

FRED & DAVE'S BIG DAY

a
screenplay

written by

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FADE IN

EXT. OFFICE COMPLEX - DAY

A delivery van pulls into the parking lot. The driver hops out of the vehicle and opens its back doors. This is FRED. He is in his mid-thirties and is a little- but, not grotesquely - overweight. Dressed in a brown uniform, he sports a tangled mass of hair and wears glasses.

He unloads a series of boxes onto a dolly and wheels it toward the building.

INT. ELEVATOR

FRED and his dolly are riding up with two young female office workers.

1ST FEMALE

Anything for us today?

FRED

What company?

1ST FEMALE

Simmons Life & Casualty.

FRED

Could be. Let's take a look.

FRED attempts to shift a package out from the middle and, in the process, sends the boxes tumbling to the floor of the elevator. The 1ST FEMALE reacts in pain.

1ST FEMALE

Jesus, my toe!

FRED

Sorry. I think that was a desktop.

INT. OFFICE

FRED IS getting the signature of the OFFICE MANAGER.

OFFICE MANAGER

Have a big weekend planned, Fred?

FRED

I'm meeting up with a friend tomorrow. I have tickets to the ballgame.

OFFICE MANAGER

I'll trade you. I have a christening and a wedding. Don't know the baby or the people getting married.

FRED

Enjoy.

OFFICE MANAGER

Oh, you bet.

FRED heads toward the door. The girl from the elevator limps by and gives him a dirty look.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

INT. OFFICE

In a modern, well-appointed setting, DAVE is flipping through some papers while seated on the edge of his desk. Tall, thin and goateed, he is wearing a black suit and tie,

giving him the look of a slightly aging hipster. A co-worker sticks his head up over his cubicle.

DAVE

Need something, Ken?

KEN

I forgot to tell you. . .
we're headed down to the
Mexican joint tomorrow night
for Darlene's birthday. Did
you want to go?

DAVE

As much as I savor faux Mexican
cuisine microwaved by inert
American teen-agers, I will have
to decline.

KEN

How come?

DAVE

Tomorrow is my day with Fred.

KEN

Is that your son?

DAVE

I don't have a son, Ken. You
may have noticed that none of
my daughters in that photo on
my desk is a boy.

KEN

Old school chum?

DAVE

Yeah, but Fred wasn't a student.
He was a clerk at the university
library. He helped me out big
time on my thesis and then we
just started to hang out.

KEN

Cool.

FRED

Yeah. We still make it a point to schedule a day every month to do something or other. I couldn't make it last time, so, now, we're contractually obligated to fit 48 hours into a 24 hour period.

KEN

What are you guys doing?

DAVE

I believe we're scheduled to strut down the boulevard to show off our finest hats.

KEN

I'll save you a Taco Loco.

DAVE

...or you can just shove my right intestine through chicken wire and save yourself a few bucks.

EXT. DINER - DAY

FRED is waiting outside the entrance of the restaurant. He is dressed casually in a polo shirt, Dockers and a leather jacket. Making his way across the street - against traffic - is DAVE, who continues with his black suit and tie look. He safely reaches the other side and approaches FRED. The two men shake hands.

DAVE

Fred.

FRED

Dave.

DAVE

How the hell are you? I'm sorry I missed last month, but I had things. I had things.

FRED

Please! No need to go into such

elaborate detail!

DAVE

Okay. I had thing.

FRED

How's the family? How are the girls?

DAVE

The girls are great. They continue to grow larger and increasingly unwieldy. They're already bursting through the clothes we shoplifted for them back in April.

FRED

You should always steal a size up. I think I told you that.

DAVE

You could have, but I've been so busy evading the law and all.

FRED

Didn't Tammy just have a birthday?

DAVE

Yeah, we threw a nice party for her. We had it outside with the tent and that whole bit. The wife arranged most of it, naturally. I was mainly relegated to grill duty, but I did introduce a concept I felt was pretty unique. My brainstorm was for Tammy's birthday presents to seemingly emerge from the flames of the grill. It would be as if a Faustian bargain had been struck to bring forth feather hair extensions and monkey slippers.

FRED

It's a no-brainer. Kids love the Faust.

DAVE

There were one or two items that got to close to the heat, but there were no major snafus. A grotesquely disfigured Barbie in the grip of tongs freaking out a table of third-graders was a small price to pay for the enchanted spell I weaved for children of all ages. The only downside was that my first batch of hot dogs tasted suspiciously like polypropylene and burnt hair. After a time, I was simply asked to leave.

FRED

That should be on your tombstone for two, maybe three, reasons.

DAVE

Come on. Let's go inside. We have a lot to talk about.

INT. DINER

FRED and Dave are seated at a small table amidst the hustle and bustle of breakfast service.

DAVE

So I'm sitting there watching the game and Bob's wife - who has been flitting in and out - pops her head in and asks me how I liked the cake. I told her it was okay, but the lemon flavoring was a bit overpowering. Did I use those exact words? I don't recall, but it was something to that effect. It was not a hostile condemnation and certainly offered benignly.

That was that and I continued to watch the game.

In a bit, Bob gets up and goes to the kitchen. He returns, perhaps five minutes later, and tells me that his wife is quite upset. I inquire why. "Well, she says you insulted her about the cake." Now here's the thing. I knew damn well she had not made the cake from scratch. There was no pretext of that. In fact, she had practically shoved the goddamned box in my face as soon as I got in the door. So why in the world would she be upset that I criticized a baked good produced by a 58 year old industrial mixer in the basement of a building suffering from acute structural damage?

FRED

I'll say this. Lemon cake can be problematic.

DAVE

I mean I didn't like their brand of potato chips either but unless she spent the previous evening carving up 5 pounds of potatoes, frying them up and then sealing them in a bag she wove from virgins, I have no beef with her. So, anyway, I'm just looking up at him, unabashedly displaying my back molars and then he drops the bomb; she would like me to leave. You can tell he doesn't agree by his expression that fully indicates that he knows he's married badly.

FRED

So what did you do?

DAVE

I left. I got up and left.
However, not before asking if
I could bring home a piece of
cake. Now every Christmas, I
send them a case of lemons.

FRED

Jesus, Dave, you could've just
said you liked the cake.

DAVE

Not in my nature. For better or
worse, I am brutally honest.

FRED

Especially about cake.

DAVE

Let's be clear. I am not - nor
never will be - an apologist
for cake, but I will defend it
and defend it forcibly.

FRED

You can sense the passion.

DAVE

Hey, did you ever ask that girl
to go out?

FRED

Katia?

DAVE

Sure. Let's call her Katia.

FRED

No.

DAVE

Why not? Did they change your

route? Do you not see her anymore?

FRED

It's the same route. I deliver to that office at least twice a week. My plan was to approach her last time I was in, but, as luck would have it, that was the day I smelled like poop.

DAVE

"Poop", the new fragrance for men from Givenche?

FRED

No..you know..just regular poop.

DAVE

What happened? Did you poop yourself?

FRED

I simply smelled of poop that morning and I have no earthly idea why.

DAVE

Are you sure you didn't have a dangler? Sometimes stuff falls out of you while you're in the shower and hibernates under one of your ass flaps. It can get embedded in there for weeks and start to cure much like jerky. I've seen it happen.

FRED

People must've thought I was crazy. I was forced to dash in

like a maniac, hurl their packages to the floor and run out. "Don't need your signatures today! Amnesty for all!"

DAVE

Tell me more about this odor - and that's the first time I've ever said that.

FRED

There's nothing else to say about it really. The condition cleared up overnight. It has not reoccurred.

DAVE

Did you think about consulting your physician?

FRED

God, no. I would have to explain to the receptionist what my condition was and as soon as we were done, she'd be on the phone with her sister so they could have a big giggle about the whole thing.

DAVE

Well, they get that from their mother. Seems like a classic case of nerves. You were apparently so stressed about talking to Katia that your body reacted in a highly erratic fashion. Have you experienced this before?

FRED

Never. (to waitress) Could I

have another coffee please?

DAVE

So now that you don't smell like a hobo's pajama bottoms, are you going to make a second attempt?

FRED

I will not. Last time I was there I was told she had left the company and moved to Seattle.

DAVE

Wow, that's too bad.

FRED

Why? I hear Seattle is great.

DAVE

I wasn't casting aspersions on Seattle. I leave it to the fine folks at Yahoo.com to aimlessly rank U.S. cities.

FRED

She had those big, sad Eastern European eyes. Anyway, I guess it's no big deal. She's hardly the only customer who didn't pay any attention to me in the ocean.

A notification sound goes off on DAVE'S iPhone. He texts back a reply.

FRED

Who was that?

DAVE

The wife. She wanted to know

what time I'd be home. I already told her I'd be out late. She never listens to anything, that wife of mine. That reminds me. I have something to tell you.

FRED

What?

DAVE

I'll tell you later. So, what's on the agenda for the day?

FRED pulls out a piece of paper and lays it on the table.

FRED

Here's the plan.

DAVE

Oh boy, it's on paper. This is serious. Can we change anything or it is written in that newfangled ink?

FRED

It's non-negotiable. First, breakfast.

DAVE

We're doing so well!

FRED

Then I thought we would head over to the broadcast museum and hang out there for a couple hours. That will take us up to lunch. Did you want to stop someplace or did you want to eat at the ballpark?

DAVE

Let's eat at the stadium. Why spend \$20 in a diner when you spend \$1000 at the ballgame?

FRED

We go to the ballgame and barring extra innings, we should be out of there by 4:30. If that's the case, we can make it back into town for dinner by around 6:00. I was thinking Carlisle's.

DAVE

I don't know. I had a hankering for Mr. Pete's.

FRED

This is in ink.

DAVE

Damn you, devil liquid!

FRED

And then I figured we would end the night at the titty bar.

DAVE

I have a coupon! Half off titty night! Buy one titty, get one free.

FRED

Did you enjoy your breakfast?

DAVE

Very much. I wouldn't not never eat here again.

FRED

Yeah, I used to come here all

the time.

DAVE

That's right. You grew up in this area. It's not quite the hellhole of yesteryear, is it?

FRED

Oh, it was horrifying.

DAVE

I appreciate the sense of renewal, but there's has to be a balance. There's already a certain homogenization creeping in. Jesus Christ, it seems like there's a chain store on every block.

FRED

They can homogenize all they want. I don't care if Wal-Mart opens twenty stores and proclaims it the kingdom of Walmartia. It would still be infinitely preferable.

DAVE

It feels like it's gone through the Ludiviccio Treatment from "A Clockwork Orange." It's being stripped of all its evils but left essentially soulless.

FRED

There was actually a shop here that sold dirt.

DAVE

You mean like potting soil?

FRED

No, I mean like dirt. It wasn't even fresh dirt. It looked used and unhealthy.

DAVE

No doubt the store is no longer there because a Super Dirt franchise moved in and wiped out all of the mom and pop dirt shops. Sure, they have a better selection, but where's the personal touch?

FRED

Invariably, the question must be asked; what if Don Draper would've handled the dirt store account?

DAVE

I have a feeling you're going to tell me.

FRED

I forgot my Brylcreme.

DAVE

Just get it over with.

FRED

(ala DRAPER)

Pick it up. Roll it around in your hand. Feels good, doesn't it? It feels the same sifting through your fingers as when you were a child. What else can you say that about? What else is the same?

You would rush in from outside through the creaky storm door with the one hinge missing and announce "Ma, I got dirty!" Mom would frown her frown and - once again - threaten to inject you with bleach, but she recognized that the stain on your T-shirt was something real. Organic. From where life springs.

Those memories and more are awaiting you at The Dirt Store. Buy it in classic brown or the slightly sinful dark brown. The Dirt Store. Come back down to earth.

EXT. FRED and DAVE emerge from the restaurant and proceed down the sidewalk.

DAVE

Is that a new jacket?

FRED

It's not new, but I've only worn it a couple of times.

DAVE

Why's that?

FRED

It hasn't been the right temperature for it. I bought it back in January. It was too cold to wear it. Then, we had that really hot Spring, so I simply couldn't fit it into the regular rotation.

DAVE

How about your uniforms? Do you have different ones for different seasons?

FRED

We have a short-sleeved version for the summer months.

DAVE

Yeah, but is it a lightweight fabric?

FRED

No, it's the same fabric as the long-sleeved.

DAVE

Have you ever said anything about it?

FRED

It's really not an issue.

DAVE

Make it an issue. Why be uncomfortable?

FRED

I appreciate your concern, but I'll tell you why it's not an issue. Because of the very nature of the job, you become immune to those things we know as "hot" and "cold."

In the summer, for instance, you're in an air-conditioned vehicle, but you are also regularly leaving that vehicle to unload boxes out in the heat. From there, you're entering buildings that range from freezing to malaria-breeding. You emerge from that deal, load boxes and then climb back into the AC. A strange feeling of numbness sets in. It's like temperature doesn't exist.

DAVE

Where's the strangest place you ever had to deliver a package?

FRED

Strange?

DAVE

You heard me! Offbeat? Queer? Have you ever feared for your life?

FRED

Beyond right now, no, never.

DAVE

This job is boring. What the hell are you going to do when it comes time to sit down and write your memoirs?

FRED

Type a polite refusal to the inexplicably interested publisher, I guess.

The two men reach a subway station and proceed down the steps. A pair of bucket drummers are performing at the bottom of the stairwell. FRED and DAVE peer up at signage and find their way to the desired platform.

DAVE

Have you mapped out how we will be transported to each of these fabulous venues?

FRED

We're in a subway station, so let's take advantage of that stroke of luck and flag down a subway car to get us to the museum. We will subway it on back and, from here, we will proceed by foot to the ferry which takes us to the ball-park. We get back, wash our necks, and then it's only

about a ten minute walk to
the restaurant.

DAVE

There's already way too much
walking in this scenario .
Aren't any of these places on
your delivery route?

FRED

After dinner, we will then walk
back to the parking garage. . .

DAVE

Jesus!

FRED

. . .hop into our luxury
vehicles and head to the club.

DAVE

It's a zany scheme, but it just
might work.

FRED

Man, it's hot down here.

FRED takes off his jacket and slings it over his arm. DAVE
fingers the fabric.

DAVE

Where did you get this jacket,
anyway?

FRED

Mort's. They always have a sale.

DAVE

I may have to pay a visit. That
is one snazzy number.

FRED

Do you think it's snazzy?

DAVE

I think it's extremely snazzy.

FRED

That's interesting, because I asked for snazzy, but they recommended something that had razzmatazz.

DAVE

Is that razzmatazz?

FRED

100 percent.

DAVE

Fooled me completely.

FRED

Don't beat yourself up.

DAVE

What's the story with the double "Z"? Their very coupling retains the uncanny power to lift an average word out its purely functional status and drive it to a smoke-filled world of flamboyance and wild abandon. Pizzazz, jazz, fizz. . .

FRED

Dazzle. Indeed, razzle-dazzle.

DAVE

Sizzle.

FRED

Has anyone mentioned snazzy or razzmatazz?

DAVE

Bejizzle. Buzz.

FRED

Nozzle, nuzzle. . .

DAVE

You're off subject.

FRED

I'm not. I've simply
switched to double "Z" words
that begin with "N."

DAVE

You've gone rogue!

FRED

It may have something to do
with the "Z" being the last
letter in the alphabet.

DAVE

Overachiever. Craves attention.

FRED

Oooh, I'm blinded by those pea-
cock feathers.

DAVE

Show-off.

EXT. BROADCAST MUSEUM - DAY

INT. MUSEUM

A guide escorts a group of people - including FRED and DAVE - into a room marked "The Birth of Broadcasting." The room is filled with antique radios placed on acrylic stands. The guide stops at one of the displays.

GUIDE

This is the first radio. Oh,
it most likely wasn't the
first one built, but this is
a model that you would
commonly find in American homes
as the medium was being
introduced in the mid-twenties.
This bad boy is a Roger's
Batteryless Receiver Model 130
built in 1925. It is typical of
radios during this time in that

it has three dials and five identical tubes.

When you put on the headphones to this particular unit, you will hear the first transmitted commercial broadcast that emanated from station KDKA in Pittsburgh in 1920. The other radios on display feature similar landmark broadcasts from pioneering stations such as KYW in Chicago, and 2LO in London. With that, I invite you to listen to the birth of radio.

The group scatters toward the various displays. FRED and DAVE don their headphones.

DAVE

What's yours?

FRED

It's a yacht race between Yale and Harvard.

DAVE

I have an amateur talent competition. It seems that one the contestants is a tap dancer. Now, I realize that radio was in its infancy and we know that start-ups have to work out the inevitable kinks. That said, someone should have had an inkling that not seeing dancing might have an adverse effect on its entertainment value.

FRED

Is it possible that audiences of the day could appreciate a performance simply by listening to the speed and rhythm of shoes hitting the floor.

DAVE

Oh, I don't think so. That has little or no chance of being right. Somehow I can't quite visualize a Kansas farm family sitting around the hearth and counting taps.

FRED

Do you suppose the dancer is black?

DAVE

There's no way to know. Why?

FRED

I thought if he was, it might indicate that early radio was a viable outlet for black performers.

DAVE

(exaggerated bluster)

If it was, it would've been quite a Godsend. At last you didn't have to look at them!

FRED

. . .or even listen to their voices!

DAVE

You could actually experience their incredible talent with-

out ever having to think
about them having a body!

DAVE

Imagine, a black person could
now just be a vague scratching
sound emanating from a remote,
non-threatening location. What
an invention! No wonder
Americans loved it so.

They put their headphones back on.

DAVE

Are they still sailing?

FRED

Yeah. Is your dancer still
dancing?

DAVE

Yep. Well at least it's tap
dancing and there's some sort
of noise. Ballet dancing would
really be disastrous.

FRED

You would have to do nothing
less than thrash microphones
to each leg to get a sound
reproduction of any sort. And
given that the amplification
devices of the time weighed
well over 75 pounds, it would
necessitate an almost complete
rethinking of the basic
choreography.

DAVE puts his headphones back on and removes them almost
immediately.

DAVE

In the same vein as dancing on radio, didn't Hollywood make a few grand operas as silent films during this same period?

FRED

They did, which is equally ridiculous.

DAVE

It is ridiculous. So, by 1922 logic, if they produced a media device that replicated the taste of food, those tastes would be generated by a giant electronic nose.

FRED

That's correct.

DAVE

That's what I thought. Is there an announcer at your boat race?

FRED

No. All you hear is the lapping of water.

GUIDE

Would you gentlemen like to take a listen to one of the other radios?

DAVE

No, we're good.

CUT TO

The tour entering a large room where the walls are lined with big screen monitors. The screens are playing a series of black & white and color news broadcasts.

GUIDE

This room, as you can see is dedicated to televised news and new reporting from its humble beginnings as a 15-minute segment on the networks to its current incarnation as a 24 hour cable marathon. Although this exhibit is very much a showcase for the great news stories of the past 60 years, of equal value is the opportunity we get to observe how the presentation of information has changed, not only in its technological advances but in style and attitude as well.

FRED & DAVE are lingering at the very rear of the tour group.

FRED

So, if you had, say, majored in guiding in school, what type of museum would you like to guide in?

DAVE

Art or natural history, I suppose. I could see myself going on about fossils and the like.

DAVE

How about you? What kind of

guide would you want to be?

FRED

I really don't know. I'll have to think about it.

Members of the tour fan out to get closer looks at the various exhibits.

DAVE

So our guide is a nice enough guy, but I hate to tell him that much of this material is available online.

FRED

Yeah, but here you're not tempted to continuously toggle over to free porn.

DAVE

Speak for yourself. The definition of a museum has really broadened over the years, hasn't it?

FRED

No, I don't see that it has.

DAVE

No?

FRED

No. How?

DAVE

Let me put in this way. It seems to me that there has been an erosion in the standards of what is pertinent and/or valuable to display.

FRED

There's certainly has been a broadening of the parameters, but who's to say what is valuable and what isn't? There's simply more stuff to show now. You don't think this collection has value.

DAVE

Without question, but as I said, what we're seeing here is accessible elsewhere sans the \$20 contribution.

FRED

Despite your misgivings, I feel there's still something to be said for experiencing collected history and viewing it through the prism of an institution with a group of other people.

DAVE

I think a painter once said that. A painter named HITLER!

FRED

You actually lucked out. Originally, I figured we might attend an outdoor lecture on Einstein.

DAVE

Feel my sternum. I just yawned very hard internally and broke a rib.

FRED

I'm sure it would've been very interesting.

DAVE

First of all, the only thing more boring than physics is soccer. Then, to add to the pain, you are holding this outside where the words mingle with air and bugs and lose all meaning.

FRED

Did you know that Einstein used to walk around town with his head constantly tilted toward the sky. When someone finally got up the courage to ask him about it, he replied that he was well acquainted with everything happening on the ground and was looking for something he didn't know.

DAVE

Einstein was overrated. He spent his last years in Princeton picking his nose.

FRED

And that's why we have the atomic number for snot today.

DAVE

Not to mention the big booger theory.

They stop in front of a bank of monitors displaying national and local figures reporting on the news.

DAVE
BIG WHITE MAN HEAD MUSEUM!

FRED
I believe it's the largest of
its type in North America.

DAVE
There's something similar in
D.C., but the heads aren't
as big.

FRED
. . .or white.

DAVE
And these people. . .these
people have to pretend they
care about our sorry asses
for a good 22 minutes with
a camera trained on them. How
can you possibly be concerned
for that long? Have you ever
tried to stay emotionally
engaged for that long. . .for
the length of an average news-
cast? I tried once. I got
really dizzy and started to
smell maple.

Look. Here's Ted Koppel
anchoring coverage of the
Iranian hostage crisis on
"Nightline." Look at the grim-
ness. Then they break for
commercial and everybody is
laying down five bucks to get
in on the hostage release date
office pool. It's just human
nature.

FRED

Yeah, their recovery time is amazing. They can be doubled over in anguish over the tragic explosion at the Puppy and Toddler Building and then, only seconds later, they're yukking it up with the weather babe.

DAVE

I get that you become desensitized over a period of time, but don't try to pretend otherwise by trotting out a pat series of facial contortions designed to convey surface empathy.

FRED

That's one of the reasons I still prefer print to broadcast journalism. Nowhere in a sentence does the writer pause to indicate that he has now slumped his shoulders and is pouting vociferously.

The GUIDE appears in the doorway. FRED and DAVE are now the only ones left in the room.

GUIDE

Gentlemen?

FRED

Coming.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

FRED and DAVE are headed up the sidewalk, past a series of storefronts. They pass a street musician strumming a guitar and singing a folk song.

Their walk takes them through a more residential part of the neighborhood.

DAVE

What time is it?

FRED

It's still pretty early. The stadium won't be open for another hour.

DAVE

Didn't you live somewhere around here?

FRED

About two blocks up. On Franklin.

DAVE

Did you want to take a walk over and check out the old homestead?

DAVE notices FRED has stopped and is taking a close look at something.

DAVE

What are you looking at?

FRED

Oh, nothing. This is a little park I used to come to as a kid.

DAVE

Is it still a park or is it a Home Depot?

FRED

It's still a park. . .more or less.

DAVE

Let's go in.

FRED

What for?

DAVE

Didn't I tell you I received a grant to shoot a fake documentary? Let's go.

EXT. PARK - DAY

P.O.V. is through DAVE'S iPhone. FRED is standing between a bench and a decaying cement fountain.

DAVE

So tell me, name of my subject whose name I will eventually learn, what is this place?

FRED

This is a park. This is a small park near where I grew up. I believe the actual name of it is Pearson Park, but I could be wrong about that.

DAVE

You're not sure about the name of the park?

FRED

That's hardly fair. You're not even familiar with the name of your subject. I ask you to weigh the two.

DAVE

I have an 80 man crew on this project. I can't possibly memorize everybody's name. Please spell it phonetically and send it to me in a attachment marked "THAT GUY'S NAME." I'll review it tonight after my full-body powdering. Please continue.

FRED

Yeah, I used to come here all the time. It's really the only park in this area. I would stop after school and play on the swings and what have you. You could actually do some fishing here. There's a small pond over to your left if you want to get a shot of it.

DAVE

Don't have time. We'll CG it in later. What kind of fishing could you do here?

FRED

Whale, mostly. Whale and eel.

DAVE

Mmmm, that's good eatin'. This was a pretty rough neighborhood. There must've some pretty shady characters hanging around this place.

FRED

Yeah, there was the cross section of lowlifes staggering in and out of here. For years, I thought hypodermic needles were perennials.

DAVE

What else do you remember?

FRED

Let's see. There used to be a candied apple stand run by an old Italian guy. He usually had his cart parked right around where I'm standing. I would get my treat and then have a seat on this bench.

DAVE

Tell us more about these candied apples.

FRED

Well, from what I understand, they really came about from a series of happy accidents. It seems there was a Mr. William Apple. . .

DAVE

You can skip that part.

FRED

Okay. Anyway, I would sit on this bench. . .

He sits down

FRED

It was a different bench at the

time. It was wooden. This is plastic or whatever, but you get the idea.

DAVE

There was sitting! Go on.

FRED

And I would spend the afternoon just taking in the sights.

DAVE

Based on the crying sounds I'll be gratuitously adding to the audio stream, I sense there's a bit of sadness about your old bench being replaced.

FRED

I'm sure it's been replaced several times over. It's been 30 years after all. It's funny how things from your childhood stick in your head. I'll be going about my daily business and, out of nowhere, that little bench will flash in front of me.

DAVE

Creepy.

FRED

Oh, yeah. It's fairly torturous. I don't know how many times I've aimed a Luger at my brain.

DAVE

I get what you're saying. There's a couple more weeks of filming, but after that, have

at it.

FRED

I guess it's a pretty common occurrence. Do you have anything like that?

DAVE

There's a line from "Kane" - and I call "Citizen Kane" "Kane" because I'm a genius filmmaker - where the character Bernstein is reminiscing about a vision from his youth; a beautiful young girl holding a parasol. He says he only saw her for a moment, but there isn't a month that goes by that he doesn't think of her. I dare say I think of Bernstein thinking of that girl almost every day.

FRED

You know, hearing that, I imagine that I will always think of you thinking about him thinking of that girl.

DAVE

Well, it's better than a bench. I want to return to you spending your valuable childhood hours watching the world go by. You were a young boy, for crying out loud! Were you practicing to be 80?

FRED

No, I just like doing it. I still do I guess. Do you find

that unusual?

DAVE

It depends. It depends if the voyeurism is impeding upon active participation in everyday life.

FRED

You can only have one type of human being? Oh, I see! There's only one type of personality allowed? Oh, I see! I had assumed there were seemingly endless ways to approach living.

DAVE

What are you getting so defensive about? I'm just saying.

FRED

I'm not getting defensive. Okay, I am getting defensive about it. You are who you are. You can screw around with the cards you were dealt, but what you generally end up with is a deck with frayed corners and the backs peeling off.

DAVE

I get your point, but I don't buy that you can't change. It doesn't hurt to screw with the deck every once in a while.

FRED

I suppose it was different for you.

DAVE

I had my moody periods, but, you know, I played with other kids, rode bikes, got into trouble, that kind of thing.

FRED

I played with other kids too. I also took the time to observe them being assholes.

Silence

DAVE

So, can you do any fishing around here?

INT. SUBWAY CAR

FRED and DAVE have an animated chat as they ride to their next destination.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

INT. STADIUM - DAY

FRED and DAVE are escorted to their seats by an usher.

DAVE

Nice seats. Good job, my friend.

FRED

I got them on Stub Hub.

DAVE

Oh, we're in the regular seats of others. You can almost feel their presence. This must be where little Judy sits. I'm getting sensations of pigtails

and earwax medicine.

FRED

Nothing like an afternoon at
the old ballpark.

DAVE

I totally have not followed
baseball this year.

FRED

Well, it's June, so you better
get started.

DAVE

How's the home team nine been
faring thus far?

FRED

They're in third place in the
division, with little or no
prospects of moving either up
or down.

DAVE

At least they're not
languishing in the cellar.
They went through that period
where they were finishing at
the bottom of the division
every year. My dad used to
say "Just stand on your head,
they'll be in first place".

FRED

They've settled into a quiet
mediocrity since then.

DAVE

I'm ashamed to admit that I
could name no more than ten

players off the current roster. This is from somebody who once regaled bored relatives with the name of every player on every team. You know how? Baseball cards. They kept you thoroughly up to date. Did you collect cards?

FRED

Obsessively.

DAVE

Oh, I loved my cards. In fact. I posed like an infielder back-handing a grounder for my high school yearbook picture. Then I cut the photo out of the yearbook, pasted a piece of light brown construction paper on the back and then typed in my stats: "David Kindler. Born: 1978. Bats: Right. Throws: Right. Lead International League with .363 average. Doesn't have quad tendons. Favorite medication: Orajel. Stares at you menacingly. Enjoys non-holiday caroling." There was some other stuff on there too. I still have it.

DAVE combs through his wallet and produces the card.

FRED

Man, this is all blurry. I can hardly read it.

DAVE

Enjoy 25 years of my ass sweat.

TITLE: TOP OF THE SECOND

DAVE

What's he doing trying to steal third? Jesus, he runs like Babe Ruth. What's with the pigeon-toed shit?

FRED

My great-grandfather told me he met Babe Ruth.

DAVE

Cool.

FRED

Yeah, I'm guessing it was in 1935 when Ruth was playing for the Boston Braves. Grandpa had arrived at the ballpark early and was strewn over the first base dugout to watch batting practice. All of sudden, here comes Ruth strolling down the first base line. Now I'm just a kid when he's telling me this and I can't believe what I'm hearing. I knew Babe Ruth was a big deal. "What did you say to him, Gramps?". I ask. "Hiya, Babe", he says. "What did Babe say back?" "Hiya", says grandpa.

DAVE

That was it?

FRED

Yeah, that was it! I must have looked particularly crestfallen because I remember being immediately whisked out the door to get ice cream.

DAVE

So, grandpa really didn't meet The Bambino as such, did he?

FRED

No. A couple exchanges of the word "Hiya" doesn't really constitute a "meet."

DAVE

"Hiya" isn't even a word. It's a compound slash slang hybrid. If we figure in the nickname "Babe", they managed to trade zero actual words during this momentous event.

FRED

I fully acknowledge how embarrassingly bad this story is.

DAVE

I think this entire stadium is embarrassed.

TITLE: TOP OF THE THIRD

DAVE

Can we get a foul ball in this section?

FRED

We can get one. It'll have to take a crazy hop, but we can get one.

DAVE

In one of my 48 patented

sexual fantasies, I catch
a foul pop-up. . .

FRED

I just came.

DAVE

There's more. I catch the foul
ball and, me, being a great
American, immediately look
around for a small child to
give it to.

FRED

That's what you're supposed
to do.

DAVE

Right. I take a peek behind me
and spot a youngster several
rows back. As fortune would
have it, he is sitting with
his beautiful young mother.
She is dressed entirely in
black and is obviously a
recent widow. I take the ball
over to the boy and gently
place it in his little hand.
The mother gazes up at me with
appreciative eyes. She rises
from her box seat and leads me
to a quiet area behind the soft
ice cream stand. There, she
lifts her veil and gives me a
hand job while I continue to
follow the game on an overhead
monitor. What do you think?

FRED

That's just so sordid on so
many levels.

DAVE

How many?

FRED

How many what?

DAVE

How many levels?

FRED

Seven.

DAVE

Seven! Wow.

FRED

Where does this take place. . .
in Victorian England? "She
lifts her veil"? What the
fuck, man.

DAVE

I bet if I was to return with
a heaping plate of cheese fries,
you'd change your tune.

FRED

Yeah, make it worse by stopping
off at concessions after you've
taken advantage of the
bereaved. Classy. I don't
even know you anymore.

DAVE

Swing batta.

TITLE: BOTTOM OF THE THIRD

FRED is eating from a huge plate of cheese fries.

FRED

Thanks for getting these for me.

DAVE

No problem.

TITLE: TOP OF THE FOURTH

DAVE

Do you remember Jamie?

FRED

The guy from your tennis club?

DAVE

Yeah. He has this friend who worked as a counselor at a suicide hotline. Part of the process, after they talked the person off the ledge, was to offer recommendations that, hopefully, would derail future such episodes. Jamie's friend would suggest they watch something funny if they were feeling depressed. He'd tell them to go to the video section of the library and grab something with Laurel & Hardy or W.C. Fields or Monty Python and have a few laughs.

FRED

That's become a common practice in the treatment of depression.

DAVE

Right. He then would conduct follow-ups with these dead wannabees and, in most cases,

this approach proved to be very successful. Now, eventually, this guy decides to leave. You can only do this type of job for so long. It's like retail, only merrier. He does get to train his replacement and he explains how effective this particular device has been and lobbies for its continued use.

The new guy starts the next day and one of his callers is going on about his mood swings, so the suggestion is made that he should watch something that will cheer him up. The caller asks what he should see. As it turns out, the new guy doesn't watch much comedy, so he says "I understand that this Adam Sandler is quite popular." Long story short, they found the caller hanging in his closet the next morning.

TITLE: BOTTOM OF THE FIFTH

DAVE

Have you ever seen Eskimo pornography? It's different.

TITLE: TOP OF THE SIXTH

DAVE is returning to his seat.

DAVE

Get this. I just went to the men's room and I was the only one in there. Do you hear what

I'm saying? You have about 25,000 people in this stadium. More than half are men and these men are consuming vast amounts of liquids. How is that even possible?

FRED

The only plausible explanation is that you entered another dimension.

DAVE

Truly, a piss to remember.

FRED

That's a little bit of heaven. right there.

DAVE

Yes, I'm aware you're not a fan of the public restroom experience.

FRED

I'm just uncomfortable doing such a private thing in a public place. It creeps me out to have another person stand beside me while I relieve myself.

DAVE

They're doing the same thing.

FRED

Are they really?

DAVE

Well. . .yeah. Is it just because it's a stranger?

FRED

It wouldn't matter if my
clone was at the next urinal.
If there is no one in there,
fine, I'll use the urinal.
Otherwise, I head to the stall.

DAVE

That's really not so unusual.
A lot of people have privacy
issues.

FRED

Yeah, but for some reason, I
experience this weird guilt
thing. Although I most likely
will never see these people
again, I don't want to come
off as some sort of elitist.
I don't want them thinking "Oh,
he's too good to participate
in this communal activity." The
sad reality is that I will often
pretend to be using the stall
for non-bath-room purposes.

DAVE

Non-bathroom purposes?

FRED

Yes.

DAVE

Such as?

FRED

Pretend phone calls.

DAVE

What do you talk about on these
calls?

FRED

Various things. Usually something business sounding. I've traded a good deal of imaginary stock, for instance.

DAVE

Is it too late for me to sit on the other side of the stadium?

FRED

I'll also do stall inspections.

DAVE

How do you convey that?

FRED

General inspection noises
. . .tapping. . . I would say
tapping, mostly.

DAVE

That makes sense as tapping is the international language of inspection. Haven't you peed yourself at this point? Why did you go in there in the first place?

FRED

I start the urination process when I hear the paper towel removed from the dispenser. That's my signal that they're on the way out the door.

DAVE

See, I find the toilets in restrooms infinitely more

disturbing. I always seem to get the one with a clump of shit clinging onto the side of the bowl.

FRED

Yeah, but then you get to play World War II fighter pilot and annihilate it with a piss bombardment.

DAVE

And the modern video game was born.

FRED

Eat urine, Nazi scum!!

SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

DAVE is standing in the aisle with his legs apart and his arms fully extended outward.

DAVE

Look, everybody, I'm actually stretching. This is what God intended.

TITLE: MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTH

DAVE

You have to hand it to that Count Dracula.

FRED

He's a vampire!

TITLE: BOTTOM OF THE NINTH

A ball caroms in the stands where FRED and DAVE are sitting. FRED reaches up over his head and snags it.

DAVE

You the man!

FRED

I told you we'd get one.

DAVE

Give it here.

FRED

No.

DAVE

Come on.

FRED

So you can use it for evil?
I don't think so.

FRED turns around and sees a young boy sitting with his mother.

FRED

Here you go, son.

MOTHER

Don't give him that ball.

FRED

He can't have it?

MOTHER

Are you going to pay for my
broken lamps?

FRED stuffs the ball in DAVE'S hand.

FRED

Here. Go find yourself a
widow.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

P.O.V. THROUGH DAVE'S I-PHONE

FRED is standing in front of an ancient brick building.

DAVE

So is this the elementary school you attended?

FRED

No, this is the Alfred P. Jacobs Junior High School or middle school as some would have it. They call it that because it's the middle of happiness and the rest of your life.

DAVE

Do we know who Alfred P. Jacobs was?

FRED

I believe he was a local magician. It was fairly common at the time to name government buildings after magicians.

DAVE

Yes, I noticed we passed "The Great Mendoza" Vocational-Technical School on the way up.

FRED

That was a rare exception. "The Great Mendoza" was actually the 18th President of the United States.

DAVE

This is quite a building.

FRED

I'd say it looks a little worse for wear. It was already pretty old when I was going here. I can't even vouch that's even still in operation.

DAVE

We're a considerable distance from where you lived. How did you end up going to this school?

FRED

We didn't have a middle school in my neighborhood. This was about the only option available to me.

DAVE

Thoughts? Memories? Themories?

FRED

See that third story window up there?

DAVE

No.

FRED

Trust me, there is a third floor and there is a window. I forgot my lunch one time, so my mom brought it out to me on the bus. She tossed it up to me and - having a mother's arm - it fell short and I almost fell out the window

lunging for it.

DAVE

So you're mother tried to kill you. Do you see that at the catalyst that sent you into a downward spiral of booze and drugs?

FRED

I experienced no such spiral. You may have me mixed up with your previous subject.

DAVE

That could be. Have you emailed me your name yet?

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

FRED is standing against a fence near the back of the building. Beyond the fence is a running track.

P.O.V. continues to be through the iPhone viewfinder.

FRED

This is the track and field area right behind the school. Naturally, I thought it might be interesting to return to the site where I did not participate in track and field.

DAVE

Were you involved in any competitive activities?

FRED

I played some softball and I was an alternate on the golf

team.

DAVE

I didn't know you played golf.
Why have we never golfed?

FRED

We did, awhile back, but, you
were such a poor winner, I
vowed I would never play with
you again.

DAVE

What did I do?

FRED

You thought it would be amusing
to perform a dance from a
different era in history every
time you won a hole. By the time
we reached the Charleston, I'd
about had it.

DAVE

Yeah, now I remember. Do you
how you could've stopped that
obnoxious behavior?

FRED

How?

DAVE

By sinking an occasional putt.

FRED

Okay, that's it for this location.
Let's go have dinner.

DAVE

Not so fast. I need more
stories. I still only have

one minute of useable footage.

FRED

There's nothing much else to say. I attended classes. I handed in homework assignments. I rotated my locker combination every three months. I ate lunches consisting of sandwiches, Hostess Sno-Balls and bananas. I stopped eating the bananas as it was portrayed as fellatio by my genius classmates.

I slept through assemblies. I learned the evils of smoking via a model of a decayed lung, which was also decaying, so you couldn't tell how bad smoking really was. I helped out in the library. I pretended to be enthused during pep rallies. I was in a sex education class taught by a health teacher who was practicing on the football team. What else did you want to know?

DAVE

Stop me if I'm wrong. . .

FRED

Stop!

DAVE

. . .but I'm getting the impression that these weren't particularly happy times for you.

FRED

Shall we tour the spots where I got beat up? Come on. Let's get out of here.

DAVE

Maybe we should stay. Maybe you'd like to get some stuff off of your chest.

FRED

No, I don't.

DAVE

Why did you get beat up?

FRED

Here's the thing; no one ever laid a finger on me. I was mentally beat up. I would have rather gotten the physical punishment. By the time I got out of here, I was an exhausted human being. The one saving grace was knowing I had high school waiting for me to renew my spirit and give me a new found respect for the human race.

DAVE

A lot of kids go through the same you did, but of many of them find the strength to rise above it.

FRED

Oh, fuck you!

DAVE

You don't think so?

FRED

Who are you to judge? You sailed through school.

DAVE

I'm not judging anybody, but just because I didn't share your experience doesn't disqualify me from making an observation.

FRED

Well, for those who came through it even stronger than before, congratulations and party hats to them. I wasn't among the blessed.

DAVE

What's the matter with you? You never seemed the type to go around feeling sorry for yourself.

FRED

Yeah, I do. All the time. Sue me.

DAVE

Is it because you ended up delivering packages for a living?

FRED

No! At least not until now! Thanks for kicking that one a few rungs up the ladder.

DAVE

I didn't mean anything by it.

FRED

I was thinking more about my total ineptitude with women or my seemingly endless battle with weight. I had even ranked my ten years of insomnia ahead of my career choice, but what the heck! Everybody in the pool!

DAVE

Truth is you could've done better for yourself, but I don't want to belabor the point.

FRED

Belabored! Point has been belabored!

DAVE

Hey, do you think my life is any great shakes? Look who I'm standing here talking to in a field.

FRED

I'd be happy to go eat by myself. I do it all the time.

DAVE

Whose fault is that?

FRED

Do me a favor. Turn the phone off.

DAVE

No, I want you to take a good hard look at yourself and

derive some good out of it.
Expect a download shortly.

FRED

What kind of friend are you
anyway?

DAVE

Let me introduce myself. My
name is Dave and I'm the best
kind of friend. I'm the type
of friend who doesn't tell
you what you want to hear.

FRED

Fucking Christ. . .you're going
to post this online, aren't
you?

DAVE

Of course not.

FRED

Yes you are.

DAVE

You're being stupid.

FRED

Now I'm stupid?

DAVE

I didn't say you were stupid.
I said you were acting stupid.

FRED

What grade did you get on your
thesis, Dave?

DAVE

That's neither here nor there.

FRED

Turn the goddamned phone off.

DAVE

No!

FRED

Give me the phone.

FRED lunges at DAVE. The camera is now recording distorted flashes of ground and sky as DAVE turns and runs. Moments later, the view settles at ground level as DAVE falls with a thud. He refocuses on FRED, who is sitting cross-legged on the grass and holding his bloodied nose.

DAVE

What happened?

FRED

I hit my nose on your knee.
Jesus, do you any flesh on
your legs at all?

DAVE

That wasn't my knee. You must've
hit it on the baseball. Do you
have a Kleenex or a hanker-
chief?

FRED

No, do you?

DAVE

I have a leaf on my ass if
that will help.

FRED takes a piece of paper from his jacket.

FRED

I'll just use the itinerary.

DAVE

It's not broken, is it?

FRED

I don't think so.

FRED stares into the viewfinder.

FRED

Why are you still recording
this?

DAVE

Sorry.

The screen goes black.

EXT. CARLISLE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

INT. RESTAURANT

FRED and DAVE are seated in a booth perusing their menus. They both have a glass of wine in front of them. FRED is dabbing at his nose with a paper towel.

DAVE

How's the nose?

FRED

I think it's sprained.

DAVE

Boy, that's really appetizing.
Maybe you can lactate during
dessert.

FRED

Keep it up and I'll order the
blood sausage.

WAITER

Gentlemen, are you ready?

DAVE

I'll have the lobster roll
with a side of dirty rice.

WAITER

You, sir?

FRED

Goat cheese ravioli. Side salad.
Balsamic vinaigrette. More
bread.

WAITER

Thank you very much.

DAVE

So, remember I said there was
something I needed to tell you?

FRED

Yeah. What the hell is it,
Dave?

DAVE

I'm getting a divorce.

FRED

You couldn't have told me that
before? Were you afraid you
would ruin my day? Guess what?
I couldn't be less shocked.

DAVE

I was not looking for sympathy,
so don't get all excited about
withholding it.

FRED

Withholding would suggest a
hidden surplus. I am denying
you sympathy. I hope that's
understood.

DAVE

I have no argument with that.

FRED

How did you screw it up this time?

DAVE

I had a brief fling with someone at the office. Really, it was over before it started, but despite its short life-span, I managed to generate an unprecedented amount of adultery themed clues. If I had left a diamond bracelet with a used condom hanging off of it, it couldn't have been more obvious. So I'm either really bad at cheating or I wanted to get caught.

FRED

I can't believe you did this. Forget the fact that Janet is a wonderful wife and mother. She's a wonderful person who doesn't deserve this type of nonsense. What the hell were you thinking? Were you guys having problems?

DAVE

In retrospect, my ongoing participation in the marriage may have been a stumbling block.

FRED

Besides that.

DAVE

No. I guess I just got bored.

FRED

Have you told the kids?

DAVE

No, we're putting that off until after the holidays . . .2025. That's going to be the tough thing. Obviously,

they're the main concern here. I'll admit to being very afraid for them. Samson is pushing on the pillars of the temple and the whole thing is starting to crumble around us.

Once, great figures - statesmen, industrialists, philosophers, artists - said and did great things. It all seemed designed to nudge the civilization forward. Now the world breathlessly awaits Kim Kardashian's ass to utter its first word. Who's to say what the next 20 or 30 years is going to bring. You hope you've provided them with the tools to properly navigate, but how can you really know?

Let me tell you a story. There was a guy in the office named Stan. He was always going on about this web based business he was developing. He eventually dredged up some capital and proceeded to launch this site. It took off big time and returned a profit within a month of its rollout. Suddenly, Stan no longer needed a nine to five job and decided to tender his resignation.

FRED

What was the site?

DAVE

I guess you could call it a concierge service. It was designed to help its users navigate the process of employing a female escort. It was like Christian Mingle without the Christians.

FRED

So he was a hi-tech pimp?

DAVE

We also called him "The Himp", This was thought to be extremely clever for about two seconds before someone realized that a pimp is already a "him" and it really didn't make much sense.

Anyway, it's time to tell the boss that's he's quitting. Our supervisor's name is Hyatt. He's been there forever and is hopelessly in over his head, but he's someone's brother-in law. So, Stan goes in the office and proceeds to give two weeks' notice.

At this point - as the story goes - Hyatt breaks out a bottle of Scotch from his desk ala' Lou Grant. Now, Stan doesn't have to stay. He's already quit. There are no further obligations. However, he doesn't want to be rude and, plus, it was a single malt scotch that Stan had not sampled previously. So the two of them are sharing a drink and, in the process Stan reveals what this website is all about.

Well, instead of being horrified he had been providing medical benefits to a deviant the last four years, Hyatt was absolutely fascinated by the concept. These guys are now on the same side of the desk and Stan is conducting a guided tour of the site. Then Hyatt starts talking about his daughter.

He explains that she has been a constant source of frustration and

disappointment. There had been attempts at a career. She has a realtor license and he had even sent her through nursing school, but nothing really took. She didn't have any steady employment as far as he could see, so he found it somewhat suspicious that she was living in a well-appointed townhouse on the north side of town. From this, he surmised that she must be hooking.

At this juncture, Stan has stretched his arm some three feet beyond its actual length to inconspicuously reach the doorknob. Hyatt tells him to hold on. He has a proposition. Hyatt takes out a checkbook and writes out a check for \$2000. Part of the money was to be used to set up an online profile for his daughter. The implication is that it's to be posted in a prime area on the site. With the remainder, Hyatt requested that Stan pay her a visit, take a few photos and then take her for a test run so he might provide a first hand review of her overall performance.

FRED

Well, you know what they say?
You never retire from being a
parent.

DAVE

Just unbelievable.

FRED

That is an incredible story. So,
at this point, am I supposed to
think, "Say, that guy was really
horrible. In comparison, old Dave

doesn't look so bad after all"?

DAVE

That wasn't the reason for the story.

FRED

You were just trying to make yourself look acceptable in comparison. And, by the way, if you are sincerely doubled-up in anguish over the state of the world, then you could help out by not doing things like cheating on your wife and breaking up your family. I know you're not thinking about it at the time, but these things add up. Pennies make dollars.

DAVE

I'm also led to understand that if you save them, you can also consider them earned.

FRED

You do see the massive hypocrisy, don't you?

DAVE

What can I tell you? It could be when you misplace your moral compass, there's a soothing element in knowing that there are people doing even worse shit than you. Having said that my deficiencies do not preclude me from loving those kids and wanting the best for them. I am more than willing to sacrifice my body to society to ensure they turn out to be good people. I want the best for my soon-to-be ex-wife. As you say, she's wonderful woman. I hope she remarries someone more worthy of her and someone more attuned

to the family dynamic.

FRED

Why not cut out the middle man?
You could be that guy...or are
you suggesting that people
can't change? I that what you're
saying, Dave? Dave, is that what
you're saying?

The food arrives.

DAVE

I might grant that, ultimately,
you are what you are, but you
can still instigate change in
your external circumstances.
That's what I'm alluding to in
your case.

FRED

Please. I'm eating.

DAVE

Even the Grinch changed.

FRED

Have you read the sequel?

DAVE

It's been on my nightstand,
but I haven't gotten around
to it yet.

FRED

It's called "How The Grinch
Massacred The Whos On New
Year's Eve." It's worth a read.

EXT. GARTER'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - NIGHT

INT. CLUB

FRED is sitting by himself at end of the bar. Activity
swirls around him. DAVE approaches and sits next to him.

DAVE

Okay, I'm hooked up. Just waiting for my girl to come out of the bathroom and then I'm off to the champagne room. Are you sure you don't want to join me?

FRED

I'm going to hang out here for a while. I might stop up later.

DAVE

Just let me know. It's no big thing to get another girl. Are you going to be okay here by yourself?

FRED

I'll be fine, Dad. I'll have the baby monitor on.

DAVE

There she is. If I'm not out of there in an hour, bite down on that capsule I gave you.

FRED

Have fun.

FRED turns his stool to look around. After taking it all in, he returns to his drink. A dancer steps up to the bar, plops down on the stool next to him and gestures to the bartender. Her name is ANASTASIA.

ANASTASIA

Jimmy, give me a refill on my Sambuca. Thank you. (she notices FRED) Hello.

FRED

Hi.

ANASTASIA

Are you here by yourself?

FRED

No, I'm with a friend. He's up in the champagne room.

ANASTASIA

He enjoys being scammed, does he?

FRED

I don't know if he enjoys it, but he doesn't seem to mind.

ANASTASIA

Do you know how much the club pays for a bottle of champagne?

FRED

No. How much?

ANASTASIA

Fifteen dollars. Isn't that right, Billy?

BILLY

What?

ANASTASIA

The champagne cost fifteen dollars, right?

BILLY

If that.

ANASTASIA

Do you know much they sell it for?

FRED

No.

ANASTASIA

300 bucks. Pretty fucked up, unh?

FRED

Yet my chair is broken.

ANASTASIA

Goes to show you. I'm
certainly not seeing any of it.
Would you like to trade seats?

FRED

It's no big deal.

ANASTASIA

Billy, get this gentleman another
stool.

BILLY

If he can wait for the one I'll
be pulling out of my ass.

ANASTASIA

This place! I hate this
place. Is your nose bleeding?

Blood has begun to seep from FRED'S nose. She hands him a
pile of cocktail napkins.

ANASTASIA

Here.

FRED

Sorry. It's been doing that all
day. I had a sports related
accident a little earlier.

ANASTASIA

It looks like it's stopped

FRED

Yeah, it's okay. Do you have
a HAZMAT container anywhere
around?

ANASTASIA

It's a strip club. You bet your
ass we do.

FRED

How are things going there tonight?

ANASTASIA

You mean money-wise?

FRED

Yeah.

ANASTASIA

Oh, I'm fucked money-wise.

FRED

I noticed it did seem slow for a Saturday night.

ANASTASIA

It's been like this for a while.

The Sambuca is delivered. FRED shoves money toward the bartender.

FRED

Let me get that.

ANASTASIA

Thank you. To make matters worse, the deadbeats who do come in can't quite grasp the concept of tipping. They think it's dinner theater. They presume that I'm a volunteer dancer and I'm doing it for the art. We get so many losers in this joint. I'm not saying you're a loser, by the way.

FRED

That's okay. I am a loser. My name is Fred.

ANASTASIA

Nice to meet you. I'm Anastasia.

FRED

Yes, but what's your stage name?

ANASTASIA

Very funny. My real name is Karen. I'm not really this unpleasant. It's just been a rough night. I needed to get off the floor for a bit.

FRED

So, are you going to school too?

ANASTASIA

What do you mean "too?"

FRED

It seems like most dancers I've encountered are in various stages of putting themselves through college.

ANASTASIA

A lot of them just tell you that. They figure they'll wrangle more cash from you if it's portrayed as going toward an education as opposed to, say, heroin.

FRED

Gotcha.

ANASTASIA

I, on the other hand, actually am a student. I'm a history major at Kent. With any luck. I'll have my degree before the year is up.

FRED

Are you going to teach?

ANASTASIA

Yeah, that's the plan anyway. We'll see what's out there

once I get back out into the
clean world.

FRED

Why history?

ANASTASIA

Ultimately, what intrigues me
is how little people have
changed from era to era. We're
told we should learn by our
mistakes, but human beings
keep on doing the same old
shit. Only the clothes are
different. When your professor
asks you to come up with a
historical parallel to a
modern day event, it's like
finding flannel at an
Indigo Girls concert.

FRED

I'm guessing, then, that
Anastasia is a shout out to
the Grand Duchess Anastasia?

ANASTASIA

It is. Anastasia Romanov. . .
daughter of Nicholas II, the
last Tsar of Russia. That's
very cool that you know that.

FRED

Isn't it common knowledge?

ANASTASIA

Not in here, pal. One idiot
thought it was a skin disease.
I'm like "Dude, I'm pretending
to love you. Why would I want
to induce that mental image?"

FRED

Let's see. . . the other kids
were Olga, Tatiana. . .

ANASTASIA

. . .another great stripper name.

FRED

. . .Marie and the only son, Alexis.

ANASTASIA

The hemophiliac.

FRED

Which sets the stage for Rasputin.

ANASTASIA

There was a handsome man. His photos just don't do him justice.

FRED

Just the type of guy you want to bring into a royal family setting.

ANASTASIA

Nicholas and Alexandria thought he had been sent by God to cure their son's illness. They totally bought the holy man act. He wasn't even a real monk. He had studied with clerics in the Urals, but he was a least three years short of getting that all important monk license.

FRED

Yeah, I always saw him as a glorified carnival performer, but, apparently he was able to exercise some control over the boy's disease.

ANASTASIA

It was thought to have been done through auto suggestion. Some tests have shown that hypnotism

produces a contraction of the small arteries. It made for a great party trick, but it was hardly a cure.

FRED

Rasputin's assassination in one of the great black comedy sequences of all time.

ANASTASIA

You start with cyanide filled cakes. He downs two of those. . .

FRED

Just the way he liked them. . . extra poisonous.

ANASTASIA

That was washed down with two glasses of wine, also liberally poisoned. . .

FRED

. . .then he was shot in the back.

ANASTASIA

He's shot twice more, once, perhaps, in the head, as he's trying to climb a fence! You have to tip your hat to his resilience, but how good are your killing skills when the person you've been murdering for an hour feels spry enough to consider scaling a wall?

FRED

These boobs are out there pounding on him with a rubber bat like he was a veal cutlet and finally they have to drown him!

ANASTASIA

Hearty stock. It's those Russian

winters.

FRED

It was one thing to pull a con on the family, but then he went too far when he injected himself into matters of state.

ANASTASIA

He literally helped bring down an empire. It's said that without Rasputin there never would have been a Lenin.

FRED

Did you want another drink?

ANASTASIA

I should have a glass of water. Jimmy, bring me a water. Well, enough about Imperial Russia. What do you do?

FRED

I'm a stock broker.

ANASTASIA

For real?

FRED

No, I'm not. I don't know why I just lied to you.

ANASTASIA

Not the first time a man has lied to me, Freddie boy.

FRED

I work for Delivery Express. I drive a truck.

ANASTASIA

I'd love to have a job like that, You get to be outside all day and cruise around the city. You must meet a ton of interesting people. I bet

they all know your name.

FRED

Yeah, I suppose so.

CLUB D.J.

. . .and now on the main stage,
the lovely Anastasia.

ANASTASIA

Oh, shit. Time to dance without
clothes for no apparent reason.

FRED

Do it for the art.

ANASTASIA

Yeah, the art. Are you sticking
around? Did you want a dance
later?

FRED

No, I'll just wait for my new
chair. Nice talking with you.

ANASTASIA

Same here. If you change your
mind, I'll be the one in the
hideous purple dress. See ya.

FRED

Have a good night.

CUT TO

FRED roaming around the club, glass in hand. He climbs the stairs to the private rooms. He peeks in one of them and spots DAVE getting a lap dance. He takes out his phone and records video.

CUT TO

FRED entering the men's room. There are two urinals. One is in use. He approaches the stall and tries the door, but it's occupied. He turns back toward the urinal.

EXT. CLUB - NIGHT

FRED is relieving himself against the side of the building. He finishes and heads toward the entrance. DAVE emerges from inside and almost bumps into him.

DAVE

What are you doing out here?

FRED

Just needed some fresh air.

DAVE

I'm done. Let's get out of here before I drop another grand.

They make their way down the sidewalk to the parking lot. They pass a jazz trio playing Thelonius Monk's "Round Midnight." They finally reach their cars which are parked next to each other. Neither man is drunk, but it's obvious they've had a few.

DAVE

Oh my God! That was a full day. I am exhausted. Give me that list of yours. I want to check off everything and have it framed.

FRED hands him the blood stained list.

DAVE

Never mind. I didn't bring my vinyl gloves with me. We will allow the blood to represent our victory over the tyranny of bloated and unreasonable scheduling. In the future, however, I will be restricting your access to pen and paper so I might survive into my fifties.

FRED

So tell me all about it as if you weren't going to.

DAVE

She was great. I'm estimating that she was only packing about 10% of her original parts, but the new stuff flowed in the right direction.

FRED

How was the champagne?

DAVE

Damned if I know. Vespa drank most of it. I stuck with bourbon.

FRED

Do you the mark up on their champagne?

DAVE

No idea.

FRED

One million percent.

DAVE

I'm not at all surprised. That's where they make their money. Were you talking with the bartender?

FRED

No, I was having a conversation with one of the dancers. Anastasia. . .or Karen, rather.

DAVE

Wow, you got the real name. Kudos to you. Did you get her phone number?

FRED

It wasn't like that.

DAVE

You have to get the phone number. Real name equals phone

number. Get with the program, man. Of course, part of their job is to chat up the customers and pad out the bar bills.

FRED

It wasn't like that. We were talking about Rasputin.

DAVE

You're a sweet talker, Fred. Jesus, this suit is done for. It has stripper stank all over it. It never comes out no matter what Martha Stewart says. What the hell's in my pockets?

DAVE begins to remove items from his pockets and laying them on the hood of his car.

DAVE

Credit card receipts, score-card, museum map, subway schedule and token, baseball - I'll give that to the girls. I actually do want our lamps destroyed - handkerchief-Freddie, look, I did have a handkerchief - ticket stub and last but not least, candy cigarettes. Where in the hell did I get those? They're not even my brand.

FRED

Shoot, a fella could've a pretty good weekend in Vegas with all that stuff.

DAVE

"Strangelove?"

FRED

"Strangelove."

DAVE

Are you okay to drive home?

FRED

Yeah, I'm good. Hey, I want to show you something. Take a look.

FRED holds up the screen of his phone toward DAVE.

DAVE

Is that me?

FRED

Yep.

DAVE

That's my bad side. Couldn't you have done something with the lighting?

FRED

Suppose your wife saw this?

DAVE

She could give a shit. Remember how I told you we're getting divorced?

FRED

How about if she turned it over to her attorney? There could be some really serious ramifications. Something like this could potentially jeopardize your visitation rights.

DAVE

All of that stuff has already been settled. We have the same fucking attorney. The last thing we wanted was to put the kids in the middle of a custody fight.

FRED

I'm just the messenger here. This piece of exclusive

content came into my possession and I just wanted to make you aware of it. Now, being a good friend, I will now delete this video. How do you do this?

DAVE
Hit "delete."

FRED
Okay, gone.

DAVE
What was that?!

FRED
I think you know.

DAVE
No, I don't. Tell me.

FRED
I don't know.

DAVE
You don't know?

FRED
I really don't.

DABE
You don't, do you?

FRED
Nope.

Both men fall to the ground laughing. Recovering, they sit up and prop themselves against their cars.

DAVE
Were you trying to blackmail me? Here! Take everything! Take my candy cigarettes!

FRED
I just wanted to do the video thing. You have to give me

some credit for initiative.
Honest, I just wanted to be
a prick like you, but I
couldn't do it.

DAVE breaks open the carton of candy cigarettes and puts
one in his mouth.

DAVE
Want one?

FRED
I've been trying to quit I've
gone to the corn syrup patch.

DAVE
God, these are awful.

FRED
Dave?

DAVE
Yeah?

FRED
Don't get me wrong. I look
forward to these little
get-togethers of ours. I
really do. However, if they
are to continue unabated,
you have to leave me the hell
alone. I am perfectly happy
in my misery. Just give it a
rest.

DAVE
Fred, Fred, Fred.

DAVE gets up and lays flat on the hood of his car.

DAVE
Whatever I might say to you,
it's only because I hate to
see you constantly under-
estimate yourself. That's all
it is. You're a smart guy.
You're probably smarter than

me. However, if those are your wishes, I leave it alone. After all, what the hell do I know? I'm making it up as I go along, just like everybody else.

FRED

There are no right answers. Conversely, you could also say that there are unwrong answers

DAVE

In return, I need your promise that you'll stop robbing the blind.

FRED

I can do that.

DAVE

Hopefully, I will pull it together eventually. Perhaps your powerful video presentation will be the springboard. Actions can have consequences.

FRED

You don't need to be helped any longer. You've always had the power to go back to Kansas. You had to learn it for yourself.

DAVE

I hate you, Fred.

FRED

I know.

DAVE

So, same time next month?

FRED

I'm there.

DAVE

We're in good shape, my friend.

Sure, we have disagreements from time to time, but that's because we talk. We communicate. We challenge. Do you know what a rare commodity that is these days?

FRED

So, before you asking me about the type of museum I'd like to work for. I believe it would have to be one devoted to the life and career of John R. Brinkley.

DAVE

Never heard of him.

FRED

Brinkley was an unadulterated quack doctor who propagated a theory that goat testicles transplanted into the male scrotum could cure impotence and increase fertility. He performed over 16000 of these procedures over a 20 year period.

DAVE

And produced a nationwide glut of cashmere in the process.

FRED

"Jebediah, get in here! Time to harvest daddy's ball fur."

DAVE

That would be quite a museum.

FRED

It be worth it for the photo gallery alone. All these poor slobs with their scrotums hanging down to their knees while their wives stand by, so hopeful, yet so terrified.

DAVE

The souvenir shop would be priceless. "Look what grandma brought you, kids!"

FRED

Alright, I'm out of here.

DAVE

Wait! I need one more fake shot for the fake documentary.

FRED

It's 3:30 in the morning. I have nothing else not to be nostalgic about.

DAVE

I need a big ending. Get up.

EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE - NIGHT

FRED is standing beside a civil war statue.

The P.O.V. is through DAVE'S iPhone.

DAVE

You've taken me here against my will. This spot must mean a great deal to you.

FRED

I don't even know where we are.

DAVE

Tell me more about that statue.

FRED

I don't know who it is. I can't read the plaque. It's too dark.

DAVE

Is the man on the horse related to you in some way?

FRED

It seems unlikely.

DAVE

Your brain must be swimming.
What's going through your
mind right now?

FRED

I was thinking how this
location continues to have
absolutely no relevance to
my life.

DAVE

What would a Mr. Don Draper
have to say about a statue
like this?

FRED

"He would say, "Dave, don't
ever die. Please, PLEASE, keep
on living.

DAVE

Any last words?

FRED

Eat me!

DAVE

That's a wrap!

FADE OUT

THE END