

MATT

30.

ACT TWO

TITLE:

Matt and Danny

We HEAR the sound of plates, glasses and silverware crashing around for a moment and then

FADE IN:

INT. BEVERLY HILTON BALLROOM - NIGHT

--as MATTHEW ALBIE, 33, sits on the floor, having tried to sit in a chair that wasn't there. He's grabbed a bit of the tablecloth on the way down, upsetting some of the place settings. None of his friends at the table seem terribly shocked. As MATT makes his way back up, he apologizes...

MATT

Sorry. I'm on some medication right now that makes me--I guess--not know where chairs are.

It's the Writers Guild Awards and the stage of the ballroom is decked out for the occasion. GUESTS and NOMINEES sit at tables in black tie and evening gowns. We're in the dinner portion and a small jazz band is playing so the guests have to raise their voices sometimes.

MATT's wearing a black-on-black tuxedo. Also at the table is DANIEL MOORE, 35--Matt's best friend and partner. DANNY's date is MARTHA, a sexy red-headed journalist.

DANNY

He means he's on back medication. Matt Albie, this is Martha Moyer from the LA Times.

MARTHA

I'm a big fan.

MATT

Thanks, that's nice of you. Are you doing a piece on Danny?

MARTHA

No, I'm not working tonight. We're on a date.

MATT

Great.

MARTHA

How did you hurt your back?

SCENE ONE

START
SCENE →

(CONTINUED)

1/7

CONTINUED:

31.

MATT

It happened when a surgeon sliced it open with a knife.

DANNY

He had back surgery a few days ago.

MARTHA

You're on Vicodin?

MATT

Yeah. I may have exceeded the recommended dosage.

MARTHA

Should you be out of bed?

MATT

(beat)
Am I?

DANNY

They haven't gotten to your category yet. They're doing the awards between courses this year.

MATT

Great. Martha, you're writing on the op-ed page now, aren't you?

MARTHA

Yeah, I just got my column.

MATT

Sure, you're doing terrific, keep it up.

MARTHA

Thank you. That's a nice tux, is that Hugo Boss?

MATT

Yes. And the way I know is that a huge Bavarian model came to my house with a rack of tuxedos and said--
(German accent)
--dees ah from Hugo.

DANNY

Well you picked a nice one.

MATT

You think?

DANNY

You look like the Number 2 guy in a Colombian drug cartel.

2/7

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MATT

I think it says formal but not stodgy.

DANNY

I think it says Hi, my name is Johnny Cash.

Another guest speaks up--

PAUL

How you doin' over there, my friend?

MATT

Is that Paul?

PAUL

Yeah, how you feelin'?

MATT

Good as new. Where's Julie?

JULIE

(right next to PAUL--raising
her hand)

Right here.

MATT

Sure. I didn't see you. I'm on Vicodin and Percocet and a steroid called Neurontin, the side effect of which is mania--I swear to God, it says so right on the bottle.

DANNY

Martha got invited to the Friday night wrap party, so I thought we might go over after, what do you think?

MATT

For Studio 7?

MARTHA

Yeah, I'm friends with Felicity Huffman and she's guest hosting tonight.

MATT

Noooo, no no.

DANNY

Come on.

MARTHA

You don't like Felicity?

MATT

No I like Felicity fine, but I used to date one of the cast members and we broke up and it would be awkward if I went to the party and...

(beat)

...killed her in front of all those people.

MARTHA

Which one?

MATT

Harriet Hayes.

MARTHA

(quickly)

Oh she's amazing, I love her. How many women in the world are there who are that beautiful and that funny? She's one of a kind, she's special.

MATT

I feel a lot better now about the break-up.

PAUL

What happened?

DANNY

Please don't ask him what happened.

MATT

It was because of the Star Spangled Banner, can you believe it?

DANNY

Please don't ask him--

JULIE

What happened with the Star Spangled Banner?

DANNY

--about the Star Spangled Banner.

MATT

She was singing it before a Dodger game.

PAUL

Who were they playing?

DANNY

What could it possibly matter?

4/7

CONTINUED: (4)

MATT

St. Louis. But Danny and I had just gotten back from London to do press for the movie and that's an 11 hour flight with an 8 hour time change and a pre-operative spinal cord so I wasn't able to make it out to the stadium.

PAUL

And that's what pissed her off?

MATT

No.

DANNY

I'll give you a thousand dollars if you don't ask what pissed her off.

An M.C. takes the podium--

M.C.

Well ladies and gentlemen, it's time to give out some more awards. To present in the category of Outstanding Original Screenplay is two-time Academy Award winner and two-time Writers Guild Award winner Robert Towne.

ROBERT TOWNE comes out to great APPLAUSE. We'll HEAR him giving an introduction in the background and then announce the nominees as the scene continues at the table.

PAUL

I'm sorry, but what did you do to--

MATT

It was later that night. She was still giving me a hard time about not going to the game and she said, "I was great, by the way, I got a standing ovation." And I said, "Harriet, I'm sure you were great, but it was the National Anthem, they were standing already." And that's pretty much when all hell broke loose.

And at that moment, the ballroom bursts into APPLAUSE. Everyone at MATT and DANNY's table--as well as the near surrounding tables--stands up in their ovation. DANNY grabs MATT and hugs him, which MATT misinterprets as--

MATT (CONT'D)

(quietly in DANNY's ear as they embrace)

Thanks, man. I really miss her. I do. I appreciate your support.

CONTINUED: (5)

DANNY
Matt?

MATT
Yeah.

DANNY
Go up on the stage now.

MATT
Why?

DANNY
You just won.

MATT
Really? Hey, that's great.

And MATT begins making his way up the aisles, shaking outstretched hands and saying a word or two to people.

MARTHA
Is he gonna be okay up there?

DANNY
Accepting awards in front of ballrooms full of people is the only place he is okay.

From another direction, BLAIR, a good-looking 40ish agent, comes quickly up to DANNY, closing her cell phone as she does. It's urgent but she also doesn't want to draw a lot of attention.

BLAIR
I need to talk to you.

DANNY
Our boy just won.

BLAIR
I need to talk to you outside.

DANNY
We're gonna listen to this.

BLAIR reaches up and whispers in DANNY's ear for a moment.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(to MARTHA)
Excuse me.

DANNY follows BLAIR out of the room as we join MATT on stage, who's already begun his acceptance.

CONTINUED: (6)

MATT

...and the Writers Guild really couldn't have done me any greater honor than to have nominated me alongside Nick Pileggi, Steve Zailian, Carrie Fisher and Akiva Goldsman. Before I go any further, I want to acknowledge Danny Moore.

The place breaks out in APPLAUSE--

MATT (CONT'D)

Whether it's on the set or at my desk he's never not been there for me. Would you put that followspot on Danny at Table 15.

The spotlight moves to where DANNY was sitting, which is now an empty seat in front of a half-used dinner plate.

MATT just shakes his head and smiles a little. Then he steps casually over to the TROPHY GIRL--the model who handed him his award--and says--

MATT (CONT'D)

You see that there's nobody there too, right?

The TROPHY GIRL nods her head 'yes' as we

CUT TO:

INT. BEVERLY HILTON LOBBY - NIGHT

DANNY and BLAIR are huddled--

DANNY

When can I see a tape.

BLAIR

It's coming in the door right now.

BLAIR'S ASSISTANT is coming through the front doors of the lobby with a tape--

DANNY

And I want to find Wes, I want to see if he's okay.

BLAIR

Yeah.

(to the ASSISTANT)

We need a room with a half-inch deck.

MARTHA comes out of the ballroom--

7/7

MATT

59.

ACT FOUR

OFFICE - NIGHT

Empty as DANNY opens the door and ushers MATT in. We can see all of the Hollywood sign in the distance out the window.

DANNY

In here.

MATT

I had them move the follow-spot over. I said "He's never not been there for me", and then there was a klieg light on a basket of dinner rolls.

DANNY

I understand.

MATT

They're offering us the job?

DANNY

Yeah, but that's not what I want to talk to you about. Somebody else has to direct the movie, I can't do it.

MATT

What are you talking about?

DANNY

I can't do it. I took my insurance physical and tested positive for cocaine. I can't get bonded for 18 months.

MATT takes it in... nods...

MATT

(pause)

Okay--are you alright?

DANNY

I'm, yeah, I'm fine.

MATT

Okay so wait.

DANNY

Look--

MATT

No wait--

DANNY

Matt--

START
SCENE →

SCENE TWO

(CONTINUED)

1/3

CONTINUED:

MATT
I'll bond you.

DANNY
What?

MATT
I'll pay for the bond.

DANNY
How much money do you have?

MATT
Well, with alimony and my percent of the first dollar gross on this movie...65 dollars.

DANNY
Matt--

MATT
We make some budget cuts, we shoot in Vancouver.

DANNY
We're not shooting in Vancouver. Vancouver doesn't look like anything, it doesn't even look like Vancouver. It looks like Boston, California. Now we can make the movie for 65 dollars but it's gonna end up looking an awful lot like an only slightly more polished version of *The Blair Witch Project*. You need to go to another director. Go to Soderbergh, go to Curtis Hanson, go to--

MATT
Wait a second.

DANNY
Ang Lee.

MATT
Wait a second.
(beat)
They must know. That's how they knew we were available.

DANNY
A guy at the insurance company wants to sleep with Jamie McDeere.

MATT
Who doesn't want to sleep with Jamie McDeere?! Are they swinging this thing in front of your face?

(CONTINUED)

2/3

LUED: (2)

DANNY
The point is, the new movie doesn't have
to be--

MATT
Sons of bitches!

MATT bolts out of the room--

DANNY
Matt--

DANNY follows him out into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--and follows MATT quickly down the hall. There are a few
people there who are surprised and delighted to see them both,
so they get a couple of "Hey, look who's here"'s and respond
with a couple of genial "Hi"'s and "How you doin' "'s until
MATT goes into--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

--where JACK RUDOLPH, JAMIE and a few of the EXECUTIVES we saw
earlier are sitting around the table. DANNY comes in a few
steps later.

MATT
Excuse me.

JAMIE
Matt, I'm Jamie.

MATT
Matt Albie.

JAMIE
I couldn't be a bigger fan of yours.

MATT
Thank you.

JACK
Matt--

MATT
You don't have to introduce yourself,
Jack, we've met. Are you people using the
confidential information that Danny
failed a drug test to force him into
taking over Studio 7 to deflect attention
from what happened on the air tonight?

There's a long, puzzled silence in the room...

MATT

65.

CONTINUED:

SUZANNE
I know. I'm Suzanne, I'm a PA.

MATT
How many of the cast, crew and writing staff would you say are in the building right now?

SUZANNE
Probably almost all of them. Are you coming to save us?

All MATT can do at the moment is just kind of hear the question and laugh a second to himself at the impossibility of it...

MATT
Would you page everyone to the stage please.

SUZANNE
Yes sir.

MATT continues down the hall and KNOCKS on the dressing room door marked HARRIET HAYES.

HARRIET (OS)
Come in.

MATT opens the door to--

INT. HARRIET'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MATT
Danny and I are taking over the show. I'm your boss now, so we're gonna have to continue this fight in a couple of years.

HARRIET
Or we could just end it now.

MATT
That would be fine too.

HARRIET
We didn't break up because of the Dodger game.

MATT
No.

HARRIET
When you were promoting the movie I was holding your hand every step of the way. When I had a CD to promote in 52 markets in 15 days, you disappeared.

SCENE THREE

START
SCENE
HERE →

1/3

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATT
I didn't disappear.

HARRIET
You got cold and you got mean.

MATT
Right after you went on *The 700 Club*, is that timing lost on you?

HARRIET
It was an album of spiritual music, those are the people who buy spiritual music!

MATT
I don't care if it was an album of the three wise men covering the Doobie Brothers, you put on a dress and sang for a bigot.

HARRIET
I sang for his audience, not every one of whom is necessarily the grotesque stereotype you'd like them to be. Most of these people have nothing except their faith, and that moves me.

MATT
Throw in the Halloween costumes and you got yourself a Klan rally.

WHACK!--

HARRIET smacks MATT across the face...

HARRIET
(pause)
I'm sorry.

MATT
Fortunately I'm on about 8000 milligrams of painkillers right now.

HARRIET
And I'm sorry if my going on Pat Robertson offended you and if I had to do it again I wouldn't. But the sketch that got cut? I stood by that sketch all week, and I've stood by it all night and I'll stand by it in front of the press, and you know what the sketch was called? "Crazy Christians".

MATT
The 700 Club isn't a comedy show.

2/3

CONTINUED: (2)

HARRIET
There's no way to get this idiotic
argument behind us?

MATT
No. But score for us on Friday nights and
we won't have a problem. I'm looking
forward to working with you.

And MATT takes a few steps and walks through the double-steel
doors onto--

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

DANNY is sitting alone on the stage as MATT walks in.

MATT
We're doing it.

DANNY
Matt, you can get another director, you
can get someone good.

MATT
I don't want someone else, I want you.

DANNY
(beat)
The joke was "I don't want someone good,
I want you."

MATT
I know where the joke was. What happened?
(beat)
What happened?

DANNY
Nothing happened. It just happened.

MATT
Once?

DANNY
Yeah.

MATT
You talked to your sponsor?

DANNY
Yeah.

MATT
You're back at meetings?

DANNY
Yeah.

STOP SCENE

3/3

MATT

67.

CONTINUED: (2)

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argument behind us?

MATT
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MATT
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DANNY
Yeah.

START
SCENE
HERE →

SCENE FOUR

(CONTINUED)

1/21

CONTINUED:

MATT

Why didn't you tell me? When I screw up you know about it.

DANNY

When you screw up I read about it.

MATT

No, I tell you, you're the first one I tell. Now we're back in the NFL and only one of us can screw up at a time and I think we both know that most of the time it's gonna be me. You're the big shoulders.

DANNY

I hear you.

MATT

Good, 'cause I'm pretty stoned and I can't really remember what I said.

DANNY

(smiles)

Don't worry, I do.

During the above scene, a few cast and crew members have begun tricking onto to the stage and taking up positions in front of the bleachers. Their conversations are hushed and they keep their distance from MATT and DANNY.

JAMIE appears coming out of a vomitorium with a few rolled-up sheets of paper--

JAMIE

Boys? Let's not have another meeting like that again, okay? It just makes my job harder.

DANNY

Why do I care about your job being harder?

JAMIE

Because you don't know it yet but I'm gonna be your dream come true.

DANNY

I appreciate the sentiment but I'll believe it when I see it.

JAMIE

Yeah, I get that a lot. You know what happened the morning after it was announced I was the new president of UBS?

(CONTINUED)

2/4

D: (2)

DANNY

What?

JAMIE

AMG stock dropped three-eighths of a point. I actually caused a dip in the NASDAQ index just by showing up to work in the morning. I don't think a lot of people are bettin' on me.

DANNY

How much latitude do we have with personnel?

JAMIE

Some. Some you're gonna have to keep though. Ricky and Ron have two more years on their contract.

MATT

I don't want Ricky and Ron.

JAMIE

They're getting 30 thousand an episode, we're not gonna eat that.

MATT

You're paying Beavis and Hackboy 30 thousand an episode?

JAMIE

I'm not the one who made the deal but it's there so they're your co-execs.

More people have been filtering in and taking places down in front of the bleachers.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(re: the rolled up papers)

Hey, you know what this is? It's the sketch that got cut. I just read it, I thought it was inspired, but I'm not an expert--Matt, read it and tell me what you think.

MATT

Nah, I'm not gonna read it.

JAMIE

Just read it and tell me if it should've gone on the air.

MATT

I don't need to read it.

(CONTINUED)

3/4

CONTINUED: (3)

JAMIE
Matt--

DANNY
He doesn't need to read it.

JAMIE
Why?

MATT
Because I wrote it. Four years ago.
Shortly before I apparently quit.

JAMIE
I know.
(pause)
Alright, so want me to prove it? Here's
my first try.
(handing the sketch to DANNY)
Open with it next week.

JAMIE walks off and disappears...And now we HEAR the low-pulsing intro to a familiar DAVID BOWIE song.

A horseshoe of about 80 people--cast, crew, writers--are standing excitedly and waiting to be addressed. The buzz is growing.

MATT and DANNY are looking off after JAMIE...DANNY turns back to MATT--

DANNY
You gotta give her style points.

MATT
Yeah.

DANNY
And you gotta ask yourself.

MATT
What.

DANNY
What if she's for real?

MATT
Yeah.

The DAVID BOWIE pulsing is building as DANNY sees CAL and waves him over--

DANNY
Cal.

CAL comes over...

END SCENE