University of New Orleans
ScholarWorks@UNO

University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations | Dissertations and Theses

5-14-2010

The Last Act of a Desperate Man

Lorne Vincent Boni
University of New Orleans

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td

Recommended Citation

Boni, Lorne Vincent, "The Last Act of a Desperate Man" (2010). *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*. 1155.
https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/1155

This Thesis is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by ScholarWorks@UNO with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Thesis in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Thesis has been accepted for inclusion in University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

The Last Act of a Desperate Man

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts
Film Production

By

Lorne Boni

B.A. Louisiana State University, 1996

May, 2010

© 2010, Lorne Boni

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper, the film it concerns, and the years of study which preceded them both to my mother, Judy St. Amand. Her unwavering and often inexplicable support is more than I deserve, and this endeavor would have folded very early on without it.

Acknowledgements

This film may have never come to pass without Robert Racine and Carmen Torres. Serving as my major professor, Rob guided me throughout the process, pushing when he felt I needed pushing and lending a hand wherever possible. His guidance and assistance in the post audio process was worthy of special note. Serving as producer, actor, casting director, gofer and counselor, Carmen did all of the above and more. She took it as a personal mission to see this film finished.

My First Assistant Director, Kenneth Reynolds, and my Director of Photography, Jason Loui Leroy, both went above and beyond the call of duty while I indulged my acting dalliances in this picture. Their help in keeping the set running smoothly while the director played pretend was invaluable.

Special thanks to Chef Thomas Bond and Rockefeller's in Ponchatoula, La. Not only did they provide us with one of our most crucial locations, they also fed us like kings the entire time we were there. No-budget film makers everywhere should be so lucky.

Finally, my ragtag crew of misfits, newbies and people we were able to black mail kept me inspired the entire time we were shooting. We never had the same set of faces two days in a row, but we always had enough hands to get the job done (thanks to Carmen). I hold no small amount of gratitude for anyone who held a boom pole, moved a C-stand or lugged a sandbag. And, we always seemed to have at least one who laughed at my lame jokes, which is nice.

Table of Contents

Abstract vi

Chapter 1 1

Introduction 1

Chapter 2 3

Writing 3

Directing 11

Production Design 19

Cinematography 23

Editing 25

Sound Design and Editing 28

Technology and Workflow 32

Chapter 3 35

Analysis 35

Chapter 4 40

Conclusion 40

References 43

Appendices 44

Appendix A: The Film (Windows Media) 44

Appendix A: Screenplay 45

Appendix B: Test Audience Questionnaires 69

Appendix C: Talent Release Forms 93

Vita 104

Abstract

This paper examines the production of the thesis film *The Last Act of a Desperate Man.* The film's production is explored with respect to writing, directing, production design, cinematography, editing, sound design, technology and workflow. Particular attention is paid to the dynamics of acting and directing simultaneously. The production is examined with regard to major decisions which influenced each area of production, ultimately shaping the final film. The film maker's own analysis is offered in conjunction with feedback from a test screening with a statistical analysis of the test audience's poll responses.

Lorne Boni, *The Last Act of a Desperate Man*¸ actor/director, film

Chapter 1: Introduction

I entered the University of New Orleans Department of Film, Theatre and Communication Arts (then Drama and Communications) in the fall of 2005. I arrived with a specific goal in mind: I was an actor who wanted to learn how to make films to create opportunities for himself and his peers. In the time that followed, I learned the fundamentals of filmmaking, further explored my interest in screenwriting, and developed a keen interest in editing.

When it came time to make my thesis film, I had a few different aspects of filmmaking into which I wanted to further delve. Chief among these, though, was my original desire to explore more fully the dynamics of being an actor/director. I had directed and acted in two films, but they were not nearly of the scope and scale which would have allowed me to get a full sense of wearing both of these hats simultaneously. Discretion being the better part of valor, I opted to take a supporting role rather than try to play the omnipresent lead while also directing. The role I took, though smaller by far, afforded me ample opportunity to address the question with which I was most concerned: How does acting in a film affect one's ability to direct it?

The Last Act of a Desperate Man was conceived as a feature, so the first step in the writing process was to condense the story to fit a shorter format, suitable for consideration as a thesis project. Bearing in mind the factors above, I set about determining what was essential to this story. The themes of personal accountability, the seamy underbelly of hollow celebrity and

the identity crisis which often befalls people in their late 20s emerged as being the essence of what the feature was about. I couched these themes in a story structure that had as much in common with a one-act play as the classic three-act paradigm, resulting in a script that stays true to the feature's intent in a more concise package.

My approach to directing the picture was heavily influenced by the above-mentioned actor/director dynamics. I cast the picture largely based on the actors' previous work rather than on auditions and readings. To keep performances fresh, I limited the number of takes by keeping the coverage fairly basic, with a few exceptions. All in all, the actor/dynamic colored the lion's share of my decisions as director.

With a character/dialog-driven story, I looked for opportunities in the production design to make the film more visually appealing, since I had no explosions or chase scenes on which to rely for visual dynamics. Choosing locations with inherent qualities that lent themselves to buttressing the story went a long way toward this end. Subtle decisions with makeup and wardrobe helped reinforce story and thematic elements as well.

The post-production process involved working hand-in-hand with my editor, Danny Retz, while learning invaluable lessons as to the sort of time and resources that need to be devoted to post audio in order to achieve a functional final audio mix.

In making this film in the manner in which I made it, I was able to do justice to my initial impetus for enrolling in film school in the first place. In the final analysis, then, the true measure of the success of this endeavor is not the film itself but rather the experience gained in making it.

Chapter 2

Writing

Story and development

This story was first conceived in 2002. I initially had the image of someone being punched in the nose and exclaiming, "Doesn't anyone aim for the jaw anymore?!" The rest of the story grew around that initial idea.

It was conceived as a feature. The story was never fully developed in this form, but the basic story and most of the major characters were similar to how they appear in the shorter version. In the original version, O'La was a record producer on the verge of marrying his hottest star, and it was balking in front of the preacher that got him socked in the nose.

The only major character who did not appear in this original version is Dawn. This character who acts as saving grace and oblique love interest came from another similar story idea which was an offshoot of the original idea. This story was about an actor returning home to visit his dying mother and estranged father, and finding a younger but seemingly wiser guide/love interest along the way. The idea was shelved when *Garden State* (Zach Braff, 2004) came along, as its storyline is virtually identical, but certain elements, most notably the character of Dawn, were incorporated into *The Last Act of a Desperate Man*.

Garden State was an important indirect influence on the development of this story. The two are quite similar at first glance, especially given that both deal with the early-adult identity

crisis which seems to befall many people in their late twenties. This identity crisis is central to Owen's odyssey in this story, and removing it would have removed the major underlying thematic element of the film. Though I jettisoned certain elements because they were too similar, I had to accept that the underlying theme would be shared with *Garden State.*

The development of this script taught me a valuable lesson on the practical implications of writing a character for a specific actor. While still in the early stages of development, I approached Phil Karnell--then chair of FTCA--about playing Owen's father. Phil, who had expressed interest in working on my thesis before, took the job, so I set about writing the father character for him. However, as production approached, Phil was forced to drop out, and I was forced to recast. Having written the part specifically for him and having tailored the dialog in a way that I thought would compliment Phil's manner, it became impossible for me to envision anyone else in the role as written.

The result was a vastly different final scene. Originally, Owen braved the paparazzi to get to his father, who then admonished him for doing so. The conclusion here featured the father drawing an analogy between Owen's being chased by paparazzi and joggers being attacked by cougars, giving rise to the film's original title *Running from Cougars*. Here, it was the realization that he was being chased only because he was running that served as Owen's epiphany. But, since I had myopically etched Phil in stone in that scene in my mind, I felt I had no other choice but to rewrite the final scene. The result was a scene that was a bit more on the nose.

Themes

When I chose *The Last Act* as my thesis film, I knew it would not be a feature, so I set about condensing the story and figuring out what I felt was essential to this story and how to

convey it. Three interconnected thematic elements emerged. The above-mentioned identity crisis was the first but most subtle. It is the silent hub of the story and is the essential cause and catalyst of much of what goes on. The notion of hollow celebrity and the celeb-obsessed attitude of American media and culture is prominent but secondary. The final thematic element--and perhaps the most obvious--was the concept of personal accountability, essentially the idea that we are all the product of our own decisions.

Possibly the most obvious reflection of the identity crisis theme in the film is Owen's name. He is referred to as Owen, O'La, Roland, Role, and "that douchebag from that show." In choosing to do this, I knew that I ran a very obvious risk: if you refer to a character by five different monikers in the space of 20 minutes, you run the risk of confusing your audience. This is a risk I accepted and was more than willing to take, primarily because I wanted people watching this film to be forced to think, even about something as simple as the main character's name. This drives home the point that Owen is unsure of his personal identity by putting the audience in a superficially similar position *vis a vis* Owen's identity.

Though the identity crisis is most central, the celebrity aspect is more easily accessible. It is obvious from the start that we are dealing with someone of some notoriety, though it is suggested that the notoriety is a product of lingering fame and the reflected glow of others' fame. My motive on this point were simple: hollow celebrity is the inevitable by-product of media saturation; it is absurd and begs for ridicule, which I hoped to provide. Ultimately, through references to people in the public eye and this fictionalized account of a star's confrontation with his own celebrity, I hope to point a critical finger at the media circus which surrounds those who breathe such rarefied air, especially when they often seem to occupy their positions for little or no apparent reason.

The element of personal accountability features more prominently in the final stages of the film, because it is the key to Owen's salvation. As Riley says, "This is the life you've chosen, so it must at least approximate the life that you want." If that weren't enough, Dawn brings it home in the final scene, saying, "Only one person has complete control over this situation: you." The writing here is a little on the nose, I admit, but I wanted there to be little doubt about what I saw as the real resolution. These two pieces of dialog go a long way toward that end.

Structure

Any good story has a beginning, middle and end. A situation arises. The situation unfolds. The situation resolves. Broadly, the three-act structure adheres to this basic pattern: Act I, Set up; Act II, Confrontation; Act III, Resolution. This paradigm is enumerated time and again in writings about writing. Syd Field's *Screenplay* is a common source and provided my first exposure to it.

Field and others further dissect this paradigm into its plot points: first, a major plot point in Act I which spurs the hero to action--often called the inciting incident; second, a major plot point at the end of Act I, wherein the hero has taken up the mantle and steps headlong into the conflict; a third major plot point in the middle of Act II which increases or reveals hidden obstacles--often called the midpoint; a fourth major plot point at the end of Act II, wherein the conflict turns again and the hero is propelled toward the climax; and finally a last major plot point in the middle of Act III which often will turn things in the hero's favor, allowing for the final resolution--the climax. The lion's share of features adhere quite cozily to this paradigm. It is the very model of a tried and true method.

When writing a short, it is not always advisable to strictly adhere to the structure as broadly defined above. All of the major elements of a well-constructed story need to be there: you have to establish the conflict; you have to confront the conflict; you have to resolve the conflict. However, there is room to toy with the paradigm. The average feature affords the writer roughly 100 to 120 pages to accomplish what a short must accomplish in as little as 10 to 20 pages.

The conflict of this film was Owen's struggle to accept and take responsibility for who he has become. He did not fit in the world from which he was fleeing, and now he does not fit the world he abandoned but ultimately finds himself returning to. His want, therefore, is to peacefully co-exist with his world. His need, however, is to take responsibility for what he has done and who he has become. Only by fulfilling his need can he achieve his want. His inability to accept this need is the source of much of his difficulty.

How did I establish this? I took a multi-faceted approach. The opening montage with the radio commentary was my on-the-nose approach. We see his bloody nose; we know something has happened. We get the sense that he is driving away from something rather than toward it. Immediately we get that he is fleeing, rather than confronting, so this is a clue that he did not fit where he came from. If he fit, he would stay and fight. When there's nothing to fight for, you might as well run.

Next, we see him in the coffee shop scene, where his attempts to be low-key backfire. Not only does he draw attention to himself, but he also literally fails to recognize the most loyal ally he has in the story and certainly in the scene: Dawn. Her presence should be a beacon of hope, but he does not see it. She is someone he knows. She is willing to see him as he wants to

be seen, not as a celebrity or the guy who left town, but simply as himself. Sadly, he is oblivious, going so far as to offer her an autograph.

Then, he tries to hole up in a hotel, runs into the "ex" and then his old best friend who drags him out into the public eye again. Once again, Dawn throws him a line, but his preoccupation with the possibility of a confrontation leads to a confrontation. Finally, Riley and Dawn are forced to give him yet another punch in the nose, a figurative one this time. Riley tells him he looks like he wants to be seen trying not to be seen. This sets Owen off. He refuses to believe that any part of his predicament is within his control. Further, he cannot accept that his situation is largely a product of his own making. It is Dawn in the end who finally opens his eyes. When she tells him that he is the only person with complete control of the situation, Owen's situation is firmly established. He understands his problem, and so do we. It is this understanding, as much as anything, that serves as the resolution. Seeing that the problem was of his own making was the solution.

To work all of these elements into only 20 minutes, some of the boundaries of the three-act paradigm must be crossed. The film establishes Owen's problem by showing him working out what it truly is, so the set up and conflict go hand-in-hand. In establishing the problem, we have come to the beginning of the road to resolution. The conflict to awake our hero to his *hamartia*--or tragic "missing of the mark," per Aristotle's *Poetics*--is his confrontation. In the end, though we do not see his resolution, we get a sense that resolution will come. When we last see Owen, he calls his father rather than driving over and confronting the paparazzi on his lawn. "It's the smart move," Dawn says. It is also the responsible move which serves as the first step on the road to taking ownership of his lot in life. It is my hope that from this ellipses, people will draw the conclusion that Owen--or Roland as he at last calls himself--will ultimately defeat O'La. As it

is somewhat open-ended, I am aware that I run the risk of some viewers not coming to the intended conclusion.

Changes During Production

The final draft of the screenplay and the film that was shot differ in a few key ways. Most noticeably, Scene 1 was not shot. I was never completely sold on this scene, so it was first on the block when we did our final look at our production schedule. Scenes 4 and 5 of the final draft met a similar fate, but they were merely combined into a single scene. The decision to condense these scenes was made on set when the kitchen/backroom area of our coffee shop location proved completely unsuited to shooting a dialog scene on the day. The backroom location was not crucial to the story, and passing all of the important pieces of dialog at the back door was a better option on the whole. Losing the gag of Owen falling asleep in the backroom did not change the story in any meaningful way, and it afforded us an opportunity to significantly lighten our workload and avoid what would have been a significant audio recording and finishing issue. These changes were all made on set and were never scripted, but they are obvious and worth noting.

It is also worth noting that these changes led to renumbering of scenes during production. Scenes 6 and 8 had already been shot, but Scene 7 was relabeled Scene 5. In retrospect, there was no actual reason to do this, and thankfully it did not cause any confusion in post production.

Dialog

When I first saw the film *Clerks* (Kevin Smith, 1994), I was initially struck by the poor production value and shaky acting. Upon repeated viewings, however, I grew to appreciate and

eventually love the film chiefly because of its dialog. I loved that here were these typical people in a typical setting, but they spoke so atypically. The dialog was witty and clever, and though it seemed that there was no way these particular characters would so frequently find *les mots justes*, it just worked. It would be easy to criticize such heightened dialog when gritty realism tends to be the mode of the day, but in art, heightened reality is not only acceptable, it should be encouraged. William Shakespeare wrote dialog that still captivates 400 years later, in spite of the fact that as far as I know no one has ever gone through life speaking in iambic pentameter. Can we favorably compare Kevin Smith to Shakespeare? Maybe, maybe not, but, "You work in a convenience store, Dante...and badly, I might add!" resonates with me just as, "To be, or not to be..." does.

I approached the dialog of this film with all this in mind. Lines like, "You're the most conspicuously inconspicuous person I've ever seen," and "Mescaline is as mescaline does," were born of this mindset. It is important to note that I do not make witty or clever dialog a priority. My point is that when a potential gem comes along, even if it is a tad loquacious or obtuse, the writer has a sacred responsibility to allow it the opportunity to succeed or fail on its own merit.

It bears mentioning that my love of words does not translate to being in love with the words I have written. I am a firm believer in the necessity of a certain fluidity in dialog, especially if the goal is for the characters to seem as if they might actually say what they were saying. Minor, on-the-fly dialog adjustments were common on set but generally were consistent from take to take. The freedom of fluidity must be balanced against accommodations necessary for editing. For example, it was decided on the fly to change the line "I told her she looked like Britney after a meth lab explosion," substituting Amy Winehouse for Britney. We made the change on set but before filming, so it is consistent from take to take.

Directing

Acting approach and experience

Since much of my approach to directing this film was tempered by my experience as an actor, I would like to indulge briefly in a few words regarding my experience and the approach and attitudes toward acting I have developed in over 20 years pursuing the craft.

As an undergraduate theatre major at Louisiana State University and as an MFA acting candidate at the University of California-Los Angeles, I was exposed to many variations on the teachings of Constantin Sergeyevich Stanislavski. Most often, these teachings were in the "method" approach (or something derived from it). Method is most often associated with Lee Strasberg and the Group Theatre. In the method approach, techniques such as emotional recall and sense memory are used to help the actor emotionally connect with the character. When done well, this creates a rich inner life which adds nuance and depth to the performance.

Sanford Meisner developed a supplement to and offshoot of these teachings after concluding that Strasberg and company missed the mark somewhat. Meisner's approach takes the focus off of the actor and his emotional life. The focus is redirected toward the acting partner. The actor focuses on his partner, their behavior, what he wants from them, and what--based on the partner's behavior--he might do to get what he wants. The emotional life is still important. Meisner technique does not replace method; it merely supplements it. The emotional work is part of what I call the homework the actor does to prepare, and I place great value on my studies of the method style and the rich inner life it affords. When the lights go on, though, I lean on Meisner. I feel this technique makes my work more immediate, more vital and hopefully more accessible to those who may see it.

My approach to acting colors my approach to directing actors. Most often, I will give my notes in the form of a question. The question will generally concern what they want from their partner, what they are seeing from their partner, and/or what they might do to get what they want. At UCLA, Salome Jens--a direct product of Strasberg's teaching--would constantly remind us to "Live in the question!" I feel that it is incumbent upon me as the director not to give the actors answers but to help guide them to the right questions.

Casting

When I first envisioned this film, I intended to play the lead role myself. However, as I began to plan for making this my thesis film, I decided that playing the lead might not be wise. The main character in this film features prominently in every scene, and based on my better judgment and advice of faculty, I chose to hand this role off to another actor instead. I took the role of Riley. As he features heavily in two scenes, this gave me a sufficient basis to compare how I worked as a director when I was also acting with how I worked when I focused solely on directing.

I chose not to use open calls for the casting of this film, preferring instead to choose actors whose work I already knew to fill the remaining principle roles. I knew James Yeargain's work through plays and films he had done through UNO, and I had worked with him on one of my previous films "The Good Book" (2007). James is an intensely hard worker, who brings a lot of homework to the table when playing a role. He has a high level of commitment which I think is evident in his work. When I decided to take a supporting role instead, James was my first choice to play Owen.

Rebecca Laborde innately has a lot of the qualities that I was looking for in Dawn. I also knew her work through UNO, and I approached her early in the writing process, and when I determined she was interested, I tried to tailor the character a little more toward her personality. Rebecca conveys the plucky self-assuredness combined somewhat oxymoronically with wide-eyed vulnerability that defines Dawn. I wanted people to get the sense from her that even though she never pops Owen, she is perfectly capable of it but refrains. This is something of an intangible quality, but I think Rebecca has it naturally.

I chose Carmen Torres for the role of Shannon, because I believe both have a very similar no-nonsense approach to life. I had not worked with Carmen in an acting capacity before, but I trusted her background in theatre had equipped her sufficiently for the role.

Production

No one factor affected my approach to directing on set more than whether or not I was acting in the scene. Going into this experience, I expected that there would be a noticeable difference in my approach, and, indeed, there was. The effects of this decision were most evident during the shooting of Scene 9, also known as the bar scene. Of all the scenes in this film, this scene was easily the most daunting to shoot. It is longer by far than any other scene, comprising eight pages of the 22-page final draft. It has four distinct sections: the initial conversation between Owen and Riley; the conversation between Owen and Dawn; the encroachment of the Drunken Idiots; and the final confrontation between Owen and Riley.

As Riley is in much of the scene, I did not have much time to spend at the monitor. Most of the coverage was taken in long takes, often covering half to three-quarters of the scene. Even though the scene is pretty cleanly divided between its component parts, I would often allow the

scene to play out to accommodate eye lines and camera wipes on entrances and exits. In less practical terms, I wanted to allow the scene to play out so that the takes would have an organic flow instead of feeling like four distinct episodes chopped up and strung together. This also afforded the actors an opportunity to develop a rhythm and a feel for the scene. My hope was that this would ultimately lead to more compelling performances which would help to carry what might otherwise have been a rather unwieldy eight-page scene.

My approach to directing that night was to give my director of photography, Jason Loui Leroy, the shot size and angle I wanted. We discussed beforehand the lighting approach I wanted, so Leroy would make all of the necessary adjustments between shots. In the case of everyone's coverage but my own, I would check the frame in the monitor before the first take. If I liked what I saw, we would go until I got the performances I wanted, with Leroy and First Assistant Director, Kenneth Reynolds, running the set between takes.

I did not look at any of the images of myself on the monitor, live or in playback. Many actors have problems watching their performances. In his appearance on "Inside the Actors Studio," Johnny Depp claims never to have seen any of his films. The last thing an actor should be concerned with is what he looks like on camera. Directors, cinematographers, makeup artists and costume designers are tasked with worrying about what the actor looks like. An actor concerned with how he looks is wasting energy on a non-essential factor. An actor should be focused on his partner, his character, his given circumstances, his wants, his actions, and his dialog, not what he looks like. All of this is why I will not look at my own image while filming, and why I will never allow an actor I am directing to do it either.

In directing performance, I was much more understated in my notes when I was directing as an actor. I am very cognizant of the fact that for an actor it can be somewhat off-putting to have another actor in the scene direct your performance. Acting requires a good deal of trust between scene partners. An actor directing a scene he is in can use his position as director to tailor the scene to make him look his best. Giving in to such a temptation would be a violation of the trust essential to the actors' working relationship. And since I feel that such a move would likely end up in a poor result, I would never give in to any such temptation. However, as the actor/director, I had to be both aware of and sensitive to the implicit concerns which go along with such an arrangement.

There are positives to being in the scene as the actor/director, as well. I found that I could get little nuances out of performances by simply tailoring my performance to get it. It sounds a little underhanded and devious, but in truth it is not so far afield from the essence of what I do as an actor. The Meisner approach is heavily concerned with changing your partner's behavior to get what you want. Occasionally, when I was in the scene but the camera was not on me, I was more concerned with what I wanted as the director than what I wanted as the character.

By contrast, when I was directing scenes I was not involved in, I took a much more hands-on approach. I perched at the monitor, scrutinizing every take. More often than not, when I called cut I would dash out from behind the monitor to make small adjustments to the actors' approach, feeding them guidance with far more frequency. Where they might have gotten one or two notes per setup while I was acting, it was much more likely that they would get minor adjustments between takes when I was only directing. I think my notes were more on point at these times as well. That dangerous territory of directing from within the scene was taken away,

so I was able to direct the actors' performances unfettered by concerns over whether my motives were honorable. As a result, I was able to have a more firm hand over the performances.

Generally, we got most shots in three or four takes, occasionally running to five or six but never more than seven. There are two reasons for this. First, as an actor, I believe doing more than five takes per shot can adversely affect performance. If you figure that in the average dialog scene, each character will be on camera for the wide shot, a medium shot and a close up, then each actor will perform the scene on camera 15 times. It is asking a lot to keep a performance fresh beyond that. These are not hard and fast numbers, and when it has to be done, it has to be done. That said, moderation is best. Second, I do not get locked into a specific pre-conceived notion of how a scene should play. I have an idea of what I want generally, but having something too specific limits creativity and collaboration. I have entrusted the characters to the actors. I have given them my take on the scene and the character in rehearsals and pre-production meetings, and I trust them to find their own way to get to where we are all going. As such, I do not have to wait until I get the pitch-perfect rendition of what I decided beforehand that the performance should be. Rather, I look for a take that I like, that works and that serves the story. If I get it in the first two takes, I will usually take a third for safety and variety. If I get it on the third take and there was not much I liked in the first two, I will get a fourth and possibly a fifth take if time permits, again, for safety and variety.

Shot selection

Generally speaking, the coverage for this film was very basic. As I have already pointed out, I am wary of over-playing a scene, and just as this colors the number of takes I like to get, it also factors into my decisions on coverage. Essentially, the choice of how many different shots

to get to cover a particular scene was governed by this over-playing factor and more practically by economy and efficiency. In very simple terms, the less coverage you try to get, the more likely it is that you will make your day.

Ultimately the basic coverage that I chose was a wide master and usually either an over-the-shoulder, medium close up, or close up of each principle actor in the scene. Usually, it was a medium close up, as this affords the most flexibility of these three options in terms of what you can see and how easily you can cut it together.

The most obvious detour from this basic coverage was what I affectionately refer to as the O'La Cam. The O'La Cam was originally intended to be a visual cue for when Owen was nearing what I call O'La Moments. O'La Moments are times when Owen is faced with dealing with the fans or the press and finds himself quickly and easily overwhelmed. What I hope to suggest, indeed it is the crux of the film, is that these O'La Moments are the prime reason why the paparazzi will not leave him alone and are, by and large, both the source of his misery and a product of his own actions. Thus, I felt it was important to set these O'La moments apart visually in order to underscore their importance to the greater story. As the idea evolved, so did the use of the O'La Cam. Instead of presenting it the exact same way each time, I thought it might be interesting to establish the convention in Scene 3 and then toy with it and tweak it when it appears again in Scenes 9 and 10 in order to create slightly different variations on the same theme.

The O'La Cam starts with handheld subjective shots from both Owen's and the coffee shop patrons' points of view in Scene 3. The intention here is obvious, I want to put the audience into the place of my protagonist while at the same time, giving them a bit of a warped

perspective of how he sees his public and how he perceives they see him. To convey this last bit, we went with a wide angle from uncomfortably close. This gives the image a slight fish-eye effect by exaggerating the size of the foreground in relation to the background. I stopped short of going for the full-blown fish-eye effect, because I believe it would have ultimately detracted more from the reality of the film than it would have added.

In Scene 9, the O'La Cam is again handheld and subjective, but this time it is only from Owen's point of view. I originally foresaw this section playing out solely through Owen's eyes in one unbroken take. What I had hoped for is one excruciatingly long take in which the audience's discomfort from the elongated shot would match Owen's discomfort with yet another public humiliation, albeit a relatively minor one.

Finally, the entirety of Scene 10 was covered through the final incarnation of the O'La Cam, a handheld seemingly objective camera which moves with the subjects into the scene. I describe this shot as "seemingly" objective, because what I hoped to convey with the look of their entrance into the scene was the subjective POV of an unseen paparazzo. The camera follows Owen as he storms out of the restaurant, seemingly bound for another O'La Moment. This section was designed to mimic the look of video images which often appear on celeb gossip shows like TMZ, or its fictional equivalent, WTF. This was intended to be the culmination of the O'La Cam device's usefulness; we see a scene of O'La's own creation, reminiscent of those other similar moments we have already seen but morphed only slightly into an image celeb worshipers should find familiar. On the day of shooting, I decided to get the other coverage in this scene handheld as well. My thought on this was that we are in the midst of a potentially catastrophic O'La Moment right up until Owen calls his father, so I decided to allow the specter of the O'La Cam to hang over the entire scene.

Production Design

Locations

As mentioned previously, the practical considerations of working with a very small budget made making creative, inventive and economical choices an absolute must. This was true for location choices as well. With a story like this one, it is often necessary to rely on visual context to help reinforce the action that takes place, and locations are often a key component in establishing that visual context.

I was found two locations which suited my practical needs perfectly and helped to reinforce Owen's inner conflict quite well. Both locations are located on UNO's campus, which meant access was mine for the asking. I was fortunate to find these locations, because each featured a stark red background against which to play the scene. Red is a fairly simple visual metaphor. It usually connotes alarm or danger, so it seemed a logical choice to act as an outward reflection of Owen's inner angst, especially given the constant presence of blood in the film.

The first of these locations served as the hotel lobby. This is actually the box office area of the Performing Arts Center. In this scene, the action plays out with the red wall looming behind Owen, as if his dread is lurking behind him. What I liked most about this setting was it also gave a nice opportunity to juxtapose Shannon's coverage with Owen's. Her backdrop is cool, even clinical and makes for a nice contrast that underscores the conflict between the characters. I have said before, but it bears repeating, that when you are telling a story with largely internal conflict that is diffuse at best, it is essential to find opportunities to visually represent what is going on inside the characters. This location served that purpose nicely. Because of the layout of

the room, I had no choice as to how to position the characters in relation to the red. Fortunately, having the red wall behind Owen worked best for where the character was in the story at that point.

The second location was the parking area in the final scene of the film. This location is on the side of UNO's Alumni Center and features an almost shockingly red brick wall. In contrast with Scene 5's location, I had some flexibility as to how I wanted to stage the action. This time, I chose to have the background behind Dawn instead of Owen. This scene is all about Owen becoming accountable for his situation, so the most logical choice seemed to be to have the red wall behind Dawn in order to make it appear as if Owen is projecting this deep and troubling dread onto the world rather than it lurking behind him as it had before. What this is intended to reflect is the shift in Owen's attitude at the end of the film, as it reinforces the notion that Owen is in a situation of his own creation.

Makeup Effects

There was an obvious need for makeup effects in this film, since the entire thing revolves around a series of punches in the nose. Our original makeup artist was lost on the first day of shooting, so Carmen Torres was pressed into duty as makeup artist on the day. As such, we were limited in what we could do, and I did not want to push it too hard and have something that did not look real.

I wanted it to look believably like this guy had been punched in the face two days before. This was critical because in the opening sequence, the gradual development of the bruising is a visual cue for the passage of time within that sequence. In the body of the film, I wanted the bruising to look consistent with what we would ultimately do when we shot the opening

sequence on the last day of shooting. Therefore, he had to have significant bruising in the first scene we shot, the coffee shop scene, so that we could have the opportunity to sell the change from the opening sequence. What we ended up with was a bruising pattern that was spread over both eyes, favoring the left side to indicate he had been punched by someone who was right handed.

Apart from the bruising, the most significant makeup factor was Owen's frequent nose bleeds, brought on by being punched time and again. In each scene, I wanted to have at least a little dried blood around his nose as a constant reminder of what started all of this. The problem that this presented was in the first scene of the first day, we were forced to use the fake blood we happened to have on hand. Unfortunately, it was far too red for dried blood. Luckily, we were in a coffee shop and had mocha powder handy. The mocha powder helped not only to give the blood the more rusty, oxidized color of dried blood, but it also helped give it more of a dried-out appearance.

The opening sequence was eventually shot almost a year later. David LeBlanc served as makeup artist on these final shots and was able to work with stills to create makeup effects that moved seamlessly into what we had done before. The sequence of seven shots that were eventually whittled down to four was achieved with three makeup applications over a four hour period before and after dusk. This allowed us to simulate two days' and nights' driving by having two contrasting makeup effects for both night and day.

Wardrobe

Sticking with the red theme, I chose to put Owen in a red shirt. This choice dovetails into the themes invoked by the red backgrounds and the red blood. The shirt I chose featured the ancient symbol *Ouroboros*, which exists in various forms but generally consists of a snake or dragon eating its own tail. This served as a perfect visual metaphor for the over-riding theme of personal accountability. The snake eating his own tail is the source of his own demise, and in the scope of this film, so is Owen.

All other wardrobe choices grew out of this first. Essentially the one rule I tried to adhere to--with principles, at least--was to have no one but Owen wear red. In Shannon's case, I chose a very cool teal blouse as a direct contrast to Owen's red. For Dawn, I was not as concerned with specifics. I wanted her to look like a coffee shop employee when we first see her, solid color, utilitarian, behind-a-counter professional. Later, I wanted something a little more provocative and revealing but subtle. There is very little overt expression of romance between Owen and Dawn, but this was a nice opportunity to show that at the very least she is willing to cast a line and see if he bites. This was tertiary to Owen's dealing with celebrity and abandoned loved ones, but it seemed appropriate to give it at least a wink and nod.

Riley's wardrobe was another product of necessity. Originally, he was to wear a t-shirt featuring a pictogram that translates to "I don't give a rat's ass." This was intended to reveal a bit of Riley's character with an immediate visual cue. Sadly, the t-shirt did not make it to set in the madness of shooting Scene 9, so I went with a neutral gray t-shirt instead. This compromise was not without its merits. It helped to illustrate a dynamic between the four principle characters,

wherein Dawn is obviously on Owen's side, Shannon is obviously against him but Riley exists somewhere in the middle.

Cinematography

Going into this process, I knew it would be vitally important that I find a strong director of photography for two reasons. First, cinematography is not a strength for me. I have a firm grasp of the basics and can express my desires intelligently in this area, but I am not as versed as some on the specifics of how best to achieve certain effects. Second, as has already been discussed at length, I was both directing and acting in the film. I knew I would need someone with a strong visual sense as my proxy at the monitor. For both of these reasons, I chose Jason Loui Leroy as director of photography. I was confident that he brought the technical savvy to fill in the gaps in my own expertise, while I also felt he could be trusted with a certain amount of autonomy when I could not be at the monitor.

By and large, my approach to lighting design on this picture was fairly basic; the majority of the scenes are lit evenly and simply. This was as much a practical decision as it was an artistic one. During our two weeks of shooting, we were competing with a number of other student productions for manpower, so we were often scrambling to find warm bodies. It seemed prudent, therefore, to light once for each scene and make primarily minor adjustments between set ups. Given the lack of hands on deck, this was the most efficient and economical approach.

In less practical terms, I felt a safe approach to the lighting would serve the story, since any risks I took with lighting ran the risk of backfiring and detracting from the story. Arguably, such risks are worth taking, however I felt other aspects of production compensated for the vanilla approach in this area.

That said, because Scene 9 plays such a large role in the arc of the picture, I felt it was necessary to look for opportunities to buttress the story visually. I did not have the luxury of a garish red wall to add visual complexity to the scene, so it was in this scene, ultimately, that I took my biggest risks with lighting. Specifically, I chose to use very heavy top lighting for the sections of the scene in which Owen and company are seated at the table. The motivation for this lighting within the world of the film was simple: in bars people are often lit at tables by a single harsh light from directly or very nearly directly above. Further, this afforded an opportunity to again reinforce thematic elements with visual ones. I envisioned this scene as a good cop/bad cop scenario, with Dawn in the role of good cop and Riley in the role of bad cop. As an extension of that vision, the top lighting, especially on Owen, was intended to suggest the classic "third degree" interrogation, wherein a subject is interrogated relentlessly under a single hot lamp.

My hand is most heavily felt in the cinematographic process in the opening sequence of the film. By the nature of these opening shots, I knew I was going to be quite limited in what I would be able to do to achieve the look I wanted. Further, I chose to shoot this sequence with just myself, the makeup artist and the actor, since we were filming inside a moving vehicle and space was limited. I felt it was important to keep the shot wide not only to get the frame I wanted but also to keep the jostling of the camera to a minimum. These shots were taken handheld using a spider brace to steady the camera against the car's seats and my own body Even so, the movement of the car caused quite a bit of unintentional camera movement. Keeping the angle wide was one way of de-emphasizing this effect. I chose to use a neutral density filter on the daylight images in this sequence. In comparison to similarly exposed images without the ND filter, the ND-filtered images seemed to have a richer color pallet.

For the nighttime shots in this sequence, I elicited the advice of several people who had much more experience in this area than I. Working on the SyFy Network film *Fight or Flight* (George Mendeluk, 2010), I observed the DP and gaffer of that picture using mini Kino Flo lights to simulate light cast by a computer screen. This created an effect very similar to that which I hoped to capture, but I had no access to mini Kino Flos. However, in discussing this with my fellow MFA candidate Erik Reuter, he suggested that I could achieve a similar effect using L-lights, very small, easily-staged lighting instruments that use common household bulbs and can be sufficiently powered by a car's cigarette lighter using a simple AC/DC adaptor. I fitted the light with a 60-watt soft white light bulb. I got the softest bulb I could find, because I wanted to avoid having to affix diffusion to the light while trying to stage it on the car's dashboard. The well of the dashboard's instrument panel provided a perfect spot for the light itself. The single light left the subject lit from the left and below, and though this achieved a perfect analog for light emanating from the instrument panel, it did not result in an image with which I was completely satisfied. Turning on the passenger's map light added just the right amount of fill to keep the lighting motivated while at the same time giving it a little more cinematic appeal. As both lights were tungsten, there were no balancing issues, and the result is a series of shots with which I am quite pleased.

Editing

As stipulated by faculty, I did not edit the film myself. I was serving as writer, director and actor on the film, and it was deemed unwise for me to serve as editor as well. I, therefore, approached the person who knew more about editing than anyone else I knew personally, Danny Retz. Danny is a professional editor with decades of experience. He is currently serving as an

Artist in Residence at UNO. Upon reading the script, he agreed to take on the task of editing the picture.

Picture assembly

Upon completion of our initial two weeks of shooting, I sat down with Danny to go through the footage and the script and discuss how I saw it unfolding. After going through all the footage, Danny requested that he be allowed to go off and put together an assembly based on what he had seen and the basic notes I had given him.

Two major concerns colored most of my approach: emotion and story. In his book *In the Blink of an Eye*, Walter Murch lays out an editing hierarchy of needs which the editor serves in making editing decisions. Emotion and story are first and second on that list, and they were my main concerns here (Murch, 18). For this story, particularly, the impact of the story was directly proportional to the emotional life we were able to create with the performances. Thus, if we cut for performance first, we would get the rich emotional life which best serves the story. Danny did not need to be told any of this, but I was at least able to ensure that we were on the same page. It was with this in mind that Danny put together the first assembly.

The first assembly was far from perfect, but it was a huge step in the right direction. My fears that the story would be lost in a morass of subtle suggestion and witty dialog were allayed; it actually made sense. However, there were some glaring problems with the first pass, some of which were a product of poor planning on my part. For example, the extended take of the Drunken Idiots in Scene 9 simply did not work. The actor playing the first Drunken Idiot simply did not have the screen presence to carry a take for that long, even one designed to cause the audience discomfort. My failure as director to foresee the possibility of this shot not working

made editing around it a problem. The other coverage we had featured Owen sandwiched between the looming shapes of the Drunken Idiots, which makes for very interesting composition given Owen's state of mind. Another major concern arising from this sequence was the edit moving out of the Drunken Idiot episode and into the final confrontation between Owen and Riley. In taking the coverage for the last beats of the scene, we deliberately jumped the 180 in order to jar the audience out of the O'La moment. In editing it together, the 180 jump coupled with a lighting shift resulted in a cut more jarring than I had hoped. Here, the coverage and the edit work as intended, but the intention was misguided because it ultimately did not work on screen. Having no other coverage to cut between for that transition, we were forced to live with it as it was.

The result of these and other minor fixes and tweaks resulted in a second cut which exists in about 90 percent of its original form in the final edit. Minor changes for pacing and rhythm account for most of the differences. The major difference between the second cut and the final cut is the opening sequence, which was not shot until nearly a year after this second pass. I assembled the opening sequence myself, as it featured no shots of my character and was really only a matter of selecting which four shots to use of the seven similar shots I had taken.

Visual Effects

The most notable visual effect in the film is the composite image of the television plate taken for Scene 9 and paparazzi-type footage of Owen's father. Two things made this process easier. First, the plate was taken with the camera locked down in order to take a perfectly static image. Since the image was static, the superimposed image was not required to track with the plate. I wanted to avoid the need for tracking, because it is a time-consuming process with no

guarantee of a good result. Second, using corner pinning made matching the two images a simple process. Using a picture-in-picture effect in Avid Media Composer, I laid the paparazzi footage over the plate image. I then re-sized and repositioned the paparazzi image so that it roughly matched the television screen in the plate image. Finally, using the corner-pinning option of the picture-in-picture effect, I matched the four corners of the paparazzi image to the four corners of the TV screen in the plate. To further sell the composed image, I layered a lower-third graphic over the paparazzi image, labeling it as a "WTF Exclusive!" To complete the illusion, I added a fourth layer with a "MUTE" indicator over the TV screen; the MUTE disappears when Riley uses the remote, helping to sell the reality of the composed image within the scene, as it reacts to the action of a character.

Sound design and editing

Sound Recording

We used a very basic set up for sound recording. We had at our disposal two wireless lavaliere microphones and a shotgun microphone with a boom pole. We were using a two-channel digital audio recorder, or DAR. We supplemented the DAR with a field mixer, but problems still arose from using three sources and ultimately two recording channels.

One solution we used was to limit ourselves to either using one lav and the boom or using both lavs and no boom; the other solution was to use the field mixer to mix down both lavs into one channel which could then be fed into the DAR. Both solutions present problems, but after working with the sound mix, the former is highly preferable to the latter, considering issues in using two lavs mixed on the same channel.

When two lavs are mixed on the same channel, it presents an inherent problem with the recording. Lavaliere mics are invaluable, as they are a largely unobtrusive means to record sound at an intimate distance. The drawback to using lavalieres is that they are often concealed by clothing, and unless they are placed very carefully, the sound of clothes rustling against the microphone can become a problem. This problem is doubled when you record two lavs on the same channel, because now the rustling of either of the two subjects' clothing potentially can compromise the signal from both mics simultaneously. Clothes rustle against a lavaliere mic renders the signal useless for the duration of the interference. It cannot be cut around if it is over dialog, so this can have a catastrophic effect. Thankfully, this practice was not used frequently and caused no irreversible damage. Some dialog did have to be replaced with audio from other takes, but this issue was not sufficient to require automated dialog replacement, more commonly known as ADR.

Sound Editing

I was not able to avoid the need for ADR altogether, unfortunately. In choosing the location for Scene 5, I had to sacrifice audio for picture. The space in which this scene was shot had the perfect look, but it also had a major aural drawback: a constant hum. There is an electrical transformer above the room which could not be turned off, so all of the sound recorded was little better than a scratch track. We knew that going in, and it was a decision that was not made lightly, but ultimately the benefit outweighed the burden.

The most critical job in the post-production audio process was the ADR for Scene 5. The ADR recordings were done in the whisper room of UNO's audio suite. Though we had both picture and sound available for the actors to match, in doing recordings with James Yeargain, I

found that leaving out the picture and having him focus only on the audio yielded better results. With James, I looped single lines of dialog, so he could listen and then try to match his delivery on set. I then used a similar process with Carmen Torres. Once the lines were re-recorded, I spent hours shuffling through each recording of each line of dialog to find those that matched the performances and lip movements the best. It is an inexact process, and some of the lines match better than others, but ultimately the result is far less objectionable than the original recordings.

Aside from the ADR work, many small fixes were also required to bring the audio mix up to snuff. Most of these fixes involved selecting alternate tracks when problems like clothes rustle were found. Another key concern arose from the shifting of microphone placement between takes occasionally resulting in a shift in the ambient sound between certain recordings. Cutting between audio from two different takes can cause a very distracting shift in the ambient sound within the scene. It was necessary to find extended pieces of the varied ambient sound, so they could be blended using cross fades between audio takes with highly disparate ambient levels. This was a long and tedious process, and one of the many instances in filmmaking where the prudent move is to strive for perfection but recognize that good enough may be the best you can expect.

Sound Design

Though by and large the sound in the picture is primarily tasked with reinforcing the reality of the film, there were instances where it was advantageous if not necessary to take a few more risks with the sound. The first of these risks came in the design of the opening sequence. From the earliest stages of development, this sequence was to feature voice over narration in the well-worn disguise of radio commentary. The dialog for this scene was recorded in a sound-

proof booth, and equalizer effects were used to enhance certain frequencies and de-emphasize others to give the audio the quality and aural texture of a radio broadcast.

In the very next scene, another opportunity arose to use audio to enhance the scene. When Owen has his first O'La Moment, I wanted to create a sense of disassociation. Put simply, disassociation is a psychological phenomenon wherein the subject becomes detached from his actions, and, in extreme cases, the subject will often have no memory of performing often-horrendous acts. I felt that as Owen approached his breaking point, he would experience a similar state of mind but to a lesser degree. We initially tried a cacophonous mix of overlapping voices. This achieved a nice effect, but it was not quite enough. I found inspiration to remedy this from *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998). In the film, Tom Hanks' character, Captain Miller, experiences a loss of reality after an explosion. A hollow, white noise accompanies slow motion images to achieve this effect. Borrowing from this, I used the sound of an ocean wave with its lowest frequencies amplified and its highest frequencies attenuated. I added a slight reverb effect and layered the result with a low-volume, high-pitched tone. Both sounds rise together as Owen nears his breaking point. What this is intended to represent is a loss of self coupled with a rising tendril of rage. Together, these sensations push Owen toward snapping and having an O'La Moment.

Music

I was somewhat at a loss for what to do about music for this film after my initial attempts to use music from an independent artist failed. It was in planning for the opening sequence that inspiration struck. The opening sequence is modeled off of a blues song. Instead of hearing the singer's lament, we hear Owen's lament played out over the radio. Each snippet of video and

radio voice over is punctuated by a quick harmonica riff. I initially felt like this would be an excellent way of establishing the tone of the film at the very beginning. The more I thought about the idea, the more it became appealing to score the entire film in a similar fashion. I opted to score the film sparingly, using harmonica riffs to punctuate key moments at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the story.

Technology and Workflow

The script was written using the Final Draft scriptwriting software. Final Draft and other programs like it help streamline the screenwriting process by rendering the complex format requirements of a screenplay with just a few keystrokes. Having written an entire feature using Windows Word with no template, I know firsthand just how much time Final Draft and its ilk save.

The film was shot on a Panasonic HVX 200 digital video camera with HD 720 resolution and 24 frames per second in a 16:9 aspect ratio. The HVX was easily the best of the options available to me. The only camera available to me that would have possibly resulted in better picture quality was the Cinema Products 16mm film camera. A 16mm image can surpass the quality of the HVX's 720-line video image, largely because it has a larger film plane which not only yields better resolution but also allows for more control over depth of field, assuming similar lenses.

However, the logistical and economic advantages of using the HVX far out-weighed the potential drawbacks. First, the camera is lighter in weight and more maneuverable than the CP 16, resulting in more flexibility in camera movement and faster set ups. Second, having used both, I can say with no qualms that changing out a P2 solid state memory card is far less time-

consuming and harrowing than changing out a film roll. Also, cost associated with film processing and transfer would likely have surpassed what was ultimately spent on the entire picture and would likely have resulted in sacrifices being made to conserve footage. Conversely, ones and zeroes are free, so from an economic standpoint, digital video was the obvious choice. Lastly, playback from P2 on the camera or an external device allows instant viewing of rushes. By contrast, unless you use a video tap, film must be processed before the image can be viewed.

The HVX also made post-production a comparative breeze. Instead of waiting days or even weeks for processing, the digital images can be dumped to a computer in minutes, allowing the P2 card to then be reused and making the images immediately available for editing. The P2 cards along with the audio data from the DAR were dumped to my personal workspace on the FTCA Avid ISIS system. The audio and video were then brought into Avid Media Composer for editing. Avid is the preferred editing software for UNO, for my editor and for me, so it was the obvious choice. The choice was also a convenient one, as it meant all of the post production could be performed using FTCA facilities, and in order to collaborate, Danny and I would only need access to the same project.

Additional sound recording and finishing were accomplished using the FTCA audio suite's whisper room and Nuendo audio finishing software. Nuendo allows for a greater variety and complexity of audio processing than Media Composer, so integrating the two programs was the best course to achieving the final mix. The integration was accomplished by exporting audio from Avid to Nuendo in an .aaf file format, making the necessary adjustments in Nuendo, and then exporting from Nuendo back to Avid in a .wav file format.

Avid Sonic DVD accommodated the DVD authoring process. After exporting the audio and video separately from Avid and creating DVD menus and backgrounds with Adobe Photoshop, all of the elements were brought together in Sonic. Sonic offers a user-friendly click and drag interface and authors all the necessary code based on the decisions the user makes in that interface. It is worth noting that the program is not perfect and will occasionally output a flawed DVD. I have personally authored multiple DVDs using the exact same steps, and I have had some work perfectly and others not at all. Therefore, a certain amount of patience is often required. Ultimately, though, the program is a great time saver and allows for a good deal of flexibility in the complexity and look of the final product.

Chapter 3: Analysis

Filmmaker's Analysis

Objectivity with regard to one's own work is an elusive beast. Too much knowledge can be a dangerous thing, and, in this instance, it is what keeps an artist from being able to be completely objective. Quite simply, you know too much. You know all about your intentions. You know what went into every shot and the agony that accompanied each crucial decision. However, an inability to be completely objective merely hampers the ability to be critical of one's own work. It does not render it impossible.

When criticizing any piece of work--one's own or otherwise--it is difficult to measure in terms of good or bad or whether you liked it or not. Steve Hank, a professor of film at UNO, often poses one simple question as being paramount: Does it work? Thus, in analyzing the results of the decisions that went into making this film, it is this question which will be given the most attention.

Starting with what worked, I was very happy with the opening sequence. It establishes the world and the tone nicely and is an effective spring board into the action of the film. It covers huge sections of exposition in a way that is artful and effective, and even though the convention of exposition via newscast is well-worn, it works well in this instance. The voice over enhances the images in the sequence by providing the foundation behind them in a reasonably organic

way, and juxtaposing it with the harmonica riffs adds the glue to give the entire sequence cohesion.

There are several images in the picture of which I am quite fond. The first one that sticks out in my mind is that of Owen's father. He is seen from a distance, with the shadow of a leafless tree cast across and behind him. The fractured appearance created by the tree is a subtle reflection of the relationship between Owen and his father, and as such it works quite well.

The entire look of the hotel lobby scene is a major boon for this film. The contrasting of the red, hot, bloody images of Owen with the cool, almost surgical images of Shannon works better than I dared hope. In all of the work I have done, this is the most striking instance of picture reinforcing story, tone and theme I have accomplished.

On the whole, I was happy with the performances I got from my actors. James brought an understated, wounded-animal quality to the role of Owen which served the character in a way I had not considered. Rebecca performed admirably in the role of ally/foil/love interest. I would be remiss if I did not mention, however, that some of the performances fell flat. I did not believe either of the coffee shop patrons, and the leader of the Drunken Idiots simply did not work, even though he looked the part. My biggest disappointment from the performances was that of Carmen Torres. She seemed very uncomfortable in the role. As portrayed, Shannon was almost too in control even for someone who is supposed to be buttoned-down cool.

The O'La Cam was a marginal success. It works best in its final incarnation, but performances may play a role in that. In the coffee shop scene it works reasonably well. It establishes the convention and draws laser-like attention to Owen's shaky control in these types

of situations. It is a moderate failure in the bar scene, because even considering the performance issues, it detracts more than it adds in this instance.

Some of the images in the film are flat and lacking in depth. As the filmmaker, it would be easy to chalk it up to limitations of equipment and time. However, if this is to be an objective analysis, such concerns are subordinate to the result. In the finished product, there are clear opportunities to remedy this, especially in the bar scene, where a little *chiaroscuro* likely would have gone a long way.

On the whole, though, the film works as a character study of a desperate man who thinks he has nowhere else to turn. The story is nuanced, and you have to pay attention to catch every little piece of information. By the end of the film, you have a clear sense of who this guy is and that he has come to accept that he is the author and finisher of his own destiny. The film sets out to tell a simple fable about personal accountability, and in the end accomplishes that. As such, it works. Good or bad, great or abysmal, it works.

Test Screening Feedback

The feedback from the test screening was tepid at best. The opening sequence was a rousing success based on feedback from the question and answer session that followed the screening. To the question "What specific elements did you find most compelling?" one viewer replied, "The V.O. of the radio announcer was great. I also enjoyed the blues in the opening titles."

The character of Dawn took a great deal of flak, but opinion was varied as to what they did not like about her. One person called her "a little bit fake." Another was less generous, saying she "didn't serve the story at all." Still another called her a "push over" and added that she lacked

assertiveness. One observer put the blame on the actor saying, "The actress was awkward and slightly annoying with her gestures." Sadly, excising an entire character as pivotal as Dawn at this stage would essentially require reshooting most of the picture, so these criticisms will have to remain criticisms rather than becoming actionable items.

Asked what they would change, responses varied greatly. The lighting in the bar scene and in general received attention from multiple viewers in response to this question. Their concerns mirrored my own, generally. The ending was mentioned by a few viewers, some saying they wished there was a more clear resolution.

Commentary on the story varied greatly. Some said the theme and story were easy to follow; others claimed it could have been clearer. During the Q&A, one viewer said the story was clear if you follow closely and pay attention. Sadly, neither "identity crisis" nor "personal accountability" appeared anywhere in discussions of the film's theme. However, reconciling one's past did appear numerous times in various forms, and remaining true to one's family and friends also came up as well. One person came close, saying, "If it is your responsibility, be responsible." Finally, one commenter who mostly panned the film offered the story as the most compelling element, saying, "The story seemed well thought-out, with a very specific theme in mind." A well thought-out story with a specific theme can still become a muddled, convoluted film, so ultimately the reaction to the story is best described as "mixed."

In order to objectively gauge overall reaction, I first did a simple mathematical analysis of the poll item "I liked this movie." The respondents were given the choice of Strongly Agree, Agree, Indifferent, Disagree, Strongly Disagree to this and the other items. Point values of 0 for Strongly Disagree up to 4 for Strongly Agree were assigned, and an average value of 2.7 resulted

from the 23 respondents who answered that item. The same analysis then was applied to the item "I would recommend this movie," yielding a result of 2.2 from 22 respondents. Both results landed between indifference and agreement, with the first favoring agreement and the second favoring indifference.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

If the measure of the success or failure of this endeavor is the film itself, then the result is less than certain. If instead we measure the success or failure based on the learning objectives set forth and what was learned, then the result can only be positive.

I went into this film with one overarching goal: to explore how a director functions when he takes on the added task of acting. On this point, the endeavor was an unqualified success. I had never directed a film of this scale and complexity. Layering in the added difficulty of acting in the film as well made the task considerably more difficult. I deliberately took this risk, primarily because it addressed the single issue which more than any other I entered film school to examine. It was far better, in my mind, to take risks in an educational setting where falling short is not failure but rather an opportunity to learn more about your craft without losing millions of dollars of other people's money.

Ultimately, this risk paid off, because there was no shortage of lessons to be learned on this point alone. Scene 9 typifies these lessons better than any other. The bar scene was clearly compromised by the fact that I was attempting to act in and direct a scene of considerable scope. I think the scene works as is, and I am happy with my performance as Riley. My performance as director, though, was lacking. National Football League quarterbacks like the New Orleans Saints' Drew Brees can look at a nearly flawless performance and still see the opportunities they left on the field. My performance as director was far from flawless, and in this scene I see many

opportunities that I left on the field. A firmer hand with the Drunken Idiot may have made that shot work. A stronger presence at the monitor could have resulted in better images. Perhaps the best illustrations of this last point are the medium shots of Riley in Scene 9 in which the left hand third of the frame is cut off by the wall. I had hoped this would give the shot a more voyeuristic feel, as if we are peering around a corner at the action. However, the wall was far too dark on screen to sell this effect, and the result simply appears as if the film mysteriously switches from a 16:9 aspect ratio to 4:3 for no apparent reason. Had I looked at the monitor live or in playback, I may have caught the problem on the day, but the limitations imposed by me as the actor upon me as the director made this impossible. What is important is that I now recognize this as a potential problem, and if I have the opportunity to act and direct again, I will be that much more prepared for having had this experience. Lessons like these are why I categorize this experience as a success.

There was plenty to be learned apart from the actor/director dynamic. In terms of the very technical, when we took the plate image for the composite in Scene 9, there was no image on the television, and the black screen coupled with the TV's black case made pinning the corners more difficult than it should have been. In retrospect, an image on the TV in the plate may have made this process easier. Casting Carmen without reading her for the role was a mistake. I do not blame her for her performance but rather myself. I tried to make it easier on myself by casting someone who seemed right for the part, but she and the character simply did not fit. Reading her for the role could have helped to avoid this issue. Post audio provided yet another lesson, this one in proper time allotment. I briefly operated on the misguided notion that I could complete the entirety of the post audio process in a single day. After spending that day and the better part of

the weekend that followed it chasing down and fixing problems in the mix and fiddling with dialog replacement, I know now to allot considerably more time to post audio in the future.

It is often said that films are rarely finished but rather abandoned. I was ready to abandon this film many times in the last year. I must admit, during the protracted post-production period of this picture, I came to loathe it. I wanted it done, so I would never have to look at it again. However, with the perspective afforded by time and by writing about the experience, I have come to be quite proud of what I accomplished both in the film itself and in the experience of making it. I can say with no reservations that I am a better filmmaker simply for having made--and finished--this film.

References

Garden State. Dir. Zach Braff. Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2004

Field, Syd. *Screenplay*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1974.

Aristotle. *Poetics.* Trans. Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2006.

Clerks. Dir. Kevin Smith. Miramax, 1994

Hamlet. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997.

Meisner, Sanford. *Sanford Meisner on Acting*, New York: Vintage, 1987

"The Good Book" Dir. Lorne Boni, RvRc Pictures, 2007

"Johnny Depp" *Inside the Actor's Studio.* Bravo, 2002

Fight or Flight. Dir. George Mendeluk. SyFy, 2010

Murch, Walter. *In the Blink of an Eye*. Beverly Hills: Silman-James Press, 1995.

Saving Private Ryan. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Paramount Pictures, 1998

Appendix A: The Film (Windows Media)

Left click above to begin. Right click for controls.

Appendix B: Screenplay

The Last Act of a Desperate Man

By

Lorne Boni

Final Draft
February, 2009

lboni@uno.edu

FADE IN.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Owen Lawerence, 29, sits with his head propped against the window. He stares blankly through the glass. Outside is a blur, punctuated with sporadic and frequent flashes.

A murmur of voices, low and distant is heard. It is punctuated by a high pitched whine. The whine eventually resolves itself into a voice.

RUBY (O.S.)
...and why would you wear that?

WIDER

Seated to Owen's right is Ruby, 22, dressed in what appears to be a prostitute's Oscar dress.

OWEN
(not looking at her.)
Which one is this?

RUBY
It's the fucking Fan's fucking Choice Awards!

OWEN
And why are we here?

RUBY
I'm here to be honored. You're...here.

OWEN
Ah.

RUBY
And if you don't wanna be here, tough shit. You're here, so try to look like something more than a coat rack with bed head.

Ruby's door opens. Her demeanor immediately changes as she steps out.

She affects a heavy southern twang.

RUBY (O.S.)
Hey, y'all! What? No, it's not but thanks!

Owen slides across the seat. He pauses momentarily, then with a sigh steps out the door.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Owen drives away from the sunset. We see him reflected in the rearview mirror. Blood has recently stopped trickling from his nose.

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT

In rearview: Owen's still driving, the blood is now dried.

DJ #1 (O.S.)
...Odyssey Satellite Radio's all talk alternative. Entertainment news: Ruby and boy toy O'La apparently called it quits today when...

INT. CAR - DAWN

In rearview: Owen driving, becoming gradually more disheveled. The dried blood is now cracking under his nose.

DJ #2 (O.S.)
...on the red carpet! The pint-sized pop diva packed a punch...

INT. CAR - DUSK

In rearview: Owen still driving, looking decidedly rough around the edges.

DJ #3 (O.S.)
...cameras caught it all, but no one heard what the tabloid-favorite couple said before the one-punch melee...

INT. CAR - MIDNIGHT

In rearview Owen driving, still bloodied. Desperately trying to stay awake.

DJ #4 (O.S.)
...and Owen left the Shrine bloodied and battered. Best known for the hit tv show "Valley High Heat"...

EXT. GAS STATION - DAWN

Owen's car pulls up to the pump. He exits the car.

DJ #5(O.S.)
...and who stayed famous by consistently making an ass of himself in front of photographers now seems to have dropped off the face of the planet.

Owen swipes his card and begins to pump.

An SUV pulls up next to him. The Driver opens her door, and the same broadcast can be heard on her stereo.

Owen shifts uncomfortably. He wills the gas to pump faster.

FEMALE DJ (O.S.)
Are we really all that surprised?

DJ #5(O.S.)
No, but these things usually happen gradually. What do you think he said to her?

FEMALE DJ (O.S.)
Probably told her he wrecked her B-mer or something.

The Driver of the SUV looks over at Owen and does a double take.

Owen quickly looks the other way, and pulls the nozzle from the gas tank, spilling gas everywhere.

Owen hops into his car and drives off.

The Driver of the SUV is on her cell phone immediately.

DRIVER
Cindy! I think I just saw Owen Lawerence... How should I know?

INT. OWEN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Owen looks in the rear view and catches his reflection. It's not good. He still has bits of dried blood under his nose.

He hasn't slept in days and he looks it.

Owen pulls into a small coffee house.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The coffee house looks like a mom and pop version of Starbucks.

Owen walks in.

Keeping his head down, he grabs a napkin and dabs at the dried blood/hides his face with it.

He approaches the counter, still hiding behind the napkin.

OWEN
(mumbling)
Can I get a half/caf soy no foam latte?

Dawn, 23, works the counter.

DAWN
Sorry?

OWEN
(slightly louder)
Half/caf soy no foam latte?

DAWN
Sir...?

Owen pulls down the napkin.

OWEN
Coffee, just coffee.

The effect is instantaneous. The moment the napkin moves away from his face, several customers crane their necks to get a better look.

A look of recognition crosses Dawn's face immediately, but she remains stoic.

DAWN
What size, sir?

WHISPERS grow. A few people move in closer to Owen.

OWEN
Large--biggest you've got.

DAWN
$2.35.

Dawn turns to pull the coffee.

CUSTOMER
O'La?

Owen steels himself and turns.

OWEN
Owen, hi.

CUSTOMER
Oh my god, can I get a picture?

OWEN
(hesitates)
Sure.

Dawn turns back and takes in the scene.

CUSTOMER
Can I pretend to punch you?

OWEN
I don't--

CUSTOMER #2
That'd be SO funny, hey can you sign a bloody napkin?

DAWN
Sir? Your coffee. Perhaps you'd like to take it in the VIP room?

Dawn hands the coffee to Owen and nods toward the back door.

OWEN
Er, that'd be lovely.

Owen moves behind the counter, taking the coffee from Dawn.

DAWN
Lisa, take the counter a sec, wouldja?

CUSTOMER
Hey...

Dawn gestures Owen to follow her and leads him into the back room.

INT. COFFEE SHOP BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAWN
You don't remember me, do you?

OWEN
Hey, ya know, I meet a lot of people. But, thanks.

He turns to hit the back door.

DAWN
Wait!

OWEN
Look, I'm not trying to be an asshole, but I'm not giving autographs right now and I'm sorry I--.

Owen pushes the door handle and an ALARM sounds.

DAWN
I was gonna say if you push the handle you're gonna set off the alarm.

Dawn turns her key to disarm the back door alarm. She pushes the door open and waits for him to leave.

OWEN
I'm sorry. I'm just a little--

DAWN
Inconsiderate? That's ok.

OWEN
Right, well...

DAWN
Ya know they're just gonna ambush you out front. Why don't you hide out back here for a bit?
(indicates a small couch)
It's not the Beverly Hills Hotel, but as back room couches go...

Owen pauses. He can still hear the BUZZ of the crowd out front.

He looks longingly at the couch.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

Dawn is still working the counter. Dianne, 40s, walks in from the back room.

DIANNE
Have I completely lost it, or is O'La passed out in the back room?

INT. COFFEE SHOP BACKROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Owen is fast asleep on the couch.

Dawn enters carrying a fresh cup of coffee to match the one that sits abandoned next to the couch.

Dawn sits on the arm of the couch and nudges Owen who wakes with a start.

He looks around and gets his bearings.

DAWN
Here, this should help.

She hands him the coffee. He takes a long swig.

Owen sighs. Long and drawn out.

DAWN (CONT'D)
That bad, huh?

OWEN
Yeah... Yeah.

She hands him a napkin.

DAWN
You've still got a little...

She brushes at her own nose.

OWEN
Thanks.

DAWN
So you really don't remember me, then?

Owen looks at her, really taking her in for the first time. He sees her name badge. "Dawn"

OWEN
Dawn... Dawn? Scrawny Dawny?!

DAWN
Yeah, no one's called me that in about 5 years.

OWEN
Oh my God. Last time I saw you you were...

He makes a "this tall" gesture a few feet off the ground.

She moves his hand up higher.

DAWN
I was twelve not six.

Owen stares wistfully for a moment.

OWEN
So, how's...

DAWN
Riley's fine. He and Shannon have two little girls. You knew they...

OWEN
Yeah, I heard. Do they...

DAWN
Hate your guts? I don't think so. Not anymore.

A heavy silence descends.

OWEN
(standing up)
I should probably...

She hands him a baseball cap emblazoned with the shop's logo.

DAWN
Here. This might help you stay under the radar.

She unlocks the door and lets him out.

OWEN
Thanks.

DAWN
See ya, O'La.

OWEN
(slightly stung)
See ya, "Scrawny Dawny."

He pulls the ball cap low over his eyes and steps out the door.

EXT. LAWERENCE HOUSE - LATER

Frank Lawerence, early 60s, mows the front lawn with a push mower. The house is modest but well-kept.

Owen's car passes by the house, slows almost to a stop.

Frank looks up and for a moment. He catches sight of Owen's car.

Owen quickly accelerates away.

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - LATER

Owen walks in, trying his best to keep a low profile.

Keeping his head down, he walks to the front desk.

Shannon, 29, works the desk.

OWEN
(low key)
I'd like a room please.

He slides his credit card across the counter. Shannon takes it, looks at it, then takes in Owen.

Owen shifts uncomfortably. Looking up at Shannon, he tries a sheepish smile.

Looking her full in the face, he recognizes her and she recognizes him.

She punches him directly in the nose.

Owen doubles over. Blood begins to dribble from his nose again.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Dammit, Shan!

SHANNON
Don't you Shan, me, Roland Lawerence!

OWEN
Owen--

SHANNON
Oh, don't even!

A Security Guard hurries over.

SECURITY GUARD
Everything alright, Ms. Shannon?

SHANNON
It's fine, Walter.

SECURITY GUARD
(Suspicious)
Sir--Hey aren't you--?

SHANNON
Roland Lawerence? No, he dropped off the face of the earth years ago. Never heard from again.

OWEN
I'm good, thanks.

The Security Guard returns to his post, eyeing Owen all the way.

SHANNON
(trying to maintain)
11 years and you come waltzing in here like it's been a long weekend?!

OWEN
Shannon, you don't know what the hell you're talking about.

Owen tries to stem the flow of blood with his sleeve.

SHANNON
I don't?! 11 years, Roland! My dad died. Nothing. Your mom died! Nothing. Just nothing.

OWEN
It's not as simple as that, you don't -- Jesus, can I just get a fucking room, please?!

SHANNON
(icy)
Will that be a single, then sir?

She shoots him a fierce look.

He returns it. Weary but defiant.

OWEN
Yes.

SHANNON
Smoking or non?

OWEN
Non.

SHANNON
It's $139 a night. 214, stairs are around the corner.

She pushes a room key and his credit card back across the counter.

Owen snatches them and walks toward the stairs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - HOURS LATER

Owen is in a heap diagonally across the bed. It looks as if he walked in the room, closed the door and collapsed, which, in fact, he did.

A KNOCK is heard at the door.

Owen barely stirs.

Another KNOCK, slightly louder.

Owen stirs, mumbles incoherently.

A BANG on the door.

Owen wakes, disoriented. He stumbles to the door, fumbles with the latch and opens it.

From nowhere a fist appears and punches him in the nose.

Owen reels back into the room, trips and sits down hard on the bed.

Blood again starts to flow from his nose.

OWEN
Fuck! Doesn't anyone aim for the jaw anymore?!

Riley, 29, enters the room.

RILEY
Welcome home, chief.

Riley grabs a towel from the bathroom and tosses it to Owen.

RILEY
(dropping into a chair)
How's it goin?

OWEN
Let's see. In the past 2 days I've driven 30 hours, gotten
(checks watch)
5 hours of sleep, and I've been punched in the nose 3 times.

RILEY
Only once on live TV though.

OWEN
True. Saw that, didja?

RILEY
No, but I hear things.

A moment passes.

Riley stands, heads for the door.

RILEY
C'mon. Beer.

OWEN
So, punch in the face, then beer. This a new drinking game?

RILEY
Well, you abandoned all your friends and family, and I married your girlfriend. I figure a punch and a beer is a good start.

Riley walks out.

OWEN
Super.

Owen follows.

INT. HOTEL BAR - EVENING

The hotel bar is a modest affair with tables and a stage.

Owen and Riley sit at one of the tables.

Owen's still wearing the coffee shop hat low over his eyes with sunglasses.

RILEY
Ok, so what -- couldja lose the sunglasses?

Owen hesitates. Looks sharply around. He removes the sunglasses.

RILEY
Now, what the hell happened to you?

OWEN
I got punched in the face on the red carpet.

RILEY
No, what the hell happened to you?

OWEN
Oh...

Owen takes a long swig off his beer then sits back in his chair.

OWEN
Short answer: I lost my friggin mind.

RILEY
Long answer?

OWEN
I got out there, first audition, got the job. That doesn't happen, but, bam, there I was. Network show, teen magazines, the whole bit.
(MORE)

OWEN(cont'd)
Next thing I knew it'd been a year since I'd spoken to anyone but my mom.

RILEY
And when she died?

OWEN
I was in Belize, getting fellated by an Olsen twin.

RILEY
Which one?

OWEN
Who remembers, man? Mescaline is as mescaline does. Anyway, get home, check the voice mail, I'd already missed the funeral.

RILEY
You had a year, man. It's not like she got hit by a bus.

OWEN
Riley--

RILEY
All she wanted was to see you, and you couldn't make the time? Who gives a shit about a funeral, but your dying mother -- you don't get that one back.

OWEN
Riley, out there, it's a momentum game. If you stop for one second -- if you say no to anyone, it's done, and there are 1000 guys who look just like you ready to take your spot. You can't understand that kind of pressure.

RILEY
We sank everything we had into this place. First few years, I was here every day, sometimes all day and night. Shan's dad got sick. I found the time. Our kids were born. I found the time. When your mom died, I found the time; I made the time.

OWEN
It's not the same.

RILEY
Bull shit it's not the same. You made choices, Roll, and the least you can do is own up to them.

Dawn appears and sits next to Riley.

RILEY
(covering)
Dawny!

OWEN
Scrawny Dawny.

DAWN
O'La. Riley, you'd better go check on Ernie.

RILEY
Why?

DAWN
He's muttering to himself a lot.

RILEY
Dammit, I'll be right back. Roll, my sister's not an Olsen twin, get me?

OWEN
We'll see.

Riley exits.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Ernie?

DAWN
Bartender. He's a good guy, just wound a little tight.

OWEN
Ah.

DAWN
And the Olsen twin?

OWEN
Nothin'. Riley being Riley.

DAWN
Guess some things don't change. Ever my protector.

OWEN
Well, he is your big brother.

DAWN
Not Riley, Roland, you. Wow, you really have blocked out a huge chunk of your life.

OWEN
What?

DAWN
Riley always gave me hell, you were the one who always stood up for me.

OWEN
I did not.

DAWN
Who turned off the hose when Riley had me pinned down under the porch?

OWEN
Well...I--

DAWN
Who tackled Riley and took away the sack of pecans when I was stuck up on the roof?

OWEN
Yeah, but--

DAWN
Who rescued me from Jabba's palace?

OWEN
Now you're makin stuff up!

DAWN
Face it, O'La, somewhere in there is a guy who wouldn't let his best friend torture his little sister.

OWEN
Well, Shannon woulda kicked my ass if she thought I'd let it go.

DAWN
I guess that's why when everybody gave up on you, I still...

OWEN
You still what?

DAWN
Shut up.

OWEN
Come on...

DAWN
So you're on the run, huh?

OWEN
Dammit.

DAWN
Oh, fine. I still thought that one day you'd come back--

OWEN
No. Over your shoulder. I know that look.

From behind Dawn, a DRUNKEN IDIOT has apparently caught sight of Owen.

Owen tries to make himself smaller, less conspicuous, invisible. To no avail.

DRUNKEN IDIOT
Hey, man, you're that guy!

OWEN
Yes. Spiro T. Agnew. Important state business going on here, so if you wouldn't mind--

DRUNKEN IDIOT
No, you're that douchebag from that show.
(to his buddies)
You guys remember. The one where they're cops, they're high school students. "Valley High Heat!" Man, that show sucked!

There is general derisive laughter from the Drunken Idiot's two friends.

OWEN
Thanks, always good to meet a fan.
(to Dawn)
(MORE)

OWEN(cont'd)
So you were saying, something about a life raft...

DRUNKEN IDIOT
Fan? Dude, that show sucked! And you sucked in it!

DRUKEN IDIOT'S DRUNKEN IDIOT FRIEND
Hey, didn't you get your ass kicked on TV?

DRUNKEN IDIOT
Yeah! By a girl!

Owen stands.

Riley reappears and steps between Owen and the Drunken Idiots.

RILEY
Alright guys. Let's let the douchebag from the cop show have his drink in peace.

DRUNKEN IDIOT
Riley! You know this guy?

RILEY
Nah, but this is a nice place. Can't have any riots on my hands.

DRUNKEN IDIOT
OK, man. For you.
(to Owen)
See ya, douchebag!

The Drunken Idiots retreat to another part of the bar.

OWEN
That went well. Remind me to send that guy a muffin basket.

DAWN
If you liked that, then you'll love this.

OWEN
What?

Dawn points to one of the TVs in the bar.

On TV: Frank Lawerence is shooting paparazzi with a garden hose.

RILEY
Ernie, remote!

The CRASH of breaking glass is heard off camera.

RILEY
Ernie!

A remote flies in from off camera. Riley snags it and turns up the volume on the TV.

CELEB SHOW HOST (O.S.)
...doesn't fall far from the tree. It would seem O'La's father

OWEN
Shit.

CELEB SHOW HOST (O.S., CONT)
shares his son's contempt for the celeb press. This exclusive WTF News footage, taken this afternoon--

Riley laughs.

RILEY
The professor's got pretty good aim.

OWEN
I'm glad you find this amusing.

Owen grabs the remote from Riley and turns off the TV.

RILEY
C'mon man. You live this, you can't be surprised.

OWEN
I don't live it because I want to.

RILEY
Really? You're the most conspicuously inconspicuous person I've ever seen. You look like you wanna be seen trying not to be seen.

OWEN
This is not what I want!

RILEY
Then stop!

OWEN
It's not that simple, Riley.

RILEY
Roll, this is what I'm talking about. This is the life you're choosing to live, so it must at least approximate the life you want!

OWEN
You know what? Just forget it.

Owen moves toward the exit.

RILEY
Where you running to now, O'La?

DAWN
Riley...

Dawn exits after Owen.

EXT. HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Owen exits and heads toward his car. He pulls open the door.

Dawn exits the hotel, chasing after Owen.

DAWN
Where are you going?

OWEN
Where do you think?

Owen shuts the door and starts to pull out.

Dawn steps in front of the car.

OWEN
What the hell?

DAWN
Stop and think! What happens when you get there?

OWEN
I don't know, but they shouldn't--

DAWN
They do and they will. It's what they do.

Owen gets out of the car.

OWEN
This is my responsibility!

DAWN
So, be responsible! If you go over there, it's a story. It's the first thing we'll see tomorrow night on WTF. If you don't, what'll they report? O'La still in hiding?

OWEN
Yeah, probably.

DAWN
Well, that'll get old eventually. They're stray dogs, Owen. You keep feeding 'em; they keep following you. You stop; they go away.

OWEN
But, it's my fault they're camped out on my father's lawn.

DAWN
And if you show up, they'll stay there. The professor can handle himself. You think this is the first time he's had to deal with paparazzi digging through his garbage?

OWEN
And in the meantime?

DAWN
Hide out here. Stop getting into shouting matches with hotel and restaurant owners and their sisters. Only one person has complete control over this situation: you.

OWEN
I feel like I owe him...

DAWN
So, call him. It's a step in the right direction and it's the smart move right now. He'd appreciate that.

Dawn holds out her phone; Owen reaches for it but she pulls it back.

DAWN
What did you say to her?

Owen smiles in spite of himself.

OWEN
I told her she looked like Britney after a meth lab explosion.

Owen takes the phone and dials.

FADE OUT.

Appendix B: Test Audience Questionnaires

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.				✓	
I would recommend this movie.				✓	
I was bored by this movie.			✓		
The movie's theme was clear.					✓
The pace was good.				✓	
I liked the story.				✓	
I liked the characters.				✓	

What specific elements did you find most compelling? The bloody nose & black eyes.

What struck you most about the characters? They all seemed to know each other well, like they all grew up together.

Did you dislike any characters? Why? No.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie? Making the theme more clear.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").
I have no idea.

Any additional comments? If they theme would have been more clear, I think I would've had a different opinion about the movie.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			✓		
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.		✓			
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.				✓	
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

It seemed like there is just enough stylized shots . . . (not too artsy)

What struck you most about the characters?

The charecters worked very well together. They were able to entertain me.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

The bald guy w/ the beard . . . (Just kidding) . . . Maybe the 2 douchebags in the bar that kept saying douchebag.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

The lighting seemed a little too much. But was balanced

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Any additional comments?

I would LOVE to see it when the audio is finished. That is a very important aspect for me.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 22 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.		✓			
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

I liked the camera work the most. The V.O. of the radio announcer was great. I also enjoyed the blues in the opening titles.

What struck you most about the characters?

What struck me the most about the characters is the realistic aspect they brought. You chose the right people for the story. None of them distracted me, they just added to it. The two "thugs" at the bar were a little over the top.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

The two "thugs" were a little bit to much for me.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

The edit in the coffee shop. And the edit in the bar. ~~The door~~

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

~~Don't take the~~ Dont forget about the ones who love you when you were just you.

Any additional comments?

Great job. Get that audio together! !!

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 26 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			X		
I would recommend this movie.				X	
I was bored by this movie.		X			
The movie's theme was clear.				X	
The pace was good.				X	
I liked the story.					
I liked the characters.			X		

What specific elements did you find most compelling? I always enjoy watching the character of Dawn develop.

What struck you most about the characters?

They didn't give the impression that they actually knew each other.

Did you dislike any characters? Why? The character played by the film maker had some dialog that didn't seem to flow.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie? I'd like to emphasize the humor element. Currently the film seems to be struggling for its genre.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

I wasn't sure about the message. There seemed to be some reconciliation, but it wasn't clear enough.

Any additional comments?

The story needs to be a little easier to follow to make the film more digestible for the general audience.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 40 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.	✓				
I would recommend this movie.		✓			
I was bored by this movie					✓
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.					
I liked the story.	✓				
I liked the characters.	✓				

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

- locations of the scenes were good.
- story in general.

What struck you most about the characters?

everyone was very honest to Roland. They were all interconnected. (brother/sister; ex b/f; etc.)

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

Nope.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Make the scene with the girl (at the end) a little more clear.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

I would say "don't take the ones you love for granted".

Any additional comments?

- Great job! ☺ Looks like a lot of hard work was put in.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.	✓				
I would recommend this movie.		✓			
I was bored by this movie.					✓
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.			✓		
I liked the story.	✓				
I liked the characters.	✓				

What specific elements did you find most compelling? The transitioning between scenes was Beautiful! I loved it!

What struck you most about the characters? They were likable and real And good actors for the most part.

Did you dislike any characters? Why? The main Female part was a little bit fake to me. She just seemed a bit too unreal But Not →not bad, really. Off a lil overacted.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?
Maybe make the Story cleaner... I was a bit confused by it.... and the end was not perfect Needed more closure.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").
Don't let Fame take over your life.. Something like that.

Any additional comments? Nice Job! I hope I ~~am~~ helped a bit!

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 __ Gender Female and proud of it!

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.				✓	

What specific elements did you find most compelling?
I liked that Ola was on the run. The film made it seem like he did something awful on the red carpet but really it was what he'd done before

What struck you most about the characters?
I liked your character and I didn't really understand Carmen... oh, wait yes I do, had to think - Sorry never mind

Did you dislike any characters? Why?
I did not like Dawn because she was a little too much of a push over and not assertive

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?
Again, I would make Dawn a little stronger

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").
your past WILL catch up w/ you

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 Gender Female

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.		✓			
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

The acting was genuine.

What struck you most about the characters?

They fit their roles well. They also meshed well together.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

No

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Nothing comes to mind.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

It is never too late to make amends.

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age. 21 Gender. M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.			✓		

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

The sudden, unexpected punches.

What struck you most about the characters?

They all hated Roland.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

I did not like the two strangers in the bar. Poor acting.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Some of the comedic parts weren't funny.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Family come first.
and friends

Any additional comments?

The scene in the coffee shop looked a bit off. [redacted]

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.	✓				
I would recommend this movie.	✓				
I was bored by this movie.					✓
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.	✓				
I liked the characters.	✓				

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

I thought the actors performance were such extremely well.

What struck you most about the characters?

how everyone just kept hiding [illegible]

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

The characters were all I think well played.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Only the ending and was funny that

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Good things come to those who wait.

Any additional comments?

Amazing movie would like see more.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 24 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.					
I would recommend this movie.					
I was bored by this movie.					
The movie's theme was clear.					
The pace was good.					
I liked the story.					
I liked the characters.					

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

The colors seemed brighter on the tv screen than on the computer and they implied that it was a cheerful movie and were unnecessarily colorful to the point of being distracting.

What struck you most about the characters?

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

It didn't like the characters when approached from the back or they seemed strange or unnecessary. I think it has to do with the camera angle or the distance.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Screen the lighting, camera angles

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender f

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			✓		
I would recommend this movie.					
I was bored by this movie.			✓		
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.			✓		
I liked the story.		✓			
I liked the characters.			✓		

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

the consistency of the voice over

What struck you most about the characters?

they were all connected

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

Scarlett Darcy. Her character was a little too cutesy.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

The ending.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

I don't know

Any additional comments?

overall engaging

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			✓		
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.			✓		

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

What struck you most about the characters?

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age_____ Gender_____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			✓		
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.			✓		
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.			✓		
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.			✓		

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

What struck you most about the characters?

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?
lighting in the first bar scene; it was too bright

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.				✓	
I would recommend this movie.				✓	
I was bored by this movie.		✓			
The movie's theme was clear.	✓				
The pace was good.				✓	
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.				✓	

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

The story seemed well thought-out, with a very specific theme in mind and knew where it wanted to go.

What struck you most about the characters?

They were more plot devices than characters.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

Yes, "Screamy Danny", didn't serve the story atall, no real relatable character attributes other than also being human

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Stronger characters, cut your shots quicker (ie. don't linger on people's expressions longer than necessary) looked very "point & shoot" stylistically

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

"Don't be an asshole." I guess. Or, "Remember where you came from."

Any additional comments?

Coulda been longer. Could have had more contrast in the lighting.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.			✓		
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.				✓	

What specific elements did you find most compelling?
The main character gave a good performance. The characters were somewhat relatable

What struck you most about the characters?
Good performances by main actor & his friend.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?
really disliked Dawny, The actress was awkward and slightly annoying with her gestures, walk of speaking etc. TOO contrived.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?
The shots behind the coffee shot between Dawny and the main character. weren't enough natural beats, lines followed too closely together.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").
"you can't outrun your past"

Any additional comments?
The first two "fans" in the coffee shop. female is not looking in right direction towards camera...

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender female

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.		✓			
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

I liked that ~~I could see those~~ the characters could be real and the soation could actualy happen.

What struck you most about the characters?

that they could be real people somewhere.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

no.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

I would like the movie to be a little longer.

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Be careful what life you choose, because it might not always be what you want.

Any additional comments?

Maybe ~~they~~ you could show the read carpet Ponch somewhere. such as when h C is in the hotel he could be watching it. Other than that its pretty good. I wanted to keep watching.

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.		✓			
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

The element of someone going to Hollywood and making it big by getting a role, only to forget about his hometown, so to speak.

What struck you most about the characters?

The characters were honest and believable. I appreciated the relationships between them.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

No

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

I may say the pace of the character that Glenn played, which is "Hale", a little easier when understanding of why he acted the

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

You cannot forget your past, no matter how much you want to.

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 25 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.	✓				
I would recommend this movie.	✓				
I was bored by this movie.					✓
The movie's theme was clear.	✓				
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.	✓				
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

I liked the story (good plot)

What struck you most about the characters?

The fact the everybody punched the lead

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

I did not believe Carmen's character really was his ex

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

More dialogue from Carmen's character so I can believe the lead really left her like that

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

If you're gone for 11 years, expect a punch in the face when you return

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 23 Gender M

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.	✓				
I would recommend this movie.		✓			
I was bored by this movie.					✓
The movie's theme was clear.				✓	
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story		✓			
I liked the characters.	✓				

What specific elements did you find most compelling? The use of the 'media' through the radio and television scenes

What struck you most about the characters? Covid fell from the first appearance of Dawn that there was going to be some love interest between her and Roland. Lance's character was the best in the film. He was the most believable and had the best dialogue. Did you dislike any characters? Why?
Carmen's character. It wasn't really clear who she was.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").
Don't let Holly Wood consume your life.

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 16 f Gender M or F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.				✓	
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.		✓			
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

What struck you most about the characters?

They were ordinary people so they are relatable

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

No

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

I would just make the theme a little more clear throughout the movie

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

If it is your responsibility, be responsible

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 14 Gender female

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.				✓	
The movie's theme was clear.			✓		
The pace was good.					
I liked the story.		✓			
I liked the characters.		✓			

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

Bloody Nose

What struck you most about the characters?

Appearance

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

NO

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Scene behind COFFEE SHOP, less "Pause" time in between Speech... ENDED TOO ABRUPTLY

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Every Dog has his day

Any additional comments?

A little (Sound effects... esp the Car Scene at the Stop Sign) Confused at the beginning, didn't Really understand the plot until midway through

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 20 Gender F

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I liked this movie.		✓			
I would recommend this movie.			✓		
I was bored by this movie.			✓		
The movie's theme was clear.	✓				
The pace was good.		✓			
I liked the story.			✓		
I liked the characters.			✓		

What specific elements did you find most compelling?

It seemed like Rahul's problems would never end.

What struck you most about the characters?

It was a realistic group.

Did you dislike any characters? Why?

No, they all seemed necessary to the story.

What, if anything, would you change about the movie?

Sum up the theme of this film in one sentence (i.e. "Good things come to those who wait").

Family first.

Any additional comments?

Please provide basic demographic information:

Age 19 Gender F

Appendix C: Talent Release Forms

James

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/22/09 3/23/09 3/24/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/21 22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of 0 receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, _____, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name James Yearguin
Address 8310 Willow Street NOLA 70118
Telephone: 504 952 3712

Talent Signature _____

Producer Signature _____

Rebecca

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/22/09 3/28/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Damien Terres DATE 3/21-22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of ___ receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Rebecca Lalonde, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Rebecca Lalonde
Address 3 Hallbrook Ct
New Orleans, LA, 70131 Telephone: (504) 606-1106
Talent Signature Rebecca Lalonde
Producer Signature

LORNE

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/26/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of € _____ receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, _____, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act _____.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, art for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Lorne V. Bost
Address 4520 Williams Blvd Apt 5238
Kenner 70065 Telephone: 985-636-6555

Talent Signature Lorne V. Bost

Producer Signature Carmen Torres

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/28/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of [redacted] receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Jarred Smith, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Jarred Smith
Address 20258 Nature's Way Apt 1 Hammond LA 70403
Telephone: 985-630-2911

Talent Signature [signature]

Producer Signature [signature]

Gideon

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/22/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of ~~0~~ _____ receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Matthew Smith, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Matthew Smith (Gideon Hodge)
Address 2308 Monson Ave.
Metairie, LA 70001 Telephone: 504-303-2252
Talent Signature
Producer Signature

DM

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/22/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/21 & 22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of $ _____ receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, _____, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Dona Mangano
Address 4600 N. Turnbull Dr. Metairie, LA 70002
Telephone: 504-606-4385

Talent Signature Dona Mangano

Producer Signature Carmen Torres

Steven

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 - 3/22/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of ¢ receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Steven Swanson, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Steven Swanson
Address 155 Gruner Rd. Metairie, LA 70001
Telephone: (504) 495-9616

Talent Signature Steven M. Swanson

Producer Signature Carmen

Noor

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09- 3/22/09 3/25/09 3/27/09- 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/22/09

For the good and valuable consideration of Ø receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Noor Athonis, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last act.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Noor Athonis
Address 1910 Marengo St New Orleans, LA 70115
Telephone: (504) 419-4676

Talent Signature

Producer Signature

Adeana

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/20/09 3/22/09 3/25/09 3/27/09 - 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/20/09

For the good and valuable consideration of $0 receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Adeana Gamble, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Adeana Gamble
Address 225 Adams St. Apt. C New Orleans, LA 70115
Telephone: 504-992-0299

Talent Signature Adeana Gamble

Producer Signature Carmen Torres

Autumn

TALENT RELEASE FORM

PRODUCTION TITLE The Last Act
PRODUCTION DATES 3/26/09- 3/28/09 3/25/09 3/27/09- 3/30/09
PRODUCER Carmen Torres DATE 3/29/09

For the good and valuable consideration of 0 receipt of which is hereby acknowledges, I, Autumn Stricklin, hereby grant the Producer the right to photograph me and to record my voice, performances, actions, and appearances, and use my picture, photograph, silhouette, and other reproductions of my physical likeness in connection with the motion picture tentatively titled The Last Act.

I hereby grant the Producer, his/her successors, assigns, and licensees the perpetual right to use, as you may desire, all still and motion pictures and sound track recordings and records that you may make of me or of my voice, and the right to use my name or likeness in or in connection with the exhibition, advertising, exploiting, and/or publicizing of the Picture.

I agree that I will not assert or maintain against the Producer, your successors, assigns, and licensees, any claim, action, suit, or demand of any kind or nature whatsoever, including but not limited to those grounded upon invasion of privacy, rights of publicity or other civil rights, ort for any reason in connection with your authorized use of my physical likeness and sound in the Picture as herein provided.

By my signature here I understand that I will, to the best of my ability, adhere to the schedule agreed to prior to the beginning of my engagement. Additionally, I agree, to the best of my ability to make myself available should it be necessary, to rerecord my voice and/or record voiceovers and otherwise perform any necessary sound work required after the end of filming. Should I not be able to perform such sound work, I understand the producer may enter into agreement with another person to rerecord my dialogue and/or record voiceovers and use this sound work over my picture or however they deem appropriate.

I hereby certify that I am over 18 years old of age and have read the foregoing and fully understand the meaning and effect thereof.

Talent Name Autumn Stricklin
Address 223 Normandy Dr.
Slidell LA 70458 Telephone: 985 290 1398
Talent Signature
Producer Signature Carmen Torres

Vita

Lorne Boni was born October 19, 1972 in Opelousas, Louisiana. He graduated with honors from Opelousas High School in May of 1990. He enrolled in Louisiana State University in August of 1990 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English-Creative Writing with a minor in Theatre. He attended the University of California-Los Angeles for one year in its MFA Acting program. After nearly a decade's hiatus from academia, he entered the University of New Orleans' Masters Program in Film Production in the ill-fated fall semester of 2005. He remained enrolled in the university during the Katrina semester and returned when the campus reopened in January of 2006. During his time at UNO, he taught FTCA 2565-Introduction to Digital Technology for five semesters as a Graduate Assistant and is now slated to graduate in May of 2010.