

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty

by

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"Too much happens... Man performs, engenders so much more than he can or should have to bear. That's how he finds that he can bear anything."

- William Faulkner

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT, BROOKLYN - MORNING

Walter Mitty (30s) sits at his small kitchen table, balancing his check book. We see his last several expense entries:

Mom's new apt. deposit

eHarmony sign-up

O's braces (2nd installment)

Piano movers

Piano storage

Piano delivery to Mom's new apt.

In-piano humidity control system

EXT. CORNER 5TH AVENUE, 43RD STREET, NYC - DAY

During the morning rush hour, a crowd of businessmen waits on the corner to cross the street. Walter is among them, dressed in a short-sleeve business shirt and tie and with a briefcase on hand. Nothing happens. Then Walter's head explodes.

CREDITS BEGIN

Up toward the clouds, propelled skyward, were the contents (ideas and images) of Walter's head; they've begun to float toward the ground.

INT. SKYSCRAPER, NYC - SAME

Some office work is going on. Then past the window (outside) comes floating down, in slow motion, Juan Valdez the Colombian Coffee guy (his donkey's floating down way in the distance).

This happens outside other high-rise and professional building windows - a floating Bishop Desmond Tutu, the silver Monopoly piece Top Hat, Statler and Waldorf (the two elderly curmudgeons from The Muppet Show) and additional detritus from Walter's mind such as Manute Bol, The Beastie Boys, etc. CREDITS PLAY.

INT. STARBUCKS, MIDTOWN NYC - MOMENTS LATER

Walter sits at a Midtown Starbucks. He's got his laptop out and he's in the middle of a phone call.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

You know, you didn't really provide much detail about your occupation. Most people put theirs on their eHarmony page. You don't care to?

WALTER

Is that like a must? Can't I just say like "I'm employed" or something?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

(like okay but that's not a great idea)

Sure.

WALTER

My work's not really that interesting. To women. Um. Or men.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

What do you do?

WALTER

I'm a Practical Asset Manager. For a corporation.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

(sounds like he agrees it's not interesting)
....okay. What do you do when you're not working?

WALTER

Mostly I guess I commute to work? It's like an hour and--

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Okay. No worries. I'll submit this information, then check back in the afternoon for your possible eHarmony matchups. That's exciting, huh?

WALTER

It is, Todd. Yeah. Hey, when can I leave a "wink" for someone? To see if they "wink" back, or..?

Walter's looking at his laptop. On screen is the eHarmony dating page for CHERYL M. (34), pretty but she looks like the sort of pretty girl who takes the bus; text beside her photo reads "*Leave a wink for Cheryl M. to indicate your interest...*"

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
I'll have your eHarmony profile all uploaded in a minute.

WALTER
Cool.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
So like in two minutes. But hey, you're a little light, if you don't mind me saying this, in your "Been There, Done that" column.

Part of the eHarmony client profile has a section *Been There, Done That* - where people list their accomplishments, travels, etc.

WALTER
I forgot what I put there?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
...Nothing.

WALTER
Oh, okay.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
We should beef that up. If you can think of anything to add that would make it, you know, not blank.... give me a ring, I'll add it.

WALTER
I sure will.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
(like he's a little concerned)
...Are you okay, man?

WALTER
(doesn't know the guy, surprised he asked)
...Me?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Yeah.

WALTER

Yeah. Why?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

You sound, I don't know, a little stressed?

WALTER

(thinks its odd this guy's taking a personal interest)

No, I just had some stuff on my mind. The past couple months.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

....What kind of stuff?

WALTER

(still thinking this personal interest is a little odd)

Just, you know... life stuff.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Yeah, I get that.

Some awkward moments pass as Walter's unsure about following through on heavy conversation with a stranger.

WALTER

...okay thanks for asking, I guess, um, Todd was your name?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Todd Mahar. I'll be your eHarmony counselor, while you're with us here at eHarmony.

WALTER

Okay. Cool.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

(gets it)

Yeah. Hey, let's hope you'll have a special lady on your mind later today.

WALTER

Sounds good, Todd.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Later, Walter.

WALTER
Later... Todd.

They finish their call. Walter looks at the computer picture of Cheryl M., then out the window at actual Cheryl M. (CHERYL MELHOFF, 34) crossing the street just outside the window for the Time-Life building lobby. Then as Walter stands to go, outside the Starbucks window, a grand piano (exploded from Walter's head) falls from the sky onto the middle of the 53rd street.

EXT. 6TH AVE, NYC - LATER

Walter's out on 6th among a crowd waiting for a light to cross. Then a black and white New Orleans Jazz Funeral procession passes in front of him - black and white in the sense everyone in it and all their instruments and lively waving umbrellas are in black and white. Walter and the business people around them are in color. CREDITS END. The title appears: *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*.

INT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Walter crosses the expansive lobby and passes a colleague ROY on his way to the building elevators.

ROY
Walter.

WALTER
What's up, Roy?

ROY
Hey. We just got acquired. Our company. This morning.

WALTER
(surprised)
Our whole company did?

Walter wasn't expecting this; it's thrown him some.

INT. ELEVATOR, TIME-LIFE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Walter's in an elevator with two other guys in suits. He addresses the first one (GARY MANNHEIM)

WALTER
Gary? You're Vice President of Acquisitions. Right?

GARY
Yeah.

WALTER

... we just got acquired. Did you know that? Roy said.

GARY

The company that I'm supposed to be acquiring companies for? *It* just got acquired?

WALTER

Yeah, Roy said.

GARY

Okay, that's not promising for me probably.

WALTER

Yeah, they probably have their own acquiring guy.

GARY MANNHEIM

He's probably the guy who acquired us.

SECOND MAN IN A SUIT

Yeah. That was me. Ted Hendricks. Hey.

This is the second man in a suit (TED HENDRICKS) who's been with them all the while. They all shake hands.

TED HENDRICKS

Ted Hendricks. Vice President of Acquisitions.

GARY MANNHEIM

(awkward)

Gary Mannheim. Um. Vice President of Acquisitions. Too. So what are you going to be doing at the company, Ted?

TED HENDRICKS

Managing the acquisition. Identifying overlap. Reducing staff where we find redundancy. What's your focus been here, Gary?

GARY MANNHEIM

...I've been managing acquisitions. Identifying overlap. Then reducing staff where I find redundancy.

Further awkward moments pass.

TED HENDRICKS
Wow, okay. That's not...

GARY MANNHEIM
Yeah, that's not good.

TED HENDRICKS
No.
(to Walter)
What do you do?

WALTER
I'm a Practical Asset Manager.

TED HENDRICKS
Do you play an important role here?

WALTER
I do. Yeah. Totally. I work in a
one-on-one basis (on a one-on-one
basis I mean) with all our
photographers.

Ted just looks at him for a moment.

TED HENDRICKS
I'm sorry. I was really getting
into this song. What were you
saying?

Walter listens to the elevator muzak Ted just referred to.
It's like *Maneater* in muzak; no one could get into it.

WALTER
I was just saying I manage our film
negatives from the moment they arri-

TED HENDRICKS
(starting to leave)
Let's talk later. We have a
specific time set aside to
conference with employees of the
former company.

WALTER
What time is that?

TED HENDRICKS
I'm not sure. But it's not at this
time.

WALTER

Okay.

TED HENDRICKS

I have to see the board and start evaluations now.

WALTER

Okay. Thank you.

(flustered, feeling that
was a dumb thing to say)

I mean "not thank you." I mean like
"looking forward to it" I should
have said.

Ted just looks over. The door's closing.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(through the closing
doors)

Looking forward to it.

The doors are almost closed.

TED HENDRICKS

I'll come by sometime this week.

WALTER

Awesome.

GARY MANNHEIM

Are you going to come by my...um?

The doors close. Ted's not coming by Gary's office.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Walter walks up a long hallway toward his department floor; on the walls are hugely blown up Life Magazine photographs. Twelve foot high *Muhammad Ali*, *Morgan Freeman (Oscar pose)*, *Moon Landings*. - Walter looks small compared. The last photo he passes is familiar - a *black and white of a New Orleans Jazz Funeral*.

INT. WALTER'S DIVISION FLOOR, LIFE - LATER

The division Walter works in has fifty employees seated around an open floor plan - fifty cubicles in view. Walter's arrived at his to find on his desk a wrapped gift with a note reading:

Heard rumbling's Life's over. Wanted to give you something cool if this is the last photo batch. Hope when you open it and look inside you'll think it's pretty special.

Walter's unwrapped the gift.

It's a leather wallet. Its front is embossed with the inscription from *S.O. to Walter Mitty - thanks for the great work.*

Walter looks back at the letter; it finishes - *by the way, neg 12 is my best ever. Landmark. The Absolute Quintessence of Life. the rest of the batch kind of sucks. Sean*

INT. RECEIVING ROOM, LIFE MAGAZINE - LATER

Walter has been working through a Life photo order negative box - it's marked *Sean O'Connell*. There's a co-worker (HERNANDO) cleaning up in the distance. Walter has been examining a negative roll with his loupes (magnifiers worn as eye glasses). THEN HE NOTICES SOMETHING THAT STOPS HIM. The negative roll, where the 12th negative should be, has been cut; 12 is missing.

WALTER

Hey, Hernando-

HERNANDO

Yeah?

WALTER

This 12th neg? From this last Life roll?

HERNANDO

Yeah.

WALTER

It's not here.

HERNANDO

What's it of?

WALTER

It's of something that's the Absolute Quintessence of Life. Or something.

HERNANDO

What's "quintessence?"

WALTER

It means like the best ever.

A moment goes by.

HERNANDO
And you can't find it?

WALTER
Um no.

HERNANDO
Wow. That's not going to go over
well with the new asshole.

The storage room is separated from the greater division floor by a wide glass window wall. At that moment, Walter has noticed new supervisor Ted Hendricks on the other side of the glass. He's holding a conversation with a LIFE EDITOR there. Walter can hear it (muffled).

TED HENDRICKS
How's the issue shaping up?

EDITOR
We got an email from Sean
O'Connell.

TED HENDRICKS
The photographer?

EDITOR
Yes. He said he got the cover shot.
His best. The Quintessence of Life.

TED HENDRICKS
What does Quintessence mean?

EDITOR
Like the best ever.

TED HENDRICKS
Okay. Awesome.

Ted starts to walk away.

TED HENDRICKS (CONT'D)
(repeating to himself for
some reason)
Quintessence.

This has Walter concerned.

INT. LIFE MAGAZINE CAFETERIA - LATER

The cafeteria is a large white room, with massive black and white Life photographs serving essentially as wallpaper. Particularly, they are images of physical and human immensity (photographs of the summiting of K2 and the beachheads of Normandy) and make the office workers here (Life magazine's low-level corporate workers among whom Walter is one) seem tiny in terms of their personal accomplishments but also physically. Walter and a co-worker TIM NAUGHTON sit in front of the Massive K2 mountain summit photograph.

WALTER

Tim, did you find out anything about Negative Box 2-6? Where it was sent from?

TIM NAUGHTON

(like he's a real big deal)

That's the *Sean O'Connell* commission?

WALTER

Yeah, the guy who took this--

Walter gestures to the K2. It's taken from above a guy who just summited.

TIM NAUGHTON

There's nothing in shipping. The box just showed up it seems like. There's no receipt.

WALTER

...I'm getting nervous with these new guys around. Lost negative. But I'm not going to freak out. I think my work here the last nine years speaks for itself. I've made my mark.

Then new superior Ted Hendricks walks past, accompanied by Life's EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATORS.

TED HENDRICKS

Who am I evaluating next?

EXECUTIVE

(holding an employee file labeled W. Mitty)

W. Mitty.

SECOND EXECUTIVE

Who's that?

EXECUTIVE

He's the black guy from Accounts.

THIRD EXECUTIVE

...He's not black.

EXECUTIVE

Are you sure?

THIRD EXECUTIVE

Yeah. He's just a white guy. With a mustache.

SECOND EXECUTIVE

He doesn't have a mustache.

FIFTH EXECUTIVE

Of course he doesn't have a mustache. He's a woman.

They've walked past Walter and out of the cafeteria - but Walter's heard every word - not promising.

EXT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, 6TH AVE, NY - LATER

Walter sits at the cement bench on 6th just out front of the Time-Life building. He's looking at a photograph he's taken from his briefcase. It's a bad print - the kind someone takes before their camera's set - over exposed, out of focus - it's impossible to discern the subject.

WALTER

(wondering)

What is this?

Cheryl Mellhoff sits down beside Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)

What is this?

He hands her the foggy print - it's clear they have an established working friendship.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I think it's either a man with one sideburn. Or a candelabra. Or a Happy Days lunch box.

CHERYL
 (can't make it out clearly
 either)
 It's... is it two badminton
 racquets? What's it supposed to be?

WALTER
 It's the Quintessence of Life. So I
 don't think it's two badminton
 racquets. Sean O'Connell took this
 just before he took another one we
 lost.

CHERYL
 (like that's significant)
 You lost a Sean O'Connell?

WALTER
 (looking at the out of
 focus print)
 ...I'm trying to figure out what
 this picture is. I think he
 focused, set his lens then took the
 missing picture. It's just a better
 picture of this. What is this?

CHERYL
 Maybe Sean has it.

WALTER
 The negative? Yeah, I tried to
 reach him. He's always in Bahrain.
 Or a shanty town or somewhere - I
 got one email off.

Walter shows Cheryl an email exchange from Sean O'Connell -

It reads - *in need of info for neg 12 of neg roll three, box
 2-6.*

Sean's reply - *Best picture I've taken. The total F'ing
 Quintessence of Life. I hope you're as happy with it as I am.*

Walter's reply = *Cool, but can't find it.*

Sean's reply - *Out of Office. This is an auto reply. Sean
 O'Connell will be out of the office through the month of
 November.*

WALTER (CONT'D)
 No cell phone. He's out on a
 freelance. I'd really like to find
 him.

Walter has taken further photographs from his briefcase

WALTER (CONT'D)

These are pictures from the last roll he sent in. I'm trying to draw a bead on his location by analyzing these.

CHERYL

Have you figured anything out?

WALTER

Not yet. Because my trail is... water.

Walter starts showing Cheryl the photographs. The first of which is water - just a picture of water, could be an ocean, lake, or pool (puddle).

WALTER (CONT'D)

A Starbucks, which I don't know which one.

(flipping to the next one)

And a man (or woman's) thumb.

This is a picture of a thumb.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I've been trying to figure out the gender (of the thumb), as I sat here. How many people in the world?

CHERYL

Six billion.

WALTER

Everyone's got two, too.

CHERYL

Two, too, *what?*

WALTER

Thumbs.

CHERYL

Yeah. But I think there are more Starbucks, so I don't know if that's what you'd call a hot trail--

WALTER

Look what Sean gave me.

Walter has taken the gift wallet out - *S.O. to Walter Mitty - thanks for the great work.*

WALTER (CONT'D)

Because we covered, you know, so many hotspots together the last 9 years...

(a little more quietly)
...boldly

CHERYL

(having some fun with Walter)

You guys covered the hotspots together boldly?

WALTER

As a team. Yeah. By Sean actually going to the hotspots, and by me staying here waiting for the pictures of hotspots to come back so I can boldly transfer them to magazine format.

Cheryl's laughed.

CHERYL

...What did you do this weekend?

WALTER

We're moving my mom here. I went and packed her house up. What about you?

CHERYL

My son and I went on a bike ride in Lake Valhalla. Jersey. We brought lunch. Had lunch in an actual field, of grass. We went swimming. My friend Marny lives on the lake.
(getting to what's on everyone's minds around there)

...This is going to be the last issue. *Life's* going to be strictly online after this merger. No new photographs. We're just going to be an internet photo storehouse. That's what I'm hearing. They're going to let most of us go.

Walter sits there for awhile. That's tough news. He's got a lot on his mind. Then he gets a text: From *Odessa*, it reads:

- piano a-holes want 300 more dollars to take the piano back, come down. I have to go. Like right now.

INT. LOBBY, TIME-LIFE BUILDING - SAME

Walter's running through the huge Time-Life lobby for the 50th St. glass exit doors, but outside the lobby it's not New York right now. It's Sana'a, Yemen. And running parallel to Walter, along the window glass wall beside him, is rugged war photographer SEAN O'CONNELL, loaded with camera gear. Walter runs out the building entrance and is now running side by side with Sean in Sana'a, Yemen in the midst of an anti-American rally, making a desperate dash together out of there under a volley of middle-eastern shoes.

SEAN

What's with all these shoes?

Angry Middle-easterners are throwing their shoes at Walter and Sean as they sprint by.

WALTER

It's a sign of disdain here.

SEAN

That's a lot of shoes, man.

WALTER

They've been targeting western journalists all summer. It's been a real hot August.

SEAN

Thanks for doing all the field work here and risking your ass and getting hit by shoes and stuff.

WALTER

Let's just get this camera bag out of here. We can shoot the shit later, O'Connell. Over whiskeys.

There are in Sana'a, Yemen, but they're chasing an actual NYC metro south. Walter has finally reached its doors, though he's continuously struck by shoes.

INT. 104 BUS, NYC - MOMENTS LATER

Walter's slightly out of breath. He's caught the bus. It's just New York again. Walter walks up the crowded bus aisle and finds a seat. Some time passes. Walter looks out the window, his daydream has faded.

INT. 104 BUS, MOVING, NYC - LATER

A little later, Walter's got his lap top out, trying to leave a "wink" for Cheryl M. (Cheryl Mellhoff) on eHarmony . It doesn't work: *unable to perform request*. Walter looks at it - it's not the smooth next step he was expecting. He tries again. Same result.

INT. 104 BUS, MOVING - LATER

Walter's in the midst of a phone call.

WALTER

I tried to leave a "wink." For someone. But it didn't work.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Well, they're not required to respond to you favorably. We can't force--

WALTER

No, it says "unable to perform request," Todd. So I don't think my wink really went through. Do I have like a broken page or something?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Broken page? I've never heard of that.

WALTER

Well, okay, something's not working. On my page.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Yeah, let me look here
(keyboard noise)
Okay, we received your application breaking your personality into 29 different dimensions, and, okay, I see the problem. You don't have any.

WALTER

Any what?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Dimensions.

Further time passes.

WALTER

...I don't have any dimensions?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Not that we can determine. Through our models. You're just lacking distinguishing features as our system sees it. Based on our really extensive evaluation, you seem, to us, a little too indistinguishable from everybody else.

A pretty long time passes as Walter wrestles with this consideration.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You're not standing out. In a way that would allow anyone to actually notice you. So hey, let's enhance your profile. Let me ask you, did you always want to be a practical asset manager?

WALTER

I don't want to be one now. I just am one.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Why do you do it?

WALTER

It's an occupation. When I became an adult I thought that would be possibly a good thing to have. Because I keep getting bills from places.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

What are some of your accomplishments?

WALTER

(after thinking)
...I studied music.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

How long?

WALTER

April.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

April? One April?

WALTER

Yeah. But I was working at Orange Julius to save money for college. That April. And my hands were always sore from working the Frother.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Can you play any pieces?

WALTER

Sure.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Which?

WALTER

A piece of Cheers. The first piece. Part.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

I don't know if we should list that.

Walter gets a text from Odessa that says *I'm leaving*.

WALTER

Hey, Todd. I have to go. I have a piano situation I have to take care of.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Okay, man.

WALTER

Um hey, can I have my four hundred dollars back?

EXT. BATTERY PARK, NYC - LATER

Walter walks up to Battery Park to find (really) a grand piano sitting in the park. He stops and stares at it awhile.

EXT. BATTERY PARK, NYC - LATER

Walter sits at the abandoned piano (in pristine shape). Regular NY foot traffic passes around him. He absentmindedly starts playing the first bars of *Cheers*. Then he just keeps doing it because he's thinking of other things.

GUY IN PARK

Stop playing Cheers, Dick.

Then Walter sees Cheryl Mellhoff and her son RICH (9), headed his way from across Bridge Street. They've got two skateboards. Walter smiles when he sees them and waves.

EXT. BRIDGE STREET - LATER

Cheryl, Walter and Rich push the grand piano toward quiet Bridge Street. It's on its wheels and a couple skateboards. It's rolling down the street pretty well. They're about to push it out onto the street.

WALTER

Rich, are you ready to push a piano down a street and get honked at by everybody in New York?

RICH

(like it's going to be fun)

Yeah.

They do. The honking begins right away, but they keep rolling the grand piano down Bridge Street. It looks like it might be fun.

CHERYL

I can't believe they left it in the park. How old is this?

WALTER

Her dad bought it for her when she was six. It's seventy-years-old.

CHERYL

Your sister just took off?

WALTER

My sister's not the responsible one in the family.

CHERYL

No kidding, man.

WALTER

She told them no steps. I paid them for a first floor move. But she screwed up and got my mom a apartment on the 15th floor. The movers weren't equipped to get it up there. She didn't have the money for them to take it back. She had to get her braces adjusted, so she just took off.

CHERYL
Braces. How old is she?

WALTER
36.

EXT. BRIDGE STREET - LATER

It's pretty late now. Walter has placed a tarp over the piano. They rolled it into a city parking space.

CHERYL
You're sure this is your sister's parking space?

WALTER
Yeah. Hey, Rich. You're pretty good on that.

Rich is skateboarding around a little.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I used to skateboard a little.

CHERYL
(something about the idea makes her smile)
When?

WALTER
Maine. When I was a kid.
(trying to unburden her of the other skateboard)
Hey. I'll bring it in tomorrow. I don't want you to have to carry it all the way home. I got it.

CHERYL
Thanks.

WALTER
You helped me move a piano. I can carry this. See you Rich. Thanks for putting your back into it.

RICH
What does that mean?

WALTER
Just, you know... helping out, man.

CHERYL
See you tomorrow.

WALTER

Yeah.

Walter's got the piano all tarped. Cheryl and Rich take off.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Are you sure I can't walk you home?

CHERYL

I'm going to drop Rich at his
Dad's. Thanks, Walter.

Walter hangs out a moment. He's watching them go. Then he starts walking off with Rich's skateboard.

EXT. CORNER, BRIDGE AND STATE NYC - LATER

Walter's alone again. He's back near the park in the city, waiting to cross State. He puts the skateboard down and starts kind of messing around with it a little, moving around on it a little bit. Then he takes off on it pretty well, then he grinds the low garden curb - nicely done.

CUT TO:

THIS IS A CLOSE UP OF THE NON-SPECIFIC PHOTOGRAPH OF WATER

INT. FILM PROCESSING ROOM, TIME-LIFE BLDG - DAY

Walter's got the water photo under a light lamp. He's scrutinizing it, hoping to gain some information.

WALTER

(quietly, to himself)

Is this the Arctic Ocean..? A glass
of Sprite.

Then he finds something. There's been a light leak at the edge of the frame. Here, with the picture blown-up and light poured on, Walter can make out something reflected in the water. It's the stern of a fishing trawler. Its vessel name and registry number are visible. She's the *Erkigsnek S0709*. Her port home is almost visible painted beneath, but only the first two letters are legible due to the light leak - *Nu*.

INT. BREAK ROOM, LIFE MAGAZINE - LATER

Walter and his colleague Tim Naughton have met up in their breakroom, having some coffee. *On the wall beyond them is a massive photo of Evel Knievel on fire.

WALTER

Hey were you able to use the Circulation computer to find that ship? That boat?

TIM NAUGHTON

Yeah, it's registered in Nuuk.

WALTER

Nuuk?

TIM NAUGHTON

That's a town. I think *the* town in Greenland. It's a coastal fishing vessel.

WALTER

....*Greenland.*

Walter considers that. It connects to nothing for him. He turns to other matters.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Tim, what would you say is a good accomplishment of yours, like something that you'd put on an online dating page?

TIM NAUGHTON

I don't know.

Tim considers this.

TIM NAUGHTON (CONT'D)

I broke Adam Lopez's record for hitting the highest singing note for a male, I guess.

WALTER

Seriously?

TIM NAUGHTON

Yeah.

After a moment, Gary hits the highest singing note ever recorded for a male.

WALTER

Wow...

TIM NAUGHTON

But I don't know if I'd put that on eHarmony.

(MORE)

TIM NAUGHTON (CONT'D)

I just don't think that's really going to do a lot for the ladies.

WALTER

Yeah. How did you know you can do that?

TIM NAUGHTON

My voice goes way up there when I'm emotional, or whatever, can't really control it.

WALTER

I was thinking about putting that I've never really been late coming back from lunch.

TIM NAUGHTON

...I don't know. Kind of weak. That's not exactly winning the Tour de France.

WALTER

...Yeah

EXT. CHOPPED SALAD, CHAIN SALAD FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - LATER

Walter is visible at a table for one. He's finishing up lunch. He checks his watch. Then he stands to leave to get back to work on time.

EXT. STATE STREET - LATER

Walter's running to the subway station a half-block ahead. Then he passes a man who's just standing there silently extending (to Walter) a cup of water. Walter takes it without breaking stride, drinks it and drops the cup on the sidewalk *it was unusual. Then Walter hustles down the subway steps and checks his watch to ensure he's running on time.

INT. SUBWAY MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Walter has taken his subway seat. Then a shirtless, beaming Frenchman leans into view (in the seat behind Walter's) and offers Walter pats (congratulatory) on the back.

EXT. 6TH AVE, NYC - LATER

Walter's made it to the corner of 6th and 49th. He looks up ahead at the Time-Life building (his destination). Then he checks his watch and finds he'll be on time. He's relieved. Then a Frenchman comes up and sprays Walter in the face with Champagne. Then multiple Frenchmen mob Walter, fighting for turns at congratulating him through frantic head rubs.

EXT. 6TH AVE, NYC - LATER

Walter is carried on the group of Frenchmen's shoulders as they run him up 6th avenue, chanting.

FRENCHMEN
(European sports chant)
Wal-ter Mi-tty.

INT. LOBBY, TIME-LIFE BUILDING - LATER

The French mob jogs through the lobby with Walter atop their shoulders.

FRENCHMEN
(European sports chant)
Wal-ter Mi-tty.

INT. ELEVATOR, MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Among more serious-looking businessmen and woman, the raucous tour-de-France style congratulations party continues. Walter's just being mobbed by ecstatic Frenchmen.

INT. FORTIETH FLOOR, ELEVATOR LOBBY - LATER

No one's around. We hear the quiet "ding" of the elevator arriving. Then Walter gets out. There are no crowds anywhere - just Walter in his short-sleeve dress shirt, tie and briefcase. He reaches his division floor offices door and enters his pass-key. Then his mom walks up - EDNA MITTY, 76.

EDNA
Hi, honey.

WALTER
(noticing her, surprised)
Hey, Mom.

EDNA
Hi, Walter. Is it all right I'm dropping by?

WALTER
Sure,
(meaning the open office area)
we'll just go through here to my office.

INT. DIVISION FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

As Walter and Edna enter the division floor, colleague Tim Naughton walks past.

TIM NAUGHTON

(to Walter)

They just called a conference.

WALTER

(following Tim, with his
mom at his side, to her)

Hey, your new place is almost ready. We just had a little hiccup due to Odessa just not getting the right one.

EDNA

Well, she's the artist...

WALTER

Why did she get the cool name? She got to turn out cool.

EDNA

I named her after a wonderful visit your Dad and I had to Odessa, our family's homeland, one summer, in southern Ukraine. There's a beautiful river there also named Odessa.

WALTER

Why did you name me Walter?

EDNA

I named you after Walter Matthau

WALTER

(noticing that a
conference is starting)

Okay. This is starting I think. We should probably just stop here to--

They've walked out onto the division floor where a group of forty or so employees has been gathered together to allow Ted Hendricks a speech (which he's forcing a colleague to make). They stand a short distance away, in the middle of letting them know:

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

This will only take a moment. I just wanted to inform you all, reluctantly, that this month's issue will be the last.

The employees have been expecting this. Nonetheless, the news saddens and concerns them.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

You are all valued employees. But as we undergo this transition we wanted to be candid with you that some of you will be--

TED HENDRICKS

(correcting him, a little more quietly, just to him)

Most.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

(to Ted, quietly)

What's that?

TED HENDRICKS

Most of them.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

We wanted to be clear that most of you will be determined non-vital to the new partnership. The remaining few employees will carry over into the new organization. We'll be deciding which category your positions fall into over the course of the next week.

Tim Naughton, among the gathered (soon to be former) employees, has begun a quiet, high-pitched, weeping. Walter has had to field this news while his mother stands beside him.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

Now for some good news. We're very excited to--

At this point, Ted Hendricks nudges the guy to move over so Ted can assume the speaking part for the good news portion.

TED HENDRICKS

Okay. So, we're very excited to play a part in publishing what will be the very last issue of Life Magazine, which has been an American Institution for 75 years and whose renowned covers have touched us all really touching ways. And for the final issue, our cover is going to be something which is...

(he forgot the word, looks at the editor for help)

What was that word?

EDITOR

(whispering)

Quintessence.

TED HENDRICKS

Our cover will probably be the most famous ever because it really has the awesome quintessence of Life. And we're all going to be a part of this historic happening. Even those of you who will, right after the happening, be asked to leave. Thank you.

Ted begins to clap (for some reason). So the gathered employees also begin some watered-down clapping. Walter is among them, standing beside his mom, who is clapping too. Then they all stop the fake good cheer and head back to work.

INT. STORAGE ROOM, PRACTICAL ASSETS, LIFE - LATER

Later, Walter's mom is with him in his work area, back in the storage area of practical assets.

WALTER

(to colleague Hernando, little rattled about the quintessence cover news)

Check for negative 12 in the wash bins.

EDNA

So the moving bill came, for my move down here. I wanted to bring it by. Thank you so much Walter.

WALTER

Mom, come on. It's nothing.

Walter takes his mom's bill. He's paying it. He seems a little worried about money. Hernando comes back into the area.

HERNANDO
 (about the negative)
 It's not in there, Walter.

It's bad news. Walter is going to have to tell his superiors the negative is lost.

EXT. TED HENDRICK'S OFFICE, LIFE - LATER

Walter has approached (reluctantly) Ted Hendrick's office to confess the negative's gone. But he finds Ted on the phone and waits politely in the open doorway for Ted to finish the call. (Ted has his back to Walter).

TED HENDRICKS
 Yes, sir. It's gone very smoothly.
 The last issue's underway.
 (listening)
 The cover? Yeah. It's amazing. It's so quintessence. It encapsulates majesty. Totally. It has some splendor, in it, too, probably. Also, I'm pretty sure it's illustrious and just really awesome. It took my breath away. And I haven't even seen it yet.
 (listening)
 We're getting it processed from practical assets now.
 (listening)
 Yes, sir. We're going to retain eleven employees. I'm going to be evaluating them over the next week.

His situation worsened, Walter turns and leaves.

INT. STORAGE ROOM, PRACTICAL ASSETS, LIFE - LATER

Walter has returned to the storage room. He's looking at his laptop at a map of Earth. Specifically, at Greenland. Hernando's working in the distance.

WALTER
 You know, the thing about Greenland... it's really not that far, man.

HERNANDO
 What's that?

WALTER
Greenland.

HERNANDO
What's Greenland?

WALTER
It's a country/island. Sean might be there. It's not as close as Canada but it's really not as far as it sounds. When you hear it. Look.

Hernando looks at the map. It is (actually) really not that far from Canada.

HERNANDO
Yeah, it's not that far.

Then Walter leaves the room.

INT. WALTER'S DIVISION FLOOR - LATER

Everyone's at work, in the cubicle spaces. Walter comes walking through the area, with his briefcase, on his way out.

EXT. 6TH AVE, NYC - LATER

Walter's out walking among the crowds. But he's moving with some purpose, somewhere specific. All he's got is his briefcase.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON AN EMAIL REPLY

Walter Mitty is Out of the Office. This is an automatic reply

INT. AIR GREENLAND 747, JFK - SAME

The plane is mostly empty. But Walter's on it. And just one other guy. But he's sitting in the seat beside Walter. The Captain's speaking Danish. Walter's looking at his iphone email from the photographer Sean O'Connell - *Best picture I've taken. The total "F"ing quintessence of Life.* Walter looks at this message like there's hope there, like finding this thing might save his job. The plane takes off now, soars.

INT. AIR GREENLAND 747, FLYING - LATER

The plane's midair. Walter's looking at the photo print the image of which (out of focus) he can't make out, trying to unlock some idea of what it is.

EXT. GREENLAND CAPITAL NUUK - DAY

The capital, coastal town of Nuuk looks like it's made out of Victorian toys. Walter's plane drops into view and descends over these handsome little buildings.

INT. PUB, NUUK, GREENLAND - LATER (EVENING)

Walter has somehow gotten involved in a Danish folkdance which involves (exclusively) linking arms with elderly Greenlanders in colorful vests (the only colorful part of the event) and shuffling slowly from side to side while making a large moving (slow) outer circle. Also they chant in Danish. Walter performs this holding his briefcase.

EXT. PUB, NUUK - LATER

Outside the pub, Walter has been showing Greenlander teens his overexposed photograph.

WALTER

This looks like a chair. Here.

It doesn't really look like a chair.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Have you seen this chair?

TEEN

That's not a chair.

WALTER

I think it's a chair. Or a pipe. A man's pipe.

No one says anything.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Have you seen this pipe?

TEEN

That's not a pipe either.

WALTER

(showing them another
photo)

Have you seen this Starbucks?

SECOND TEEN
I don't know. Possibly.

WALTER
(another photo)
Have you seen this man (or woman's)
thumb?

INT. COFFEE SHOP, NUUK - MORNING

It's a fresh morning. Walter's sitting in a coffee shop, looking out on the capital town street. Then he sees a cab pull up for him.

INT. CAB, MOVING - LATER

Walter sits in back. The older female cabby cruises the car past some open, pretty fields.

CAB DRIVER
Greenland is the least densely populated country in the world. There's only 56,000 people. Lots to do. Most of us work a few different jobs, to cover everything. For example I drive this cab.

A moment passes.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)
I'm also the Queen.

Walter has been surprised.

WALTER
...You're the Queen of Greenland?

CAB DRIVER
Yeah. Oh, there goes my meter.

Her meter's gone out.

CAB DRIVER (CONT'D)
You want to just a call it 93 kroner? Flat rate.

WALTER
That's cool... your Majesty.

An awkward moment passes.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Should I call you that?

CAB DRIVER

Sure.

WALTER

Is there anything around here that a renowned photographer might be photographing?

CAB DRIVER

No.

WALTER

Are you sure?

CAB DRIVER

Yes.

WALTER

I think he was here.

CAB DRIVER

Well, possibly if he was mistaken, he might have thought the Musk Ox migration was worth photographing.

WALTER

Can we see that?

INT. CAB, MOVING, OUTSKIRTS, NUUK, GREENLAND - LATER

Walter and the Queen continue their peaceful drive through the outskirts of Nuuk, Greenland.

WALTER

So are you Queen for life?

CAB DRIVER

Yeah.

WALTER

That's a good gig. They're making some changes at work. My work. They're letting most of the divisions go.

CAB DRIVER

How long have you been there?

WALTER

Nine years.

CAB DRIVER

That's tough.

WALTER
How'd you get to be Queen?

CAB DRIVER
My dad was King.

WALTER
...My dad sold ice cream.

CAB DRIVER
Here we are.

Walter looks out the window. In a field they've parked beside, there are a few indigenous Oxen (they look like huge Jim Henson muppets) walking slowly.

WALTER
That's the Musk Ox migration?

CAB DRIVER
Yeah.

WALTER
There's just three of them.

CAB DRIVER
Yeah.

WALTER
Where are they migrating?

CAB DRIVER
To the other side of the island.

WALTER
(like it's not that big a deal)
Yeah, I don't think Sean would cover this, so much. Can you just take me to the boat wharf place?

EXT. WHARF, NUUK - LATER

At the end of a dock, with western Nuuk in the distance behind them and the Atlantic all around, Walter holds a conversation with an older BOAT CAPTAIN. The cab waits in the distance.

WALTER
You're the captain of the *Erkigsnek*? I don't know how to pronounce that.

BOAT CAPTAIN

That wasn't right. But yeah, I know what you're trying to say. Yeah. I am.

Walter shows him the water photo.

WALTER

Your boat was photographed. In the past four days. Do you know where?

He looks at the photo for a while.

BOAT CAPTAIN

We've been out in the Atlantic the last four days. I have no idea when this was taken.

WALTER

Can you guess from where?

BOAT CAPTAIN

Where it was taken from?

WALTER

Yeah.

BOAT CAPTAIN

...another ship? Which I can't say. We passed a lot of them. You should check the mail logs at the post office.

INT. POST OFFICE, NUUK - LATER

Walter's at the desk of the small post office.

POSTAL CLERK

Are you a detective?

WALTER

Yep.

Some moments pass.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Did I just say "yep?" I'm sorry. I meant "nope." I'm an office worker. We're trying to secure a photograph he might have, that's valuable to my company.

POSTAL CLERK

Well, these are the airmail records from this last week.

(checking a large register)

They helicopter mail in. As the shipping freighters go by. We had fifty three pick ups. That's fifty three freighters. He could have been on any one of them.

WALTER

So he just went by us?

POSTAL CLERK

If he was on a freighter, he went right by us.

WALTER

So there's no one here who might have had contact with him, who might know where he's going.

POSTAL CLERK

I'm afraid I can't help you.

A moment passes.

POSTAL CLERK (CONT'D)

Unless you want to mail something.

WALTER

(just standing there)

No, I don't have any... mailing needs.

INT. PUB, NUUK, GREENLAND - EVENING

Learning Sean has slipped into the unknown again, Walter's despondent; he sits at the bar, drinking a beer out of what looks a glass, woman's boot (it's huge). The same folk dance dance is going on behind him. But he's not engaged. He's looking at the blown up photograph of "the thumb." He's just staring at it like it's never going to grant him anything - a thumb - then after a moment a real thumb that looks just like that thumb appears beside it, attached to the hand of a guy who's just walked up to the bar and put his hand on it (on the bar beside the photo). The two thumbs rest beside one another. They're the same thumb. After a brief moment, Walter notices the resemblance. Then he turns and looks at the guy. The guy looks back.

WALTER

Can I ask you a question?

MAN (PILOT)

Sure.

WALTER

Where was your thumb like four days ago?

EXT. PUB, NUUK, GREENLAND - LATER

Walter has come outside the pub to talk to this guy. There's a helicopter parked in the field beyond the pub. The thumb guy is its PILOT.

WALTER

I can't believe I found one thumb.

PILOT

Well, it's the least densely populated country on earth. It's a good place to find a thumb. He's on the Dolores. I helicopter dropped and picked up mail from her Tuesday. He's a strange guy.

WALTER

Sean?

PILOT

Yeah. He took a picture of my thumb.

WALTER

Yeah, why?

PILOT

He saw I worked my controls with it. He's shooting photos of people working. That's why he's on that ship. I'm taking some radio parts out there in fifteen minutes. Their radio's fucked.

WALTER

Man, I really need to contact him. We're in a transition period and--

PILOT

You could contact him by coming with me. Then contacting him. In person. On the boat.

WALTER

...Can't we just call them? I could ask him on like the boat phone.

PILOT

The *Ship to shore*.

WALTER

Can I just ask him on the "ship to shore?" Instead of going on that old-looking helicopter?

PILOT

Well, their radio's fucked. That's why I'm flying out.

WALTER

You're leaving now?

PILOT

After I finish my beer.

That makes Walter pause.

WALTER

The weather doesn't seem great. Feels like there a storm "moving in." "Brewing."

MAN

Yeah.

WALTER

But you're just going to finish your big-glass-woman's-beer-boot and then fly?

PILOT

Yeah.

WALTER

Okay. I'm not going to go with you.

INT. PUB, NUUK, GREENLAND - LATER

The pilot sits at the bar finishing his boot beer. Walter's in the background, looking in through the window, watching the pilot drink.

EXT. FIELD BESIDE THE PUB - LATER

A little while later, the pilot's in the pilot's chair of the helicopter. The blades are spinning.

He's about to lift off out of Nuuk. Walter's in the distance, standing thirty yards away near the pub, looking over. He's not going. Then the helicopter starts to lift at the same moment Walter has a change of heart and starts to run toward it to come along.

The helicopter begins to ascend (the environment around the pub is pretty, different than what we've seen). We also haven't seen Walter sprinting before, which he is now (briefcase), arriving, then leaping three feet up into the passenger seat of the helicopter.

INT. HELICOPTER, FLYING - LATER

Walter's high above Greenland, flying over a fjord. It's breathtaking. He yells to be heard from the passenger seat to the pilot.

WALTER

Is that a fjord?

PILOT

Yeah.

WALTER

I've seen pictures of fjords. But I've never actually seen a fjord. I don't think I've ever even said the word fjord out loud--

PILOT

Stop saying fjord. It's annoying.

WALTER

Okay.

EXT. VIEW DOWN ON ATLANTIC - LATER

This is a look from way up at an international shipping vessel mid-sea. The weather around it's getting rocky. On deck, they're prepping a life raft.

INT. HELICOPTER, GREENLAND, SKY, MOVING - LATER

Walter's getting rocked a little in the helicopter passenger seat. The weather's getting rough. They're in some low lying storm clouds.

PILOT

(yelling over the blades)

We're not going to be able to land on the freighter. I've got to drop the radio parts and you in a life raft.

(MORE)

PILOT (CONT'D)

It's a short drop, but your decision. You can just fly back with me.

WALTER

(yelling over the blades)
I'd really like to get my hands on this property. They're making some changes at the office. It's going to reflect poorly on my work. I might get let go. And I have a mounting piano situation that's--
(rocked big time)
Whoa...

The pilot carries on to the freighter. Walter seems to be calling on his reserves to see this through.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATER

It's noisy. The weather's rough. There is lots of lifting and dropping. Walter's steadying himself in the cargo hold, preparing to jump..

PILOT

You're doing great. We're only six feet up. Just jump out the door, Walter.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - SAME

This is wide view of what's going on. We see the back of the hovering helicopter. To its left is the international shipping vessel the *Dolores* which has placed a life raft between it and the helicopter. There is still some space to the right of the frame where there's open water. That's the side of the helicopter Walter mistakenly jumped from. After he surfaces, he starts to drift away from the freighter.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - LATER

Walter's treading water a fair distance from the freighter. The crew (Chilean) has gathered at the bow of the freighter. The captain calls out to Walter through a megaphone.

CAPTAIN

We're sending a pontoon. Try to remain calm.

At this point a fin passes behind Walter.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(through the megaphone)
Okay, if that's a porpoise--

WALTER
 (sort of to himself,
 looking around)
 If what's a--
 (noticing the fin)
what?

CAPTAIN
 If that is a porpoise, befriend it.
 Porpoises are mammals with rare
 intelligence and sympathy. They
 often protect swimmers from
 predators.

The fin circles by again.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 If that's a shark, strike it. Their
 snouts are sensory hubs.

WALTER
 (calling out)
 How do you-- I just see a fin. Can
 you get a bead on some more
 information?

On board the crew has a brief consultation.

CAPTAIN
 (then, to Walter through
 the megaphone)
 We're confident that's a shark.

The fin comes nearer. Walter steels himself. Then he finds
 some presence of mind and power and is able to deter the
 thing away by thrashing at it with a few decent punches.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 (after a moment)
 Okay, now we think that was a
 porpoise.

After another moments, another fin shows up.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
That probably is a shark.

At this point, though, the pontoon arrives and Walter
 scrambles into it (he still has his briefcase).

INT. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - LATER

Walter has dried off. He's being tended to by some young Chilean sailors. He's been sounding them out about where Sean O'Connell is.

CHILEAN SAILOR
Sean O'Connell? He was picked up.

WALTER
From your ship?

CHILEAN CAPTAIN
A pilot boat came. They took him.
Four hours ago.

WALTER
Took him where?

CHILEAN CAPTAIN
I don't know.

It's dawned on Walter that he's missed Sean. Just by a little.

WALTER
Can we radio them? There's
something I need to discuss with--

CAPTAIN
You jumped into the ocean with our
radio components. No. We are, as
you say, "on our own."

EXT. INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING FREIGHTER THE DOLORES - LATER

The freighter's hauling automobiles. The surface of the ship looks like a mall parking lot. One of the Chilean sailors accompanies Walter on a walk among the car rows.

CHILEAN SAILOR
You can sleep where Sean did.

They stop alongside a Subaru. The Sailor opens the driver's door. He means this is where Sean slept. In this Subaru. Walter's confused.

WALTER
Sean slept here?

CHILEAN SAILOR
Yes.

WALTER
In this Subaru Outback?

CHILEAN SAILOR
Yes. That's where our undocumented laborers sleep. Our Stevedores. He was photographing our workers.

WALTER
He was photographing Chilean Stevedores?

CHILEAN SAILOR
Yeah.

WALTER
(about the Outback)
This was his room/car?

CHILEAN SAILOR
Now it will be your room/car.

INT. SUBARU OUTBACK - SAME

Walter has gotten in. There are five Chilean Stevedores in the back in different states of rest - sleeping, reading, playing chess.

WALTER
Hey. Walter.

They wave.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Did you guys, were you living in this car back seat when Sean O'Connell lived in the front seat?

Walter starts miming taking photographs.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Sean?

BACK SEAT CHILEAN
La Quintasencia....

The guy's pointing to where Walter is in the front seat.

SECOND BACK SEAT CHILEAN
La Quintasencia.

WALTER
Is that-- Are you saying quin--

SECOND BACK SEAT CHILEAN
La Quintasencia...

WALTER
Are you saying Quintessence? In the
Spanish form? Yeah. Sean says that.

A deck *Squall Alarm* sounds. These guys leave the car quickly
(to perhaps batten something down). Walter notices the
breaktime snack they were enjoying - half's been left behind.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Is that Clementine cake? My mom
makes-- I didn't know anyone else
made that.

Walter's alone in the Subaru.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Clementine cake. Wow.

He reaches for some cake, it's been sliced into pieces,
wrapped bakery style in some stray paper from the backseat.
Walter takes one such slice. While the storm lifts and lowers
the ship, Walter enjoys some clementine cake, then he notices
something about the paper scrap it's wrapped in. There's
handwriting on it. Walter examines it.

What Walter's holding is a half-torn page bearing cursive
handwriting. There is a date beside the word:
Eyjafjallajökull. Then *TTL shoemount flash. Zoom bounce
flash. Nikon Camera....*

WALTER (CONT'D)
This is Sean's.

There is a later destination and date on the paper - and some
scrawl beside it.

WALTER (CONT'D)
(excited)
...this is an itinerary.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP OF THE WORD *EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL*

EXT. SHIP CROW'S NEST - LATER

During this storm, Walter has climbed up the crow's nest
ladder and stands in the crow's nest with the English-
Speaking Chilean Sailor who escorted him to the Subaru.
Walter's showing him the paper - *Eyjafjallajökull*

WALTER

That's where Sean is. Tomorrow.
This gibberish. I have to crack it.

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

Crack?

WALTER

I have to crack the gibberish.

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

You don't have to crack anything.
It's a volcano. In Iceland. That's
the name. *Eyjafjallajökull*.

WALTER

...Sean's in Iceland. We're going
past there, right? Can we land
there?

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

We can get you there.

WALTER

Can you get me there tomorrow?

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

We can get you there tomorrow, yes.

WALTER

Would you like some Clementine
cake?

Walter's brought the cake up with him.

WALTER (CONT'D)

It's very good. It tastes, man,
exactly like my mom's. I didn't
know Chilean mom's made this. Small
world.

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

No thank you. I have to actually
perform a function up here, during
the storm. That's why I'm up here.

WALTER

Oh. Sorry.

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR

I have to monitor the mooring
winches and wind Lasses.

(MORE)

ENGLISH SPEAKING CHILEAN SAILOR
 And you're standing, I'm sorry,
 like right where I'm supposed to be
 looking.

WALTER
 Okay, I'm going to go, take my cake
 and.....

Walter starts to descend the crow's nest ladder.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING VESSEL - LATER

The storm has broken. The sea is calm. The sun is out. This is a huge ship. Walter's sitting on the bow, all by himself. His briefcase is beside him. It's quiet. He's looking out at the water, then (oddly) his cell phone rings.

WALTER
 ...Hello?

MAN'S VOICE
 Walter.

WALTER
 Yeah.

MAN'S VOICE
 Todd Mahar. From eHarmony.

WALTER
 ...Oh. Hey.
 (like it's weird to be
 getting a call out here
 from Todd Mahar)
 Um, do I owe you guys money?
 Because your supervisor was clear I
 can't get my 400 dollars back. But
 I don't think I'm going to renew-

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 No, I just wanted to see how you
 were doing. You didn't sound great
 last time.

WALTER
 The last time we talked? The time
 you told me I have no personality?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 Well, you know, you just left your
 application so empty. Share
 something about yourself. It
 doesn't have to be major league.

(MORE)

EHARMONY COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
 Life's full of small
 accomplishments. What do you strive
 to do everyday, that you take pride
 in? Can I ask you that?

WALTER
 Well, I take my work seriously.
 Also keeping a tidy apartment. I
 help my sister out paying her bills
 now and then. But can we not list
 that? None of that stuff really
 seems like an accomplishment.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 You know there's a way to consider
 it where the *tasks* you accomplish
 (paying some of your sister's rent--

WALTER
 Braces.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 What's that?

WALTER
 She hasn't asked me for rent money.
 For like a year. But I did pay for
 her braces. She's 36.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 Well, taking care of yourself and
 your household, your mom, after you
 do that without ever failing, for a
 long time, hey that *becomes* an
accomplishment.

Some time passes. A bird flies by.

WALTER
 I fought a dolphin.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 Today?

WALTER
 Yeah.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
 Aren't they supposed to be nice?

WALTER
 They are. I think they're probably
 the best mammal.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
(meaning like aren't we
the best)
We're mammals.

Walter doesn't say anything about us being the best. Life's heavy for him right now.

WALTER
This mammal tried to protect me.
And most of the other mammals I
know, like the mammals at the
office, they're dicks.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Why are you near dolphins?

WALTER
I'm on a ship.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Where?

WALTER
Near Greenland. I tracked a thumb
here. To Nuuk, Greenland. I located
the thumb. Now I'm fortunately
going to Iceland to correct an
oversight.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Well, I'm going to tweak your
profile, add "sailing" or whatever
to your *Done Thats*. I'll put *Swims
with Dolphins*, too.

WALTER
It was just one.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
I can really put *Swims with
Dolphin*. That sounds like you have
a pet dolphin you swim with
everyday. Can I handle this please?
It's my job.

WALTER
Okay, Todd.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
You sound a little better?

WALTER

Do I? Because I think I'm a little worse.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING FREIGHTER - DAY (LATER)

Walter's been equipped with a kayak pole and life vest. Some of the crew assist him down a ladder to the ocean; others keep watch over a kayak waiting there.

CAPTAIN

(to Walter)

It's a mile and half to Iceland.
It's as far in as we can get with our hull size.

WALTER

So. Okay. I'm supposed to kayak in?

CAPTAIN

Reykjavik is due north. You'll be there by 9 am.

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - LATER

Walter's quietly kayaking through an empty expanse of the Atlantic. His paddle makes noise; that's it. Then Cheryl Mellhoff emerges from underwater - but she's giant. She takes up the whole horizon. She's catching her breath like she's been underwater for a while. Then her son Rich (giant) pops up from underwater beside her. He catches his breath, too, but he's pleased.

RICH

I stayed under longer.

CHERYL

Just barely.

RICH

Let's do it again.

CHERYL

Okay. One, two, three.

Cheryl fakes going underwater on three. Rich has. She's still above water. She's cheating. She stays there for a while, smiling. Then Rich pops up.

RICH

You're cheating.

CHERYL
 (laughing)
 Okay, okay. One two three.

They both get caught faking it this time, and they start to laugh. Then they both go underwater. They're under for a long time. A pretty long time, in fact. Then Cheryl surfaces. But Rich doesn't. She's breathing again, but she expected to see Rich and doesn't, and now she's concerned.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Rich...?

He's nowhere.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Rich?

Finally, he pops up. But he's coughing, was under too long and has taken in some water; he's scared.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 It's okay. Come here. Hey come here.

She hugs him.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Hey, it's okay.

He's freaked, he's crying a little.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
 Hey, don't worry. You're good.
 Don't worry. Hey...

After a moment, she begins to sing to distract him. She's singing Bob Marley's *Three Little Birds* pretty well.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
*Don't worry, about a thing, 'cause
 every little thing, is gonna be all
 right. Don't worry. About a
 thing...*

Walter looks on from (from his kayak). He's worried about a lot of things, but what he's picturing soothes him too. The day dream fades. Walter keeps kayaking. It looks desolate, then a guy in a rubber triathlon swimsuit swims by. Then another one does.

WALTER
shit.

A wide shot shows that Walter has kayaked near to the coast of Reykjavik, Iceland during the swimming portion of a triathlon. Now he's in the midst of a hundred pissed guys in rubber swim suits.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Fuck. Sorry.

INT. ICELANDIC CAB, MOVING, REYKJAVIK ICELAND - DAY

Walter's in the heart of Reykjavik, Iceland, driven through the city. He's taking in the sights, looking around through the cab window, when his phone rings again. He checks his caller I.D

WALTER

(clicking over)

Hey, Mom.

EDNA

Hi, Walter.

WALTER

What's up?

EDNA

Oh, I'm just making some yogurt.
With some banana.

WALTER

Okay. Cool.

EDNA

It snowed today. Didn't expect that. Not much. Just a light little cover. Very pretty. Less than an inch even.

WALTER

That's awesome.

EDNA

My piano got towed, Walter.

A moment goes by.

WALTER

...Your piano got towed?

EDNA

Yes. Odessa said it wasn't there.
Where you said it was going to be.

(MORE)

EDNA (CONT'D)

She said possibly that it got towed. That that's not her space anymore.

WALTER

I lent her money for that space.

EDNA

Where are you, honey?

WALTER

In Iceland.

EDNA

That's nice.

EXT. REYKJAVIK - LATER

Walter's out front of the capital building in Reykjavik texting Odessa.

Walter writes - *Wtf on mom's p.?*

He waits. This comes back - *I had to go last minute to yoga workshop out of town. Can you handle?*

Walter sends - *Can you please take care of this - I am in Iceland. I repeat. Iceland.*

He gets back - *thanks lots :) I'll have my phone off forseably. Love, O.*

Walter just sits there for a while - tending to the piano has been left to him - at this critical moment. He turns around. You can see the volcano (where Sean O'Connell is) looming way in the distance.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Walter has left. He's taken off. He's looking out the small window, down at Iceland as he goes, down at *Eyjafjallajökul* the volcano he nearly reached. It's getting smaller. Walter watches as it does.

INT. AIRPLANE, LANDING - NIGHT

Home now, Walter lands at JFK. He's in economy, taking out his laptop.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

It is now safe to turn on portable electronic devices.

Walter's laptop is on. So he goes on eHarmony. Again, he tries to leave a wink for Cheryl. The reply he gets, again, is *"unable to perform request."*

INT. JFK, AIRPORT - LATER

It's two a.m. Walter is alone on a terminal moving walkway. He hasn't changed since we met him - he's still got hold of his briefcase. He's looking (again) at the out of focus picture. He can't draw anything out of it.

EXT. PORT AUTHORITY CAR IMPOUND LOT, NEWARK, NJ - LATER

Walter hurries through a car impound facility. Among the rows of impounded cars, there is his mom's grand piano.

INT. OFFICE, PORT AUTHORITY CAR IMPOUND LOT - LATER

It's Walter's turn in line.

CAR IMPOUND OFFICER
Retrieving..?

WALTER
My mom's piano.

CAR IMPOUND OFFICER
...Make and color?

WALTER
(doesn't really understand
the question in regard to
a piano)
It's a Baldwin? Um, Walnut, I
guess? A Walnut Baldwin. Piano.

A moment goes by.

WALTER (CONT'D)
It's a piano.

CAR IMPOUND OFFICER
I heard you.

WALTER
It's right out there. I just walked
by it. Do you have more than one
piano?

CAR IMPOUND OFFICER
Impound fees. I'm making your fees.
Heavy duty tow fee. \$370. Two
nights overnight. \$80.

(MORE)

CAR IMPOUND OFFICER (CONT'D)
Failure to display city vehicle
inspection sticker. \$112.

WALTER
It's a piano.

The guy just keeps adding.

WALTER (CONT'D)
It's not a car. Its a musical
instrument. I should have had my
musical instrument inspected? By a
government.

The guy ignores Walter. He just stays at his task which is
adding money Walter doesn't have.

EXT. PORT AUTHORITY CAR IMPOUND LOT, NEWARK, NJ - LATER

Walter looks on while movers consider how to load his mom's
piano into the back of their moving van.

MOVER
Where are we taking it?

WALTER
We can't move into my mom's until
tomorrow.

MOVER
(sarcastically)
Well, what do you want me to do?
Drive really slowly? We can store
it at our warehouse and move it in
the morning. But that's two moves.
Separate billings.

WALTER
(quietly)
Man.... You know what?
(meaning they can leave
without the piano)
Don't worry about it.

MOVER
What are you talking about?

WALTER
Don't worry about it.

Walter walks over, lowers himself beneath the keyboard, finds
a grip, then rises and lifts the piano up by himself.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - LATER

Walter's carrying the piano on his back, walking down the middle of the New Jersey Turnpike, slowing down traffic.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION, NY - LATER

Walter climbs a set of stairs to the subway with the piano on his back.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - LATER

Walter sits on a bench waiting for the train. The Grand Piano is beside him.

INT. SUBWAY, MOVING - LATER

Walter has brought the piano onto the subway. Then the subway hits one of those mid-tunnel stops where the train stops, and the lights go on and off. When the lights return we see the piano's gone. Walter's still there though.

CUT TO:

A CHECK BOOK EXPENSE ENTRY

Piano move (third) - \$1,100.00

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

This is an empty (small) apartment. Walter and his sister ODESSA sit on the carpet. She's pretty, good spirit, a little flighty (also she's wearing braces). She's watching Walter write this piano moving check. But she's looking at a checkbook entry a few entries above it.

ODESSA

Does that say eHarmony? Four hundred dollars.

WALTER

Yes.

ODESSA

(a little amused)
Are you on eHarmony?

WALTER

No.

ODESSA

Then why did you give them four hundred dollars?

WALTER

I tried to join, but-- I don't really even want to be on it. I'm just trying to do this thing with someone at work.

ODESSA

(meaning do what)
What?

At this point we see a piano float up into view outside the living room window beyond them, odd because they're fifteen stories up.

WALTER

I'm trying to do that Piña Colada thing?

(singing pretty well)

"If you like Piña Coladas, and getting caught in the rain while wearing a cape--"

ODESSA

That's not how it goes.

WALTER

Well, the guy answers a personal ad and finds out it's his wife. They have a good laugh, then they make love on the cape while drinking Piña Coladas or something, and wearing capes, I think. Anyway. I'm hoping she'll click my profile and not realize that she works in my office area. Then we can realize it and have a good laugh. Then--

ODESSA

Make love on a cape? While wearing capes? Because that's not what they do in the song.

WALTER

No, then we can know that we picked each other out, you know, from the whole planet. Not just the cafeteria.

Walter's quiet for a moment.

WALTER (CONT'D)

... We're friends. I'd like there to be more.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

I was hoping this web site (that they won't let me be on) would show her more.

Walter is putting his checkbook back in his briefcase. Odessa has noticed the out-of-focus photo Walter carries in it.

ODESSA

(about the picture)

What's that?

WALTER

I don't know. What do you think it is?

Odessa looks the photo for a while.

ODESSA

(trying to make it out)

...Triple A batteries working, as a team, to carry a fish tank up some apartment stairs.

Out the window we see that the piano is attached to a crane. Movers have lifted it up to the fifteenth floor. Walter looks out at it from the small, small room they're in.

WALTER

We better tell them they need to shift that over to outside the big room.

ODESSA

What big room?

WALTER

(sensing there is going to be some problem)

The big room where the big piano is going to go.

ODESSA

This is the big room.

Walter's surprised. There's no way the piano fits in this space.

WALTER

Hey, Odessa?

ODESSA

Yeah.

WALTER

You know when I asked you to pick the apartment out for Mom, you understood that she was taking her piano along.

ODESSA

I did not understand that.

WALTER

(pissed)

Oh, I thought I made that clear when I said the English sentence to you *Mom's bringing her piano with her*. A month ago.

ODESSA

I think when we were having that conversation I was using my blender, for a juice drink. It's quite a noisemaker.

Walter's trying to keep his composure (as a grand piano dangles out the window nearby).

WALTER

Did you enjoy that juice drink? That you were making (for some reason) simultaneous to me talking to you about important matters? So, okay, right now the piano is hanging in the air, above a city, we can't fit it in here, and I'm not sure I can afford to move it anywhere else. So I hope you enjoyed that juice drink.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

A retirement facility administrator has joined them to deal with the piano problem. They're all convened at the kitchen counter. *The piano's in view out the window, dangling there.

RETIREMENT HOME ADMINISTRATOR

The instrument will fit in one of our Villa apartments. Those units, though, are more spacious, and more highly priced.

Quietly, Walter's getting really worried about money.

RETIREMENT HOME ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

Or you can remain with the unit lease you have, the less expensive one, and possibly sell the piano?

WALTER

We can't. It's the only thing she really wanted to take along. I think it's really best for her. She can still play. Reading's not that easy for her now. She doesn't really have any friends in New York.

RETIREMENT HOME ADMINISTRATOR

Well, a Villa Apartment comes open in three weeks.

WALTER

What's that move-in like. In terms of deposits and-- for Villa living? In a Villa situation?

RETIREMENT HOME ADMINISTRATOR

On your move-in we'll need first month's, last month's and your full deposit. \$6,300.

This is a little more than Walter has around. He's starting to show it.

WALTER

How much should I make this deposit for today? To reserve it.

BILLING DIRECTOR

Nine hundred.

Walter's writing the word *Villa* in the memo space of his check.

Then he checks his balance - he has \$7,100 in there.

THIS IS A SERIOUS REALIZATION FOR WALTER. THIS EXPENSE WILL TAKE NEARLY EVERYTHING HE HAS.

INT. ELEVATOR, DESCENDING, RETIREMENT HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Walter and Odessa ride the elevator down. Walter's pretty stressed.

WALTER

Where's that frigging Clementine
cake wrapper thing...

Walter takes out the torn piece of paper Sean O'Connell had written some of his itinerary on (also that was wrapped around cake). Walter's now concentrating on the destination under Iceland. The one where the destination name has been torn off. It just has the dates and words:

Klipspringer

Koofiyad

Fakr ad-D

And one that looks like *Warlock*.

Then letters from a strange looking alphabet.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(trying to figure it out)
Warlock...

ODESSA

(meaning the paper)
What is that?

WALTER

I almost found someone I was looking for. For work. In Iceland. This is where he's going next. I just don't know where it is.

(looking at the paper)
Warlock. Little weird deer. Like kind of a fez-style hat.

ODESSA

What are you talking about?

WALTER

That's what these things are. Klipspringer. Koofiyad. I just don't know what they add up to. I put them all in Google nothing comes up.

EXT. BATTERY PARK - LATER

Walter and Odessa are back in Battery Park. The piano is still across the street dangling from a winch 15 stories up. Walter has just written (yet) another check to the mover.

ODESSA
...Is everything okay? At work? Are you sure?

WALTER
(trying to seem confident)
Yeah. Don't worry.

ODESSA
Hey. Happy birthday, Walter.

Odessa has handed him two wrapped gifts. Walter begins to unwrap them. Inside are two toys: A Stretch Armstrong and, from yesteryear, the cheap drawing tablet where little metal filings are moved about with a magnetic wand to add features to a cartoon face.

ODESSA (CONT'D)
Those were your favorite toys when you were a kid. You don't remember?

WALTER
(touched)
Yeah, I do.... Thanks.

Odessa gives Walter a kiss.

INT. SUBWAY, MOVING, NYC - LATER

Walter's riding the subway to work. Everything looks pretty normal except there's a small African Antelope walking around.

INT. ELEVATOR, TIME-LIFE BUILDING - LATER

Walter gets in the elevator - but already in there are Ted Hendricks and the executive board member guys. Walter has been caught off guard. He's holding toys - the Stretch Armstrong and drawing tablet.

WALTER
Oh. Hey.

Walter offers his hand to Ted.

WALTER (CONT'D)
You know we haven't really had a chance to talk yet. I know you're deciding who's vital to the transition. And I wanted to let you know what I do--

TED HENDRICKS
You're vital here?

WALTER
I am. Totally.

TED HENDRICKS
Why are you holding toys?

WALTER
...It's my birthday.

TED HENDRICKS
...you wanted toys.

WALTER
No... Um, my sister gave me these.

TED HENDRICKS
(nodding at Walter's
Stretch Armstrong)
What does that do?

WALTER
My...
(doesn't want to call it a
toy)
...item?

TED HENDRICKS
Yeah, you're toy.

WALTER
His arms and legs stretch outward.
Um. But that's not-- I wanted,
before we have the chance to talk,
I need to discuss an asset
situation with you.

Walter begins to open his briefcase to stash the toys, but he's nervous so it drops.

INT. TED HENDRICK'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Walter's in Ted's glass partitioned work space.

TED HENDRICKS
(after being told it's
lost, pissed)
A photographic negative? I thought
those had all been processed?

WALTER

I've processed the digitization of every single photograph in Life's library. Two million and eleven. But we haven't been able to locate this last negative.

TED HENDRICKS

I know. Because I've been asking for it. Because it's the Quintessence fucking one that I told my boss we had. It's the cover. You seriously lost a photographer's work? At Life?

WALTER' MOM APPEARS ONCE MORE IN THE HALLWAY; she's out there, peeking into this office.

WALTER

I'm confident we'll find it.

TED HENDRICKS

Why are you confident we'll find it?

Walter has no reason to be confident he'll find it. So he doesn't say anything.

TED HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

That doesn't give me confidence, a no-answer. You're in assets, I guess?

WALTER

Yes.

TED HENDRICKS

This doesn't reflect very well on you.

Walter's at a loss.

TED HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

During an evaluation week.

WALTER

I've been here nine years--

TED HENDRICKS

(gesturing out his cell phone)

Here. Call Helmut Newton. Tell him you lost his picture.

WALTER
Helmut Newton didn't--

TED HENDRICKS
Don't Helmut Newton me.

WALTER
I didn't Helmut Newton you.

An awkward moment passes.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I didn't Helmut Newton anyone. I was saying I haven't misplaced a negative in nine years. I've handled every negative in our library and prepared them for our archive. I've overseen their digitization, catalogued each photographer's period-specific film and photo equipment. And I've managed the preservation of the original vision of each photograph. I've never mishandled a single nega-

TED HENDRICKS
Hey. We've held up publication of this issue because I told my boss that photo was fucking amazing. Okay? We've spent a hundred and nine thousand dollars because of the overage. You lost an amazing photo--

WALTER
I know where he is. Sean.

TED HENDRICKS
Where is he?

WALTER
Somewhere-- I haven't pieced it together, somewhere were there are (I think) little deers and Warlocks.

TED HENDRICKS
Do you know what "fired with cause" means?

WALTER
Yes.

TED HENDRICKS

I have cause to fire you. You won't pick up another check. I can let you go without severance because-

WALTER

That's not--

TED HENDRICKS

You lost a Sean O'Connell. It was quintessence. He's a *war photographer*? Cubicle, you're going to tell this brave photographer, risks his life, that *you*, a male sitting in an office, lost--?

WALTER

Did you call me Cubicle?

TED HENDRICKS

Do you work at one?

WALTER

Well, yeah, but I'm not named after one.

TED HENDRICKS

What are you named?

Ted turns around (his back to Walter) to pour himself some Fiji.

TED HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

What's your name?

While Ted is turned around, Walter leaves. So when Ted turns back, he finds Walter gone.

INT. ELEVATOR, DESCENDING - MOMENTS LATER

Walter and his mom ride the elevator down.

WALTER

Mom, why are you-- did you need something?

EDNA

I just wanted to thank you for my Villa. Odessa told me all about it. It sounds so pleasant. Villa. That guy was a real dick.

WALTER

Yeah.

EDNA

Anyway, hon, you've really become the man of the family, and I wanted to say I love you, and Happy Birthday.

WALTER

...thanks, Mom.

Walter's in a desperate state.

EDNA

What a dick. Big man. Big warlord of the fortieth floor--

WALTER

Warlord?

EDNA

I was just discussing them. Last week. They rule over small areas of land using threats, and force bribes of livestock or klipspringers.

WALTER

(strange, his mom's using words from the clementine itinerary)
...*Klipspringers?*

EDNA

Yes.

WALTER

Why did you just say that word?

EDNA

In some parts of the world they carry small deer like we carry, say, quarters. To pay bribes. Also, blankets or clothing items like koofiyads.

WALTER

(this is getting bizarre)
...koofiyads.

EDNA

Yes, for the warlords.

WALTER
 (something important has
 dawned on him)
 ...Warlord.

INT. STARBUCKS, 5TH AVENUE - LATER

Walter's in Starbucks, on his laptop. He's in google. He's put in the words: klipspringer, koofiyad,, and he's looking at the Clementine cake paper scrap that says *warlock* but he's beginning to maybe realize it says *Warlord*. So Walters enters it in google with the other clues.

The first result is the Wikipedia page for...

Mogadishu, Somalia.

Walter processes this. Not great. On a nearby customer's laptop, a youtube clip plays:

YOUTUBE CLIP

Of David After Dentist.

But Walter has been miniaturized and morphed into a little boy, so finely done he's recognizable both as Walter and as famous little drugged-up, young David from the youtube phenomenon clip *David After Dentist* wherein a five-year-old boy was videotaped by his dad in a post-dental-visit painkiller haze. He's in a kid-seat in the back of an SUV trying to get his mental bearings (unsuccessfully).

WALTER AS DAVID AFTER DENTIST
 I feel funny. Why is this
 happening?
 (existentially bewildered
 about where he is)
 ...Is this real life?

Soon after, David arches up and roars some noise meant to express kid rage that he can't control his situation - but we're watching a grown man do it and it applies specifically to the frustrations and challenges of his grown-up life.

Then, in Starbucks, Walter takes out his gift wallet from photographer Sean O'Connell. He looks at the inscription:

From S.O. To Walter Mitty - Thanks for the great work.

Then Walter looks at a further embossment on the back. It says *Life's Purpose*. It's the mission statement of his company. Walter believes in it.

CUT TO:

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A MONTAGE OF THE MOST CLASSIC PHOTOGRAPHS

...on proud display at Life. These aren't simply celebrities or commemorations of familiar events - these are the results of the painstaking quest to fulfill the pledge of Life at its inception. Amid the pictures we glimpse parts of *Life's Purpose* engraved on the lobby wall.

"To see life;

to see the world;

to eyewitness great events;

to watch the faces of the poor

More photos that reach this standard pass - American faces. Faces from all over the world.

"to see man's work -

his towers,

discoveries and labor

We see photos of men and women in pain, moments of deep pride, fear, uncertainty, glory.

things hidden behind walls

These are depictions of American plights - what devastating weather wrought, the sequestered lives of the deeply poor.

things dangerous to come to;

to see and to take pleasure in seeing;

to see and be amazed;

That is the purpose of Life.

EXT. JFK, AIRPORT, TERMINAL - LATER

Walter walks up a white terminal with his briefcase. He stops. He unsure he's going to go forward. Then he looks at his wallet again.

Specifically the phrase *Life's Purpose - to see the World. Things dangerous to come to.* He's looking hard at the *things dangerous to come to part.*

INT. EMIRATES AIRLINES DESK, JFK - LATER

Walter buys a ticket at the desk of the national airline of the United Arab Emirates at the far western edge of terminal three.

WALTER

I need to buy a ticket, I think to Dubai. Because I'm going, actually, to Mogadishu (shit) which I think, I'm not allowed to do from here, because it's illegally dangerous.

TICKET CLERK

Yeah..

(punching in some stuff)

That's right more or less..

INT. EMERITUS AIRLINE 747 - LATER

Walter's the only guy on here without a headdress. He's still looking at the out of focus photograph he printed way back, hoping yet, that it will give him some indication of what the missing picture is.

EXT. BAGGAGE CLAIM, DUBAI AIRPORT - DAY

Walter is waiting for his bags to come around on the luggage carousel. They do - it's just his briefcase he's had with him for the film's entirety. But as he retrieves it, he makes the acquaintance of a group of traveling Danish teens by helping them lift their heavy backpacks from the carousel.

WALTER

Here you go.

(like it's heavy)

Whoa, what do you have in there?

ULF

Skateboards. Some switch out boards.

These teens are boys Knud, Soren and Ulf. And girls Grys and Denll.

WALTER

I like your trucks. I used to skateboard. Where are you guys headed?

SOREN

Into Dubai.

WALTER

Hey, do you guys know anyplace to stay, that's not like an arm and a leg.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN, MOVING - LATER

The group of teens (and Walter) tour into Dubai in a gypsy van.

EXT. SKATE PARK, DUBAI - LATER

Walter's in a skate park with Danish teens Knud, Soren and Ulf. And girls Grys and Dnll. And skateboarding around them are Middle-Eastern Emiratis, performing familiar skateboard moves like "ollies," and "shuvits" but in traditional Arab robes and headdresses. It's a lot to take in. Walter seems pleased to be doing it.

INT. YOUTH HOSTEL, DUBAI - EVENING

The group (including Walter) waits to register at a youth hostel. Late teens and kids in their early twenties mill about the lobby. Walter's the oldest guy around. The clerk has been speaking to Soren in Arabic. Soren seems to know him. They seem to have been talking about Walter. Then they stop. Then Soren turns to Walter. *note - Walter has a skateboard with him now (with Arabic graphics on it); he'll have it with him for a while.

SOREN

He said you're too old to sleep in a room, but you can sleep in the stairwell, hallway or business center.

Walter stands there for a moment.

WALTER

Business center.

INT. BUSINESS CENTER, DUBAI YOUTH HOSTEL - NIGHT

Walter's laying in the business center of the Dubai youth hostel. It looks like he's possibly sleeping on a copier machine. Audio from the succeeding scene can be heard.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

...evacuations began in earnest Wednesday the third.

INT. CHERYL'S STUDIO APT, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Cheryl's watching the nightly news - specifically a report about escalating violence in Somalia.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

In a city already long ago
descended into chaos--

Against the news report, we see news video from Mogadishu - car tire fires mid-city, skinny goon squads, gun-toting 11-year-olds, and in each of them there is a glimpse of Walter Mitty, usually in the far background and generally just hustling (but not running) just hustling across the street in his short-sleeve shirt and briefcase presumably to do some sort of business there. Cheryl has noticed this.

EXT. MOGADISHU, CITY PARK - DAY

Walter's sitting in a shitty park in Mogadishu. Walter once had a dream like this - where he was in a hotspot like this. Now he is. He's speaking to a Somali sitting on the bench facing his. *occasionally, people pass by carrying small deers.

WALTER

Do you know-- are there American journalists working here? What would someone want to photograph here?

SOMALIAN

The evacuations.

WALTER

Who's evacuating?

SOMALIAN

The peacekeepers.

WALTER

(like that's not good)
The peacekeepers?

SOMALIAN

Yeah, they're evacuating.

WALTER

Like right now?

SOMALIAN

All week. The Koreans are leaving from the soccer field.

The guy has pointed a block east of there.

EXT. SOCCER FIELDS - LATER

Walter has run up to the Mogadishun soccer field to find a group of Korean soldiers amassed at midfield. Then he makes out a blond white photographer among them. Walter has started running across the soccer field.

WALTER

...Sean?

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - LATER

Across the field, SEAN O'CONNELL (42) is in a squatted, interlocked arm embrace with four Korean soldiers. There's aircraft noise above them.

WALTER

Sean?

The photographer turns around.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Sean O'Connell?

Sean looks at Walter coming nearer. He doesn't recognize Walter.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Hey. Walter Mitty. From the office.

SEAN

Walter?

Walter has reached the group.

WALTER

...Yeah. Hey. Man, I've really been trying to reach you.

(to the Koreans)

Hey.

(to Sean)

It's good to finally meet you. Thanks for the wallet, man, by the way. Sean, do you happen to know where that negative 12 is. 2-6? On the roll three?

SEAN

...you have it.

WALTER

You know what, we don't. I've looked in every neg box and even every camera bag and we have in the warehouse. I even double-checked the Teaneck warehouse.

SEANN

You have it.

WALTER

I really don't.

SEAN

(proud)

No, it's not in the neg box. That one was special. Favorite ever. You have it. Seriously. Loan me five bucks.

WALTER

Loan you... *what?*

SEAN

Loan me five bucks.

Walter doesn't know why this became important to Sean just now. But he reaches for his wallet, but when he looks up, he finds that Sean and the Korean guys he's attached to have been lifted as a group briskly into the air. They've been tethered to a hovering rescue helicopter that's withdrawing quickly. Sean's yelling something down. It's unclear. They ascend further as a unit, way up, way out of reach, getting smaller. Walter, though remains down on the soccer field.

WALTER

(quietly)

Fuck...

SOCCER FIELD - LATER

Moments later, Walter remains there, holding five bucks that's flapping in the wind. He's watching the Koreans and Sean floating away. They're very small and very far away.

EXT. MOGADISHU - LATER

Walter is skateboarding through Mogadishu. There are random tire fires going on in the distance. A tire on fire rolls by.

EXT. MOGADISHU - LATER

Walter's back in the city park, talking to the same Somalian who told him where to find the Koreans.

WALTER

Do you have any sense how I could get back to America if I can't afford a plane ticket right now? Totally?

RODNEY

...Yeah, my brother William. Two dollars.

WALTER

I give your brother two dollars and then he'll tell me how to get back to America?

RODNEY

Two dollars. To go to America.

WALTER

...I can go to America for two dollars?

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - DAY

Walter's behind the wheel of a small car. But as the camera pulls back, we see that he's behind the wheel of a small car parked on another large shipping vessel (Chinese this time).

EXT. INDIAN OCEAN - MOMENTS LATER

Still sitting in one of the cars, Walter's made a phone call.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Eharmony. Todd Mahar.

WALTER

Hey, Todd. It's Walter. Mitty.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

What's up, Walter?

WALTER

Hey I wanted to add a couple items?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Okay.

WALTER

To my Been There, Done Thats. If that's cool.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

It's really cool. What do you got?

WALTER

Okay. Mogadishu?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Yeah.

WALTER

Been there.

The shot lifts up and we see the full scope of what Walter is willing to do to keep his job, sleep in a Chinese car on a Chinese boat, on a slow trip back home.

INT. LOBBY, APARTMENT HIGHRISE, NEW YORK - LATER

Walter walks up to the front desk of a residential apartment building.

WALTER

Cheryl Mellhoff.

FRONT DESK LADY

Your name?

WALTER

Walter Mitty.

She dials the inner-building phone, then has a brief conversation with Cheryl. Walter waits quietly.

FRONT DESK LADY

(to Walter)

Have a seat. She'll be right down.

WALTER

Thanks.

Walter's holding the Arabic skateboard.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Cheryl and her son Rich have entered the lobby waiting area to greet Walter. *We're only on her for the top of the following exchange

CHERYL

Hey.

WALTER (O.S.)

Hey.

CHERYL

Did you find the Quintessence of
Life?

WALTER (O.S.)

Almost...

CHERYL

Man, I'm sorry.
(concerned about him)
How are you feeling?

WALTER (O.S.)

...I'm okay.

Now we see Walter; he's a short distance away in the seating area, but he's not seated because he's a human cubicle. He's shaped like a cubicle.

WALTER AS A CUBICLE

(gesturing with the Arabic
skateboard)

Hey, I picked this up for you,
Rich. It's got some cool Arabic
writing on it. I don't know what it
means. But it looked cool.

EXT. AVENUE A, NYC - LATER

They've gone out among the throngs of New Yorkers, walking up the sidewalk of Avenue A. Walter is with Cheryl and Rich but he's remained a cubicle.

EXT. SKATE PARK, WEST SIDE, NYC - LATER

Walter (real Walter again) and Cheryl are sitting on the lip. Rich is out using the Arabic skateboard.

CHERYL

(impressed about the
board)

...Walter. You go to Mogadishu, and
you think about bringing a gift
home to my son?

WALTER

I got the board in Dubai. Hey, Rich. Here watch. The board's going to come up. You don't have to try to lift it.

Walter has walked out to show Rich how to ollie. Walter does it pretty well.

WALTER (CONT'D)

You really just have to think about landing. Both feet. Same time.

RICH

Thanks, Walter.

Rich starts trying his best. Walter sits back down.

CHERYL

(about Sean O'Connell)

Do you have any idea where Sean is now?

WALTER

No, I lost him. He said I had it though. Like he knew. He smiled. He said "you have it." "You." What's he talking about?

At this point, Rich wipes out. He's scared. He slid on the pavement pretty far and he's shaken up. He bumped his shoulder pretty hard, and he's privately started to cry.

CHERYL

Honey. Hey. Come here. That was great.

Rich has come over.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

That was really great. Here.

She means Rich to sit beside her. She puts her arm around him. He's trying not to cry, but he's crying.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Hey. Don't worry. You're going to feel fine in five minutes. Don't worry. Hey.

She wraps him up. She starts rubbing his back. Then she starts singing.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

*Don't worry, about a thing, 'cause
every little thing is going to be
all right. Don't worry.....*

Walter's sitting right there with them. He knew she knew this song, and that she used it with Rich. He doesn't know why he knew it, but he did. They just sit there for a while, while Rich calms down. The song's pretty much worked, Walter's enjoyed being there as much as Rich.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

(quietly, to Walter)

You know, all hell broke loose this week, while you were gone.

EXT. 6TH AVE, NYC - DAY

Walter walks south up 6th amid foot traffic. Coming past him, though is a huge black and white Morgan Freeman (it's a mover carting off the Life Morgan Freeman photo, but he's hidden behind the picture, so this Morgan Freeman has a surreal, lifelike quality.

Elsewhere up 6th, Walter is passed likewise by the Beatles, Winston Churchill and a huge Warhol Soup can color photo.

INT. WALTER'S DIVISION FLOOR, CORRIDOR - LATER

Walter tries his pass key to enter the division floor. It's not working. *More huge photos have been carried past Walter during this time: "Nixon eating with chopsticks." Then "Ruby shooting Oswald." Then Ted Hendrick's colleague comes out, he's with a guy we haven't seen yet. They're both dressed for squash.

WALTER

Excuse me. Can you pass key me in?
I need to see Ted. My pass key
isn't working. I need to let him
know I verified that I have
negative 12. I just didn't verify
where I have it.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

You're Walter Mitty?

WALTER

Yes.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

Practical Assets.

WALTER

Yes.

TED HENDRICKS COLLEAGUE

Your pass key's not working because you've been let go. With cause.

Walter is shaken.

WALTER

I need to speak to Ted. I found Sean O'Connell--

NEW GUY

Ted's been let go. We had an overage of 280,000 dollars. Due to this publishing delay.

WALTER

Is there someone who took over Ted's responsibilities? On a permanent--

NEW GUY

Yeah, that's me Steve Penders.
(starting to leave)
We're late for Squash.

INT. SQUASH COURT, NYC - LATER

Walter's on the squash court holding a conversation with these two guys who are trying to play squash.

STEVE PENDERS

This is the last-Life-cover situation?

WALTER

Yes.

STEVE PENDERS

You lost an asset. You cost that comp--

WALTER

I didn't lose it. I have it. The photographer told me. I just don't know where I have it.

STEVE PENDERS

Those are grounds--

WALTER

Those are no grounds. You can't fire me for not having something that I have.

STEVE PENDERS

I'm not following you.

Steve serves into Walter.

WALTER

I have it. I always have had it. When you fired me, I had it. Why are you trying to hit me with Squash balls?

STEVE PENDERS

You're on a squash court. I'm trying to play--

WALTER

No one's informed me that I've been let go.

STEVE PENDERS

I'm informing you.

WALTER

I should be sent my November check.

STEVE PENDERS

Fired with cause. No picture. No check

WALTER

There's no cause to keep my salary. Ow.

Penders just served into Walter again.

STEVE PENDERS

Can you get off the fucking court here?

WALTER

I'd like to speak to your supervisor.

STEVE PENDERS

You can't.

WALTER

I demand to speak to your supervisor.

STEVE PENDERS

You can't do that either.

WALTER

I'd like to demand to speak to your supervisor.

STEVE PENDERS

I don't work at Comcast. I don't have a supervisor you can just talk to. My supervisor is Mark Chatham. He owns The Timms Company. Which is a holding company that holds conglomerates. He's in Los Angeles for the G8 summit, and he wouldn't talk to you anyway even if you were stuck in a fucking elevator. That's my supervisor.

WALTER

The Purpose of Life--

STEVE PENDERS

Go.

WALTER

Hey, fuck you, man.

There's been a little bit of a shoving, shoulder thing. It's getting a little hot.

INT. BUS, MOVING, NY - LATER

Walter's on the bus. He's looking at the out of focus print again.

WALTER

(to himself)

What is this?

Some time passes. Then Walter puts on his loupes (eye glasses with a center magnifying lens). Then his cell phone vibrates. He's got an email. He reads it.

*it looks weird because we're seeing it through Walter's magnifying loupes - but much of it is clear: It's from human resources and reads in part: *because you have been terminated with cause you do not qualify for severance or to salary beyond your last day of work. This message confirms that today's date (11/12/11) constitutes the last day of your.....*

Walter is stunned.

EXT. STREET, BROOKLYN - LATER

Walter's among some others, walking up a sidewalk home, but he's been so thrown by being fired in this manner that he's forgotten to take his head-mounted loupes off. It's an unusual image.

This is a view through Walter's loupes as he walks through Brooklyn trying to get his head together. The middle images are magnified but the outside circumference isn't - it's unusual and sort of pretty - to see people pass by, sometimes enhanced, then not, all a little dizzy, like Walter's feeling.

INT. ELEVATOR, WALTER'S BUILDING - LATER

Walter rides up the elevator with some normal-looking residents in his head-mounted loupes.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Walter walks into his apartment. He sits down in the small living room (he's still wearing the loupes). Some time passes. Nothing seems to happen. Then, slowly, after considerable time, a look of powerful and complete astonishment comes over him. He's looking at something that has just shifted his world.

We see things from Walter's perspective (through the loupes). Most everything is out of focus because he's wearing them. But he's looking, in real life (in his apartment), at exactly the out of focus image that he has been carrying around a photo of. The object is in his apartment. He looks at this out of focus (because of the loupes) real object. Then he looks at the photo he still holds. They are indisputably the same. Then he looks back at the real object and removes his loupes to bring it into focus. It's the piano.

Some time goes by.

WALTER

....Mom?

EDNA (O.S.)

Yes?

WALTER

Hey, did-- did a guy take a picture of your piano? Like a week ago?

EDNA

Sean?

WALTER

(surprised)

...yeah.

EDNA

No. I took it. With Sean's camera.

WALTER

Where did you get Sean's camera?

EDNA

From Sean. He came to visit.

Edna has entered the room.

WALTER

Sean O'Connell?

EDNA

He came to visit. To talk about you.

WALTER

Me?

EDNA

Yeah. He asked me some questions about you? What your work schedule was, when you left, when you came home. He said you really understood Life. He wanted to know about your work. He said you "got Life."

Walter listens.

EDNA (CONT'D)

I just sent him my recipe for Clementine cake? To his email. I packed him some when he left. He just loved it. We snacked on some during our Warlord conversation.

WALTER

Do you know where--

EDNA

He's in Nepal now, I think.
Photographing snow leopards. Let me
think. Yes. Ship. Iceland.
Mogadishu. Nepal. That's what he
said.

The information's been right there. Walter thinks about that
for a while.

WALTER

Man, I've been desperately
searching for him. For a long time.
Thanks, mom.

EDNA

I didn't know that. You don't talk
about work that often.

WALTER

I know. I don't want you to worry.
It's not always cool and easy.
... why did you take a picture of
your piano?

EDNA

I was concerned we couldn't keep
it, Dear. I know it's a burden. I
didn't know if we could manage. So
I thought I might not see it again.
I wanted a picture.

She smiles at Walter. Then Edna looks at the out of focus
print.

EDNA (CONT'D)

That's not a very good picture. But
that's okay. She's right here.

Edna pats her actual piano. Then she looks at Walter with
great affection.

EDNA (CONT'D)

You know, I wonder sometimes... you
had to start work so early. Orange
Julius. Then all through college.
At Avis. Then Pizza delivery. That
shitty pizza. Then at this company.

(MORE)

EDNA (CONT'D)

I wish maybe you had the chance, a greater chance to pursue your dreams.

WALTER

(smiling, cheering her)
Mom. Hey. Come on. I like my job. I mean it's not my dream job. So what?

(meaning no one really gets that wish)
I have a lot of company.

EDNA

What did you want to be, when you younger?

WALTER

...I don't even remember.

EDNA

Sure you do. Everybody does.

Walter thinks about it. Then Edna kisses him.

EDNA (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking care of us, Walter.

Walter sits there for a moment. He is the man of the family. He's got to go out into the world and get something done.

WALTER

(rising to leave)
I have to go somewhere, mom. Possibly I'll be reachable by phone.

EXT. NYC - LATER

This is New York at lunch hour. Walter's out there with everybody. It's the same kind of Manhattan scene we've seen before, but here everybody around Walter's walking to their dream jobs. There's a large female jockey. A black matador, an elderly magician, etc. A wider view reveals a block full of men and women headed for jobs that were not "fall back" jobs but longed-for walks of life - astronaut, beekeeper, rodeo clown, Supreme Court Judge, a city-block full of who are visibly living dreams. It's a colorful environment. Except for one normal looking guy beside Walter.

WALTER

What are you?

NORMAL GUY
Stay at home dad.

WALTER
Cool.

NORMAL GUY
Congratulations.

WALTER
Thanks, man.

Walter looks normal. But he's holding a trophy. This is what he's just been congratulated over.

NORMAL GUY
Is that a Grammy? Or a Nobel--

WALTER
Grammy. Best male R & B vocal performance.

NORMAL GUY
Way to go.

WALTER
You, too.

Walter (with his trophy) crosses the street with the whole massive host of dream job-going New York commuters - a thousand of them.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION, BROOKLYN - LATER

Walter back in the working world, runs up a platform to catch a train that's nearly leaving.

INT. TERMINAL, JFK - LATER

Walter's at Etihad Airways booking desk. It's a shabby airline. It's a shabby-looking desk. There's only one clerk and Walter's the only one in line.

ETIHAD CLERK
There's only one flight to Nepal,
in the next 18 hours.

WALTER
That's okay.

ETIHAD CLERK
(checking his computer)
But there aren't any seats left.

WALTER
(disappointed)
None?

ETIHAD CLERK
I'm afraid not.

WALTER
...Not one?

ETIHAD CLERK
Well, there's one seat, but...

He looks around like he shouldn't be selling it, like it's not by the books, but he'll do it.

INT. LAVATORY, ETIHAD AIRLINE FLIGHT, FLYING - DAY

Walter's sitting in the airplane lavatory. He's not using it. He's just riding on it. It's the seat he just bought. Someone knocks. So Walter has to get up and leave for a moment.

We jump cut through Walter doing this several times. Then we find him during a nice quiet stretch, where he can sit on the lavatory seat uninterrupted for a couple minutes. During this time we watch him take out his wallet - the gift from Sean O'Connell. Walter looks at it

CLOSE ON THE "LIFE'S PURPOSE" CREDO

Specifically we're looking at the line "...the Purpose of Life."

Walter's looking at this embossment on his wallet. He's lost faith anyone besides him takes it to heart. Walter no longer does either. So he discards the wallet in the lav trash. Then someone knocks on the lav door after which Walter must rise and leave the lavatory once more.

EXT. ZHENGMO, NEPAL - DAY

A small bus drives slowly up the single mountain road through the town of Zhengmo, Nepal.

INT. BUS, MOVING, ZHENGMO - SAME

Walter rides on this bus. There is a great deal to look at and marvel over out the window. Walter's doing that.

EXT. VILLAGE TRAVELING LODGE, VILLAGE OF QUENN, NEPAL - LATER

The bus has stopped in a remote village.

INT. VILLAGE TRAVELING LODGE - SAME (NIGHT)

Walter speaks with a mountain guide near the lodge fireplace.

WALTER

I'm trying to locate a
photographer.

GUIDE

How can I help?

WALTER

The information I have (from my
mom) is that he's working with a
guide named Stepit. Any idea... is
that enough of a clue where they
might be? I know they're
photographing snow leopards, and
this is the snow leopard region--

GUIDE

They'll be in the Kosi forest.
That's where Stepit was raised.
When he's booked it's to go there.
It's dangerous. Only he can take
you there safely.

WALTER

I need to go there.

GUIDE

I can take you. For a fee.

There is a pause.

WALTER

Didn't you just say that only that
other guy can take you through
there? Safely?

GUIDE

(he's a huckster)
...Did I say that?

WALTER

Yes.

GUIDE

I didn't mean that. I meant that
only he and *I* are the guys who can
do that.

Walter looks skeptical.

EXT. SNOWFIELDS, FOREST, QEEUNG NEPAL - LATER

Walter and the guide drive snowmobiles up into the hilly distance of Nepal.

EXT. FOREST AND SNOWFIELDS - LATER

They've gotten off their snowmobiles. Walter has started walking west - all we see that way is snow, mountains and forest.

WALTER

This way?

GUIDE

Yeah.

WALTER

Aren't you coming?

GUIDE

I can't walk in the snow. It's hard as shit.

(pointing)

Just go that way.

WALTER

That's-- that's how you're *guiding* me? By pointing and saying go that way?

Walter has pointed to make a point. But his guide adjusts the direction of Walter's sarcastic point slightly.

GUIDE

A little-- to the left.

(as Walter does it)

There. Yeah.

After a moment, Walter starts to go that way.

EXT. SNOWFIELDS, FOREST - DAY

A massive snow scape. You can only see a snow horizon and bare forest, and Walter walking across it (with his briefcase). Total middle of nowhere. He walks for a while, then his phone begins to ring.

WALTER

...Hello.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Hey.

WALTER
(they know each others
voices by now)
Hey, Todd.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
What's up?

WALTER
Not much.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Good news. I think we're going to
be able to get you on eHarmony.

WALTER
Okay. Cool.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Your profile has rounded out a
little. I put your travels in.
There's enough going on in your
profile so now we can submit you.

WALTER
Great, man.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Where are you now? It sounds cold.

WALTER
It even *sounds* cold?

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Yeah.

WALTER
Nepal.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Hey, Walter. Why didn't you submit
any pictures? Most people have
photos of them with friends, out on
the town.

WALTER
I don't really do a lot of, you
know, swinging.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
Swinging?

WALTER

Yeah.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Swinging means fucking married people. When you're married.

WALTER

Oh. I don't mean that.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

No.

WALTER

I meant like partying, I guess. I used to like to be at work at 8. And I have some family demands that keep me pretty busy.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Your mom and sister.

WALTER

Yeah.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

You know. People don't know they're leaning on you. Until you move. And they fall.

WALTER

(not in the mood for
advice)

Are you Chinese? You're so wise.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

I'm neither. But I know you, Walter. I've been studying you here. You seem to carry a lot of weight.

WALTER

Well, I'm not going to move and let the people who lean on me fall, because the people who lean on me are my mom and my sister.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Are you in a bad mood?

WALTER

A little.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

Well, let's keep rounding this profile out. What do you do during your downtime?

WALTER

I don't get a lot. But I guess if I had to say - mostly I just consider thoughts... for my visions for ideas and scenarios about the world.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

(like that sentence
doesn't actually mean
anything)

You consider thoughts for your visions for ideas and scenarios about the world?

WALTER

Yeah.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR

You daydream?

Todd has gotten to the heart of the matter.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR (CONT'D)

You know, studies show that people who spend a great deal of time fantasizing and daydreaming, doodling and shit they're not really that happy.

SEAN

...Hey, man, do you mind?

Walter has come upon, without realizing it, some kind of snow nest camp, camouflaged among trees. Photographer Sean O'Connell is camped there with his gear. Walter looks at him.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'm trying to photograph a snow leopard.

WALTER

...Sean?

SEAN

Yeah.

WALTER
(to Todd)
Hey, I got to go.

EHARMONY COUNSELOR
No problem. Congratulations. You're
on eHarmony.

WALTER
Cool.

Walter hangs his phone up. He looks at Sean.

WALTER (CONT'D)
Sean O'Connell?

SEAN
Yeah.

WALTER
Walter. Mitty.

SEAN
Walter. Seriously. What the fuck?
What are you--

WALTER
I've been looking for you.

SEAN
Sit down.

Walter sits by the fire with Sean.

SEAN (CONT'D)
...Are you okay?

WALTER
Yeah, warming up.

SEAN
Take your time.

WALTER
Hey, Sean. I really need that
picture. I'm taking a lot of heat
at work. Over that.

SEAN
That negative you asked me about.

WALTER
Yeah.

SEAN

12?

A moment goes by.

SEAN (CONT'D)

You're sitting on it.

Walter doesn't understand.

WALTER

Why am I sitting on it?

SEAN

Because it's in your wallet.

Walter's listening.

SEAN (CONT'D)

That was the gift. The picture. The wallet was just someplace to keep the picture. I put it in the little picture slot in the wallet. The little picture holder. I thought that would be cute. I said "look inside." In the note.

WALTER

I thought that meant inside the wrapping paper. I never opened it. Goddmanit. The wallet. I left the--

SEAN

(whispering)
Shhh...

WALTER

Oh, yeah...
(whispering)
Fuck.

SEAN

What?

WALTER

I-- can you believe it - I just this morning I put it in a receptacle thing.

SEAN

The picture?

WALTER

Well, I didn't know I was throwing that out, but... yeah.

SEAN

The wallet?

WALTER

I just didn't believe in Life's Purpose anymore. So I fucking (I cannot believe it) chucked it.

SEAN

So you have no idea what it is?

WALTER

No...

SEAN

The picture?

WALTER

No.

Walter's dispirited (and cold).

SEAN

Do you want to know what it was? It was great.

Walter thinks about it. Then he shakes his head. Some time goes by.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Hey.

Walter turns.

SEAN (CONT'D)

(kind of excited, smiling)

Real life.

Sean points up ahead at a tree line. What they find there, a pretty good way off, are two snow leopards. Sean gestures for Walter to recline. Sean does too.

SEAN (CONT'D)

They're pretty rare.

Sean has his camera rigged up. He just shifts it a little as the snow leopards draw nearer. This all thrills a part of Walter. Sean nods at the camera to mean that Walter should take the picture, if he'd like.

Walter seems to like that idea. He looks through the lens, he prepares to take the picture. He's smiling.

SEAN (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Your hand's over the lens.

WALTER
Oh.

SEAN
There you go.

Walter takes the picture. Then he sits up. Then both guys watch the snow leopards for real- it's a little thrill.

INT. LAX AIRPORT, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Walter has landed in Los Angeles. He looks exhausted. He's sitting in a terminal chair, on the phone with his sister. He's all alone. It's quiet there.

WALTER
...We may have to sell Mom's piano,
in order to pay for the Villa. This
week.

ODESSA (O.S.)
But didn't we get the Villa so we
can put Mom's piano in it?

WALTER
Yeah.

The situation makes no sense. But it's where they've found themselves.

WALTER (CONT'D)
It's "f"ed up. I know. But if I
don't get my severance I'm going to
have to forfeit that deposit,
because I can't afford the room.
And I won't have enough to get her
another place. Another decent
place.

ODESSA (O.S.)
So we may end up having to pay for
a bigger room because it can hold a
piano by *selling* that piano? And
then having to pay for the bigger
empty room for a year.

WALTER

Yeah.

ODESSA (O.S.)

....Did you get everything you wanted? For your birthday.

WALTER

Almost?

ODESSA (O.S.)

What's left?

WALTER

Nothing I just want everyone in the world to be Morgan Freeman. So it would just be me and Morgan Freemans, in the whole world.

ODESSA (O.S.)

(smiling)

What about me?

WALTER

You'd be you. But like a combo with him. Just a little calmer, more quiet. Gentler.

ODESSA (O.S.)

Would I have push-back hair and freckles?

WALTER

Yeah.

ODESSA (V.O.)

Where are you?

WALTER

Los Angeles.

ODESSA (O.S.)

Are you okay? You sound tired.

WALTER

I'm okay. I'm going to take the train to my hotel. Try to get home tomorrow.

ODESSA (O.S.)

I love you.

WALTER
I love you, too.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - LATER

This is a huge shot of downtown. We pan back around and find we're in a metro train. Walter's there. He's nearing his stop. So he rises, and he walks past his roommate to the aisle, but he's jostled her accidentally.

WALTER
I'm sorry.

She's a fifteen-year Puerto Rican girl (who's Morgan Freeman).

15-YR-OLD-PUERTO-RICAN GIRL MORGAN
FREEMAN
(Morgan freeman's voice)
Don't worry about it.

She's been morphed with Morgan Freeman -- still Puerto Rican but also Morgan Freeman. We notice elsewhere around Walter this has happened; everyone in his vicinity (the train he's walking off) has a combination with Morgan Freeman's features - Korean Morgan Freemans, Transit Police Freemans, six-year-olds. Black ones. Everyone around, morphed with the familiar characteristics of the dignified and peaceful actor. Walter has a hundred Morgan Freemans around him. It's a good world. Walter walks in the midst of it all.

EXT. 2ND STREET, DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - LATER

Walter, walking with his briefcase, has reached a street corner farther east in downtown L.A. The Morgan Freemans have left him. It's the regular world. Walter's trying to cross up 2nd Street, but he's found a police barricade there.

COP
You can't go this way without a
summit pass.

WALTER
What's a summit pass?

COP
For the G8.

WALTER
I'm trying to get to my hotel.

COP
... protests are on 3rd street.

Walter watches a series of limos drive by; they're bound for their downtown hotel and the summit there. Walter recalls an association to this. The director of his corporation's attending.

WALTER

My boss, the guy who runs my company is here. Is it cool if I talked to him. Am I allowed?

COP

This is America. You can do whatever you want as long as you stay on the far sides of the barricades on 3rd.

WALTER

There's a work situation I want to clue him in on. I was let go with cause. But there wasn't--

COP

Hey. Keep walking, okay? I've got a job to do.

INT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, NYC - LATER

The TVs are on in the corporate board rooms, no one's watching but if they were, they'd see news report from MSNBC from the G8 summit in Los Angeles

FEMALE NEWS REPORTER

It's a tense environment. To be sure. There are fears of a repeat of the violence in Seattle at the WTO. And there are three thousand more protestors here today.

Behind her you can see a great number of young people, anti-establishment and anti-capitalist chanters. It looks like a hot environment already.

FEMALE NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

There's an outdoor concert scheduled just a block away from the hotel where the summit is held, which summit organizers say is a deliberate provocation, but which concert promoters and protestors say is within their freedom to assemble.

Walter walks by her. He's still dressed the same. Still with his briefcase, now in Los Angeles at the G8.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - SAME

The G8 summit attendees (business leaders and government leaders from across the industrialized world) are being hustled past the crowds of chanting young people. Some are fielding reporter's questions hastily, then heading up the hotel steps for the summit. There's a huge number of people here, protestors, reporters, police (many). It already feels a little like mayhem.

Business leader MARK CHATHAM is wrapping up an exchange with CNN on the sidewalk outside the steps, then he starts being peppered with a request from Walter who's amid the chanting protestors on the other side of the barricades.

WALTER

Sir, can I have two secs? Mr. Chatham, Can I have two secs? I'm a former employee of one of your companies. Mitty?

Chatham has noticed Walter. The CNN reporter looks on.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Just two secs? Former employee? Mitty? I was let go with cause. But I don't think that's actually what should have happened.

It's awkward for Chatham, observed and on camera by CNN. He can't blatantly ignore Walter now.

MARK CHATHAM

Where did you work?

WALTER

The Life corporation. Two secs?

MARK CHATHAM

(gesturing for Walter to "hold on")

One minute.

Mark says something to an aide. The guy begins to make a phone call. Walter waits as Chatham finished his CNN exchange. Walter's jostled by the crowd. The police are in the midst now, trying to push people back. It's getting a little rough, ugly.

When Chatham finishes with CNN, his aide hangs up his phone and he says something to Chatham that Walter overhears.

AIDE

There was a Mitty there, but she's
a black woman.

MARK CHATHAM

Okay
(leaving, to Walter)
Nice try.

Chatham heads up to the hotel. He's brushed Walter off. A cop's trying to move Walter back. Walter's resisting, needing Chatham.

WALTER

Wait. No. I'm Walter Mitty! I'm a
man!

Chatham's a little farther away.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(yelling out)
I'm Walter Mitty!

Walter has passed the barrier. The cop's getting hard with him.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(really having to yell
now)
I'm Walter Mitty! I'm a man!

POLICE OFFICER

Get the fuck behind the barricade.

WALTER

(meaning the young
protestors)
I'm not with them.

It's at this point one of the young Danish teens Walter befriended in Dubai comes up to Walter, glad to see him.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(pleased to see Ulf even
in the midst of this)
Hey, Ulf.

Now the cop's convinced Walter means harm. He's just shoved Walter in the chest with his nightstick.

WALTER (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

Something has snapped beyond them. Some real violence has started. The cops are bearing down. Walter gets jacked in the thigh with a nightstick.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Ow, fuck, man. Hey, I have a scaled-back co-pay medical plan.

A phalanx of police has moved in. They're a straight-across line of force, there to push the protestors back. During this scrum, Walter becomes separated from his briefcase. *He's literally held it throughout the movie - Greenland, Dubai, Mogadishu, Nepal; now it's been torn from his hands.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Hey.

New desperation comes over him.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Hey, my briefcase.

Walter's being pushed farther back. There is great noise around and an antic vibe of violence brewing.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Seriously. Can I just-- I need my briefcase.

Walter, during the mayhem finds an abandoned megaphone at his feet. He starts to use it.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(through the megaphone, to
the gathering police)

Okay. Hey can I just get my
briefcase. It's behind you guys.

Walter really has to fight to even hold his ground here.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(through the megaphone)

My briefcase? It has assets in
there that belong to the company
that-- a negative roll. Can all you
people stop for one second so I can
get my goddamned briefcase. *Horses?*

A new line of mounted riot police have moved in, filling the space left between Walter, the riot police wall and Walter's briefcase laying there on the pavement. The horses endanger it. They gather around it, precariously close to damaging what it holds.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (through the megaphone)
 There're assets in that bag.
 They're my responsi--

Two police officers have moved in on Walter because he's the only protestor holding his ground and not fleeing (because he wants his briefcase)

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (through the megaphone)
 I'm just trying to finish my job.
 Ask. I'm Walter Mitty. I'm a man.

A TEAR-GAS CANNISTER LANDS AT WALTER'S FEET. But he remains there. He starts to call over (through the megaphone) to Mark Chatham forty yards away on the hotel steps.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (through the megaphone)
 Sir? I'm Walter Mitty! I'm a man!

The cops are getting rough with him.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (through the megaphone)
 I am Walter Mitty! I'm a man! I
 need to just snag my briefcase. I'm
 a man! Let me do my fucking job!

Walter has fought through the cops, now he fights through the horses to reach his briefcase.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 Horses!

Walter's choking on the teargas but he won't quit. He's finally fought his way to his briefcase.

INT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, NYC - LATER

They're watching this on the news at Life. It's a riot. Like Seattle. On screen, Walter's image has a beautiful thing to it - it's like Tank Man.

A company man standing there in a short-sleeve dress shirt, getting tear-gassed, fighting to get out of there with his briefcase.

WALTER

I'm Walter Mitty! I'm a man!

Ulf and Soren arrive at his side and try to drag him back from an approaching flank of LA riot police. They want these kids stepping back. Walter's not. When they reach him, there's a dust-up with Ulf. More kids get in the mix. It's going to get out of hand; the police are too rough, the kids too dumb to move. Walter's in the middle of it all. Soon, there are some wild punches. Then everyone in the scrum must fight to keep their teeth in their mouth. It's all broken loose. Walter's fighting it out like everyone else. More kids have run in. Some others, too, older.

PROTESTOR

I'm a man!

The kids start yelling this, too.

YOUNGER PROTESTORS

I'm a man!

There's like eight people yelling this now.

Over where there's just a lot of people safely observing, along the sidewalks, some more down to earth types, older people, family people, this message is starting to hit. There's a 60-year-old WORKING MAN there. He's admiring Walter's guts.

WORKING MAN

...you're goddamned right.

INT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, NYC - SAME

Back on the boardroom TVs we see that CNN is broadcasting a report on the riot.

REPORTER

Known only as "I'm a man Man." This brave protestor was tear-gassed then just "f"ing hammered with nightsticks. I'm sorry I'm losing some professionalism. But this guy just wouldn't back down. Let him get his briefcase. Jeez.

On screen, there is further footage from the G8. Walter's in the middle of a pack really getting worked over by fired-up police.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - SAME

We have a helicopter view of the G8 scene, there's a huge concert going on, the summit across the street and the street in between swelling with a mob of people.

RADIO HOST (O.S.)

All right Los Angeles County.
You're on Talk 360. What do you
think of "I'm a man" Man?

CALLER

(latino)

Like the guy's style. He's just letting the world now "don't walk all over me." Wasn't that on one of our old flags and shit?" He's a human man. Those corporations own the cops, man. You know that. Do you not?

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - SAME

On the streets, outside the summit, lots of the crowd is yelling "I'm a man." You can hear *Rage Against the Machine* soundchecking across the street.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - LATER

*it's important to note that the source footage for most of what follows is the actual hand-held video captures of the cop-baiting *Rage Against the Machine* daytime concert staged among five city blocks outside the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. Five thousand angry, anti-establishment young people - 2,000 police officers wearing riot gear, as well as additional horses, motorcycles, squad cars and police helicopters, all captured in raw frames Walter has been very naturally included in. He's trying to walk through the crowd, find his way home through it (this is the free provocative downtown concert the reporter mentioned) but he's being recognized.

KID

It's I'm a Man Man.

Walter's trying to find his Danish friends.

WALTER

Ulf?

Walter's being rubbed on the head by way of congratulations, recognized from what he did earlier. Pretty soon he's up (sort of against his will) on their shoulders. Rage Against the Machine has begun Bulls On Parade - it's an anti-establishment classic. On stage:

LEAD SINGER ZACH DE LA ROCHA

Brothers and sisters, Our democracy
has been hijacked. All your true
freedoms in this country are over,
as long as it's controlled by
corporations.

(noticing Walter)

Is that that motherfucker from the
fight?

Back in the crowd, they're riled up. They start passing Walter forward (atop them) like a beach ball.

ZACH DE LA ROCHA

Pass him up here.
(starting the song)

The song kicks in. It's an electric area now. The song's powerful. The crowd's starting to feel like a mob. Walter's still a beach ball they're sending up to the stage. He crosses seventy feet on his back, passed up by a couple hundred hands. Soon the crowd has him on the stage. Right among the band.

ZACH DE LA ROCHA (CONT'D)

Hey, man.

WALTER

Hey. Walter Mitty. How are you?

ZACH DE LA ROCHA

(gesturing to the crowd)
Tell them who you are.

WALTER

(into the mic Zach handed
him)
I'm Walter Mitty! I'm enjoying the
show!

The music keeps playing.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(to Zach)
I know all the words.

ZACH DE LA ROCHA
 (can't hear him)
 What?

WALTER
 I love this song. I know all the
 words.

ZACH DE LA ROCHA
 (handing him the mic and
 megaphone)
 Well sing them.

Walter takes the gear.

WALTER
 Sing them out, Walter. Sing out,
 Man!

The music has some drive for sure. Walter's getting pumped. He looks at the crowd - all anti-establishment jumping up and down.

WALTER (CONT'D)
 (starting the song)
Come with it now.

Walter performs the first sets of verses, mic through a megaphone. He's got some decent body language and an okay metal-rap flow (and he still has his briefcase).

WALTER (CONT'D)
*Rally round the family, with a
 pocket full of shells.*

The crowd's liking it. Soon, they want Walter to stage dive and join them. He does it.

There's no way that this crowd stays inside the concert grounds, and its energy level won't keep things safe. Soon enough the sparks of a riot start when some folding chairs start flying from the crowd over to the police, now flying cups of ice and water. Then there's face to face, cop-protestor taunting. There are five thousand young people in the street (and Walter) and they're too close to the sedans that drove the business leaders there. When a folding chair hits a lady cop it's a riot.

Down in the middle of it, Walter's got some mixed-feelings - some fear, but the mayhem's releasing something pent up that makes him feel good. He's thrashing around as hard as anybody. He's pushed past a news camera whose feed we have the perspective of.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Hi, Mom.

They all spill into the LA street next door. So, it's one of those fifteen minutes where rules don't work anymore. The music, sun, collective anger. Someone throws a chair through a Starbucks window. Walter gets involved in some property destruction, all caught up in this big feeling. He tries to kick over a post office drop box, but it's welded in there, so he can't. Then he gets arrested.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Shit....

Walter's down on the pavement with a policeman's knee in his back.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Oh, that's my shoulder blade.

INT. PADDY WAGON, POLICE TRANSPORTER - LATER

Walter's alone in the back of the police wagon. His arms are shackled. He's sitting on the built in metal bench, until the transporter hits a bump and he falls to the metal floor. It's not easy to stand when your hands are cuffed. But Walter struggles up. But he's standing without any means to stabilize himself and every time the wagon turns he gets chucked around.

INT. POLICE STATION, LA - LATER

Walter has just been booked. The police clerk hands him a phone.

POLICE CLERK

Make your call.

WALTER

Um, shoot, I don't have my cell phone. I think I only know like one number by heart.

After a moment, Walter calls this number. He waits while it rings.

INT. POLICE STATION, LA - LATER

Walter's being released. His short-sleeve dress shirt is torn. Worked over. He's worked over. He doesn't look like much of a businessman anymore. Just the contours. His briefcase is being released back to him, ticking off its contents.

POLICE CLERK

One negative roll. Five
photographic prints. One laptop.
Stretch Armstrong. Cell phone. An
orange.

EXT. POLICE STATION, LA - LATER

There is a young man waiting on the steps of the downtown
police station. Walter comes down the steps his way.

YOUNG MAN

Walter Mitty?

WALTER

Yeah.

YOUNG MAN

Todd Mahar. eHarmony.

After a moment, they hug.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - LATER

Todd and Walter catch a late bite at IHOP. They got a good
booth.

WALTER

Do you like working in Los Angeles?

TODD MAHAR

Yeah. Traffic's tough. But it's a
cool city. If you get bored here,
man, it's your fault.

WALTER

You look different.

TODD MAHAR

Than what?

WALTER

Than I pictured. I pictured you
wearing an old time judge's wig.
The whole time.

TODD MAHAR

The whole time we talked you
pictured me in a judge's wig?

Walter's cell has started ringing.

WALTER

Hello?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hi this is Cynthia Desping. With Etihad Airlines. Is this Walter Mitty?

WALTER

Yeah, hey.

WOMAN'S VOICE

We found your wallet. I think.

This has surprised Walter. He's gone quiet.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Are you a Walter Mitty who flew to Nepal Wednesday the 15th?

WALTER

Yes I'm a Walter Mitty who did that.

WOMAN'S VOICE

We have your wallet. It's at our Los Angeles terminal office.

WALTER

I'm in Los Angeles. With pancakes.
(after a moment)
I don't know why I just said that.
I'm excited.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It's exciting to get your wallet back when you thought you lost it.

WALTER

...for sure.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Maintenance found it in a trash receptacle. You must have accidentally--

WALTER

Yeah.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Our luggage delivery car can get it to you. She's going out now.

WALTER
 (nearly overwhelmed)
 ...thank you.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES, LOS ANGELES - LATER

Walter and Todd Mahar wait out in front of IHOP, under the IHOP overhang, waiting for Walter's wallet to arrive in the parking lot. *every once in a while, when Walter looks at Todd, Todd's wearing an old time judge's wig.

WALTER
 Do I look like you pictured?

TODD MAHAR
 Yep. Pretty normal looking guy.

This didn't really jack Walter up.

TODD MAHAR (CONT'D)
 You look normal. But you're not.
 You're a pretty interesting guy
 Walter.

A car pulls up.

TODD MAHAR (CONT'D)
 I'm glad you got out of the office.
 It's good to meet you.

A young woman (middle-eastern, 20s) has left the small car. She's walking up to Walter; she's got his wallet.

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL
 Are you Walter Mitty?

WALTER
 Yeah.

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL
 Here you go.

She hands Walter his wallet.

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL (CONT'D)
 That's really beautiful.

WALTER
 What's that?

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL
 What it says. Life's Purpose.

She looks at Walter for a while.

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL (CONT'D)

*To see things hidden behind walls,
to take pleasure in seeing, to see
and be amazed, that is the purpose
of Life.* I really like that. I'm
glad you got it back.

WALTER

Yeah. I appreciate it. That was
cool of you guys.

ETIHAD AIRLINES LUGGAGE GIRL

(leaving)

Have a nice night.

INT. TODD MAHAR'S CAR, MOVING, LOS ANGELES - LATER

They're driving through nighttime Los Angeles. Walter's just opened his wallet. He's looking at the little picture sleeve. There's a small white envelope in there. Walter removes it. Then he takes a film negative from the envelope. Just to check it's there. Then he puts it right back in the envelope without examining it.

TODD MAHAR

(in a judge's wig here)

What is it?

WALTER

I don't know. I don't care. I have
it.

Walter and Todd ride along for a while.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Can you drop me off at like...
where would that guy stay? Who owns
my company? Mark Chatham.

TED HENDRICKS

Want to try the Four Seasons?

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Walter has walked up to the front desk of the Four Seasons lobby.

WALTER

Mark Chatham?

The young desk clerk picks up the house phone. A ring.

FOUR SEASONS CLERK
I'm a Man Man's here?

The clerk listens for a moment. Walter waits to see if he'll be allowed up. He will.

FOUR SEASONS CLERK (CONT'D)
Room Seven Ten.

INT. HOTEL 7TH FLOOR - LATER

Walter waits just outside a Four Season's hotel room door. He's just finished knocking. The guy who holds conglomerates Mark Chatham answers the door.

WALTER
Hey. Man, I'm sorry. I was hoping I could talk to you for two secs?

A moment goes by.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I'm Walter Mitty.

Mark looks at him.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I'm not a black woman, with a mustache. I'm a man who used to work for your company.

MARK CHATHAM
Your the guy from TV? I'm a Man Guy?

WALTER
I don't know. I was in jail. We didn't get TV.

MARK CHATHAM
You are.

You don't know which way Chatham's going to go. But he respects Walter. He extends his hand. Walter takes it.

WALTER
Can I just talk to you for two secs.?

A moment passes.

MARK CHATHAM

Not in my room. Because you're
freaking me out a little. Can we
maybe sit out here. Indian style or
something?

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Mark and Walter sit Indian Style facing each other in the
Four Seasons fifth floor hallway. Chatham's holding a
negative roll.

WALTER

There was one absent from the roll.
But I have it.

Walter hands the small envelope over.

MARK CHATHAM

That's the one Sean O'Connell wants
for the cover? The Quintessence
one?

WALTER

Yeah. For the last issue. That's
the complete roll.

MARK CHATHAM

What was in the briefcase? Out on
the street, when you were getting
cracked in the neck by police
sticks.

WALTER

(meaning the roll)
Those.

MARK CHATHAM

Well, thanks.

WALTER

That last one's pretty late. Nine
days late. There was an unforeseen
set of unbelievable shit that
happened.

MARK CHATHAM

Why do people think that you're a
black woman?

WALTER

I sit way in the back. Maybe that's-

MARK CHATHAM

What does tear gas really feel like?

WALTER

It's a pretty intense burn. It's like having Cajun eyes. Spicy eyes.

MARK CHATHAM

I saw you on TV fighting a mailbox.

A long time passes.

WALTER

Was that a question?

MARK CHATHAM

Not like in the form that I just said it. But...

Walter still doesn't say anything about his participation in a riot. So Mark rephrases it.

MARK CHATHAM (CONT'D)

Why were you fighting a mailbox?

WALTER

I guess I was revved up.

MARK CHATHAM

From what?

WALTER

From fighting with a piano for a month and trying to get someone at my company to evaluate my position there based on understanding what I actually do.

MARK CHATHAM

You fight pianos, too?

WALTER

Not in the way that I fought the mailbox, but just in the way that I've been struggling with one.

MARK CHATHAM

(recounting Walter having told him this moments ago)

You rode in a car on a boat?

WALTER

Yes.

MARK CHATHAM

You slept on a copier in a business center?

WALTER

Yes.

MARK CHATHAM

You're an interesting guy.

WALTER

(pleased to hear this)

Someone else told me that. An hour ago. Hey, I don't want to take up too much more of your time. But I'd like my severance. There's no cause to keep it from me. That's what I was trying to tell you downtown. I did my job well for nine years.

MARK CHATHAM

That's all you were trying to say downtown?

WALTER

Yeah.

Some moments go by next, while Mark and Walter sit Indian style with the Sean O'Connell photo of Walter sitting between them.

MARK CHATHAM

I'm going to run some numbers.

Mark has stood up and started in to his hotel room. Walter's been following him.

MARK CHATHAM (CONT'D)

(meaning don't follow me
in)

Not right now. I don't even know where the numbers are. There in some guy's computer. Show up Monday, let's see.

The door closes, Walter's left out there to wait.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Walter has returned to Brooklyn; he's heading up a set of Subway stairs up to a neighborhood street.

INT. TIME-LIFE BUILDING, NYC - DAY

Walter crosses the huge lobby, dressed as always for work.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Walter has entered the elevator. He's alone. It won't work without his floor elevator key (which stopped working once he was let go). Walter waits a moment. Then he tries his key. The button illuminates. Walter starts to ascend.

INT. WALTER'S DIVISION FLOOR, CORRIDOR - LATER

Walter has reached the floor elevator corridor door to his division floor office. He's just tried his pass key. That functions as well.

INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - LATER

Walter waits in a line at an accounting office window counter (like a DMV) behind recently let-go colleagues Tim Naughton and Gary Mannheim. Tim speaks to the accounting clerk.

TIM NAUGHTON

Tim Naughton? Severance package?

She hands Tim his check. He's sad, but he takes it and heads off.

GARY MANNHEIM

Gary Mannheim. Same.

After a moment, Gary gets his severance. He's also blue about it. Then Walter steps up.

WALTER

Walter Mitty? Is there a...
possibly there's a severance
package for me?

She starts typing into her keyboard.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I was fired for cause, but then I
think I maybe gave them cause to
provide me with a severance
package.

ACCOUNTING CLERK

It's not really a package. It's just one check. For forty two hundred dollars. That's what everybody's getting.

WALTER

Okay. Possibly there's that? For me?

She's typed additional stuff. Then she roots around in a check stash. Then she hands Walter an envelope. He takes it. He looks at it for a while. For the first time in a long while, he seems relieved.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK, NYC - LATER

Walter's just walking through the park. He looks at peace. There are many others around, all coming and going at a normal pace, but the earth around them transforms from winter to summer smoothly over the course of thirty seconds as they naturally inhabit the park in their regular ways. So when Walter sits at a bench. It's all midsummer around him. He's smiling from relief.

CUT TO:

A FLOATING PIANO

This is a grand piano mid-air in Manhattan.

EXT. BATTERY PARK - LATER

There's a winch machine, a huge rig, lifting this piano to the 7th floor of the residential building Walter secured for his mom. Walter and Odessa stand in Battery Park, looking up at the piano. The movers are setting it into the removed window space. It looks like it's going to fit.

INT. VILLA, ROOM, RETIREMENT - LATER

The piano has fit easily here. Odessa and Edna are straightening up, putting the last few things away. The room's in good shape. It's really pretty nice. Edna seems at home.

ODESSA

(to Walter)

Hey, babe, come on. We'll go grab lunch.

Odessa and Edna head out the door.

WALTER
I'll be right out.

They go. The room is quiet. Walter looks around again. Making it happen took considerable effort no one but Walter will know about. After a moment, he goes and sits at the piano. Some time passes. Then Walter plays the beginning of *Cheers*. Then he gets up and follows his sister and mom out.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE - LATER

Walter's walking with Odessa and Edna. They've come past a newsstand with magazine displays. Walter was going to walk right on by like Edna and Odessa did. But he's noticed something on the magazine racks that's stopped him. He stands there for a while looking at it.

It's the last issue of *Life Magazine*. Its cover is a black and white photograph of Walter sitting on a cement bench out front of the Time-Life building. He's got his lunch in a brown bag beside him; he's looking over photo prints with his loupe, working carefully on some day in the past to fulfill the wishes of *Life's* photographers- a person who's work the world never knew took place. It's really good. You can see the word LIFE on the building sign above the bench. So the last photograph, on the last cover of *Life*, elegantly honors the people who quietly worked there and cared for it.

Walter stands in front of the newsstand looking at it. It's the first time he's seeing it. It's a message that to Sean, at least, and possibly to others his work was meaningful.

EXT. BATTERY PARK, NYC - DAY

On another day, Walter's sitting in Battery Park across the little street where his mom lives. He's with Cheryl. Her son Rich skateboards around the park.

CHERYL
How'd the move go?

WALTER
All done.

CHERYL
Everybody's good?

WALTER
Everybody's good.

Time passes.

WALTER (CONT'D)
How's Life?

CHERYL
The company or the... thing.

WALTER
Both.

CHERYL
The company's okay. The thing's tough.

WALTER
Yeah.

CHERYL
Are you glad you're not there anymore?

WALTER
I'm excited. About the new stuff.

CHERYL
What's the new stuff?

WALTER
I don't know yet. Would you have lunch with me? Somewhere not in the cafeteria. For once. Out somewhere? In the world. I was wondering that.

She smiles at Walter.

CHERYL
Yeah...

She starts looking in her scheduler.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
The ninth? Is that good? Two days?

WALTER
The ninth. Yeah.

CHERYL
Yeah, cool.

Walter seems pleased. Rich skates by and does a move. Cheryl and Walter sit there a while. They can hear piano music.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Is that your mom?

WALTER
Yeah.

CHERYL
She's good.

WALTER
Yeah.

Some time goes by. Walter looks tired, worn out from his extended journey and his large efforts to keep the lid on the critical matters of his life. But he also looks relieved and satisfied. Piano music continues. The title appears again: *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*. Then CREDITS BEGIN.