

*THE WRONG MUTHA F*CKIN'*

SHIA LABEOUF WON ~~ANOTHER~~ SCREENWRITING COMPETITION

Written by

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* Believe it or not, all events and characters
in this screenplay are entirely fictional.

INSPIRING MUSIC

A blinking cursor.

A blank page.

Chirping birds welcome a new day.

Knuckles crack over a laptop keyboard.

A deep breath in.

Coffee is sipped from a coveted Frontline Artists mug.

Restless fingers tap the keyboard. Nothing is written.

Sigh.

The inspiring music comes to a WARPING HALT.

JIMI, a bi-racial neckbeard in his mid-thirties, stares into the middle distance breathing from his mouth.

He sits on the couch with his laptop on a messy coffee table.

His leg shakes in his pajamas.

The blinking cursor SYNCHRONIZES with a ticking clock.

He chugs a 2-Liter bottle of soda by the fridge.

The cursor blinks.

He jacks off.

Blink.

He rips a bong.

Blink.

He plays a video game.

Blink.

He laughs at a death scene in a movie.

Blink.

He cries by the window.

The cursor blinks atop an empty page -- a sad reminder of life's missed opportunities.

INT. SAME APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door crashes open and BERNICE enters after a long day of construction work. Jimi sleeps on the couch.

Bernice is a domineering and husky force of nature. She towers over Jimmy, drops her bag of tools on the coffee table, and he jumps up.

JIMI

Huh? Her jewelry is in the-- Oh, hey baby.

BERNICE

Are you really still in the same spot that I left you in?

JIMI

I got up.

BERNICE

You want an award for that?

JIMI

Only if you're the trophy.

Jimi tries to pull her in for a kiss. She pushes him away and heads to the kitchen.

BERNICE

Please tell me you did something today other than jacking off.

JIMI

What? No. I-- I got some work done.

BERNICE

Work? Ha!

JIMI

Hey! I wrote, like, 500 words.

BERNICE

Oh, really? How much money did you make?

JIMI

N-- Nothin'.

BERNICE

Then it's not work. It's a hobby.

JIMI

It's an investment.

BERNICE

Then you invested in a bankrupt company. You should quit while you're behind.

JIMI

Quit? I can't quit. Writing is like breathing to me -- if I don't write, I'll suffocate. I dedicated my life to my craft.

BERNICE

You're suffocating me. I need more from you, Jimi. You can't mooch off me for the rest of your life. Joe says Parcels United is hiring.

JIMI

I'm not-- Wait, who's--

BERNICE

You're going first thing in the morning.

JIMI

I don't wanna.

BERNICE

I don't care.

JIMI

You can't make me.

She glares at him, a petulant man-child.

JIMI

Fine, I'll go.

BERNICE

Oh, and my parents want to meet you. They invited you to dinner.

JIMI

I've met them like five times already. When are they gonna remember me?

BERNICE

I dunno -- maybe when you do something worth remembering.

They shrug it out. Bernice huffs and stomps out of the room. Jimi looks at the blinking cursor.

It's clearly mocking him.

JIMI

Shut up.

BERNICE (O.S.)

What did you just say?

JIMI

Nothin'. I wasn't--

He closes the laptop and looks longingly out of the window.

To the brick wall of a neighboring strip-mall.

A homeless man, PATCHOULI, is encamped there. Patchouli rolls over and waves. Jimi waves back.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

A Parcels United facility squats in the middle of nowhere -- seemingly abandoned and reclaimed by nature. The shit brown PU LOGO is the only signifying marker.

Jimi checks his phone to make sure he's at the right address, but there's no service here -- wherever the hell here is.

He's decked out in a suit and tie. His hair gelled over.

Last chance...

The chicken crosses the road -- and dodges a honking car.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Jimi sits at a conference table with a group of teenagers wearing sweats and hoodies. He's way overdressed.

The building supervisor RUTH can be heard before she can be seen and enters with a fury.

RUTH

All right chumps, take a vest from the box and follow me.

Jimi stands and pulls a blue trainee vest from a box. It's smeared with dirt, sweat, and blood -- eh, maybe it's grease?

The trainees look up and notice that Ruth is gone. They hurry out of the room.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ruth walks alone past the sorting table.

Machines hiss, pop, and screech.

RUTH

You have to memorize four pages of safety standards, even though only dorks follow them. You'll be tested tomorrow.

Boxes crash and are crushed in a massive unorganized mess. Workers smash and kick boxes through the slots. The trainees finally catch up with Ruth.

JIMI

Excuse me.

RUTH

After a month, you'll be evaluated. If we decide to keep you on, you'll have another thirty six weeks before you can join the union.

JIMI

Um, excuse me.

Ruth stops and Jimi bumps into her.

RUTH

What? What do you want?

JIMI

I haven't even applied yet.

RUTH

You're hired.

JIMI

But, um--

RUTH

Truth is. Most of you turkey dicks won't make it through the night. You'll crawl outta here and never return -- except in nightmares.

Ruth has a brief absence seizure before coming back to them.

The trainees stand before her like the military. She paces up the ranks.

RUTH

One or two of you might be dumb enough to stick around, but we will inevitably crush your minds, bodies, and spirits. You'll wish you quit when you had the chance, but you won't be able to. No one will hire you. You'll become dependent on our abuse to survive. Very few human beings have what it takes to be a PU Lifer. You!

Ruth reaches for a scrawny kid but he breaks out in a sprint for the door.

RUTH

See? You!

Ruth pushes Jimi. He trips over a box and hits the ground.

RUTH

We call that egress. It's on tomorrow's test. Memorize it. 300.

Jimi gets up.

JIMI

What?

RUTH

300 belt. Get the fuck out of here. Go goddamnit, move!

Jimi hurries through the huge chaotic space like a pinball banging off the bumpers.

A cart of oversized boxes nearly hits him.

CART PUSHER

Watch out, asshole!

He staggers through obstacles -- dodging bags full of small packages, trucks backing up, a raccoon escaping with a bagel.

Jimi passes an open door. He ducks his head in.

INT. ELECTRICAL ROOM - WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A wall of old wires. Inside the tangled mainframe rests an elderly man. He seems to be one with the wiring. The Old Bird senses a rise in atmospheric temperature.

He shifts with a groan. Jimi startles.

JIMI
Oh, hi. Do you, by chance, know
where I might find the 300 belt?

The Old Bird lifts a wrench clamped in his arthritic hand.

OLD BIRD
Kill me...

He points the rusted wrench to the belt behind Jimi.

OLD BIRD
Kill me...

JIMI
Sorry, I wouldn't hurt a fly even
if it gave me reason to. Thanks.

Jimi skips away.

The Old Bird drops the wrench in exasperation. It's clatter
is lost to the buzz of the warehouse floor.

INT. 300 BELT - WAREHOUSE - DAY

The belt hums. Packages drop violently down the shoot.

A splitter, FREDDIE, divvies up the boxes on either side of
the belt.

Freddie is a tough woman in her mid forties. She's been with
the company long enough -- though due to her pride, she's
never moved up.

Workers scan boxes and load them into trucks.

Freddie looks up and sees Jimi standing on the other side of
the belt. His goofy oversized suit, the raggedy training
vest. Freddie erupts in laughter.

FREDDIE
Yoho! Anyone lose a puppy?

Jimi is petrified.

FREDDIE
Look at this bozo!

All work is stopped as the workers gather around. The SANCHEZ
BROTHERS (RONNY and TOMMY) cackle like hyenas.

RONNY

Hold up, 'member that game from
back in the day -- Mealworm Jim?

Freddie looks him over.

FREDDIE

Yooo! You're right. He does look
like Mealworm Jim.

Jimi is ready to run away crying.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Why'd the belt stop?

The workers becomes quiet and BRYAN, the supervisor, walks
over. He takes his job too damn seriously.

BRYAN

Who the fuck are you?

JIMI

I don't--

BRYAN

Name. What's your name?

Bryan turns to the workers.

BRYAN

I swear, we get the dumbest
motherfuckers.

JIMI

Jimi.

BRYAN

What was that?

FREDDIE

Say your name with some pride, man.

JIMI

My name's Jimi.

Freddie and the Sanchez brothers double over with laughter.

RONNY

Nooo. Did this guy just say his
name was Jimi? I can't.

FREDDIE

That's it then. Your new name is
Mealworm Jim.

Bryan smiles.

BRYAN
Come with me, Mealworm.

Bryan leads him to a truck and hands him a scanner.

BRYAN
Ruth should've went over everything
with you, good luck.

JIMI
Uh...

Bryan leaves him to sink or swim.

Jimi mimics the actions of the others. He scans a giant box, it beeps ERROR, then he tries to lift it. It slides off the belt and somehow lands on top of him.

The workers watch with dismay. Bryan cusses to himself.

CHASON, mid 30s, runs over and helps him up. He sees the hazing and doesn't like it. They go back to work.

CHASON
Hey man, don't stress 'em. They're
just busting your balls.

JIMI
Thanks.

Chason slaps Jimi's back and some confidence returns.

He tries to lift the box, but can't.

THUNDEROUS LAUGHTER OFF SCREEN

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Jimi stumbles in and heads to the couch. His suit has been shredded. He falls like a tree, but misses and smashes through the coffee table.

He settles in the mess. Bernice enters the living room. She's dressed up nice and fastening her earrings.

BERNICE
What the hell was that?

JIMI
I can't-- I can't do it anymore.

BERNICE

What?

JIMI

Work. Waste the rest of my life
breakin' my back for some
corporation that doesn't even give
a shit if I live or die.

BERNICE

Give me a break. It was one day.

JIMI

You don't know what it's like.

Bernice squares up, *oh word?*

BERNICE

You wanna maybe rewrite that?

JIMI

I have dreams, ambitions.

BERNICE

What? You don't think I have
dreams? My main one being that you
stop wasting my time with this
stupid ass writing fantasy.

JIMI

It's not stupid. It's the only
thing keeping me alive. I mean, I
coulda been somebody. A working
screenwriter. Back in LA--

BERNICE

Cut the shit. It's been two years
since you crawled back home with
your tail between your legs.

JIMI

I came back because my mom was
sick.

BERNICE

Everyone's mom dies. Get over it.
Kill that darling and bury her down
deep like the rest of us, because
honey boy this is the real world
and when rent is due, nobody gives
a shit about your little dream of
being a writer. What's a writer do,
anyway? Make shit up? Anyone can do
that.

JIMI

Pah! You literally spend all of your free time consuming shows and movies.

BERNICE

So what? Now you're calling me lazy?

JIMI

No, I'm just pointing out--

BERNICE

At least at PU you'll be contributing something to society. Look at me. I bust my ass every day and earn what I have. What you got? Me? Pshh. You need to get your shit together, Jimi. Ain't nobody gonna do that for you. Now go take a shower and get ready, we have to be at my parents by 8.

JIMI

What?

BERNICE

We're having dinner with my parents, remember?

JIMI

Tonight?

BERNICE

I told you it was tonight.

JIMI

No, you didn't. You just said--

Her scowl speaks volumes.

JIMI

Do we have to go? I'm dead.

BERNICE

You will be dead if you don't get up off your ass right now.

Bernice holds up her shoe, ready to toss it at him. He struggles to rise, his joints pop and crack while he walks over to the coat rack. He pulls one off.

JIMI

Let's go.

EXT. PLANTATION - NIGHT

The white columned stain of the south glistens atop the hill overlooking the fields.

Bernice is six feet ahead of Jimi and nearly sprinting.

BERNICE
Don't go embarrassing me.

JIMI
How am I gonna embarrass you?

BERNICE
You always find a way.

Jimi stops -- observes the opulent landscaped lawn. Ugh.

INT. DINING ROOM - PLANTATION - NIGHT

The staunch white family is gathered around the table. Servants wait on them. Jimi dozes off.

FATHER
So...

The sudden noise wakes Jimi up like cold water to the face.

MOTHER
Jim.

JIMI
Actually, it's--

FATHER
Jim. I once knew a kid in prep school named Jim.

JIMI
Oh yeah?

FATHER
I hated him.

Bernice gives Jimi a disapproving look. He shrugs -- *what?*

JIMI
Oh.

FATHER
Jim. Sniveling little worm. No backbone on that one. The worst.

MOTHER

Not all Jims are the same, dear.

Father looks Jimi up and down.

FATHER

Hmph.

MOTHER

So, um, Jim--

JIMI

It's Jimi, actually, like the musician.

MOTHER

Oh, okay? So, what do you do, Jim-me? Hopefully your profession doesn't match your namesake's.

JIMI

Oh, no. Actually I'm a--

Jimi lights up. Not many people ask about his writing.

For good reason.

Bernice shoots him down -- *you better not.*

JIMI

Uh--

He deflates in his seat.

JIMI

I... just started working at Parcels United.

The father slaps the table with the force of thunder.

FATHER

PU! Good for you, son. An honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

JIMI

I guess.

MOTHER

My sister's husband just retired after forty years. He doesn't even know what to do with himself.

JIMI

That sounds--

FATHER

Like a sweetheart deal! *Forty*
years? Gone like that.

Father snaps his fingers. Jimi startles and sinks deeper.

FATHER

Think about it. All you have to do
is keep your head down for **forty**
years, then you'll have the rest of
your life to do *whatever you want*.

Sweat leaks from Jimi's forehead.

MOTHER

Forty years really isn't all that
long. What'll that make you? **74**
when you retire? There'll still be
plenty of **time**.

FATHER

Nothing better than rolling up your
sleeves and working your way up.
Myself? My entire empire was built
on the back of a single Lima bean.
You see...

A servant drops a roast goose in front of Jimi. The servant's
face is sullen, sunken, foreboding -- hungry.

Jimi suffers a panic attack. The Father drools on.

A PRISON DOOR GRINDS SHUT AND IS LOCKED.

INT. BEDROOM - APARTMENT - NIGHT

A storm rages outside. Thunder rattles the walls. Jimi kicks
at the sheets as he fights his nightmare.

A MINOR KEY VERSION OF AKON'S "LOCKED UP" plays on the TV.

Haunting voices rock him back and forth.

BERNICE (V.O.)

Maybe when you do something
worth remembering.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Forty years!

FATHER (V.O.)

Sniveling little worm!

OLD BIRD (V.O.)

Kill me.

LIGHTNING STRIKES.

Jimi shoots up, sweaty, eyes electric.

He's alive, bygone it!

He leaps from bed, opens his laptop, and loads a new document -- trembling like a fiend.

JIMI
C'mon, c'mon, c'mon.

The cursor blinks as if nodding approval.

A deep breath and he settles.

His fingers type slowly: INT. MY HEAD - DAY??? (FIX L8TR)

Momentum builds.

His keyboard becomes an instrument.

He rides the solo.

Bernice rolls over.

BERNICE
What're you doing?

Jimi can't look away from the screen or stop typing. The story pours out of him. His hands can't keep up.

JIMI
I have to write this down.

She rolls back away from him.

BERNICE (O.S.)
Don't be stupid. You have work in the morning.

Jimi doesn't hear her. He can't. He's in the ZONE.

Jimi types and chuckles. He shakes his head in disbelief.

JIMI
You crazy coot.

His middle finger stamps down on the period key.

One word. Period. One word. Period. *Umph, it feels good.*

Deep into an action scene and he's on the edge of his seat.

He bolds his sluglines, uses (V.O.), slaps on onomatopoeias.

A bad boy breaking all the rules.

BANG!

POW!

He excitedly types on the brink of madness.

He reads his words back, proud tears flowing from his eyes.

The CLOCK FADES from 2:27 AM to 6:43 AM.

He's still going, though doggedly.

Bernice wakes up and gets out of bed.

BERNICE

You been up this whole time?

She drops onto the toilet and farts.

JIMI

Huh?

BERNICE

Don't be late for work.

JIMI

Mhmm.

Bernice wipes, flushes, then leaves the room.

He resigns, saves the file, and closes the laptop.

THE DRUMMING OF A SEA SHANTY

INT. WORK - DAY

Jimi scans and loads boxes while he sings the *SEA SHANTY*.

JIMI

*There once was a script that was
writ for screen,
The passion in the prose would be
seen,
The hype blew up, the value 'round
town,
Oh blow, my bully boys, blow! Huh!*

The other workers joyfully join in on the shanty. They work in a rhythm like the off-broadway show STOMP.

WORKERS

*Soon may Producermen come,
To bring us fame and weed and rum
(MORE)*

WORKERS (CONT'D)

*One day, when the writing is done
We'll take our leave and go! Ho!*

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jimi puts money in a shoe box. There's two dollars, several pennies, a nickel, and two quarters.

*JIMI (V.O.)
She'd not been out two weeks from
shore,
When down on her, an agent did
bore...*

He sighs. This is gonna take a while.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jimi writes at the kitchen table while Bernice watches scripted TV.

*JIMI (V.O.)
Director called all hands and swore
That she'd make this film in tow!
Huh!*

She giggles. He looks up as she takes a selfie, duck face, then sends it to someone.

His suspicions fuel his fingers.

INT. BELT - UP FACILITY - DAY

The assembly line scans and loads boxes into delivery trucks like NORMAL.

Jimi's IN HIS OWN WORLD.

*JIMI
Soon may Producermen come
To bring us fame and weed and rum.*

Jimi sings to himself. His earphones are on. He's tone deaf. Freddie keeps a weary eye on him.

BACK INTO HIS FANTASY WORLD

The workers jump up on the belt and do an elaborate dance number.

WORKERS (V.O.)
One day, when the writing is done
We'll take our leave and go! Ho!

They all leap off the belt at once like a cheesy musical.

INT. TRUCK - UP FACILITY - DAY

THE DRUMMING CONTINUES

Jimi crouches between boxes in the back of his truck, scribbling away in his pocket notebook. Boots approach.

BRYAN (O.S.)
 You seen Mealworm?

Jimi stops writing and listens like a soldier trying not to be caught by the enemy. He looks out through the crack in the doors. Bryan holds his walkie talkie in the air.

CHASON (O.S.)
 Think he's taking a shit.

Bryan's boots continue on. Chason throws Jimi a thumbs up.

JIMI (V.O.)
 Weell...

Jimi lets off a sly smile, then continues writing.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

More money in the shoe box. Loose coins. It's adding up.

ALL (V.O.)
Soon may Producermen come...

The money piles up until the box can't contain it.

ALL (V.O.)
To bring us fame and weed and
rum...

Jimi looks down with a proud smile.

LATER

Jimi writes by candle and computer light.

ALL (V.O.)
One day, when the writing is
done...

He types the final words: FADE OUT.

ALL (V.O.)
...we'll take our leave and gooo!

The SHANTY comes to a sweeping finale.

Jimi weeps. A sleeping Bernice throws a slipper at him.

SMACK

INT. BANK - DAY

Jimi enters like a boss and drops a huge stack of cash on the teller's counter and a jar of coins next to it.

JIMI
I'd like to make a deposit, please.

The Teller leers at the coins.

TELLER
We don't do that here.

JIMI
What? Deposits?

TELLER
No. Count coins.

JIMI
Oh, but you're a bank.

The Teller takes the cash and puts it in the machine. The machine chucks the cash through.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jimi stands at a COINSTAR machine, trying to figure it out.

JIMI
Ten percent? Rip off.

He presses a button and the machine hums to life.

He flips the jar over and the machine chugs the coins.

He looks around, embarrassed.

A piece of gum filters into the machine. It comes to a grinding halt.

JIMI

C'mon.

A HELP LIGHT FLASHES above him, accompanied by a HARSH ALARM.

He looks back to the line of people. The one clerk working has to leave them to attend Jimi. They all watch and silently judge him. He's sure of it. He hides his face.

INT. BANK - DAY

Jimi drags himself through the doors. This time he's drained. He snakes through the empty stanchion belts.

He gingerly places the rest of the cash on the counter.

JIMI

I'd like to make another deposit,
please.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jimi logs onto the WRITE ON! SCREENWRITING COMPETITION submission website. He uploads his script, bites his nails. The pointer hovers over the SUBMIT button.

He closes his eyes, says a silent prayer, and presses send.

A BIG RED ERROR BOX HONKS onto the page.

JIMI

What the fuck?

Jimi leans in and reads the error.

He missed the LATE REGISTRATION by one day.

He has to pay the REALLY LATE SUBMISSION FEE.

JIMI

A hundred and fifty MORE dollars?

He sighs, then clicks okay.

A green confirmation box pops up. Total price: \$250. He checks his bank account on his phone. \$253.36 in his account. It refreshes.

\$3.36 left.

His forehead drops to the table.

BERNICE (O.S.)
Hey babe, can you run to the store
and grab me pads and chocolates?

He groans.

INT. BELT - UP FACILITY

The workers shlep away. Jimi's face is smeared with dirt.
He's formed a deep frown -- a true WORKING MAN.

An old man, CHESTER, walks up to the belt with a shit grin.

FREDDIE
Aye, Chester! You're back, I
thought you were dead.

CHESTER
Freddie, how's that whore mother of
yours doing?

FREDDIE
Still mad she gave you Chlamydia?

CHESTER
No, I'm mad she won't get a
paternity test to prove you aren't
mine. This child support's killing
me.

Everyone laughs. Jimi is perplexed by this exchange. Chester
catches him staring.

CHESTER
What the hell is his problem? Hey,
bitch boy, what're you lookin' at?

JIMI
N-- Nothin'. Sorry.

Jimi turns away. Chason stops him.

CHASON
You just gonna let him talk to you
like that?

JIMI
I don't like confrontation.

CHASON
How the hell'd you make it this far
in life?

JIMI

What am I supposed to do, be an asshole?

CHASON

No, but you can't just take shit from people. Watch this. Hey Chester, ya ol' moth ball, I bet you could tell me what you were doing when Jesus died.

CHESTER

Very funny, your mother should've swallowed you.

Everyone laughs.

CHASON

You try.

JIMI

Hey Chester, your mother... is a cunt.

CHESTER

She was a saint, you worthless piece of shit!

Chester lunges at Jimi, ready to fight. Freddie holds him back.

Bryan marches over.

BRYAN

Mealworm, what the hell do you think you're doing?

JIMI

I was just trying to--

They look over to Chester, who is crying and being consoled by the other workers.

CHESTER

She was such a wonderful woman.

FREDDIE

Not cool, man.

BRYAN

Walk away, Mealworm. Just walk away.

Jimi throws his hands up and storms off.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jimi pushes into the locker room. RUTH enters behind him. She's dressed in coveralls like an older mentor type.

They sit on the bench.

JIMI

I'm sorry boss. I didn't mean to--

RUTH

No, no... it's okay. I get it. I've been here for fifty four years. Trust me, I get it.

JIMI

How is that even possible?

RUTH

It's not, but that's what we do here at PU -- the impossible.

She nudges closer, making him uncomfortable.

RUTH

You've really been impressive lately. Showing a lot of potential.

JIMI

Yeah?

RUTH

Oh, sure. You're quiet, docile, meek. You'd make the perfect supervisor. Would you like that, Jimi? To be a supervisor?

Jimi thinks about it.

RUTH

It's more responsibility, 60 hours a week -- somehow less pay. You'll also lose your rights and benefits.

JIMI

I had rights and benefits?

RUTH

Not really. So, what do you say? The position is yours.

JIMI

I dunno. Can I think about it?

RUTH

Of course. Just don't think too hard. We have people younger and smarter and stronger than you.

Ruth smacks Jimi on the back and heads for the door.

The thought of working 60 hours a week for 40 years in this hellhole weighs him down. Ruth stops before leaving.

RUTH

Oh, and turn that frown upside down, my friend.

JIMI

Huh?

RUTH

You're a quarterfinalist now.

JIMI

What?

RUTH

Haven't you heard? The email went out an hour ago. You were probably too busy working. Silly goose.

Jimi checks his phone.

JIMI

How'd you know?

Ruth points to a camera over her shoulder. It pans and zooms.

RUTH

We know everything.

Ruth's winks and leaves with a smile.

Jimi blushes as the email loads.

SUPER: FIREWORKS. Words like CONGRATULATIONS, QUARTERFINALIST, and TOP 40% OF 20,000 SUBMISSIONS burst from his head.

Jimi steps onto the balcony overlooking the facility floor, thrusts his fists in the air like Rocky, and roars.

WORKER (O.S.)

Fuck off!

CRASH TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jimi sits deflated on the couch. Bernice is on the opposite end, texting someone while a movie plays.

SUPER: 6 MONTHS LATER

He pulls down the EMAIL INBOX on his phone.

CHECKING FOR MAIL...

UPDATED JUST NOW.

Nada. Same unopened spam from BLUE SKY SCREENPLAY CONTEST.

He double checks the announcement date, it matches the present date, 7/7/2023.

He tries to move closer but Bernice stiff legs him. He settles into his humdrum corner.

JIMI

They offered me a promotion.

BERNICE

It's probably just a scam.

JIMI

No, at work.

BERNICE

Really? Why?

JIMI

The boss said I've been showing a lot of initiative.

BERNICE

Hmph.

She notices that he wants to tell her something. *Oh god.*

BERNICE

So... you took it. You took it, right?

JIMI

I told her I'd think about it.

She slaps him across the face with a pillow.

JIMI

Ow.

BERNICE

What's there to think about?

JIMI

This script I wrote, it's--

BERNICE

Are you fucking serious right now?

JIMI

This is the one. I feel it. I mean, I'm a quarterfinalist now.

BERNICE

First off, that doesn't mean shit. Second, you've said that about the last twenty shits you've written.

JIMI

Scripts.

BERNICE

I said scripts.

JIMI

No, you said--

BERNICE

I know what I said and I meant it. You better take that fuckin' promotion or we're-- Oh!

A bird crashes through the window and smacks the wall.

BERNICE

Fucking hell!

The bird cries out in pain. Jimi leaps up.

JIMI

It's a courier pigeon. There seems to be something...

Jimi notices a tiny scroll tied to the bird's broken foot. He pulls the slipknot and the paper rolls into his hand.

He unravels it.

JIMI

Congratulations **Jimi W.**,
We at the Write On! Screenwriting
Competition, first of its name,
hereby anoint you...*semifinalist*?!
No way!

Jimi hugs Bernice and hops in place. She remains limp.

JIMI
Can you believe it?

BERNICE
Did you win any prize money?

JIMI
What? No. Pshh. There's still like
five more rounds.

BERNICE
That's too bad. You coulda used it
to buy me a new window.

Bernice leaves the room. Jimi shoves open the broken window,
making the crack worse.

JIMI
Watch out world, I'm a semifinalist
now!

His voice echoes off the adjacent wall. He tosses the pigeon
for flight. It drops with a light thud.

Patchouli rolls over and throws up a thumb.

PATCHOULI
Hell yeah, man!

JIMI
Hell yeah!

PATCHOULI
Woo! You gonna eat that?

All joy leaves Jimi's face.

WORKERS (V.O.)
Break!!!

A MACHINE BUZZES AND POWERS DOWN WITH A POP

EXT. UNITED PARCELS FACILITY - DAY

Jimi and the rest of the workers stream out of the warehouse
doors. Jimi's hollow, unresponsive.

SUPER: ANOTHER 6 MONTHS LATER

FREDDIE
Fuck this place.

RONNY

They treat us like machines.

Jimi stares deep into an existential crisis.

JIMI

(Monotone)

That's all we are. Look at us.
Every day it's the same thing.
Nothing changes, nothing matters.
We just go through the motions,
numb. Dumb enough to believe that
one day an opportunity is just
gonna fall from the sky and land in
our laps. Hope is futile. The end
is nigh. Only death will set us
free. Lord, show us mercy.

CHASON

Ayo Jimi, ain't that you?

Chason points to the sky.

A plane flies by towing a banner that reads: CONGRATS 2023
WRITE ON! SCREENWRITING COMP FINALISTS!

A second plane tows another banner with the finalists: STOWE
HARDAWAY, SARAH MILLER, JIMI WOJCCHWSKI...

The list continues on but Jimi pays it no mind.

JIMI

Name's spelled wrong, but...that is
me. That's me!

His mood flips as his coworkers rush him like he's just won
the World Cup. They lift him on their shoulders and thrust
him in the air.

For a moment, he's on top of the world.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The window's been taped over. It's cold outside, but the
apartment is warm and radiant from the glow of candles.

Jimi cooks a nice dinner for Bernice. She enters and the
table has been set with flowers and a card.

BERNICE

What's all this?

Jimi sweeps over and gives her a kiss. She tries to pull away, but it's too late.

JIMI
Just dinner for m'lady.

BERNICE
Ew, don't say that. What did you do?

JIMI
Nothin'.

A sneaky smile breaks over his face.

BERNICE
Hmph. It actually smells good.

Jimi pulls back a chair. She hesitates. The pork shoulder steams before them.

JIMI
It better be. I spent seven hours on it.

BERNICE
Seven hours?

JIMI
Damn right. Roasted to perfection.

BERNICE
Is today a holiday or something?

JIMI
You can say that.

BERNICE
Didn't you have work?

JIMI
Oh-- I-- Maybe you should sit down.

BERNICE
Why would I have to sit down?

JIMI
You don't have to, but you'll probably want to.

Bernice sits. Her cheek is streaked with grease from work. Jimi drops to a knee and he takes her hand.

BERNICE
Oh my god, Jimi.

JIMI
Today marks a special day.

She gushes. A tender moment.

BERNICE
Aww, baby, finally...

JIMI
I quit that bullshit job.

BERNICE
Ye-- Wait, what?

JIMI
I'm officially a finalist.

BERNICE
What?!?

JIMI
I know, right?

BERNICE
You quit? As in, you quit your job?

Bernice goes numb.

JIMI
You're damned right! You're looking
at a finalist, baby.

She moans in pain.

JIMI
Th- That's a good thing.

BERNICE
Is it? What does that even mean?
Finalist?

JIMI
I dunno. It's gotta mean something.

BERNICE
So let me get this straight, you
quit your job?

JIMI
Darling, this is it. This is the
moment we've been waiting for.

Bernice's rage bubbles over.

The shelves tremble.

The dirty dishes in the sink clink together.

A picture frame of the couple falls off the wall and the glass shatters.

AN EARTHQUAKE

The emergency alarm system erupts from their phones, the TV, across the quaint mountain town.

The world settles.

BING. A NOTIFICATION.

He checks his phone.

JIMI
(Cryptically)
A winner has been announced.

BERNICE
Oh, for the love of god!

Jimi trembles as he scrolls the page.

JIMI
And the winner is...

Jimi squints to make sure he's reading correctly.

JIMI
Shia Labeau?

Bernice snickers.

BERNICE
Like, the actor?

A PANIC ALARM goes off in his head and he SEES RED.

JIMI
That son of a bitch.

She erupts in mad laughter.

JIMI
That mother fucking son of a bitch!

Jimi falls back onto the couch in a daze. Bernice paces behind him.

BERNICE

What a fuckin' loser! I knew it.
You'll never amount to anything.
Pathetic! I always knew you were a
fraud. I'm done. I'm so done.

Her abuse fades away as a trippy song like THE DOORS - RIDERS
ON THE STORM PLAYS.

Jimi's APOCALYPSE starts NOW:

NAPALM OVER A JUNGLE. THE BEATING OF HELICOPTER BLADES.

Jimi stares ahead at a fixed point. His hair is longer and
his beard is unkept.

The ceiling fan turns.

Bernice has movers remove everything but the couch he's
sitting on. She's all over a middle aged steel worker, JOE.

A pedestal fan oscillates.

Joe fucks Bernice doggy style in the kitchen. She flicks Jimi
off. He simply stares ahead, unaware or uncaring.

FLAMES IN THE TREES

Jimi stares up at the ceiling, his eyes wide and unflinching.

Pages of his script are strewn across the floor.

The cigarette hanging from his limp hand burns down to the
filter as he lies twisted on the couch.

He drops the cigarette. His script smolders beneath him as he
sleeps with a .38 snub nose revolver on his stomach.

Outside of the window, life resumes as normal.

Patchouli hangs his laundry with concern as Jimi stares at
him through the window.

JIMI (V.O.)

Screenwriting competitions, shit.

The burnt pages still smoke behind him.

JIMI (V.O.)

Another fuckin' screenwriting
competition.

Jimi takes a swig of his whiskey. Belches.

JIMI (V.O.)
 Every time, I think I'm gonna wake
 up and things will be different.

Jimi's coiled up in the corner of the room hugging his knees.

JIMI (V.O.)
 The first few rejections were the
 worst. But this--

He sleeps through the day -- then wakes up in a jolt and
 swats at the air.

JIMI (V.O.)
 I'd wake up, and there'd be
 nothing.

He squats over the pages of his script, ordering them
 methodically.

MUSIC FADES BACK IN

Jimi dances in his tighty whities.

He trembles with anger.

His face is painted and the world burns around him.

EXPLOSIONS IN THE TREES

He cries and contorts into a free form trance. Then, he's
 laughing hysterically.

He punches a flimsy door mirror, flips over the couch, and
 settles on the floor.

He notices his bloody hand, pours whiskey on it, and bellows
 like a cat in heat.

Curiosity gets the best of him and he licks the wound.

The poor bastard cries himself to sleep, sucking his thumb.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

He groggily wakes up and rises with suspicion.

JIMI (V.O.)
 Everyone gets what they deserve.

The KNOCKING intensifies.

JIMI
 Whattaya want?

He limps over on pins and needles.

JIMI (V.O.)
I wanted revenge, and for my sins,
I got it. Delivered to me like
Doordash.

Jimi opens the door.

JIMI
I don't have a tip.

It's Freddie and Chason from work.

He turns away from them and stumbles back to the couch.

JIMI
Sign for it and leave it by the
door. I'll get to it later, or the
rats will, I don't really care.

Freddie and Chason enter cautiously. They cover their noses
to block out the stench.

There's a mound of pizza boxes and trash in the kitchen. His
apartment has become a neckbeard nest.

FREDDIE
Dude, what the fuck is that smell?

CHASON
This ain't a good look.

FREDDIE
You mind putting on some clothes?

JIMI
Go on and get if you don't like it.

Freddie turns to leave. Chason stops her.

CHASON
Listen, we're worried about you.

JIMI
Worried? Why would you be worried?
I've never felt better.

Jimi waves the gun around.

FREDDIE
Whoa, what the fuck is that?

JIMI
Oh, this? It's a gun.

FREDDIE
No shit, why do you have a gun?

JIMI
Eh, I dunno. I blacked out and
must've ordered it online.

CHASON
We heard about what happened.

JIMI
What'd you hear?

Jimi steps aggressively to Chason.

Freddie cuts him off and hands him a shirt. Jimi puts it on.

FREDDIE
That you lost a singing competition
or some shit and had a melt down.

CHASON
I didn't know you could sing.

FREDDIE
I've heard him at work. He's got
the voice of an angel.

JIMI
It was a *screenwriting* competition.

FREDDIE
That don't mean shit to me, man.
Fact is--

JIMI
The fact is these screenwriting
competitions are bullshit. They
just capitalize on desperate
writers chasing pipe dreams, so
what -- some Hollywood asshole can
take that away from us too? Fuck
Shia Labuff--

CHASON
I know that you're angry right now,
but let's not-- Wait, you lost to
Shea Labouf? That's so cool!

FREDDIE

I fuckin' love that guy.
"You will not defeat us, you will
not..."

CHASON

"Do it!" Hahaha.

Freddie pumps her fist, Chason flexes his shoulder muscles.

JIMI

Are you fuckin' kiddin' me? No one
loves Shian Laboth except Shy
Labauf. He's a narcissistic,
abusive asshole who thinks he can
goal-keep the gates from the tired,
poor, huddled masses. Well, you
know what? Fuck that!

CHASON

Fun fact: He's shooting a movie
just out of town. I saw him at the
Full Moon Saloon last weee--

Freddie twists Chason's nipple, *why would you say that?*

Jimi hardens with a newfound determination.

JIMI

You don't say.

FREDDIE

Way, way, wait. Hold up. Maybe you
shouldn't focus so much on Shay
Lacroix right now, and instead
focus on fixing your own problems.
Know what I'm sayin'?

JIMI

He is my problem. He's everyone's
problem.

FREDDIE

He's the least of your worries.

Freddie looks around the sparse, nasty apartment.

FREDDIE

Trust me. You gotta straighten up
your life, man.

JIMI

You're right, I should straighten
him out.

Jimi hisses at him. The Super falls into Freddie and Chason's arms as Jimi bounds out of the apartment building's door like Frankenstein's monster.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jimi hobbles down the steps, spitting through his teeth.

THUNDER

He picks a direction, growls, and hobbles off.

A madman on the loose.

LIGHTNING CRACKS

EXT. FULL MOON SALOON - NIGHT

A torrential downpour. The backwoods bar sits at the base of a mountain. It's really just a shed with an awning.

Roughneck BIKERS hang outside smoking cigars.

Two boots stomp down in a puddle across the parking lot. An enormous shadow looms to meet the Bikers.

BIKER 1

Hey man, maybe we should scam.

Biker 1 tosses his cigar and they scurry inside.

Jimi staggers across the lot, hunched over and shrouded in shadows. Even rats run and hide.

INT. FULL MOON SALOON - NIGHT

Jimi barges through the double swinging doors and they slap against the walls. He takes a step into the oversized bar and the room turns to him.

Conversations shush.

The nomads at the bar, the hustlers playing poker in the back, the scared bikers taking refuge behind the pool table.

All eyes on the kid.

Jimi approaches the bar, his keys jingling in his pocket with each step. The BARKEEP cleans a pint glass with a dirty rag.

They lock eyes.

Jimi slides onto the stool across from the Barkeep.

BARKEEP

Not from around here, are ya?

JIMI

Actually, it was only about a
twenty minute drive.

BARKEEP

Whattaya want?

JIMI

I'm looking for Shia Labeauth.

The room breaks out in laughter. Jimi shifts uneasily on his squeaky rotating stool.

STRANGER (O.S.)

You don't find Chi Labeauve. Chi
Lebuthe finds you.

The room shudders into silence and turns to a dark corner.

Jimi spins around on the stool and catches himself with his feet. It squeaks like a drawn-out fart.

He looks deep into the shadows. A heavy presence lurks within. He puts two fingers in the Barkeep's face.

JIMI

Two whi--

The Barkeep slaps his hand out of the air like a fly.

JIMI

Ow! T-- Two whiskeys for me and...
the gentlemen.

The Barkeep stares him down. Jimi turns on a puppy face.

JIMI

Please?

INT. CORNER - FULL MOON SALOON - NIGHT

Jimi shimmies away from the bar, whiskey spilling everywhere.

He drops two half empty shot glasses onto the wood table.

The shadowed stranger looks up at him. Jimi pulls back the chair. The stranger clears his throat.

JIMI

May I?

The stranger extends a hand. Jimi sits.

STRANGER (O.S.)

That's a dope shirt.

Jimi looks down and feels his ripped collar.

JIMI

Thanks, but I'm not here to talk about fashion. What can you tell me about Shy Labeuof?

STRANGER (O.S.)

That information don't come cheap.

JIMI

How much?

The elusive figure leans forward into the light.

It's mother fuckin' KANYE WEST, y'all.

KANYE

53 million dollars.

JIMI

Oh my god!

KANYE

God? Naww. I'm bigger than God.

JIMI

You're Kanye West.

KANYE

Maybe I'm just a hologram.

Jimi touches Kanye's hand.

Kanye recoils in disgust and a smidgen of disappointment.

KANYE

We got a deal or what?

JIMI

I-- I don't have that kind of money.

KANYE

So be it.

Kanye tosses the whiskey over his shoulder like salt and rises. Jimi clenches the table as if it was about to fly away with the wind.

JIMI

Wait!

Kanye settles back down. He's listening.

JIMI

Please, Mr. West, Mr. West I-- I need to find him. If there's anything else I can do, anything.

Kanye observes Jimi's chic homeless look.

KANYE

Anything?

Kanye considers ALL of the possibilities.

KANYE

Your shirt.

JIMI

My shirt? You want my-- Oh-- Okay.

Jimi pulls the shirt off his back, gives it to Kanye, waits.

KANYE

Mmm -- it tells a story.

Kanye holds the raggedy shirt up, smells the armpit.

KANYE

Struggle. Desperation. Grandiose delusions of achieving unattainable goals. Finding one's inner strength to defeat their mortal enemy. Redemption. It's all in the fabric.

JIMI

I got it at Target.

Kanye shoots him a disbelieving, but approving look. He tosses Jimi his red leather jacket with a zillion zippers.

KANYE

Hide your nipples, you look ridiculous.

JIMI

Thanks. Wow, that's a whole lotta zippers.

KANYE

You never know, one of those zippers could save your life one day.

JIMI

Sure. So, Chai.

KANYE

Right, Chi. Why you wanna find such a man?

JIMI

That's my business. I heard he's shooting a film around here.

KANYE

Maybe. The mind is capable of anything.

JIMI

Mm. Where can I find the set?

KANYE

Deep in the heart of darkness.

Jimi gets frustrated.

JIMI

Yeezus.

KANYE

Bless you.

JIMI

That's not what I-- Where is this heart of darkness you speak of?

KANYE

I can only take you so far -- but I'm willing to show you the way.

JIMI

You could just give me the address. I have GPS.

KANYE

Where we're going, there ain't no stinkin' GPS.

Kanye pushes out of his chair and struts into the kitchen. Jimi follows.

INT. KITCHEN - FULL MOON SALOON - NIGHT

Kanye walks by the grill and daps up the Chef.

KANYE
What's good, Rico?

Jimmy follows behind as Kanye pushes out the back door. Rico stares blankly at Jimi.

JIMI
H-- Hey Rico.

Jimi continues through the door and plunges into darkness.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Kanye leads Jimi to a river. He pulls a canoe off the bank.

KANYE
Get in.

JIMI
You travel by canoe?

KANYE
I can go to Mars bi-weekly if I want to, or-or have a satellite shoot you down from space. I travel however the fuck I want. Get in.

Jimi hops in the front. Kanye pushes the canoe into the flowing waters, then hops in the back and steers down river.

JIMI
Where are you taking me?

KANYE
First, we gotta hit up the black lagoon. Got some shit I gotta take care of. Then, I'll drop you off at the falls. The rest is up to you.

JIMI
Where do I go from there?

KANYE
You'll have to pass beneath the Wailing Baby, then you wanna hang the second right at the third of the Three Forks, then you gotta cross the Valley of a Hundred Sorrows.

JIMI
That all sounds... crazy.

KANYE
Yeah well, you gotta be a crazy
mother fucker to go looking for a
mother fucker like Shah Labowf.

They pass under a swinging bridge. The feet of a malformed
woodland creature dangle over them.

The creature tunes a banjo.

KANYE
...but you know who else people
thought was crazy? Me. Steve Jobs.
Leonardo Da Vinci. Me.

The woodland creature picks the opening of DUELING BANJOS.

EXT. BLACK LAGOON - DAWN

Kanye pulls up to a dock. A peaceful yet primitive village is
just waking up as fishermen prepare their nets.

KANYE
Chill here for a sec.

Kanye hops out of the canoe and ties it to the dock. He pulls
some buffalo hides out of the canoe and approaches the
fisherman. He speaks their language. They escort him toward
the village.

Jimi presses down on a button on the rim of the canoe, like
the lock on a car door. A couple lingering fisherman watch
him with weariness. He's too scared to make eye contact.

The gentle patter of the water on the canoe, the birds
chirping, the light fog -- it's all so serene.

An ARROW plunks into the calm waters before him -- the
feather fletching vibrating from the force.

SHOUTING from the village.

Kanye sprints away, tripping over the buffalo hides.

The villagers chase after him, loosening arrows. He screeches
like a child running away from a beehive.

KANYE
Get it going! Start the canoe!

Jimi unties the rope from the piling and pushes off from the dock. Kanye bounds down the dock like a fashion runway.

A tomahawk clears his shoulder and sticks into a wood piling.

Jimi is swept downstream. Kanye LEAPS and lands in the canoe.

The villagers gather at the end of the dock. The arriving parties push those on the edges into the water.

The villagers pump their fists and shoot arrows that rain down around Jimi and Kanye.

The canoe clears the bend. Suddenly it's quiet and peaceful.

JIMI

What the hell was that all about?

KANYE

They said I sold 'em fake furs. Can you believe that shit?

Jimi turns around and gags.

JIMI

Holy Toledo! You're hit.

A bloody arrowhead protrudes from Kanye's shoulder.

KANYE

No shit.

Kanye snaps the tip off. He bends over and...

KANYE

Just a flesh wooo--

...pulls the arrow out of his back.

Blood sprays and gushes out like a volcanic eruption.

Jimi's world SPINS OUT OF CONTROL. His eyes roll back and he faints -- his cheek crashing to the canoe's bottom.

LATER - DAY

Jimi sleeps peacefully in a pool of blood as the flow of the river speeds up.

A low rumble in the distance.

The canoe strikes a rock and water splashes in his face.

He wakes up in a shock and takes stock of his surroundings.

White water rolls around him.

JIMI

Um, Kanye.

The river ahead drops off the ends of the earth.

A WATERFALL.

CERTAIN DEATH.

Jimi looks back to Kanye, hunched over yet still holding onto his paddle.

JIMI

Kanye? Kanye, wake up.

Jimi shakes to wake him, but his head rolls back.

He's DEAD.

The canoe strikes another rock and Kanye slips overboard.

JIMI

No! Ye!

Kanye's body is swept away.

Jimi holds on for dear life.

The flow strengthens.

The river thrashes the canoe violently.

Jimi's frozen with fear.

Gravity lets out. He squeals like a pig.

The canoe drops off a small rapid and he's thrown overboard.

He sinks and is caught in a hydraulic water flow.

He's pulled under, comes up, pulled under -- spit free.

The waters rush him downstream.

He bobs in and out gasping for air.

He flails away chaotically.

The canoe flies over the edge of the waterfall and shatters on the rocks below.

Jimi screams and closes his eyes, ready for death.

The zipper of his red leather jacket reaches out and catches the twig of an overhanging fallen tree.

He opens his eyes. He's dangling over the edge by the zipper and twig.

Jimi lifts himself onto the branch, has a moment of reprieve.

CRACK.

The branch drops an inch. Jimi nearly loses grip.

A crack spreads down to the trunk of the fallen tree.

Jimi shimmies toward the trunk. The branch shakes under his weight. He slips on the wet wood.

CRACK.

He plunges but the wood holds.

He scrambles and the branch drops out from under him. He sinks and catches the trunk of the fallen tree as the branch is swept over the falls.

He crawls to the shoreline, sobbing and wallowing.

Once he's cried it out, he rises to his knees and looks to the horizon from the waterfall's edge.

A rock formation along the gorge is strangely recognizable.

A WAILING BABY. *No shit.*

Jimi sighs and accepts his fate. He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out the gun. There is a god.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Jimi pushes through the thicket. Branches slap him in the face. He becomes entangled in vines. He trips on roots. He's clearly not an outdoorsman.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Jimi stumbles out of the jungle and trips over the rocks of the embankment in a perpetually clumsy free-fall.

He looks back up to the waterfall, then to the WAILING BABY. *Shit, barely made a dent.* He labors along the riverbank.

TRAVEL MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

Jimi traverses over mountain tops, free climbs cliffs, hikes through a blizzard up-hill all ways.

He reaches the WAILING BABY -- it's a lot smaller up close. He wails back at the rocks. The earth shakes in fear.

He continues on angrily.

Standing before the THREE FORKS, which is nine tributaries of the river. He mulls over the choices.

JIMI

Third right, second fork?

He picks one and presses on. Then changes his mind and crosses over into the right path. The second right of the third fork.

Jimi staggers across the VALLEY OF A HUNDRED SORROWS. Heat rises from the scorched earth. He nearly collapses with every lunge forward.

Suddenly, a sandstorm sweeps over him.

END TRAVEL MONTAGE

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Jimi pushes through the bushes -- half naked, delirious, and covered in sand. He mumbles to himself incoherently.

A commotion causes him to stop.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I'll never talk.

MAN (O.S.)

We'll see about that.

Jimi ducks behind a tree and gets a decent view of a PARAMILITARY GROUP holding a WOMAN hostage at the end of a firing squad.

She's bound to a tree, but she's no damsel in distress. A military transport vehicle idles nearby.

WOMAN

You're making a big mistake.

MAN

The biggest mistake I've ever made is letting you live. I won't make that mistake twice.

The man lifts a gun to her forehead. She doesn't flinch.

Jimi cowers away and steps on a branch. SNAP.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Hey! You!

Jimi shrinks like a turtle. Soldiers emerge with guns trained on him. He throws up his hands and is marched out.

The woman glares at him, confused. Her familiar beauty makes him shy away. Surely he's seen her before.

The MAN bares a striking resemblance to TOM BERENGER. Old and ineffective, but still bad ass.

TOM

Now, where were we?

SOLDIER

"Won't make that mistake twice."

TOM

Ah, yes. I won't make that mistake twice.

WOMAN

Do it. I dare you.

Tom cocks his gun and steadies his aim between her eyes. He tickles the trigger. Jimi hangs in the soldiers' grasps.

Tom Berenger grits his teeth -- and his head EXPLODES.

His body drops and blood sprays all over Jimi's face.

The sound wave of the gun shot finally reaches them from a SNIPER in the trees.

JIMI

Holy shit.

The back end of the military vehicle EXPLODES and FLIPS.

Jimi screams and ducks behind the tree.

Bullets rain down on them. Several soldiers drop. Others return fire blindly while seeking refuge.

WOMAN

Cut me free.

Jimi sees a buck knife on the headless man's belt. He crawls out and gags as he wriggles the knife from the sheath.

Flames rise up in the trees as charges detonate around them. A soldier flies from impact.

Jimi cuts the rope and the woman wrestles her arms free. She immediately engages in hand-to-hand combat with multiple soldiers, breaking knees and jaws.

Jimi's astonished. She's a wonder of a woman. He realizes who she is. IT IS WONDER WOMAN. GAL GADOT in all her glory.

Gal hooks Soldier 1's arm, wrestles his machine gun away, and shoots a charging Soldier 2 in the chest.

She then spins Soldier 1 like they're dancing a tango, and shoots him point black in the face.

A MASKED NINJA SOLDIER twist flips over the flaming military vehicle. They square off as he twirls two samurai swords.

Gal pulls the trigger.

Empty.

The Ninja's eyes smile.

She tosses the gun and throws her dukes up. *Let's go!*

The Ninja sprints at her.

JIMI

No!

Jimi comes out of nowhere and pushes Gal to the ground.

The ninja leaps in the air and descends his swords on Jimi.

A roaring shadow swoops down from the trees on a vine and drop kicks the Ninja in the face.

The hero sweeps around and scoops Jimi in his arms.

SHIA LABEOUF

in the BUFF.

SHIA

There you are.

Shia dips Jimi and plants a passionate KISS.

He pulls his wet lips away as flames climb up the trees. Jimi squirms in his arms.

Realization settles in.

SHIA
What the fuck? You're not
Anastasia.

Shia drops Jimi hard to the ground.

SHIA
Cut! Cuut!

The lights come on, revealing a rinky-dink set.

SHIA
Harry! I swear to god I'm dealing
with amateurs. Harry!

HARRY, a nasally producer, jogs out onto set.

HARRY
Sheya, baby, it's nothin'. We can
edit her onto him in post.

The Ninja lowers his weapons impatiently. Tom Berenger
timidly pokes his head out of the prosthetic torso.

SHIA
Where the fuck is Anastasia?

Gal steps forward.

SHIA
I thought we talked about hitting
our marks.

GAL
We did. I'm sorry, I didn't know--

SHIA
A quarter of an inch, Ana. That's
all it takes. Do you want another
beheading on set? Huh? 'Cause I'll
Ned Stark the shit outta Karl right
now if that's what you want.

KARL, a Production Assistant, lowers his head and steps back.

GAL
No. No, of course not. Karl's been
through enough.

Karl seems disappointed.

SHIA
Then who the fuck is this and why
is he on your mark?

GAL

I-- Eh--

SHIA

Who the fuck are you?

JIMI

J-- J--

SHIA

You know what? It doesn't even fuckin' matter. You just shit a quarter of a million dollars down the drain.

Shia turns to the cast and crew, who linger dejectedly.

SHIA

All of you. You dropped the fuckin' ball. What are we even doing here? Huh? You call yourselves professionals? Fuck! I'm sick of this shit.

Shia kicks over a C-Stand. The light shatters on the ground and he marches off.

The GRIP/GAFFER throws up his hands, *what the hell, man?*

Gal shoots Jimi a scathing glare as the crew scatters.

GAL

Thanks a lot.

She saunters away. Jimi is left in the middle of the mess holding the buck knife. He cuts himself. *Ow.*

EXT. FIRE - NIGHT

The crew huddles around a small fire. They're cold, tired.

Gal plunks down next to Karl and wraps a blanket around him. He shivers under the blanket. They've seen better times.

The crew members whisper amongst themselves, stealing glances at Jimi sitting off by himself.

GAL

Hey kid.

Jimi looks around. Clearly he's the only one there.

GAL
Yeah you, come over here.

Jimi jogs over, fearful of the shadows. He sits across from Gal. Tom offers him a shirt.

TOM
You should cover up those nipples.

Jimi puts the oversized shirt on and slinks a little lower.

JIMI
I'm sorry I ruined your lil' movie.

GAL
Hey, it's not my money. Where are you from?

JIMI
Not far from here.

The crew chatters with excitement.

GAL
So you know your way around?

JIMI
Not really.

The crew groans and grumbles. The Director of Photography, BILL STEVENS, angrily stands.

BILL
I knew he was worthless.

Bill marches away to his tent.

HARRY
We'll never escape. We're trapped, done for, doomed.

GAL
Now wait just a minute. He found us. Maybe he can lead us out.

Boots crunch through the underbrush and settle on the edge of darkness. It's Assistant Director ALLEN DEERFIELD. He's fully adopted Shia's homeless style, and sporting an assault rifle.

ALLEN
The director will speak to you now.

Gal nods, giving Jimi the courage to stand and make his way to a lone HADDAD'S CAST TRAILER that looks as though it's always been there. There could be no other way.

Allen climbs the stairs, knocks, takes a cautious step back.

The door creaks open gently.

Allen extends a hand and ceremoniously bows.

Jimi climbs the stairs and enters.

INT. HADDAD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

The door slams shut behind Jimi. He jumps.

The trailer is lit by candles.

A BUZZING from the back.

JIMI

Hello?

Jimi approaches. The buzzing gets louder.

JIMI (V.O.)

It smelled like slow death in there, nightmares.

A gnarly tattoo artist is hunched over a chair with his back to Jimi. In the seat getting a face tattoo is Shia.

JIMI

Mr. Leboaf?

Shia lifts a hand and the tattoo artist stops, drops his tool, and leaves the room. Shia waves for Jimi to get closer. He pats a chair beside him.

Jimi sits, his pocketed hand gripping the gun.

Shia leans into the flickering candle light with a fresh tear drop tattoo under his eye. A real tear drops over it.

SHIA

I'm ashamed of how I acted earlier.

JIMI

Yeah, about that...

SHIA

No, truly. I'm sorry. It'll never happen again.

Shia's mood shifts from sadness to suspicion.

SHIA
Who sent you? TMZ? FBI? Interpol?

JIMI
No one.

SHIA
How'd you find me?

JIMI
Yeezy brought me.

SHIA
Yeezy? That son of bitch. Lemme
guess, he wants his hat back. He
can have it.

Shia pulls the flat billed hat off and throws it at Jimi.

SHIA
It's brought me nothin' but bad
luck.

JIMI
I'm not here for the hat. You won
the Write On! Screenwriting
Competition.

SHIA
No shit? I forgot I submitted to
that -- as a joke.

JIMI
A joke?

Jimi tightens his grip on the gun. Shia gauges him from the shadows, leans in.

SHIA
Who are you?

JIMI
Jimi. Jimi Wojciechowski.

SHIA
Jesus, I though my name was bad.
Are you an assassin?

JIMI
No, I'm just a writer.

SHIA
You're neither. You're an errand
boy. A puppet.

A tea kettle whistles. Shia rises, grinds herbs into tea, and pours himself some. With his back turned, Jimi slowly pulls the gun from his pocket.

SHIA
You owe me a substantial amount of
money.

JIMI
I owe you nothing.

SHIA
I'll let you make it up to me.
There's been a recent job opening.
Due to an unforeseen freak
accident, I'm in need of a new pup--
a new personal assistant.

Shia twirls to face Jimi, who slips the gun back.

JIMI
Oh, I dunno about all that.

SHIA
I insist.

JIMI
That's awfully kind of you, but...

SHIA
Have you ever considered a life of
absolute freedom?

JIMI
What?

SHIA
Freedom from the opinions of
others? Even opinions of yourself?

JIMI
I never really thought about that.

SHIA
Join me, Puppet. Help me finish
this film and I'll give you freedom
from your worthless existence.

Jimi considers.

SHIA

It's not a choice, puppet.

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Jimi carries water from the river in buckets made from chopped wood. He gets a good look at their camp. A desperate, wild bunch -- ghosts of a forgotten frontier.

JIMI (V.O.)

For a while, at least, things were calm. It seemed as though the hurricane had passed.

Tents, a makeshift hut, and a fire pit make out the northeast border. A bamboo cage sits off alone. Shia's trailer sits on the hill as an overlook.

A BUZZING attracts Jimi to the watchers of the camp. The rotting, SHRUNKEN HEADS of former crew members, impaled on spikes that line the perimeter of the camp. The flies rage.

Jimi approaches Bill as he sets up a shot.

JIMI

That's some realistic set design.

Bill lends Jimi an annoyed and grave glare.

BILL

Those were our friends.

Bill marches away, leaving Jimi perplexed.

Shia jokes around with the tired crew members. They laugh along uneasily. Harry stands by, waiting for Shia. The tone of his laughter becomes sinister -- selfish.

Shia directs the scene with Tom and Gal in the golden light of morning. Good spirits abound. Then again, they're actors.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Jimi grinds and pours the tea now. He enters the back room.

Shia is sullen as he watches the REACTION VIDEO of himself watching his own movies.

Jimi offers him a cup.

JIMI (V.O.)
And then just like that, he'd
shatter into a million pieces.

Shia smacks the cup out of his hand and it shatters against the wall. The Shia on the screen laughs.

JIMI (V.O.)
I've never seen a man so broken,
his soul ripped apart.

The fragments dance on the faux marble floor. Both Shia LaBeoufs are now crying.

EXT. TRAILER - DAY

Shia exits his trailer and the nearby crew's conversation quiets. Karl doesn't see him and continues to chuckle.

SHIA
You talking shit 'bout me?

Shia feints an attack at Karl, then laughs it off as he continues onto set.

Jimi watches as he CHURNS BUTTER for the CRAFTY.

JIMI (V.O.)
You almost felt bad for him.

EXT. RIVER - EVENING

A fish swims in a still pool of clear water. Jimi's reflection emerges on the surface. He throws a spear -- it misses the pool entirely and ricochets off a rock.

A SLOW CLAP causes him to turn. Gal laughs on the shoreline.

GAL
Impressive.

JIMI
Oh, like you can do better?

Gal grabs the spear and tosses it from ten twenty feet away.

It sinks into the pool before Jimi. He pulls it out of the water. Two massive rainbow trout wriggle on the end.

JIMI
Of course you can.

Gal smirks.

JIMI

Could you teach me how to do that?

Gal hops over the stones, then takes the spear away from him. She drops the fish into a bucket, then assumes big spoon position behind Jimi.

GAL

First you wanna...

She pulls his ass closer.

EXT. FIREPIT - EVENING

Shia watches Gal showing Jimi through the motions with envy. He whittles a stake. Shrunk heads surround him.

The BUZZING of flies echoes inside of his head.

He leans over and whispers in Allen's ear. Allen gets up and heads toward the river.

EXT. RIVER - EVENING

Gal guides Jimi's throw while pulling his hips in. He tosses the spear wildly in the air like a loose missile.

GAL

That's... better.

They giggle.

ALLEN (O.S.)

Ahem!

They part and act like nothing is happening. Allen stands off in the bushes.

ALLEN

He's getting hangry.

Gal clears her throat and hands Allen the bucket of fish.

GAL

This ought to quell his hunger.

Allen watches them as he heads back down the trail.

EXT. TENT - EVENING

Allen drops the bucket of fish by Jimi's tent and looks back. Jimi's attention is diverted by Gal. Allen squats and unzips the tent.

He searches the sparse living quarters, then spots a stack of folded laundry. On the top, Jimi's revolver.

Allen pockets it, zips up the tent, and hurries along with the bucket of fish.

EXT. FIRE PIT - EVENING

The cast and crew suck the meat from the fish bones.

A BUGLE SOUNDS.

Allen emerges holding an assault rifle on the ready.

ALLEN
Attention!

The crew continues to eat.

ALLEN
I said, attention!

They pay him no mind.

Allen fires the assault rifle in the air. It nearly kicks out of his hands.

The crew scrambles into formation. Bill remains seated.

BILL
What's all of this about?

ALLEN
Your director will be with you shortly.

Shia steps out from the shadows. Harry tries to intercept and reason with him. Shia ignores him, then joins Allen's side.

He keeps his back turned to the crew and whispers in Allen's ear.

ALLEN
Thank you all for coming.

TOM

Where the hell else would we be?
We're being held hostage.

Shia cracks his neck, then Allen does the same. Shia whispers. Allen nods.

ALLEN

Your director would like to remind
you that you're under contract.

Tom grovels and takes a step back into the crowd.

ALLEN

Now, tomorrow will be another long,
grueling day. We begin shooting the
final scene before day break.

The crew applauds.

ALLEN

Shut up!

Their elation crashes hard.

ALLEN

Unfortunately, since we're behind
on budget, Harry insists we'll have
to make cuts.

The crew picks up rocks and sticks to throw at Harry.

HARRY

I never-- Ow! Stop it!

ALLEN

Please report to the production hub
immediately until further
instruction.

Allen nudges Bill's belly with the barrel of his rifle.

ALLEN

Let's go, people.

The cast and crew shamle over to the PRODUCTION HUB -- which
is just a BAMBOO CAGE.

They climb inside at gun point. Gal helps A GINGERLY OLD
POLISH BABUSHKA inside like an emergency worker.

Before stepping up the bamboo ladder, Jimi looks back to the
trailer. Shia watches solemnly in the doorway.

Jimi climbs inside.

INT. PRODUCTION HUB - NIGHT

The cast and crew huddle together in the bamboo cage. They're sore from hours of waiting. A silent yet unmistakable dread hovers over them.

Torches provide enough light to capture their fear.

Footsteps in the dark.

Allen emerges with his gun and he unlocks the door.

ALLEN

You and...

He points to an EXTRA and...

Karl sinks into Gal's arms. She shields him. Allen sees this and smiles. He points to Karl.

ALLEN

You.

GAL

No.

ALLEN

His orders.

Karl wails.

KARL

Please, don't let them take me.

GAL

I won't.

ALLEN

Let's go. Now.

GAL

I said, no.

Allen cocks the gun and points it at Gal.

GAL

What're you gonna do, kill me? Do it! Could you imagine what the media would do to you?

ALLEN

The media? Ha! I don't care what anyone thinks about me. I'm free from all of that now.

GAL

Clearly. Look at you. You enable him because you're just like him.

This pings Allen's heart.

Allen CRACKS her forehead with the BUTT of the gun. She falls back unconscious. Jimi catches her and gently lies her in a bed of hay.

ALLEN

Anyone else want their whistle blown?

Karl clamors over Gal's wound.

ALLEN

Count of three before I start shooting. One.

Allen lifts the gun to the crew. They climb over each other like crabs in a bucket.

ALLEN

Two...

He cocks his gun again... for dramatic effect.

BILL

For fuck's sake.

Bill grabs Karl and shoves him out of the cage. The rest of the crew protest.

EXT. PRODUCTION HUB - NIGHT

Karl drops hard in front of Allen's boots. The Extra comes out without a fight, his head stooped in defeat.

Allen clicks his tongue and motions with his gun to march. They do so.

INT. PRODUCTION HUB - NIGHT

The crew shoots Bill disapproving looks. Tom looks ready to fight him.

BILL
What? Better him than us.

GAL (O.S.)
Wuh--

Everyone turns their attention to Gal as she regains consciousness. Jimi helps her sit up.

JIMI
Yeezy does it.

GAL
Karl. Where's Karl?

Her vision adjusts and she sees Karl being led to the small hut with a roof made of dry palm fronds.

GAL
Karl!

Karl screeches like a wounded crow.

KARL
Gal! Help. Please!

GAL
Let him go!

Karl's led into the hut by Allen's rifle. His squealing is reduced to silence when the door slams shut behind them.

GAL
Karl.

She grabs the bamboo bars and lets off a PRIMEVAL SHRIEK.

TOM
It's okay. It's going to be--

GAL
No, it's not okay! This has to stop. We can't keep giving these monsters power.

HARRY
What're we supposed to do? He's above the line.

GAL
Like you're any better. Who gave him this kind of power in the first place? Huh?

HARRY
Hey, he's not my responsibility.

GAL
Somebody needs to hold him
accountable.

Gal pushes Harry. Tom breaks them up.

TOM
Hey, hey! Squabbling amongst
ourselves isn't going to help.

BILL
And what do you propose we do?

Gal turns to Jimi. Everyone hones in on him.

GAL
You.

JIMI
Me?

GAL
You're close to him.

JIMI
I hate him just as much as you do.

GAL
But he trusts you.

JIMI
What do you want me to do?

They exchange glances of uncertainty. The Crafty holds out a pouch. Gal offers it to Jimi.

GAL
Put this in his tea.

JIMI
What is it? What'll happen to him?

CRAFTY
It'll neutralize him.

GAL
And give us enough time to escape.

JIMI
I-- I can't do that. I'm--

In a last ditch effort, Gal pulls Jimi in and plants a kiss on him. He pulls her in and tries to make out with her.

She slips the poison into his pocket and pushes him away with a bit of suction.

GAL

Please, Jimi. Before...

JIMI

Yeah, sure, anything you want.

BANG!

A gun pops off in the hut.

The cast and crew are reduced to silence as crickets take back the night.

The door of the hut creaks open and Allen staggers out. He steps into the torch light, his face covered in blood. He points to Jimi.

ALLEN

Puppet. He wants you.

Gal rubs his back. In a daze, Jimi stands.

The door of the cage opens and Jimi steps out.

Jimi looks back to the miserable lot and salutes them.

Bill spits.

Time slows as he's led to the hut.

The crew hangs on the bars, watching a dead man walking.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

Jimi and Allen enter. Mosquitos line up for an open bar on Shia and Karl. They sit around a small folding table with Jimi'S REVOLVER in the middle. Karl sobs.

The Extra lies next to an overturned folding chair with a bullet hole in his temple.

The wall has been splattered with brain matter. The haze of gun powder lingers in the air.

Allen rightens the chair and pats the bloody padded back.

Jimi feels his pocket. The small packet of poison.

SHIA
Nice of you to join us, Puppet.

JIMI
Is that my--

SHIA
I had Allen search your belongings.
I knew there was something off
about you.

JIMI
Something off -- *about me?*

SHIA
Sit down and shut up.

Jimi sits across from Karl. He's a mess. Snot oozes out of his nose.

JIMI
Hey, you okay?

He trembles, *no*.

JIMI
Don't worry, we're gonna get you
outta here.

SHIA
Don't lie to him like that.

Shia grabs the gun, flips open the cylinder, and shows Jimi and Karl a single bullet. He slides the bullet in, snaps the cylinder shut, and spins it.

Jimi laughs.

JIMI
You're crazy.

SHIA
I'm. Not. Crazy.

ALLEN
He's just misunderstood.

SHIA
Eccentric!

ALLEN
Yes, eccentric. Sorry, sir. That's
the word I was looking for. I'll do
better next time.

JIMI
You have to be crazy if you think
I'm--

BANG.

Shia slams the gun on the table and spins it. The barrel lands on Karl. He shakes uncontrollably.

KARL
Oh, dear god, no.

JIMI
You don't have to do it, Karl.

Karl is shocked by this. He looks to Shia for confirmation.

SHIA
You're getting paid \$50 a day to do
one thing and one thing only.
Whatever I say. Do it.

JIMI
Don't.

SHIA
Do it!

Karl seesaws between the two.

JIMI
Karl, listen to me--

SHIA
Just do it.

JIMI
No, Karl. Don't.

SHIA
Stop giving up and do it! Now!

Karl grips the gun and hyperventilates.

JIMI
You don't have to do anything you
don't want to. Karl.

SHIA
Mao!

Shia slaps Karl across the face.

Karl bites down, lifts the gun to his temple, hisses like a tea pot, and pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

He drops the gun and convulses.

JIMI

It's okay, okay? You made it, you made it.

Jimi laughs nervously. Karl joins him.

Shia slides the gun to Jimi.

SHIA

Your turn.

JIMI

You son of a bitch. I'm not playing your games.

Shia slaps him.

SHIA

Do it!

JIMI

Oh, you son of-- Ooh, I'm gonna kill you.

Shia slaps him again.

SHIA

Mao.

JIMI

That what you want? Huh?

Jimi lifts the gun and roars as he pulls the trigger...

...and puts an empty chamber in the gun. He slams the gun to the table and roars.

Allen golf claps. Shia slides the gun to Karl.

Karl is still now. His nerves have settled. He seems at peace. Takes the gun.

Jimi grabs his arm.

JIMI

Don't do it, Karl. Come home with us. Just come home.

KARL
Tell my mother I love her.

He closes his eyes, takes a breath, rips his hand from Jimi's grasp, and salutes the gun to his temple.

JIMI
No!

BANG

Karl's head whips back. Blood sprays the wall. Jimi rushes and catches Karl's body as it rolls out of the chair.

JIMI
Karly! Oh, god Karly.

He guides Karl to the ground and howls.

EXT. PRODUCTION HUB - NIGHT

The crew watches the hut as Jimi's screams echo through the night. They saunter away from the bars.

Gal continues to watch. The flames of the torches reflect off her vengeful eyes.

The door of the hut opens and Jimi is led back to the cage.

He enters and sits in a stupor. The rest of the crew watch him wearily from a distance. Once Allen is gone...

JIMI
I'll do it.

A sigh of relief wafts from the cage. Gal slides over and rests her head on his shoulder. He wraps his arm around her. They commiserate in silence.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Jimi enters. Shia sits alone, shrouded in shadows.

SHIA
Look at what you made me do.

JIMI
I didn't make you do anything.

SHIA

If you hadn't blown 250k, they'd still be alive. We had to cut the budget somehow.

JIMI

Don't you put that on me.

SHIA

It's all on you.

JIMI

You did that. You made that choice. These are people you're hurting. They're not disposable.

SHIA

Do you think I wanted them to die? Huh? That I woke up today and thought gee, I hope I get the chance to kill someone today? You did that. If I go down, you go down with me.

The tea kettle hisses behind Jimi, startling him.

Shia languidly waves his hand for Jimi to prepare the tea and covers his face with a hot towel.

Jimi turns his back to Shia and pours the scalding hot water in a French Press. Then, he mashes the tea leaves.

Jimi looks back -- Shia's face is still covered.

Jimi removes the pouch of POISON from his pocket, feels it in his hand.

SHIA (O.S.)

What are they saying?

JIMI

That you've gone totally insane. And, uh, that your method is unsound.

SHIA

Does my method seem unsound?

JIMI

I don't see any method at all.

Shia grumbles. Jimi swirls the tea with a spoon and carries it over to him.

Jimi hands him the tea.

Shia takes a sip.

SHIA

Maybe they're right. I've done horrible things to get into character -- shot stray dogs, slaughtered entire villages, hurt everyone I ever loved. People-- They just don't know what it takes to go full method. It-- takes a piece of your soul every damn time, and I'm tired, Puppet, so tired.

Shia gulps the rest down and falls back, slipping away.

JIMI

Then just go to sleep.

Shia murmurs to himself.

JIMI

Sleep.

Shia slips into sleep. Jimi waits a moment, then nudges him. He starts snoring.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Jimi bounds out of the trailer. Bill and Tom finish fastening Allen to a tree with a ratchet strap. His forehead is bloody. He's been knocked unconscious. The crew awaits the news.

BILL

Didja do it?

Jimi nods. They celebrate like a soccer team after a goal.

GAL

We have to be quiet and move fast.

The crew scatters like crazed ants to gather enough to survive on. Gal places her hand on Jimi's chest.

GAL

Thank you.

She takes charge and directs traffic.

GAL

This way. Stay calm.

Jimi looks back to Shia's trailer with a ping of regret.
It sits lonely, dark -- quiet amidst the chaos.

EXT. TRAILHEAD - NIGHT

The crew huddles at the edge of the campsite.

Jimi waits with Tom. He's conflicted.

Gal escorts the Polish Babushka over.

GAL

That's everyone. Ready?

JIMI

There's something I have to do. Go
on without me. I'll catch up.

GAL

We won't leave without you. Hurry.

Jimi nods and jogs back to the camp.

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Jimi enters the trailer cautiously. Shia snores so deep that
he nearly chokes himself awake.

Jimi stands over him, knife in hand.

He psyches himself up.

He lifts the knife above his head.

ALLEN (O.S.)

Don't you dare.

Jimi turns to the barrel of Allen's rifle.

JIMI

Think about this.

ALLEN

Drop the knife.

Jimi drops it and holds his hands up.

ALLEN

You could never make it in this
industry. You're too thin skinned,
weak. You don't have what it takes.

Jimi straightens his posture.

JIMI

What I gotta do? Huh? Give up my
soul like you?

ALLEN

At least bare a little of it.

Jimi rips open his shirt and bares his chest. He beats at his
heart. His breasts jiggle.

JIMI

Here it is. Take it!

ALLEN

Dude, your nipples.

Jimi takes his breast in his hand.

JIMI

What -- these? Can't handle 'em?

Jimi squeezes and milk sprays into Allen's eyes like mace.
Allen falls back, blinded.

ALLEN

What the fuck?

Jimi tackles Allen into a wall of TEEN CHOICE AWARDS and a
DAYTIME EMMY. The knife flies. They wrestle in the glass and
Jimi spots the knife across the trailer.

Jimi grabs the EMMY and bashes Allen's head with it.

He breaks free and crawls for the knife.

Snatching the knife, he rises and turns.

Allen pile-drives Jimi onto Shia in bed.

Allen straddles Jimi and Jimi slashes unsuccessfully at
Allen's face. Allen gets a hold of Jimi's wrist and
INTERCEPTS the knife.

Allen stabs down.

Jimi catches Allen's forearms and the tip of the knife falls
just short of his eye.

A stalemate as the knife stays steady.

Allen presses down with all his strength. Jimi loses his
hold. Allen surges down.

Jimi dodges the knife, and it stabs Shia in the shoulder.

Allen becomes terrified. *His dear director!*

Jimi throat checks Allen, rolls on top of him, and pins him on top of Shia. They've switched places, the knife just shy of Allen's sternum.

JIMI

I'm sorry. You left me no choice.

The knife slowly plunges into Allen's chest. Allen grovels in pain. Over his shoulder, Shia's EYES SHOOT WIDE OPEN.

Shia roars to life and BITES into Allen's neck. Allen screams and blood sprays everywhere.

Jimi falls to the ground and kicks himself back. Allen is tossed aside and Shia rises like Nosferatu.

JIMI

How are you alive?

SHIA

You're gonna need stronger drugs than that.

Jimi gets to his feet and Shia rushes at him.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Shia tackles Jimi off the steps and they crash to the ground. Jimi gets to his knees. Shia kicks him in the gut.

Jimi drops to all fours.

Shia pulls a convenient MACHETE from a chopping stump and towers over Jimi's neck.

SHIA

You're gonna die in obscurity, boy.
No one will ever know your name.

Shia steps forward with murder in his eyes.

He cocks back to behead Jimi.

A stream of FIRE billows out from the darkness and blankets Shia in flames.

He staggers backwards, engulfed and flailing.

Tom struts out from the night with a FLAME THROWER. He helps Jimi to his feet with his free hand.

They watch as Shia drops and burns out.

TOM
Get outta here, kid.

JIMI
What about you?

TOM
Time to renegotiate my contract.
Go!

Jimi scampers away and Tom steps forward.

Shia smolders before him.

EXT. TRAILHEAD - NIGHT

Gal keeps Babushka warm. Jimi catches up with them.

GAL
Where's Tom?

JIMI
Doing God's work.

GAL
We can't leave without him.

JIMI
We have to. Shia's awake.

GAL
Okay, everyone -- let's move out.

The refugees hobble slowly down the trail.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Tom approaches Shia's smoldering body.

TOM
Look at you now, you little shit.

He tosses the flame thrower and kneels beside the charred body. He lifts Shia by the shirt and pulls back a fist.

TOM
I'm going to savor this.

Shia coughs ashes in Tom's face.

Then he lurches and drives his hand through Tom's stomach, clawing upwards through his organs.

Tom gurgles on his blood.

Shia gets elbow deep as he fists Tom's esophagus.

Tom's eyes bulge.

Shia looks deep in them...

Tom's eyes pop out of the sockets by Shia's prodding fingers.

His thumb holds the roof of Tom's mouth and he handles him like a ventriloquist dummy in his lap.

SHIA

(Tom Impression)

Look at you now, you little shit.

Shia pulls his arm out of Tom's chest in one fluid motion. Tom drops hard.

Shia stands, puffs out his chest, and grunts like a gorilla.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Gal and Jimi help the crew down the trail.

The GRUNTS OF A GORILLA echo through the forest.

The shadow of a monstrous beast blasts through the thicket.

The crew slows down at a fork in the trail. The waterfall rumbles near.

The sign reads: <-- THISSA WAY THATTA WAY -->

Jimi and Gal stop in their tracks.

The crew struggles to breathe.

Gal notices blood dripping from Jimi's sleeve.

GAL

You're hurt.

Jimi observes...

JIMI

Shit.

...then runs the flashlight along the trail of blood he left in their wake.

JIMI
I'll lead him straight to us. We
have to split up.

GAL
No. We stand a better chance if we
stick together.

JIMI
I have to do this on my own.

GAL
It's too dangerous. Don't go.

They share a tender moment.

A MONSTROUS ROAR, too close for comfort.

JIMI
I'm sorry. There's no other choice.
Go. Now. Get them to safety.

Gal nods and leads the crew down the mountain. Jimi climbs up the rocks toward the waterfall.

GAL
Oh, Jimi.

Jimi turns back dramatically.

GAL
Come back to me-- I mean, us, come
back to us.

Jimi nods with a smirk and climbs the side of the mountain.

Gal follows up the rear of the pack heading downhill. They turn the corner on a massive boulder.

The trail crossing is silent for a moment.

Shia LaBeouf bursts through a bush on all fours, sniffing at the dirt and tracking the trail of blood.

He looks up to the sign, then scans the woods.

SHIA'S INFRARED POV:

Down mountain, he sees no change in colors. Up the mountain, the faint trail of hot blood leads up to the RED HEAT of a human struggling up the boulders.

SNAP OUT OF SHIA'S POV.

Shia snorts and his hind legs kick up dirt as he bounds up the boulders like a master of parkour.

EXT. CAVE - DAWN

Shia enters a cavernous area underneath the waterfall. He sniffs the air and licks his bloody teeth.

SHIA
Puppet? I know you're here. I can
smell your taint.

Jimi steps out from behind a stalagmite and they square off with the waterfall as a backdrop.

SHIA
Where's the rest of 'em?

Jimi instinctively looks into the flowing water.

Shia looks through it.

SHIA'S INFRARED POV:

Fluttering and faint red cores are surrounded by the shape of humans fleeing down the mountain.

END SHIA'S POV.

SHIA
You're clever, Puppet. I'll give
you that.

JIMI
I regret to inform you that you
won't be advancing any further.

Shia laughs.

JIMI
You're done. I won't let you hurt
anyone else.

SHIA
You can't even beat me in a
screenwriting contest. What makes
you think you beat me in a fight to
the death?

Jimi cracks his knuckles and forms fists. Shia notices. They circle each other, the distance between them becoming closer.

JIMI

You had it all, man, and you just
shit it away. You know how many
people die every day fighting for a
chance to have even a fraction of
your success? Huh? Do you?

SHIA

I don't care.

Enraged into a frenzied war cry, Jimi rushes Shia.

Shia lands a hook to Jimi's chin and a jab to the stomach.
Jimi keels over. An uppercut sends Jimmy stumbling back into
a stalagmite.

Shia throws a massive punch and Jimi ducks.

Shia's fist explodes through the stalagmite.

Jimi tries to flee but Shia grabs him from behind and gets
him in a chokehold.

SHIA

This game...

Shia squeezes mercilessly. Jimi's face turns purple.

SHIA

...shows no mercy.

They stagger back, the stalactite ceiling reaching lower.

SHIA

It's kill or be killed.

JIMI

So. Be. It!

Jimi drives Shia back into the low ceiling, jamming his head
into a cluster of stalactites.

Jimi drops and gasps for breath. Shia pulls a stalactite
point from his shoulder and stomps after Jimi.

Jimi scrambles. Shia descends on him.

Jimi flips around and stabs him in the eye with a shard of
stalagmite.

Shia roars in pain and Jimi kicks his knee cap in. Shia drops
to his other knee and Jimi gets to his feet.

A victorious stand off as Jimi towers over a cowering Shia.

JIMI

Rot in hell you piece of shit.

Jimi spartan kicks Shia's chest.

Shia launches over the ledge and the water crushes him.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - DAWN

Gal and the rest of the crew turn to the sound of a scream.

Shia free falls and claps against the water with a massive belly flop.

They cheer.

INT. CAVE - DAWN

Jimi crashes onto his back in relief. A smile breaks over his face and he chuckles. The laughter turns into tears.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY

A triumphant jubilee as the crew hugs, high fives, and does beer bongs. Harry struggles with a champagne cork.

HARRY

It's over! Oh thank god, it's finally over.

The cork POPS and champagne flows. They shower in it like they won a championship.

A ripple disrupts the still waters in the pool behind them.

Gal lifts Babushka and twirls her around.

They're oblivious as Shia's head emerges like a slow torpedo.

Shia glides up from the waters, steady, menacing.

Gal drops Babushka to her feet, looks over her, and screams.

The scream echoes up the cliff.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Asleep from exhaustion, Jimi snores.

Gal's scream echoes through the cave system.

Jimi's snorts and his eyes shoot open.

JIMI

Gal.

He leaps up and dashes to the opening of the cave.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

Jimi stumbles out from behind the waterfall and peers around a huge boulder.

Shia walks on water. The crew cowers against the bank of the river. He has them cornered. Gal steps up to defend them.

JIMI

Gal!

Helpless to aid them by distance, Jimi searches for options. His fingers rub the boulder before him.

He knows what he must do.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY

Shia looks as though he's been rotting underwater for weeks. His toes drag in the pebbles. His speech has been reduced to guttural incoherence.

Gal shields the crew by wielding a stick.

GAL

Get back, you devil!

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

Jimi squats at the base of the boulder.

He tries prying, lifting, pushing, kicking. Nothing works. He nearly pops from exertion.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY

Shia smiles -- the few jagged fangs remaining are covered in blood. He squats and hisses. The crew cries out.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

Jimi screeches as he tries to lift from the bottom. The boulder shifts in the soil.

Exhausted, Jimi collapses against the base of the stone. With his back to the stone, he bangs the back of his head against it in frustration.

The boulder falls out from under him.

He flips around and watches in amazement.

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - DAY

The boulder tumbles down the cliff, breaking other stones from their ancient resting places.

A ROCK SLIDE.

Pebbles plunk in the water beside Shia. He looks back.

SHIA

The horror.

A tsunami of gravel, granite, and limestone crumble around him. He's clipped in the shoulder, then cracked in the head.

Shia stumbles back. A boulder rolls and pins his leg. He's crushed and entombed beneath the shifting landscape.

Dust rises and settles.

Shia's buried beneath the rubble.

A ray from the rising sun reaches out from beyond a cloud, returning color to the world like THE LAND BEFORE TIME.

FADE TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Paramedics attend the crew members.

The trail head has been blocked off with police tape. Bodies are airlifted out by helicopter.

Water is poured in Jimi's mouth like an athlete on the sidelines. Harry finishes up with detectives and walks by.

HARRY

Jimi was it?

JIMI
You remembered my name?

HARRY
Of course! You saved my neck out there. Say, if there's anything you ever need, just ask. I owe you big time.

JIMI
Well, there is one thing.

HARRY
All you gotta do is rub my lamp and make a wish.

Harry rubs his crotch. Jimi recoils.

HARRY
Kidding. I need to work on that.

JIMI
Yeah, no. Would you-- Maybe-- Oh, I dunno. It's stupid. I shouldn't even bother.

HARRY
Jimi, baby, anything.

JIMI
Would you... read my screenplay?

HARRY
That's it?

JIMI
Yeah, I mean, that would be huge.

HARRY
Yeah, sure, whatever. Have your people call my people.

Harry is ushered away by a white gloved ambulance service. The paramedics don tuxedos.

JIMI
Wait, who are your people and where do I-- Okay, it's cool. Hey, Gal!

Gal is attended to by a hair and makeup crew on the back of an ambulance. She looks primed for a photo shoot.

GAL
There's my hero.

JIMI
Whattaya say we get outta here?

GAL
I'd say, "Where to cowboy?"

Jimi throws his leg over a nearby motorcycle and buckles a helmet on.

JIMI
Wherever our hearts desire.

GAL
You know how to drive that thing?

Jimi looks at the handlebars.

JIMI
No, I was hoping that you'd--

Gal laughs.

GAL
Scooch.

Jimi shimmies onto the tail and Gal hops on.

GAL
Hold tight.

Jimi squeezes her.

GAL
Not that tight.

He lets go a bit, she kicks it into gear, and they take off. He nearly falls off the back but manages to hold on.

They ride into the freakin' sunset.

FADE TO:

EXT. BASE OF WATERFALL - NIGHT

A FULL MOON hangs heavy over the gorge as emergency workers search through the rocks. A dog sniffs incessantly.

EMERGENCY WORKER
Let's shut 'er down for the night.
We'll keep looking in the morning.

The emergency workers wrap it up and head down the trail.

A mound of rocks sits heavy under the weight of space.
Pebbles roll down the side as the underlying rocks bubble up.
A mangled hand breaks through the peak, clawing at the moon.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPER: 6 MONTHS LATER

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

FLASHES of STEREOTYPICAL LOS ANGELES LANDMARKS

The Hollywood Sign.

A dog shitting on Donald Trump's star on the Walk of Fame.

Griffith Observatory.

Close in on a MANSION at the top of a rolling hill.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Jimi reclines with his feet in an infinity pool as he smokes a cigar and reads the trades.

ON THE COVER:

His headshot gleams under a headline that reads:

JIMI FRANCISCO TAKES THE TOWN!

He drops the magazine and admires the view. The entire city can be seen. A truly marvelous sight.

He's made it, baby!

INT. MANSION - DAY

A landline rings.

Gal picks up.

GAL

Hello? Oh, hi Harry, how are you?
Good, good. Yes, just a sec. Jimi
love, it's Harry.

She whisks by a fireplace.

On the mantel sits an URN LABELED with TAPE AND MARKER: KARL.
Above it is a MOUNTED MUSKET.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Gal struts out in a swimsuit and long wrap cover up.

GAL
Sugar bear?

JIMI
Yes, darling?

GAL
It's Harry.

She offers him the phone, he takes it. She sits on his lap and tickles his hair. They share a tender kiss.

JIMI
Thank you, love.

Jimi puts Harry on speaker phone.

JIMI
Harold, talk to me. Tell me something good.

HARRY (V.O.)
Good? Jimi Francisco, baby, it's great.

JIMI
How great we talkin'?

HARRY (V.O.)
Never seen anything like it! They love it! They want more of it!

JIMI
How much are they offering?

HARRY (V.O.)
We're talkin' Netflix money, hunny.

JIMI
Marvelous. Send the contract over. Oh, and hold on to the original, might be worth something one day.

Jimi winks at Gal. She blushes.

HARRY (V.O.)
Cha-ching, baby! Cha-Ching!

JIMI
Make it rain, Harry. Ciao.

Jimi hangs up. Gal gushes over him.

GAL
I'm so proud of you.

JIMI
Oh, stop it. Say, where are the
kids?

A gang of adopted children run up and pile on them. One big happy mixed family. Jimi wrestles with them.

JIMI
Oho! Easy now.

A BUSH in the neighbor's yard RUSTLES.

Jimi snaps his head around on high alert. The bush shakes...
As do the trees. A wind blows through.

GAL
What is it?

JIMI
Just the wind.

He feints a reassuring smile, but looks off with concern.

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gal tucks the kids in while Jimi reads them a bedtime story.

JIMI
And that's when the monster came
ROARING back to life. RAWR!

Jimi claws the air. The children shriek at an ungodly pitch.
Gal covers her ears.

GAL
Okay, okay. That's enough story
time with Daddy.

KIDS
Awww!

MARTIN
But what happens next?

JIMI
You'll just have to wait and find out next week. Mommy says it's time to go to sleep.

MARTIN
I really don't see how a weekly episodic format can remain sustainable when competing streaming services offer entire binge worthy seasons at once.

Jimi shoots Gal a confounded look.

GAL
He's definitely *your* son.

JIMI
Ha! He sure is. Will make a fine artist one day. Sleep tight, don't let the LaBofes bite.

Jimi pokes Martin's nose.

JIMI
Boop.

Gal turns out the lights and they leave the room.

The silhouette of a PEEPING TOM lingers in the window.

INT. BATHROOM - MANSION - NIGHT

Jimi brushes his teeth while Gal flosses in a satin nightgown. Just going about their normal routine.

INT. BEDROOM - MANSION - NIGHT

Gal steps toward the bed and turns seductively to Jimi as they exit the bathroom.

GAL
You know, it's been awhile...

JIMI
Four hours since our last romp is a new record.

Jimi takes her in his arms and they drop to the bed in a fit of giggles. Jimi looks longingly into her eyes.

JIMI

I can't believe this is actually happening. This is what dreams may come.

GAL

What's not to believe? You got me, babe. And I got--

A CLAY POT SHATTERS in another room.

Jimi jumps out of bed and ties off his robe.

JIMI

Must be the paparazzi again. I'll take care of it.

He grabs a bat from beside the night stand.

JIMI

They're like vultures.

GAL

Be careful, my dear.

Jimi exits the room.

INT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - MANSION - NIGHT

Jimi marches down the hallway and a heaviness lingers.

He enters the living room and KARL'S URN lies broken on the floor. The assistant's ashes are scattered across the room.

MARTIN SCREAMS from down the hall.

JIMI

Hey!

Jimi races and reaches his children's room.

The door slams shut in his face, is locked from inside.

Jimi shimmies the door knob.

JIMI

Open the fuckin'--

His children shriek.

Furniture crashes to the floor.

JIMI

No, no!

Jimi manically beats at the door with his fists.

He takes a step back, summons all his strength.

INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - MANSION - NIGHT

Jimi bursts through the door like the Kool Aid Man and slides to a stop.

MARTIN

Daddy!

Shia LaBeouf, with Castaway level beard and hair growth, holds a rusty revolver to poor little Martin's head.

JIMI

If you hurt a hair on his--

Shia plucks a single strand from Martin's head.

MARTIN

Ow!

JIMI

Why I oughta--

Jimi shimmies in place. Shia cocks the revolver.

Jimi freezes. Gal emerges behind him in the doorway.

GAL

Get your hands off his son!

SHIA

You took everything from me. It's only right I repay you.

JIMI

Martin. hoc est bellum.

Martin nods.

MARTIN

Hi-yah!

Martin grabs the arm around his neck and ducks his head forward. He elbows Shia's balls, redirects the gun, and spins free. He wraps around Shia's shooting hand.

Martin traps the gun, Shia shoots, barely missing the other children. Feathers from the pillows fly.

Jimi swings the bat and breaks Shia's collar bone. Martin rips the gun free and points.

Shia kicks Martin in the chest and he smacks his head against the bunkbed frame.

Enraged, Jimi tackles Shia through the broken door and they crash through the hallway dry wall.

LIVING ROOM

Jimi and Shia explode through the wall and land on a glass coffee table. They scratch and bite and kick. Shia grabs a lamp and breaks it over Jimi's back.

They exchange merciless blows to the face until they're both bloody, swollen, and delirious from concussions.

Jaw to broken jaw, they practically slow dance in the middle of the room.

JIMI

Why won't you just go away?

Shia head butts Jimi, sending him to his knees.

SHIA

I'm like a cockroach. I will survive.

Shia growls as he heads in for the final blow.

BOOM

Pellets riddle Shia's chest and he flies backward. Gal steps forward with a smoking musket.

She helps Jimi to his feet.

Shia rises slowly. Gal desperately tries to reload the musket. Jimi grabs a fireplace stoker and swings it at him.

Shia dodges the iron.

Gal stuffs a handful of pellets into the barrel.

Jimi swings the stoker. Shia catches it and laughs like a maniac -- blood spewing from his mouth.

BANG BANG BANG

Shia staggers backwards as bullets rip through his chest.

Jimi turns to Martin, backed by the gang of adopted children. Each with their own gun.

Little Delilah tosses Jimi a shotgun, Gal aims her musket.

PATIO

The family steps out over the glass.

Shia's facing a firing squad.

GAL

The jig is up, chump.

A crazed smile spreads across Shia's demented face.

SHIA

You think you can take me, huh?
You're gonna need a fuckin' Army!

JIMI

Why do you think we adopted all
these kids? Let 'er rip!

The children unload their guns on Shia. The glass wall shatters behind him and he stumbles onto the patio over the broken glass.

SHIA

That all you got? Huh?

Gal joins in with her musket, which is suddenly automatic.

He's torn to shreds yet still stands.

SHIA

I'm still standing!

Jimi steps forward and lifts the shotgun.

The guns seem to have unlimited ammo as Shia dances in place.

SHIA

You can't kill me! I'm--

BOOM

Jimi's shotgun blasts him in the chest and explodes out of his back. He jumps, suspended in air for a cheesy ass moment, and falls into the infinity pool.

His body floats -- must be a witch.

The children lower their smoking weapons.

Gal falls into Jimi's arms.

JIMI

Shh... It's over. He's gone.

RISE OVER THE HOUSE.

SHIA'S BLOOD spreads in the pool.

POLICE CARS wind up the hill.

The Los Angeles skyline glistens.

ROLL CREDITS
OVER CRIME SCENE
TO SOME BITCHIN'
HAIR METAL