred. Do you like my math?

AL

Katya, I don't know if we have that much cash reserves.

KATYA

And a building?

AL

You can have floor six at Smith Tower.

KATYA

Only one floor?

EXT. VICTORIA'S FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Victoria collapses on the steps in tears. Lou lights a cigar, and he glides off to his car. Victoria throws the gun in the bushes, rises up and enters the house.

INT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Victoria cautiously stumbles to the kitchen. An empty chair remains with tattered duct tape and an open sliding door. She falls onto her couch.

VICTORIA

Fuck!

INT. AL'S HOUSE - DAY

Al has gone over the line, guzzling vodka, tearing through family albums. He crawls to the TV, inserts another tape.

VIDEO: Little Victoria (5) as a butterfly in a stage play. Al freezes the video on Lisa Namid's beaming face, the enraptured mother in the audience.

Al presses his nose into the television panel. Tears smear the view. Al claws back to the vodka. Rolls onto his back, devastated.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

Al locks his office door, and he cautiously follows Lou inside. Lou sits casually, texting in a baseball cap with a viewfinder lens dangling from his neck.

LOU

All right L. I know what you're thinking.

AL

I've read your opus. No thanks to you. You never sent me the damned file. I've got some notes.

LOU

No notes. No compromise. Go fuck yourself.

AL

Yes, well I had a feeling you'd say that. Could you put that away, please?

LOU

I'm busy.

AL

Thing is, my hand is very sore, and I don't think-

AL (Cont'd)

-I can sign any more checks until my hand starts to feel better about your project.

LOU

Don't even dare, L.

Lou snaps shut the phone. Al flips open the script.

AL

Issue number one, mass murder.

LOU

You mean collateral casualties.

INTERCUT: MIDDLE EAST WAR ZONE, Bomb after bomb falling on CIVILIAN CROWDS.

AL

No. I mean deliberately bombing towns, cities, calling in air strikes. Talk about upsetting.

LOU

That's war.

AL

That's not good enough. There needs to be a reason.

LOU

Mistakes are made. They're regrettable. They move on. Like in your 1988 picture, *The Mission Comes First*. Remember?

AL

You can't just kill a few thousand extras here a few thousand there without a fucking reason.

Al slams the script down.

LOU
Happens every day, L.

AL
This isn't real life, Lou.
Things need to make sense.

LOU
How about this? Julio El Gato
needs more lines. Every time
they waste a bunch of
nobodies, he says—

INTERCUTTING: Latino Superman mouths the words.

LOU (V.O.)
They were in the wrong place
at the wrong time.

AL
Wrong place at the wrong
time?

LOU
That'll be his catch phrase.
By the end it'll be an inside
joke.

AL
That's your answer? A catch
phrase?

LOU
It explains everything.

AL
You could not show all these
people being killed
senselessly.

LOU
Thing is war is real ugly.
The audience needs to
acclimate in order to
understand these guys.

AL

To understand what, exactly
Lou? What is your theme?

LOU

The best defense is a good
offense. Our offenses should
blow away anything anyone can
hope to throw back at us.

AL

I see. ...I see. Issue number
two. What are these side
effects I'm experiencing from
your treatment?

LOU

I don't know Al. You tell me.

AL

I'm having hallucinations.

LOU

That's to be expected.

AL

Not by me!

LOU

You might have a few bugs to
work out. Can't be helped.

AL

They're very disturbing. I
feel like I'm losing my mind.

LOU

Maybe you are. Are we done?

LATER - DUSK

Al turns off computer. Walks to the door. Anna TAPS.

ANNA HOLT

Hello? Mr. Smith?

AL

Yes, Anna. What is it?

ANNA HOLT

Have you heard from your father?

AL

No. No I haven't.

ANNA HOLT

It's just, it's his birthday today.

AL

Oh my God. I forgot all about it.

ANNA HOLT

And I just wanted to wish him a happy birthday. It's been so long he's been gone.

AL

That's very considerate, Anna.

ANNA HOLT

If you talk to him, could you ask him to just give a call? I'd like to know that he's doing well.

AL

If he calls in, I will let him know.

ANNA HOLT

Thank you.

AL

Thank you.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

In a dark corner Al sits alone, and he sips his drink.

INT. SMITH SCREENING THEATER - NIGHT

FILM CREW fill the seats. Packed house, even in the aisles. Lou and Katya, Al and the Smith Executives. "TERRA: EARTH UNDER TERROR" rolls.

SERIES OF SHOTS: Thunderous war sequences. Popcorn, candy and drinks are consumed. The crowd LAUGHS at the SCREAMS of the enemies. They shout OBSCENITIES. They sit silently enthralled. Al watches them all.

INTERCUT: INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The Supermen, veterans beaten to hell, enter the classroom. All have long hair, tattered fatigues. Zach Zane rolls in a wheelchair, and he wears an eye-patch, a skull and crossbones on it. Iced Benz has one arm.

Glide through the class of EIGHTH GRADERS and settle on the long-haired Hippie Kid, in his tie-dyed peace symbol shirt -- the boy who blinded Zane.

Hippie Kid sees that Zane has no legs.

The Eighth Graders gather around the Supermen in a semi-circle. The Supermen open military crates, much to the avid curiosity of the children. Zach Zane rolls to center.

ZANE

Since they're too pussy to
use nukes, it's down to you.
Who wants one?

The squad presents assault rifles. The Hippie Kid steps forward slowly up the aisle.

Al shudders.

Zach hands out assault rifles like Santa Claus. The other men demonstrate how to load. The Hippie Kid steps up to Zane. They lock eyes.

HIPPIE KID

You're my hero.

Zach sheds a single tear, and without looking he grabs a machine gun. He shoves the gun into the Kid's hands.

ZANE

You'll know what to do.

The Hippie Kid clutches it tightly. Devastatingly loud ROCK MUSIC blares. The Indian Superman buzzes the Hippie Kid's hair. Camera pushes in to the kid's stern face, and CREDITS ROLL alongside the hair buzzing.

Theater CHEERS in an explosion of approval. Lights up.

Iced Benz punches Zane in his biceps, and Zane grabs his co-star with a warm embrace.

Al rises up, and he walks through the throng of fawning crewmembers, and he approaches Lou.

AL

Lou. We need to talk.

Lou slaps hands, and he points around lightheartedly.

LOU

Oh yeah?

AL

Privately.

LOU

Whatever you say, boss man.
All right you fucks,
everybody out! We're gonna do
some business! Get out!

The mob scampers off in a hurry. Lou and Al are alone.

LOU

So maestro, here we are.

Al peeks back up at the projection booth, and the PROJECTIONIST also scampers away.

AL

You're using kids to make a
very controversial political
point.

Lou pops a stick of gum, leans up against a seat.

LOU

Not at all, buddy. I'm using mythic, iconic imagery to elucidate on a greater reality.

AL

It's disturbing.

LOU

Perhaps, to some.

AL

Very disturbing. What does it all mean?

LOU

That's for each viewer to decide.

AL

I've got a very negative feeling about your project. From what I've seen here The Smith Company is not going to be able to distribute this picture. I'm sorry.

LOU

(laughs)

What?

AL

We're not distributing Terra. Sorry.

LOU

You're not, huh? You paid me a hundred million dollars to not release the film?

AL

Oh well. Win some, lose some.

LOU

We had a deal, Al.

AL

Yeah, we did. And, I'm more than within the terms of our deal to refuse to distribute the picture. Read your contract.

LOU

I'll just walk it across the street. Why would you throw away that kind of profit?

AL

Walk across the street? You would have to have one of the other majors buy us out for a hundred mil. That's absurd. That's not going to happen.

LOU

Oh really? Would you like to wager on that, bud?

AL

Never happen Lou.

LOU

I guess you haven't seen the kind of global buzz we've been generating? We're talking Zach Zane, Iced Benz, War on Terror, edgy adventure story. You'd better reconsider.

AL

I've considered. We're not touching it. Lou, why did you want to make this movie?

LOU

To save the world, of course.

AL

That's a silly answer, Lou.

LOU

Is it?

AL

It's a motion picture, not a
cure for cancer.

LOU

What is the world's number
one problem, Alfred?

AL

Energy? I don't know.

LOU

No, no no no no. Over-
population.

AL

That's a problem.

LOU

Okay. How to solve the
problem?

AL

You tell me.

LOU

World War Four.

AL

You want to start World War
Four?

LOU

It's already begun. What
we're doing is helping push
the sled over the edge of the
hill, let gravity do the
rest. You with me?

Al steps back, perturbed.

AL

No. Not really.

LOU

I am going to destroy a civilization in order to save it.

AL

I don't understand, Lou. Why would you want to do that?

LOU

I'm saving the world.

AL

From what?

LOU

Over-population.

AL

By killing millions?

LOU

Billions, with a 'B' Al.

AL

Killing billions? That's your specific goal? That's what you want to do?

LOU

Yes. Isn't it beautiful?

AL

Well no. I'd have to actually disagree with you on your stated aim. ...If it wasn't so absurd—

LOU

So you don't think I can do it?

AL

No, my friend. I do not think you can do it.

LOU

You don't believe in me.

AL

Believe in you? No. I believe you are sincere. In you is a whole different kind of level of belief.

LOU

Oh, Al. Come on. Do you still not know who I am?

AL

You must have sold a shit load of tubes and vials on your way up, Lou.

LOU

No Al. What's my name?

Lou's skin turns crimson. He grows steadily larger.

LOU

What's my name, Al?

AL

Louis, Lou Seaford. Lou Seaford.

Lou's voice RUMBLES the theater.

LOU

Yeah. Something like that.

AL

Who are you? Really?

Lou grows twelve feet tall, dwarfing everything, even the silver screen behind him. His facial features swirl like a dream. Al retreats back up the aisle, his eyes pinned open.

LOU

I am he who is ignored, left to toil in many guises. And I am he whom you serve, Al.

AL

No. I don't serve you.

LOU

But Al, you've served me quite well. I'll award you a gold star on my own little walk of fame, buddy. Your movies have done a lot of heavy lifting for me.

AL

I make no bones about my films.

LOU

I'm glad to hear it.

Lou slowly shrinks back down to size.

AL

Why?

LOU

Because in the fine print of the universe, you're also accountable for those movies.

Blackness rims Lou's form, and it sucks the energy from the air. A BREEZE pulls in toward him.

AL

My films are entertainment. That's all they are!

LOU

Oh, I don't think you're being quite honest with me, baby, nor with yourself.

AL

People want to escape. They go see an Al Smith picture. It's as simple as that.

LOU

If only it were, buddy,

LOU (Cont'd)

I wouldn't have bothered. The ignorant youth come watch our films, and they want to get in the game. Or is that news?

AL

It's only entertainment!

Lou smiles, steps slowly up the aisle toward Al.

LOU

Sure it is, Al. Sure it is.

Al scoots across the top row away from Seaford.

AL

I'm not going to distribute your movie. Your picture can languish in hell.

LOU

Ha, ha, ha, ha... It's a hit, a big blockbuster. You'll see.

AL

I'm not going to be a part of it.

LOU

Your time for due diligence has long past you by, Alfred. I yanked your decrepit ass off a refuse pile. How do you think you got there?

AL

I've still got a few tricks up my sleeve.

LOU

Yeah, little buddy? You give it your best shot.

Lou strolls out. The metal doors fly open for him. Each light fixture dims down as he passes. Al shudders, and he collapses down in a movie seat.

INT. SMITH TOWER - TOP FLOOR - DAY

Al emerges from the elevator. All of the employees LAUGH loudly, across the entire floor. The ROARS come from cubicles and offices and every desk.

Al, stunned, avoids the revelers. He stares starkly at a series of them. Steps cautiously past Anna Holt, as she howls into her phone. Al flips through his keys.

SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

As Al slams his door shut behind him the LAUGHTER CEASES. He backs away from the door tensely.

Al paces in front of his desk as the sun sets over Hollywood.

NIGHT

Harsh shadows. Al huddles alone in his big office chair, and he squeezes his knees in tight. He dials a number.

AL

Is there any way to block
distribution of Terra, even
if Seaford finds another
studio to buy us out?

Al hangs up the phone.

DAY

Al awakens, his head on his desk. He scribbles notes on a pad. He calls up his computer. He grabs the phone.

EXT. L.A. COURTHOUSE - DAY

PRESS CIRCUS on the steps. News vans line the avenue. A limousine stops. Al exits with a couple of his Lawyers.

Lou Seaford arrives with his LEGAL TEAM. Katya appears stunning in her lingerie dress. Hectic frenzy of REPORTERS surround Katya. She smiles over at Al, but Al turns away.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Lou smiles at Al from the opposite table. THE JUDGE, an African American woman (50) sits. She slides on a pair of reading glasses. Everyone sits.

SEAFORD'S LAWYER (30s), attractive, has the floor.

SEAFORD'S LAWYER

My client's character has been impugned. A libel of this magnitude has done irreparable harm and continues to inflict untold damage on my client's profitability.

THE JUDGE

How much are you asking for?

SEAFORD'S LAWYER

Mr. Smith's irreparable harm has forced us to seek one billion dollars in damages, plus court fees.

The COURTROOM AUDIENCE fidgets and stirs.

THE JUDGE

One billion, with a B?

SEAFORD'S LAWYER

That is correct, your honor.

AL

I object.

THE JUDGE

You object? On what grounds?

AL

On the grounds that it's complete fantasy. He doesn't get to claim his movie would have made a billion dollars, just because he says so.

AL (Cont'd)

That's nuts. Most films lose money.

THE JUDGE

Mr. Smith, I will caution you to let your attorney raise objections, based upon specific legal rationales.

AL

Reality isn't a legal rationale?

THE JUDGE

No. I'm afraid it isn't. Now be quiet until I call on you to speak.

AL

Fine.

SEAFORD'S LAWYER

Your honor, we ask that Mr. Smith's comments be stricken. His contention that most studio films lose money is a false myth and does not reflect the so-called reality he allegedly wishes to impart to this court.

THE JUDGE

Oh?

Al stews. Lou flashes a toothy smile.

SEAFORD'S LAWYER

Motion picture studios are notorious for 'creative accounting practices' where cooked books leave the appearance of losing money for the purposes of tax evasion and to deny duly-owed royalty payments which were promised to the artists.

The crowd looks to Al, who appears guilty.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Al sits alone in a dim corner, a sloppy drunk.
Two HOT ACTRESSES catch Al's attention.

AL
I've produced two hundred
movies. Two hundred, ladies.

ACTRESS
Sure you have.

AL
So what do you two do?

The girls glance at one another.

ACTRESS
Nothing. Bye!

ANOTHER CROWDED BAR

Al confides in his young muscular BARTENDER (22).

AL
She didn't know who I was.
She didn't care.

BARTENDER
What?

Bartender works blazingly fast, fills drinks.

AL
My wife. She didn't know I
was on my way up in the
movies. Didn't interest her.

BARTENDER
Oh no?

AL
She liked me for me. I don't
know why.

Al tosses currency onto the bar.

AL

I guess I should go.

BARTENDER

Well thanks, sir. You need a cab? I'll have one down here in five minutes?

AL

No thanks.

Al turns away annoyed, and he struts out of the club.

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY

Sun glare. Al shuffles inside the door to the lobby.

PRIVATE OFFICE

Attorney JIM HANFORD (55), perpetual tan, guides Al to a chair. Al is still wasted from the night before.

JIM

You are definitely exposed, Al. You stand to lose everything.

AL

It's a preposterous case! No judge in her right mind is going to give Seaford a billion dollars because he didn't like something he read in the papers.

JIM

Don't be too certain of that. Look, Al. He's got top talent on his team. They will crucify you if you give them anything at all.

AL

I don't even care.

AL (Cont'd)

I just want to be sure
Victoria is taken care of. Is
she going to be okay?

JIM

Victoria's trust is
untouchable. They cannot go
after her for this. She had
nothing to do with it.

AL

You're sure?

JIM

Untouchable.

AL

Can't I just grant Victoria
all of my assets, so Seaford
can't get his filthy claws on
them?

JIM

While this lawsuit is
ongoing, not a chance. Don't
even attempt to hide assets.

AL

You know what I should do?

JIM

What's that, Alfred?

AL

Take out a two-page ad in The
Chronicle that says: 'Lou
Seaford is The Devil.' Ha.

Jim is mortified.

JIM

Al. You've been drinking, and
it's 9:45 in the morning.
Will you promise me, for your
father's company's sake, that
you won't drink anything-

JIM (Cont'd)

-before you go into your next
court hearing?

AL

Hey Jim. I can hold my booze.
Not like those other guys.
Thanks for your concern. ...He
is the fucking devil!

INT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

Al jogs all night on his treadmill. Al's plasma monitor
hypnotizes him as he jogs.

MORNING

Al slows to a snail's pace, trudging forth like Sisyphus.

VIDEO: TV Morning Show reveals the DATE, CLOSER. Al's mind
shatters at the sight of this date.

INT. HOSPICE - (3 YEARS AGO)

Al (71) tries to comfort Lisa (61). A morphine drip button
is clutched tightly in her hand.

LISA

Promise me, you will give me
enough morphine, Al.

AL

Too much could kill you.

LISA

Promise me.

AL

Lisa, stay here with me. I
don't want to live without
you.

LISA

You live, Alfred. You must
live.

AL

Don't go away.

LISA

You live, and you tell
Victoria how much you love
her every single day.

Lisa presses the button repeatedly.

AL

I will.

Al tries to hug Lisa, but her frail body is too tender. She
rejects his touch.

AL

I love you Lisa Namid. I love
you. I love you.

Lisa gasps for breath.

AL

Oh God, Lisa. No. You're not
supposed to. I should be the
first.

LISA

No. You should not. You live,
Al.

AL

Lisa. No.

Lisa takes Al's hand.

LISA

Morphine. Now.

Al presses the button. He presses it over and over.

LISA

Zahgidiwin. ...Love.

Al presses the button until Lisa is at peace, and the
anguish slips away from her beautiful face.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY (RETURN)

Al (31), an unshaven mess, carries a dozen red roses up the winding path. His mind in a depressed haze, he stumbles carelessly across the lawn.

Al sits on Lisa's grassy grave, and he arranges the red roses across the base of the granite marker, six pointed left and six right. In the center of the smooth polished stone a carved crane juts out, upside down.

AL

Love.

Al rolls on the grassy grave heartbroken. He rises.

Al steps from Lisa's grave site, and he sees Victoria Smith coming right up the path toward him cradling a flower bouquet. Al freezes in a panic. Victoria's eyes glance up.

VICTORIA

You!

AL

Victoria, just talk to me.

VICTORIA

Aaaah!

Victoria throws down the flowers, and she runs away in the opposite direction.

VICTORIA

You win! You've got my father, and I can't do anything. Isn't that enough?

Al races after Victoria.

AL

No. Victoria. It's not like that!

VICTORIA

Stay away from me!

Victoria sprints around the curved path to the LOT.

AL

Let me try and explain!

VICTORIA

Just don't kill him!

Victoria jumps into her car, and she locks the doors. Several VISITORS gasp in surprise. Al races up to Victoria's car window, crashing into the door.

AL

Victoria, just listen to me!
We can fix this!

Victoria screams out. She starts the engine, and she slams it into gear.

AL

I love you, Vee. I love you,
Vee. Come back.

Victoria's car disappears down the winding road. Al raises his head, and he stumbles on.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Judge instructs Al to stand.

THE JUDGE

Just tell me in your own
words what was your purpose
in writing that op-ed letter?

Al taps the microphone.

AL

Your honor, if you punish me
for writing the truth as I
see it as regards to Mr.
Seaford's film, then this
would have a chilling effect
on critics everywhere.

THE JUDGE

I want to know what you hoped
to accomplish with the op-ed?

AL

Isn't expressing my opinion enough? Am I not guaranteed that?

JUMP LATER

LOU

When Mr. Smith Jr., whom I considered a friend and confidante, wrote that my movie rose to the level of 'evil,' I took that as directed at the people creating the project, and as a direct libel and defamation.

Al whispers with his legal team. In the audience REPORTERS jot notes. ARTISTS draw caricatures of Al.

LOU

Surely good and upstanding movie audiences won't want to go see a film produced by someone who is proclaimed 'evil' in a major newspaper?

THE JUDGE

I don't like being stuck between free speech rights and property rights. I really must ask you, Mr. Smith, didn't you know that you were branding Mr. Seaford in the offending passage?

(slides glasses on)

"...horrid, juvenile, vulgar and dare I say 'evil' piece of entertainment?"

AL

Your honor, evil clearly described the film there and not the plaintiff.

THE JUDGE

But with a concept like evilness, doesn't it imply agency? How does one separate the product of 'evil' from the producer, so to speak?

Al turns to his Lawyers, consults.

THE JUDGE

Mr. Smith?

AL

Your honor, it's common practice to get bad reviews in our business. I myself have suffered a total of more than eleven thousand four hundred negative movie reviews just this past year.

The Crowd chuckles. Lou nods playfully.

AL

I certainly don't intend to file frivolous lawsuits against my detractors.

THE JUDGE

Mr. Smith, I do not try frivolous lawsuits. Are you now impugning the competency of this court?

AL

No, your honor. I'm just pointing out that everyone gets bad reviews. There is the appearance to some that this entire lawsuit is a publicity stunt, to drum up attention for his film.

THE JUDGE

Be that as it may, there is a financial question we must settle here. You're an-

THE JUDGE (Cont'd)
-intelligent man, Mr. Smith.
Certainly you knew how your
comments would be perceived,
and that the person behind
the film would be categorized
as 'evil.' Is that really
such a stretch?

AL
If the shoe fits.

THE JUDGE
Now, what does that mean?

Al turns back to his lawyers, who come up blank.

THE JUDGE
I want a straight answer, Mr.
Smith, and stop wasting this
court's time.

Al's teeth grind.

THE JUDGE (Cont'd)
Mr. Smith, answer the
question. Did you intend to
disparage Mr. Seaford as evil
in your op-ed letter?

Al's Lawyers all shake their heads in the negative.

AL
..He is evil! In the extreme!

The Audience gasps.

THE JUDGE
Oh Mr. Smith. Thank you for
your candor.

Al's Attorney drops his head. Lou smiles broadly, and he
throws his head back in celebration.

AL
That's my opinion. And it's
covered under the First
Amendment. Fuck you, Seaford.

The crowd ROARS. The Judge BANGS her gavel.

THE JUDGE

Shut up! Mr. Smith! Do not
open your mouth again in this
courtroom if you know what's
good for you!

Al glares back. Lou snickers merrily. Katya flicks her
tongue playfully at Al.

EXT. L.A. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Al stumbles through the PRESS CIRCUS.

AL

We're going to appeal. We'll
appeal.

Special Agent Worczek and Agent Hong push past the elbows
of the reporters. Victoria Smith follows behind them.
Worczek muscles in past the evening news people, and he
grabs Al's arm hard.

AGENT WORCZEK

You're under arrest. You got
the right to remain silent.
Come on.

Agent Hong pushes through, and he latches onto Al's other
arm. Hong flicks open his handcuffs, and he snaps them on.
The news mob rises to high hysteria, as Al is restrained in
front of the many cameras.

Victoria steps toward Al. She spits in his face.

VICTORIA

I told you.

AL

What's the charge?

AGENT WORCZEK

Murder.

AL

I didn't kill anybody!

AGENT HONG
Funny, we hear that line a
lot.

They push Al through the phalanx of news personnel.
Victoria watches, stern faced.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Al notices there's no door handle on the inside. Worczek
and Hong take seats across the opposite side of the
interview table.

AL
Fellas, I don't know why I'm
here. Really. You got the
wrong guy.

AGENT WORCZEK
When's the last time you saw
Mr. Rodriguez?

AL
Who?

AGENT HONG
Umberto Rodriguez, your
forger. The guy who gave you
your id papers.

AL
No, no, no. I never met the
guy.

AGENT WORCZEK
So you admit you have fake id
papers?

AL
What's the meaning of this? I
want a lawyer.

AGENT WORCZEK
Can you afford one nowadays?

The Agents laugh. Hong snaps open a manila file, and he
flips through several grisly photographs.

AL

Look, I never met the guy. I sure as hell never killed him. It's up to you to prove otherwise.

AGENT HONG

Ring a bell?

The 8x10" photo shows a young UMBERTO RODRIGUEZ (28), his body brutally mangled amid the destruction.

AL

No. Nothing to do with me.

AGENT WORCZEK

Show him the fingernails.

AGENT HONG

See this? That's your hair under his fingernail. We ran DNA tests.

AGENT WORCZEK

There's more. You left DNA on the cup you drank from. Very sloppy. Fingerprints too. It all matches.

AL

No, no no. This is a frame-up. I've been set up!

AGENT WORCZEK

Yeah? By who?

AL

Lou Seaford!

The two Agents glance at one another amused.

AGENT HONG

Why would Seaford need to do something like this when he just took you for a billion dollars? Ha ha ha.

AGENT WORCZEK

Yeah but not him, if he's not
him. How does that work?

Hong shrugs.

AL

Seaford hates me! He's the
fucking devil! He hates
everyone! ...He's Satan!

The Agents nod playfully.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Al waits in his cell alone, hears GRUNTS and WHISPERS.

INT. PRISON - GENERAL POPULATION - DAY

GATES UNLATCH. Al is led by TWO GUARDS. He's chained at the
arms and legs, and he wears an orange jumpsuit. NUMEROUS
INMATES lift weights in the background. Al arrives at the
payphone. He dials out.

LOU (V.O.)

Hey buddy. Took you long
enough.

AL

I want to make a new deal.

LOU (V.O.)

Whatever do you mean? Hey,
it's a shame Katya posted all
those kinky photos of you two
on that prison love website.
Smile bitch! Ha ha ha...

AL

I want my daughter back.

LOU (V.O.)

Has she gone somewhere?

AL

I want me back.

LOU (V.O.)

Oh, Al. That crappy, broken down piece of shit body? Is that what you mean?

AL

It's the only way.

LOU (V.O.)

That's just sad, man.

AL

Make another deal. It's what you do, right?

LOU (V.O.)

Oooooh. What are you going to do? Assassinate somebody for me? That'd be fun.

AL

No. Just, take back your treatment. Give me some time as my old self, with my daughter.

LOU (V.O.)

Ehhh. What's in it for me, buddy?

AL

I just. Haven't you taken enough from me?

LOU (V.O.)

Oh the guilt. Here's what I can do. Remember when I walked into your office that very first time?

AL

Vaguely.

LOU (V.O.)

And you said, 'You got five minutes, kid?'

AL

Yeah.

LOU (V.O.)

I'll give you five minutes,
kid.

AL

With Victoria?

LOU (V.O.)

Yep.

AL

Conscious? Able to speak?

LOU (V.O.)

Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah.
Anything else I can do for
you? I'm very busy these
days, as you should know.

AL

No. Just let me see Victoria.
Let me have her back. That's
the only thing I want.

Lou sighs with a blunt RASP.

LOU (V.O.)

You know. Don't go tellin'
people I'm turning into a big
softie, Smith. I have an
image to uphold.

FLARES WHITE.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

EKG machine BILPS. Al (74) opens his eyes to see sunlight
raking the bed through a window. Hands are wrinkled. Tubes
and elastic restrict his movement.

Victoria runs in, and she sees Al.

VICTORIA

Daddy! You're still alive!

AL

Vee. I don't have long.

VICTORIA

Don't say that.

AL

I love you with all my heart.
Just listen.

VICTORIA

What, daddy?

AL

Your first boyfriend, was it
Tommy?

VICTORIA

Huh? Yeah. Tommy.

AL

I've made a lot of shit
movies.

VICTORIA

No!

AL

It's true. I was
irresponsible. I regret that
now.

VICTORIA

Daddy, you made some
wonderful films, too.

AL

I did a lot more harm than
good.

VICTORIA

That's just wrong.

AL

I damaged young developing
minds. I told them torture
was acceptable.

AL (Cont'd)

I made murder seem like fun
and games. I gave them
terrible, immoral ideas and
said this is how you be cool.

VICTORIA

What are you saying, daddy?

Al's heart attack hits, and the EKG spikes. An ALARM rings
in the hall. Victoria panics, and she flits around the
machines. Al grabs her wrist.

AL

You're taking over the
studio.

VICTORIA

What about Junior?

AL

He's gone. He was a ghost.

Al gasps for air.

AL

Victoria, I want you to do
something for me.

VICTORIA

Just say it, daddy.

AL

I want you to live a happy
life.

VICTORIA

I will.

AL

And, I want you to end up on
the right side of the
universe.

VICTORIA

What do you mean?

CRASH TEAM arrives, YELL at Victoria. Al holds fast.

AL
Do it better than I did.
You're my legacy.

VICTORIA
Me?

AL
Make moral art.

Victoria nods as the ORDERLIES wrench her away.

AL
Don't end up like me.
Disgraced. Like a stain on
the culture.

Orderlies pull Victoria back and out of the room.

VICTORIA
Daddy!

HOSPITAL HALLWAY

They close the door in Victoria's face, and they shock,
inject and prod Al. Victoria collapses onto a chair.

AL'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Stillness. Al lies silently. Lou strolls in.

LOU
Hey buddy, you miss me?

Al sits up.

AL
So it's you.

LOU
Forever and ever.

Lou strolls, and walls melt away. They pass through a dream
to a star field and hazy obscuring clouds.

AL
Your plan won't work.

LOU
Which one?

AL
People are basically good.
They're not going to fall for
your tricks.

LOU
Sure they will. They always
do.

AL
They'll see through you.

LOU
You didn't.

MASSIVE GATES restrain the inferno ahead. Al sees and feels
the ultimate nightmare growing closer.

AL
Can I just ask one question?

LOU
Shoot.

AL
Is Lisa in there?

LOU
Your wife? Nah.

AL
Really?

LOU
Haven't seen her.

Lou sheds his human mask, and his skin dissolves away. The
crimson energy beneath expands outward.

AL
Oh. Thank God.

Al's shell peels away revealing the essence beneath, a glowing mist. The Gates of Hell are upon him.

LOU

Maybe, when your wife Lisa
stopped going to see your
movies you might have taken
that as some kind of a sign?

Lou watches Al Smith fade out and disappear.

LOU

Hey?

Lou spins, searching. He rockets around the stars, the nebulae, the clouds. Al is gone. Lou stops before the infernal gates.

LOU

Son of a bitch!

MONTAGE - BACK ON EARTH

"Terra: Earth Under Terror" opens as the biggest, most controversial film in history.

- Movie theaters and signs promote the title.
- Premiere red carpet is lined with US flags.
- Interviews show Lou, Zane, Benz, Katya.
- Army recruiter vans outside theaters.
- Nationalism and entertainment merge.
- Crowds of angry, yet happy FANS grow.
- MILITIAS show up at theaters with weapons.
- NEWSCASTERS extol the Terra phenomenon.
- Terrorists burn in effigy outside theaters.
- Asian-owned businesses are smashed in riots.

- TEENAGERS enroll in the military en masse.
- TV Graphs chart box office gold.

NEWSCASTER
Terra, the phenonmenon...

NEWSCASTER-2
Highly controversial...

NEWSCASTER-3
Setting global records...

EXT. SPACE

Watching big blue earth. A flash erupts over the mainland USA, an atomic detonation.

FADE IN:

Over Asia, larger flashes erupt over the Middle-East.

FADE IN:

Over Asia, more flashes erupt: Pakistan, India, Saudi, China.

FADE IN:

Over the USA, numerous flashes ignite across the land.

Over Europe, the cities incinerate quickly.

Over Asia, Russia, China, Japan, Korea, India, the Central Asian Republics.

Flames spread out across the earth, a red glowing planet of terror and annihilation.

Descend back into the charred, burning atmosphere, through the flames, and through hell on earth.

END CREDITS ROLL. END. FADE OUT.