

ROAD TO NOWHERE

By

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INT. LA APARTMENT- NIGHT

On a white piece of paper, slide onto the desk horizontally.

A pair eyes focuses hard on the white piece of paper.

A ruler straightens up as a black of sharpie draws 6 stages of story diagram.

The black letter word EXPOSITION.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - PRE-DAWN

MONTAGE -

Time lapse shots of icons of LA as sunrises becomes day. Each image moves us deeper into the Hollywood streets.

We move along at normal speed in the AVENUE OF THE STARS, a low POV.

A dog's snout pops into frame as we pull back see eight dogs of different sizes being walked by ARTIE VERCLER, mid 20s. It's more like the dogs are walking him. He wear a bright green shirt with the logo that reads "Puppy Walker".

EXT. APARTMENT COURTYARD - DAY

Artie, now dog-less, walks into the courtyard of a rundown, Hollywood, apartment complex.

He walks past pool. It's empty. A BEARDED OLD MAN lounging on a floaty sunbathes on the floor of the empty pool.

INT. ARTIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Artie drops his mail on a small table in his apartment. On top: a letter inviting him to get a new credit card.

INT. ARTIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

A dark computer screen. In the reflection we see Artie. He stares at the screen. The screen stares back.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - DUSK

Time lapse of the sunset falling on Hollywood Blvd. LA traffic moving on the 110 freeway. Darkness falling on LA city-scape.

INT. ARTIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ARTIE eats ramen soup from a dollar store Styrofoam container as he intently reads a book. "Don't let One Bad Movie Stop You: Hints to Write a Better Screenplay."

INT. HONEY BUCKET PORTA POTTY - DAY

Artie, in a hazmat suit, he slowly stick a long cleaning brush into the toilet. He is trying not to gag. He slips a loud splash. Brown chunks hits his face.

EXT. HONEY BUCKET PORTA POTTY - DAY

The door flies open Artie rushes out. He rips off the mask - he's going to throw up. He bends over, hacks a few times but nothing. He looks down the row of honey buckets. It seems endless.

INT. ARTIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

On a laptop screen he writes a title, "Road to Redemption." He stares at the screen. The screen stares back.

INT. SUNSET BLVD - DAY

Three different time-lapse shots of iconic corners of Sunset Blvd.

INT. PLASMA CENTER - DAY

Artie reads his book, lying on his back. He's half way done. We pull back to reveal, he is on a table at a plasma center.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Static wide shot of a bus stop. On the bench a sleeping homeless woman and her small grocery cart full of her things. Nearby a very animated dooms day prophet wearing a sandwich board. It reads End of the World. Revelations 12:6. He yells through a megaphone.

Artie walks in to frame and takes a seat. Artie reacts to how loud the prophet is the profit points to the megaphone towards him. He slides closer to the homeless woman. He waits impatiently for his bus. Slowly the homeless woman starts slipping closer to Artie. Finally her head lands on his shoulder. Artie unsure what to do he looks at her.

She is beginning to drool. Artie decides just wait for his bus.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

On a laptop with night time screen the title, "Road to Redemption," is deleted and a new one appears, "Road to Attainment."

He stares at the screen. The screen stares back.

A website pops up on the screen. Two quick clicks and a credit card application pops up. He starts to fill it out.

EXT. SANTA MONICA - DAWN

Series of time-lapse shots as the day begins in the Santa Monica beach area.

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET- DAY

Artie deep in thought. He concentrates hard on something of screen.

1ST AD (OS)

Places everybody. Okay lets roll sound.

BOOM (OS)

Speed.

AC

Scene 42 take 7.

ARTIE

And Action.

MAN (OS)

Who are you?

We pop out wider to see Artie is on film set. He is looking over the real DIRECTOR shoulder to a monitor. He wear lime shirt that reads Clean Street Team and orange work vest on top. He looks at the director speechless.

DIRECTOR

Can someone get this guy off my set.

Two security guards pick up Artie and carry him off.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Oh sweet Jesus I'm never going to make my day.

INT. BUS - DAY

Artie is riding the bus, focusing deeply as he writes his name on a pad. Artie Vercler. He glances around at the other passengers.

Someone is reading a tabloid with the headline, "Religious Leader claims celestial alignment means end of the world."

Artie goes back to his pad. He writes:

Arthur Vallone. Angelo Valentine. Arnie Vandross. Arturo Vespucci. At this one, he pauses. Admires.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He sits on the toilet as he reads the last few pages of his book. He finishes the last page of the book. Close the book and reaches over for toilet paper. There is only one sheet left. He thinks for a moment. Grabs the book and tears a few pages from the book.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Artie is covered in paint. He opens an envelope.

A CREDIT CARD, with his name on it, lands on top of the four other credit cards already on the small table.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

On a laptop night time screen, the title, "Road to Attainment," is deleted and then a new one appears: "Road to"

He stares at the screen. The screen stares back.

Angrily he types. "ROAD TO NOWHERE".

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

An empty mirror. Artie's reflection rises into view. He looks at himself. Stares deeply into his reflection. Takes a deep breath.

ARTIE

My whole life, I've been an
afterthought. That person whose
name you can't remember three times
after you've heard it.

Artie takes in what he just said. Turns to look off camera

MATCH CUT

INT. GYM - DAY

Same profile shot.

ARTIE

Well, that all changes from here on
out.

Artie runs on a treadmill next to KODY DAWSON, 25 year old, smoldering, heartthrob---the next big thing. Kody runs without problems. Artie is a little winded.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

When I go to sleep, this is what I
dream. It's such a big idea, and
I'm the only one who can tell it
right. I feel like Michelangelo.
Everyone else looked up at the
Sistine Chapel and they just saw a
ceiling. This is my ceiling.

Artie slips and falls out of frame. Kody looks back.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Artie is trying to figure out how to pick up this huge dog poop with a small plastic bag. A little toy dog watches him.

ARTIE

Now more than ever it's important
to be honest. It's a small thing,
but it means the entire world.
Truth has become fluid.

He's kneeling in front of GLORIA GLORY, faded former starlet in her 70s dressed way too glam to just be walking her dog.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

There are no facts, there's no science, and emotions are easily manipulated on all sides.

He starts to rise up...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

... Artie rises up, dripping with sweat, into a Warrior pose. Next to him is BIRDY, early 20s, an novice actress and big time new-age believer. She listens closely as he whispers.

ARTIE

We live in a time where cinema has made the impossible possible, but the audience knows it.

As they finish the hot yoga class, she grabs a towel and water bottle.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

They're jaded. You can destroy the world a thousand times over digitally, and no one will blink. Everything's a post apocalyptic landscape.

As they walk towards the door, Artie uses all his energy to spin in front of her. He continues to walk backwards while speaking.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

When was the last time you lost yourself in a movie?

He reaches for the door and starts to open it. He steps through the doorway...

WIPE CUT:

INT. STEAM ROOM - DAY

...as Artie step in still walking backwards followed by CHARLES HARDY, 60s-70s, a lion past his prime but with one great roar remaining. They wear nothing but their towels.

ARTIE

Better yet, when was the last time you found yourself in a movie, gasping because you've been shown the truth?

They sit in the steam room.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

I want reality, not something manufactured to tug at heartstrings. I want truth, a story that treats its characters with dignity, relishes in the art of storytelling, starts a new conversation on the human condition--something raw, provocative ... pure.

Charles gets up to add more water to the rocks.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

All this with reverent respect for the craft, never losing sight of the fact that the audience is dying of starvation, forced to feed upon sequels and prequels, remakes of remakes.

Charles spins around to look at Artie and his towel falls off. Artie begins to covers his eyes in shock.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MILLIE'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Artie's hand covers his eyes. He lowers it in frustration.

ARTIE

I have waited my whole life to tell this story. It's now or never. Will you join me?

MILLIE, 22, more model then actress stands at her doorway high end house somewhere in the Hollywood hills. Her arms are crossed. She looks skeptical.

MILLIE

I don't know, Artie. It sounds really good. But then, so did BIKINI SLAUGHTER HOUSE, and look how that turned out.

ARTIE

This is different, Millie. This is a passion project!

MILLIE

So will there be no stripers but real actors?

ARTIE

Correct.

MILLIE

And nudity?

ARTIE

The nudity will be much more tasteful this time.

(more to himself)

Well, if there is nudity.

MILLIE

No.

ARTIE

You've got to be in the movie! It was literally made for you.

MILLIE

We broke up and I don't even think of you as friend so why would I do this?

ARTIE

Please, Millie. This is my last chance to tell a story I'm proud of.

MILLIE

Oh, please.

ARTIE

I mean it. If this doesn't work, I'm done. I'm out.

MILLIE

What do you mean?

ARTIE

I'll sell tires at my uncle's garage.

MILLIE

You hate your uncle.

ARTIE

I know!

MILLIE

Artie...

ARTIE

I want to know I did something worthwhile. I want my Terrence Malick picture. I want my Thin Red Line. I want my Citizen Kane, my Easy Rider, my Apocalypse Now, my Goodfellas, my Shawshank Redemption, my Memento. My Hamilton.

MILLIE

The musical?

ARTIE

That's a musical? Anyway, I want you there, by my side. I'm tired of being the guy who's easy to leave.

MILLIE

If this is all a trick to get me back ...

ARTIE

It's not.

MILLIE

Because I'm seeing someone.

Long pause.

ARTIE

Is it serious?

She closes the door in his face. His head drops in disappointment. He sadly walks towards camera.

The sound of scrapping...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

ECU of butter knife spreading butter on rye toast.

ECU on the tip of shoot gun mic. A tinkling sound

ECU of teaspoon stirring coffee.

CU of the mic as the bell ding continues. As camera moves along the shaft of the mic it reveals SLAV, African American, 30s. He wears some air buds and sits at a four top table near the large diner window.

Artie invades the seat next to him. Slav takes his air buds out begins wrapping up his gear.

ARTIE

I know what you're going to say. I'm never, ever supposed to talk to you again. And I get it. I took you for granted. I was a terrible director. I was a horrible friend. When you said, "I'm never making another movie with you," you meant it.

Slav just looks at him.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

I'm making another movie.

Slav gets up and leaves the booth.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

It's a script you always wanted to be part of.

Slav hates himself, but he pauses.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

If this doesn't go, I'm selling tires.

The expression on Slav's face clearly means, "but you hate your uncle!"

ARTIE (CONT'D)

I know!

Slav sits back down.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

I think the problem with all the other movies, I settled. I didn't stay true to my vision. I let outside influences take over.

Slav gets up to walk again.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

I let my ego take over. Please, don't say anything. Just give me five minutes and then, if ...

Slav begrudgingly sits down.

Artie looks around the diner.

ARTIE ((CONT'D)

Look at 'em all. If they only knew a sound genius is in their midst. A tech guru. They're gonna teach your stuff in classes one day.

He turns back to Slav.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

It'll be different this time. Small crew. Me. You, if you're willing. I got Charles Hardy and Gloria Glory to say yes.

Slav arches an eyebrow.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Millie? She said no but we got Birdy Blue. And we got Kody Dawson.

This surprises Slav.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

He's all done with the Spielberg thing, so that's like, built-in street-cred. He's working cheap. His grandmother owed me after she hit me with her car.

Slav shakes his head.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

This is going to be amazing.

Slav waits.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

And we need your van.

Slav gets up.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Please? When I picture doing this in my head, there's no one else beside me but you. I need you.

No one works tech like you. I'll pay for gas money!

Slav stops. Apparently for Artie, this is progress. He returns to the table, sits down.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(pause)

I might need to borrow some money for the bus.

Slav nods: Good old Artie. He hands him two dollars.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

How's the vow of silence going?

Slav gives a thumb's up.

EXT. DINER - DAWN

Charles stands, waiting, looking dashing. He has a fancy old school bag for the excursion.

Gloria sneaks up behind him. She also has a bag.

GLORIA

Boo!

CHARLES

Ah! How now, dear friend. Ready for another adventure with Artie - I mean, Arturo?

GLORIA

It's sure to be exciting.

CHARLES

I don't supposed you've seen the script yet.

GLORIA

Of course not. But the passion ...

CHARLES

That boy ...

A town car pulls up. Charles and Gloria exchange a glance. Surely this isn't Artie -

KODY

Are we in the right place?

Gloria and Charles both react to Kody's handsomeness.

CHARLES

Oh my ...

Kody looks at the two of them and gets giddy like a big fan. He hops out of the car as the driver gets his bag from the trunk then drives off.

KODY

Oh, I know who you both are! My whole family loves "Count Fang's Last Sunrise."

Charles gives a little bow.

KODY (CONT'D)

And I had such a crush after seeing "The Cook's Daughter."

GLORIA/CHARLES

Why thank you.

Kody is little confused by this response.

KODY

Anyway...thank god, if you're in this, I am less worried. I mean I haven't worked with this Arturo Vespucci. Is he any good? My people couldn't find any of his other movies ... and they looked.

GLORIA

He's very energized.

CHARLES

Caffeinated but inspiring.

GLORIA

Very particular. But very giving.

CHARLES

He is an actor's director.

KODY

So you've worked with him before?

GLORIA

Darling, that's something a good actor just smells.

KODY

Ahhh.

CHARLES

So my dear new young friend, you
have us at a disadvantage?

Kody looks at him confused

GLORIA

Your name, darling.

KODY

Kody. Wow I can't believe I get to
work with Charles Hardy and Gloria
Glory! Can we take a selfie?

He pops out his cell phone before they can even answer. This
takes a moment because they all are busy primping.

ON THE PHONE'S SCREEN: Finally done he is about to take the
picture when their eyes divert to the background as they are
photo bombed by Birdy. A LOUD, OBNOXIOUS HORN HONK!

They lower the phone to see Slav and Artie pull up in a
crappy van, loaded over with film equipment.

ARTIE

There are my actors!

Artie gets out and greets his cast warmly. He kisses Gloria
on the cheek, slaps Charles on the shoulders. Charles slaps
back.

CHARLES

Once more unto the breach, dear
friend!

Artie gives a hug to Birdy. A long tight hug. She giggles and
he extends his hand out to Kody all the while hugging Birdy.

KODY

Is this our ride?

Finally releasing Birdy he escorts them both to the van.

ARTIE

Yep, isn't she a beaut!

KODY

Spielberg doesn't work like this.

The van door slams shut. The van engine starts but sputters,
then dies.

INT. VAN - DAWN

All the actors look at Artie. Artie glares at Slav.

EXT. DINER - DAWN

The exhaust pipe explodes to life. The van roars off.

EXT. STREETS OF LOS ANGELES - MOMENTS LATER

The van speeds through various streets and LA traffic, making its way to the 101 to 118 Interstate. Finally heading north on the 5 Interstate towards the Grapevine.

EXT. 5 INTERSTATE - DAY

Aerial shot of the van, making its way out to more remote areas outside of LA.

INT. VAN - DAY

ARTIE

Thanks again for doing this,
everybody!

Slav nods in agreement.

GLORIA

It'll be good to be in front of a
camera again.

CHARLES

Here, here.

KODY

And after this you'll drop the
lawsuit against my Nana?

ARTIE

All in good time, Kody, all in good
time.

KODY

She's on a fixed income.

ARTIE

Once the world sees our movie, your
nana will be on two fixed incomes.

Kody doesn't know what that means. Neither does anyone else in the van.

CHARLES
How is the script, dear boy?

ARTIE
It's amazing.

KODY
When do we get to take a look at it? I don't even know who I'm playing!

GLORIA
(Looks at Kody)
Tell me there's a love scene.

BIRDY
Yeah! Um ... if there is will it be beautiful?

Slav looks at Birdy in the rearview mirror.

ARTIE
I'm keeping it pretty under wraps. Don't want it getting out too early. I want to make sure it flows.

CHARLES
You know best, fearless leader!

ARTIE
(He looks at each person to drive home the message)
Thank you Charles. Anybody can write dialogue. I want to capture an emotion. A feeling. Honesty. Washington here we come.

Slav looks at Artie: WHAT?

ARTIE (CONT'D)
What? My cousin has huge house just outside of Spokane. Free place to stay.

Slav looks at him: Really?

ARTIE (CONT'D)
Don't judge just drive.