

<Title>

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. BACKSTAGE - EVENING

Jason (79), an elderly man who has gray hair and is balding a bit is dressed in a suit.

He is slightly slumped over and is making snoring sounds. There's a KNOCK at the door.

JASON

What? What was that?

JUAN (O.S.)

Mr. Graves, there's a reporter out here that wants to interview you.

JASON

Tell him I'm busy.

RYAN NELSON (O.S.)

Mr. Graves this is Ryan Nelson from Entertainment Weekly.

GRAVES

So? I haven't made a movie since fifty-four. What the hell you want to talk to me for?

RYAN NELSON (O.S.)

Just give me five minutes of your time and I promise I'll be out of your hair.

Jason puts his hand over his face and sighs.

JASON

OK...but make it quick. I'm an old man, and I don't have time for any nonsense.

The door opens up and RYAN NELSON (26), a very tanned young man with a wide mouthy grin filled with brilliant white teeth enters the room accompanied by JUAN REYNOLDS (32), a big man with long black hair tied back in a ponytail and a goatee and wearing casual clothes.

Ryan walks up to Jason and gingerly shakes his hand.

RYAN NELSON

It's a pleasure to meet you Mr. Graves.

JASON
(Looking at Juan)
He always talk that way when he's
interviewing someone?

Ryan looks confused, and then smiles disarmingly.

RYAN NELSON
(SPEAKING UP)
What way? Jason.

JASON (Loudly)
You always talk so damned loud when
your interviewing people?

Juan smiles, although Ryan doesn't seem so amused.

RYAN NELSON
My apologies Mr. Graves, I meant no
disrespect.

JASON
Fair enough, apology accepted...So
get on with it, times a wasting.

Juan smiles again.

Ryan pulls out his notes.

RYAN NELSON
Ok, Mr. Graves, back in the fifties
you were accused of having ties to
the Soviet Union going back to World
War 2, which eventually resulted in
your twenty-five year self-imposed
exile. Would you care to comment
about any of that?

Jason sits there for a moment as if deliberating on the right
words to say.

JASON
Some things are more complicated
than they look, a lot happened in
Russia during the war that I couldn't
go into, not with anyone.

RYAN NELSON
Not even the United States congress?

JASON
Sometimes...

Jason draws out the word, not ready to complete the sentence.

RYAN NELSON

Yes? Sometimes what?

JASON

Sometimes congressmen are full of
crap, and you can quote me on that.

RYAN NELSON

That's it?

JASON

Yup. Next question.

Ryan glances over at Juan, and then back to Jason. The reporter looks at his notes again.

RYAN NELSON

After you returned to America in the
early eighties you've generally kept
to yourself, not giving interviews,
and refusing movie role after movie
role.

JASON

I'm an old man, and the type of roles
that people were used to seeing me
do, I couldn't do anymore...And when
my European aviation company was
bought out a few years back, there
wasn't a studio in the world who
could throw enough cash my way to
get me interested enough to get back
in front of the camera.

RYAN NELSON

Very interesting.

(beat)

And finally I wanted to ask you what
you thought about the current crop
of costume vigilantes who have sprung
up all over the country in the last
few years? Especially considering
technically you were the world's
first costumed adventurer.

(beat)

There has been some speculation over
the years the whole things was was
all just a publicity stunt.

Jason starts to say something, but then stops and lets out a large breath.

JASON

People can believe whatever they
want.

RYAN NELSON

Would you care to clarify?

JASON

People were murdered, and if I hadn't been there, things could have gotten a lot worse.

FLASHBACK - CHARLIE'S BOXING DAYS

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Charlie (28) is in the boxing ring wearing white trunks. He is a powerfully built man, and his left ear is slightly deformed, a touch of cauliflower ear. And his nose looks like it has been broken at least once.

Charlie plops down on his stool, and sweat is dripping off of him. He turns and looks into the crowd and a man in a nice suit catches his eye and nods. And all of a sudden Gunn looks like he is going to be sick.

The bell rings and the two of them go at it again, but this time the other guy is surprised by Charlie's continued savagery, and before he knows what is happening, his body plummets to the mat.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- LATER

Charlie is on the phone talking to a younger Jason.

CHARLIE

I did what I had to do, but you know these guys, they don't take no for an answer. Nah, I don't know what I'm going to do now.

JASON (O.S.)

Don't worry we'll figure out something. Why don't you come down to the West Coast for a couple of days. I'll wire you some money.

EXT. JASON'S HOLLYWOOD ESTATE -- DAY

Charlie's taxi drops him off at the front door of Jason's estate, and when he goes to knock on the door it suddenly swings open.

Inside are multiple signs of a very recent party. The house is a complete mess and a half-naked woman walks by.

He puts down his bags, and starts picking up.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM -- DAY

JASON GRAVE(29) wakes up in a luxurious bed, he is naked himself, as are both of the ladies, under the covers.

There is a rapid series of knocks at the door.

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Got to wake up! Meeting with the studio head about the new picture you've got coming out.

JASON

What? Hold on.

CHARLIE

Sure thing boss.

Jason looks over at the two women with a wry grin on his face.

JASON

Apologies ladies. It has been a pleasure, but I've got to get up and put some clothes on.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN#1

Huh baby, what are you talking about?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN#2

He means it's time for us to hit the road.

JASON

Sorry, but I'm afraid I have a meeting, although I'd much rather stay here with both of you.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN#2

It's okay honey, I had a great time.

The woman says, as she crawls on top of Jason and gives him a passionate kiss.

Jason starts to respond, holding her in his arms and kissing her back.

GUNN (O.S.)

Boss we've got to go, and I promised Mr. Sturgis I'd get you there on time today.

Jason looks over at the door and frowns, and then back up at the woman on top of him and smiles.

JASON

Like I said, I have to go.

The three of them get up and start putting on clothes.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN#1

Wait until I tell the folks back home that I made love to Robin Hood.

The two women leave the bedroom.

GRAVES

Errol Flynn. That was Errol Flynn. I played Pirate Captain of the Caribbean.

Charlie comes into the room.

CHARLIE

Boss, the studio called, Howard

Sturgis wants you there pronto.

JASON

Boss? Charlie I hate it when you call me that, just call me Jason, or something simpler, like "your majesty".

CHARLIE

Right, anyway like I was saying, we need to get on the road.

JASON

Sure, just give me a second; need to make a drink.

Jason goes over to a mini bar in his bedroom.

GUNN

A little early for that don't you think?

JASON

Last time I checked it's a little early for you to start acting like my mother.

CHARLIE

Last time I checked your mother could drink you under the table.

JASON

Not the point.

Jason finishes his drink.

CHARLIE

You think you could slow down to a crawl on the boozin' till after the meeting at the studio?

Jason looks at Charlie a little disappointed.

JASON

Maybe...I guess I could.

CHARLIE

Yeah give it a try, do something different for a change. And honestly a day I don't have to dress you is a good one in my book.

JASON

Thank God for little favors.

CHARLIE

You eating breakfast today?

JASON

If I don't have time to drink, then I don't have time to eat, right?

CHARLIE

I guess.

GRAVES

I'll just get something after my meeting with Sturgis. Any idea what he wants to see me about?

CHARLIE

All I know is it has something to do with that new movie of yours.

JASON

That piece of crap? Sometimes I don't know why I work in this dreadful business.

CHARLIE

The mansion, the girls, the parties, did I miss anything?

JASON

Nothing that matters.

CHARLIE

Alright boss, I'll lay out your clothes while you take a shower. And then I'll be waiting outside.

Charlie leaves the room and Jason gets dressed.

EXT. JASON'S ESTATE - DAY

Charlie is outside wiping a smudge off of a 1941 dark blue Packard Clipper that is parked in the long driveway in front of the house. He is wearing tan trousers with suspenders and a simple white shirt, topped off with a herringbone cap.

Jason comes out wearing a double breasted midnight blue jacket with stippled vertical stripes, with a stone blue shirt. Completing the look is a dark blue tie and a handkerchief that Charlie had already perfectly placed in patch pocket of the coat.

INT. PACKARD CLIPPER - LATER

Charlie drives him to the studio.

CHARLIE

Anything new in the news Jay?

JASON

Not much, just those pro-Germany guys making a stink again.

CHARLIE

Yeah I've noticed that. You think they're going to make any real problems?

JASON

Nah, probably a bunch of old men with nothing better to do.

CHARLIE

Probably. Did you know the President gave another speech last night?

JASON

He did? Must have missed it.

CHARLIE

Yeah, you were indisposed at the time.

JASON

Jason Indisposed? Is that what they're calling it now?

CHARLIE

The papers would have a field day if they knew about your little bedroom adventures.

JASON

Yeah, maybe it would help me get cast in a better movie than all of that pirate and swashbuckling crap I seem to be getting now.

CHARLIE

I've seen a couple of your last movies, they weren't so bad.

JASON

This last one is. The Rapier? Who do they think they're kidding. I could have written something better.

CHARLIE

Write? You barely know how to act.

JASON

E tu Brute'?

CHARLIE

What was that?

JASON

Nothing.

Charlie makes a quick turn at a light.

CHARLIE

Heard rumors that Gloria is signing up to do your next film.

JASON

I certainly hope not.

GUNN

What's wrong with Gloria, I thought you liked her.

JASON

That's not the problem, the problem is she doesn't like men.

CHARLIE

Doesn't like men, how do you know that? She always seemed nice to me.

JASON

I just know.

CHARLIE

Just because she doesn't rush into bed with you anytime you want doesn't mean she likes women.

JASON

Does in my book.

CHARLIE

Maybe you just need to act a little different around her. You're a little rough around the edges.

JASON

Rough around the edges? In the papers Call me dashing and heroic, see?

Jason shows Charlie the article in the paper where they wrote about him.

INSERT - PAPER READS:

"Jason DASHING AND HEROIC IN NEW MOVIE."

CHARLIE

Don't believe everything you read in the paper.

INT. HOWARD' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jason enters the studio head's office. There are several couches and love seats arranged against two of the walls, as well as several comfortable chairs, and the wall behind the large desk is covered with various pictures. And the stuffed heads of an antelope and wild boar are prominently displayed amongst the pictures. Howard(56) is sitting at his desk.

JASON

Hello Howard, fine day we're

HOWARD

Yes it is, glad you could make it before the sun went down. I usually leave by four.

JASON

That's why I got here early.

HOWARD

Early? Where is two o'clock ever considered early?

JASON

In Hollywood?

HOWARD
Very funny Jason.

Howard gets up and puts his hand on Jason's shoulder.

JASON
Thanks.

HOWARD
This new movie is going to be huge!

JASON
Yeah I know, it's pretty good.

Howard walks away from Jason.

HOWARD
Pretty good? Its crap, but the public
loves you.

JASON
Is it that bad?

HOWARD
Another one of those pirate
swashbuckler things you always do.

JASON
Yeah, I've been thinking about that.

STURGIS
You've been thinking? Bad idea.

JASON
No seriously, maybe it's time I made
a western.

HOWARD
Nah, you're not the Western type.

JASON
What do you mean by that?

HOWARD
Doesn't matter, the premiere is
tonight. Are you gonna be ready?

JASON
I'll be dressed up and ready to party.

HOWARD
Oh no, you won't, you'll be in your
Rapier getup.

JASON

You have got to be kidding me.

HOWARD

Nope. I want you to do the scene where you swing down and rescue Jessica from a couple of pirates. Press will eat it up. Do you think you can remember your lines?

JASON

But...I'll be made to be a laughing stock.

HOWARD

Be what you are, one of the highest paid actors working at this studio.

JASON

(to himself)

With great pay comes great responsibility.

HOWARD

What was that?

JASON

Oh nothing. Anything else I need to know about for this thing?

HOWARD

The premiere?

JASON

Yeah, the premiere.

HOWARD

There is one more thing.

JASON

And that would be?

HOWARD

The pirates. They'll both be stunt men. You're going to have an opportunity to show a little demonstration of your skills.

JASON

A demonstration of my skills? I'm not liking the sound of this.

HOWARD

Just knock them around a little,
they'll go down and you'll do what
you are best t, playing the hero.

JASON

Whatever it is that I am, I'm not a
hero.

HOWARD

Being so hard on yourself, you'll be
fine.

JASON

Shouldn't I practice a little with
the stunt men beforehand?

HOWARD

Nah. Makes it more dramatic.

JASON

More dramatic? What if one of your
stunt men misses a step and ends up
hitting me?

HOWARD

As long as you leave the stunt man's
wife alone you'll be just fine.

JASON

Do I have to do this?

Howard takes a couple of steps rubbing his chin with his
fingertips.

HOWARD

Have you taken a moment to look at
those checks of yours you like to
cash regularly?

JASON

Yeah occasionally.

HOWARD

Ever notice whose signature that was
on those checks?

JASON

Um...that would be your signature.

HOWARD

Exactly, so be at the theater by
seven-thirty.

JASON
Is that everything?

HOWARD
For now, my secretary has the outfit
you'll be wearing for this evening.

JASON
Thanks.

Jason leaves the office.

INT. WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LAURA ADAMS
It's right here Mr. Graves.

Jason picks up the Rapier costume.

JASON
He's out of his mind if he thinks
I'm going to wear that to the
premiere.

LAURA ADAMS
I don't know, I think you look cute
it.

JASON
Cute huh, really?

Jason leans over the desk smiling.

LAURA ADAMS
(beat)
Not that cute.

He rises back up.

JASON
Too bad.

Jason gets up and leaves the office.

EXT. OUTSIDE - CONTINUOUS

Charlie waits with the car.

CHARLIE
How did it go?

JASON
Don't ask. Just drive me someplace
I can get a decent drink.

15.

Charlie opens the door for Jason and then gets in and they drive away.

FADE OUT: