



endeavor

(MASKED AND ANONYMOUS)

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Based On the Short Story
"Los Vientos Del Destino"
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1 (PRE-TITLE SEQUENCE)

1

FADE IN:

Archival footage (black and white): That iconic image of Jack Fate (Bob Dylan) circa 1965-1966 from over his shoulder, guitar in hand, harmonica around his neck, performing one of his signature songs (eg. 'Blowin in the Wind', 'The Times They Are A Changin') for a massive adoring audience.

FADE OUT:

(TITLES)

2 FADE IN:

2

Open on news footage montage: international, social and political unrest, violence, revolt, protest, natural disasters, and their aftermath. Audio underneath: urgent overlapping news reports in a variety of foreign languages. Music: Various (rock, rap, country, salsa, opera, classical, avant-garde, jazz. We hear talk radio and commercials. Out of the montage, the camera tracks down a street of a homeless encampment. People living in elaborate configurations of boxes and under tarps lined up one after another against a building, landing finally on a vacant homeless man, sitting up against the wall, staring back at us. We move in to his barely held together boom box perched by his side, as out of the cacophony, the voice of a radio preacher emerges from it:

RADIO PREACHER (V.O.)

...Do you not believe in many gods?
Or do you not believe in the one true
God? Do you believe God created the
slave race? Ezekiel saw the wheel?
But what kind of wheel? The cigar
shaped hubcap things in the sky? Are
these the gods that created mankind?
Was he imagining that? Let me ask you
another question, people, how many
people think God and the devil are the
same? Amen. People, there are many
gods. It is written in the Bible that
there are many gods. Does the bible
lie? The earth was here long before
these gods were...It's written in the
Psalms, King David, "Ye are gods."
God did not create this earth.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

RADIO PREACHER (cont'd)

The earth was here long before these Gods were. It was God created the people...Would you swear on a Bible? I'd swear on a Bible. What happens when you go to court? You swear on the bible. A book of treachery, murder and genocide. Of course I'd swear on that. Put it down right now. They ask God to sacrifice his son. Sacrifice? It's completely absurd, and I'll tell you why. The Christians are relinquishing nine-tenths of the world to the devil... The false Christianity that you subscribe to is nothing more than the cult of the virgin... People, it's time to evaluate and reflect on your lives. Think about it. What did Martin Luther King get out of the whole thing? A boulevard?...

FADE OUT.

3 EXT. OFFICE BLDG.-DAY

3

In one continuous POV shot, we see a once regal office building in a changing neighborhood, in an indeterminate multi-ethnic city in an unnamed country, poised between affluence and abject poverty. We see beautifully wrought architecture gone to seed, done over poorly, modernized haphazardly. Closed storefronts, throngs of homeless and those one step above homeless wandering the streets.

We move into the lobby of this office building and see the once grand ornate interior left to deteriorate.

We move to the directory. It is filled with bogus, dubious foreign sounding businesses, interspersed between obviously carelessly misspelled names and large blank spaces representing widespread vacancies in the building. Amongst the names we see:

Uncle Sweetheart Management - 4th Floor

We move into the elevator. The door closes. We

CUT TO:

4 INT. UNCLE SWEETHEART'S OFFICE - DAY

4

In one continuous move, we pan across photos displayed on his wall. They are 'head-shots' of dubious 'talent' of various disciplines. (We will meet some of them later.) 8x10 composites, signed by the talent to Uncle Sweetheart. Actors, magicians, animal acts, etc. The first two photos seem typical and good, although clearly old, yellowed, dog-eared. As we move, however, the "picture" changes. One frame is broken. The next picture is unceremoniously ripped. Teeth are blackened out and mustaches and glasses are drawn on a couple. Eyes are cut out of another. Then, a few missing altogether, faded rectangles on the wall where they once were. Then, a violent looking hole in the wall. The camera continues moving, first, hearing Uncle Sweetheart on the phone over the photos, then, finally landing on his desiccated countenance itself. UNCLE SWEETHEART is a hard drinking, hard living hard ass combination of John the Baptist and P.T. Barnum, who has blurred the line, even for himself, between salesman and evangelist. He is at once desperate and fatalistic with an abundance of charm and balls. He wears a well worn powder blue tuxedo, a ruffled white shirt and kick ass, ass kicked boots. He is wearing a shoulder holster. We see him put on his jacket over the holster. He takes his pistol, puts one bullet in the chamber, and places it in the holster, concealed by his jacket. Uncle Sweetheart is on the phone. At once, orating, berating, seducing, cajoling, goofing, and challenging.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

(on the phone)

...Honey, you don't have to scream at me. I hear you fine at normal decibel levels. I got a volume control on this phone...Honey, this here's a benefit concert. Benefit...That's right. Bigger than Live-Aid, or Farm-Aid or whatever...if you don't want a piece of this action, then you ain't human...I'm not making a dime on the deal, I'm just trying to feed some starving children, is all. You can't get behind that, you can live with yourself, god bless ya, although I doubt he will...Who takes care of the sick? We're not committing ourselves to any formal point of view.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

The more you know the more you suffer...Strong words alone don't influence the Senate. It takes daring and outrageous acts...Oh, how post-modern of you. Thinking is getting in the way of your life. No gambler ever won anything by thinking...

He hangs up and begins rummaging through his cluttered desktop and overstuffed briefcase.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

(singing)

I put a spell on you, 'cause you're mine...

Finally, he finds what he's looking for, a scrap of paper just as the song climaxes. He is very satisfied with his performance.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

Ha! I know where everything is...

Angle on scrap: The name "Jack Fate" is scribbled on it, along with a phone number. He hurriedly shoves it in his pocket as he hears movement outside his door. He quickly takes his seat and tries to act nonchalant. We see the shadow of two men, PERCY and BLUNT, loom in his office door window. Then, suddenly, they enter. They are serious men with an agenda.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

Oh, it's the dark princes, the democratic republicans. Working for a barbarian who can scarcely spell his own name. Hey, the only thing more pleasant than seeing you would be seeing the grim reaper himself. You gentlemen are about to make a hideous choice. You two are pitiable figures weeping with blood, and it's gonna be your blood. Are you aware gentlemen, that this is all a play?

They wait until he's finished. But they are not really listening. More importantly, they care little for what he has to say.

PERCY

We don't want paper money. We want gold and silver.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Dark glasses, huh? Usually I like to see the eyes of who I'm dealing with. Okay listen, Uncle Sweetheart is organizing a benefit concert. A benefit concert. To help the children. The real victims of the revolution! However, I will be personally siphoning the majority of the funds into the kitty of the fattest cat of all. Me! And you gentlemen will be paid in full.

PERCY

When?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Definitely in this lifetime.

BLUNT

You got the money, or not?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I understand you're not accustomed to staring into the face of God.

PERCY

Shut up.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I can't. As long as I keep talking, I know I'm still alive.

The two men grab Uncle Sweetheart.

PERCY

There's no use talking to you.

BLUNT

There's no point listening, either.

And with that, the two men proceed to beat the crap out of Uncle Sweetheart. They throw him to the ground and kick and punch him unmercilessly as he lies unseen but not unheard behind his massive desk. As they continue to pummel him, we pan to the pictures, on the wall, which vibrate with each blow, until one of them falls and breaks on the floor. Finally, arbitrarily, the two men seem satisfied.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3)

4

PERCY
Are you still alive?

There is a beat, then:

UNCLE SWEETHEART
(weakly)
Yup.

Percy and Blunt exit as we

CUT TO:

5 EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

5

It's an imposing building that has seen better days, a place where a secret broadcast could take place. An old TV or radio station, or perhaps temple, or other house of worship. Seemingly abandoned or close to it. Perhaps it seems like one thing from the street, but once inside, is something quite different.

6 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

6

We follow NINA VERONICA, the hard charging, cynical, yet secretly optimistic executive supervising the project as she moves through the soundstage, followed by two weasly, officious men, DION and BACCHUS. Past banners heralding the upcoming benefit concert, sets being built, cables laid, a makeshift stage being constructed and art directed. Past a makeshift tent city on the soundstage, a refugee camp, bazaar, the soundstage, not only the location of this concert, but a sort of self contained post modern village, like one might see in the Middle East, Africa, or a Grateful Dead concert. Nina is stuck between the rock and the hard place, and knows that she always will be. Her very appearance, hard, sexual, yet intimidating and untouchable, belies the inner ambivalence she is loath to reveal.

NINA
...Remind Lucius that it's a benefit.
We're trying to raise money for
medical aid for the families of those
dispossessed by the war...

DION
What war?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Nina, clearly has no respect for these two men. And they are in no position to defy or confront her. This is her domain.

NINA

What war? Are you kidding me? All the wars. The futility of war. I'm not going to debate semantics with you. It's real. It's beyond phenomena. There's shooting and killing. How do you define a war, in this day and age?

DION

What are they fighting about?

NINA

I don't know what they're fighting about. Do the Hindus; Jews, Arabs, Irish, Muslims, Buddhists, know what they are fighting about? The last thing anybody knows is what they're fighting about. It's a battle between this world and the next world. One God against another. Religious/Economic wars caused by pride, ethnic pride. Nobody knows that anymore. The last person who actually knew that was killed years ago. They're all religious wars. Look, we've got dead aliens stacked up in warehouses. What else do you need to know? We're talking about a war with no technological spin-off. Where the fighting is over a small piece of mud, the gateway of the afterlife. The burial site of Arthur and Guinevere. It's an uneasy puzzle to solve, gentlemen.

BACCHUS

So, why a benefit concert?

NINA

Well, how else do you get rock stars to do television? Either give 'em a cause or give 'em an award...

She stops and stares down Dion and Bacchus. She is clearly done with them.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

They get the message and awkwardly exit. She pivots to two CREW GUYS, who have been eyeing her lasciviously.

NINA

Hey, big boy, you getting your eyes full?

They avert their gaze and quickly return to work.

She enters her trailer which serves as both an office and makeshift home, as the phone is ringing. She picks it up as she checks what's left of her paltry excuse for a wardrobe, changing her shirt, smelling her clothes, etc.

NINA (cont'd)

Lucius, why are you hassling me?...I told you! We're already in too deep to make that kind of change on such short notice...It'll work out. It always works out. Even when it doesn't work out, that's a form of working out...Don't threaten me with pulling the plug. This is about intuition. How we look at the world is who we are. We're bound by an honor code here. This is about some weird plague...You think this is about making money? This isn't about making money. Money-craving is a disease...Don't tell me the definition of a man. A man isn't so much what he does as what he's allowed to do...All right. I'll keep it in mind.

Uncle Sweetheart climbs into the trailer without knocking but with great difficulty, showing some of the effects of the beating.

NINA (cont'd)

I gotta go.
(she hangs up)
What happened to you?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

What happened to me? How far back do you want to go?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

6

NINA

Where's my headliner? I just got off the phone with the network. They want something to promote. They need something to promote. They have some questions about your ability to perform services due.

He looks around for something. A drink? She stops him from snooping. He pulls out his bottle of booze.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

And I suppose you told 'em I was a showbiz stud, that you have total mystical knowledge and faith in me and absolutely no questions about my ability to perform services due.

NINA

Yea, something like that. So, who are we getting? Are we getting any important people? You know, headliners, top of the line performers.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Maybe. We'll see. Ya never know.

NINA

Should I believe you?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Of course.

NINA

Are we or are we not screwed?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I'm not. Are you? I don't think you are getting screwed. That's your problem.

He offers her a swig. She pushes past him.

NINA

I can't believe you're going to turn this disaster into a seduction.

Uncle Sweetheart is seized by a thought.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (4)

6

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Is this place bugged?

She begins to exit trailer. At the door:

NINA
Uncle Sweetheart, an entire society is counting on you to raise some money for them. Victims of circumstance. The victims of the world. We're fighting a war here, in case you didn't know.

She exits: He follows her out onto the soundstage floor where the work continues.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
War? Don't tell me about war. I fought in the grand daddy of all wars. The war to end all wars. The one that ripped the heart out of things... Look, honey, I'm on your side.

NINA
My side? Everyone I've ever met I can look in the eye and tell what side he's on, so why don't we stop the spiffy chatter. I'm on my way to a meeting with the network. They have a much greater reach and resonance than even they themselves might suspect.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
For the love of humanity we must limit their power.

NINA
You don't take any of this seriously.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
I am taking it seriously. Look at me, being all serious. Here's the thing. I don't think Sting or Springsteen or Billy Joel or McCartney are going to work out. But I have a surprise for you...

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (5)

6

He pulls out the crumpled number of Jack Fate, and shows it to Nina. He tries to sell it with a smile. She's not buying. We hear the sounds of distant thunder.

DISSOLVE TO:

7 FLASHBACK #1 - APPROXIMATELY 1941

7

They are edited together, eight millimeter home movies (perhaps coupled with stills, candid shots and official portraits). A MAN and a WOMAN, early in their marriage, although hardly young. He seems 40ish. The woman, slightly younger. They are proper-looking people, officious, even somewhat stiff in front of the camera, the smiles artificial. They wave awkwardly, from the terrace or veranda, or courtyard of what seems like an opulent, palatial estate. (Think of those candid home movies of Hitler and Eva Braun.)

JACK FATE (V.O.)

...They were happy once, although it's hard to imagine now. Everything in their lives was infused with hope and meaning. Every thought, every emotion, still pure. It seems so long ago now...

CUT TO:

8 FLASHBACK #2 - APPROXIMATELY 1946

8

The father, cavorting awkwardly with his five year old son, in front of and quite obviously for the cameras. A photo op. Think JFK and John John. Once again, the technology is probably 8 mm, coupled with a combination of candid and posed stills.

JACK FATE (V.O.)

...Once he was a real father, full of love, compassion and forgiveness. That didn't last too long. After awhile, being a father didn't amount to more than an official title... He had lived a hard life, survived gunfights, duels and warfare. Once he beat his assassins with a cane after they misfired from point blank range.

CUT TO:

9 FLASHBACK #3 - APPROXIMATELY 1952

9

Same combination of technologies and techniques. This time, it's the proud mother and her embarrassed eleven year old son. She tries to show him affection: a hug, a kiss on the head. He reluctantly accepts it. Again, some candid, some posed and planned.

JACK FATE (V.O.)

...My mother tried to love me, but I think she was trying to kill me. I don't think she recognized me as her son. It was like I'd become a symbol of everything that had gone wrong in her life, in her world...I can tell you one thing. She never loved him either. She married him on the rebound. She had so many suitors, they didn't have enough chairs to accommodate them all...

FADE IN:

10 EXT. HOLDING TANK - PRESENT - DAY

10

It is a facility not originally intended to hold prisoners, but now forced to do so. The men, of various ethnic backgrounds and political ideologies. Amongst them, JACK FATE, a troubadour, a poet, an outsider, he's seen better days and worse. A GUARD approaches and addresses Jack.

GUARD

You're getting out Jack, somebody sprung you.

JACK FATE

Must be my lucky day. Who would do that?

GUARD

Some angels must have intervened on your behalf. Maybe a bunch of people put their savings together. Hell, I don't know.

JACK FATE

I ain't felt free in a long time.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

GUARD

Keeping people from being free is a big business.

JACK FATE

What's going on out there?

GUARD

I don't know. It's a very complex society that we're living in. Lotta people moving around, movin' the way fear makes them move. Lotta severed limbs and raped women. It's the same old parade. This time though Jack, if you wanna ride in it you better pay a fee.

JACK FATE

I'll keep it in mind.

An inmate who sits nearby approaches Jack.

INMATE #1

Where you going, Jack?

JACK FATE

Roswell.

INMATE #1

Yeah. Used to be it was the devil who'd molest you all night and leave Rosemary's Baby as a calling card. Now, it's the alien. Well, say hello from me to the mysteriously dead.

Jack nods his head and is led out, as the inmate returns to his position.

CUT TO:

11 INT. NETWORK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

11

Nina is being chastised by an intimidating executive, LUCIUS, as they sit around a long conference table with other network executives, including Lucius' equally intimidating main flunkies, VALENTINE and NESTOR.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

LUCIUS

I don't understand what went on here. Where are the headliners? Where are the big waves? The big names? Where are the superstars?

VALENTINE

What's to understand? There's nothing to understand. They're not here and there not coming.

NESTOR

You mean to tell me, after all this, we wind up with Jack Fate?

VALENTINE

Jack Nobody? Why?

NESTOR

That guy was over before he started.

NINA

Are you finished?

LUCIUS

We're all finished!

NINA

We ultimately did not have the money in the budget to attract a big name.

LUCIUS

You said we did.

NINA

Well, then, I was wrong. I'm sorry.

Lucius rises and approaches Nina menacingly.

LUCIUS

You're sorry? Something's beginning to smell. It's giving off a bad odor. The fumes are choking me. This isn't grade school. You're not apologizing to your teacher for talking out of turn. We can make all kinds of ugly things happen. I can have you killed for the price of a cup of coffee. Everybody in this room would look the other way.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (3)

11

LUCIUS

Plug. There is no plug. Show me a plug and I'll pull it. There's no plug. There's no socket. There's no wall.

VALENTINE

If I go down, I'm taking part of the wall with me. Ha, ha, ha.

No one shares his laughter. Chagrined, he tries to change the subject.

VALENTINE (cont'd)

By the way, Jack Fate, he's not a blood relative is he?

LUCIUS

Shut up, Valentine.

VALENTINE

We should get out now. Wash our hands.

Lucius, Valentine and Nestor rise to exit.

LUCIUS

You think you're getting off cheap with Jack Fate. But believe me, the price will be steep.

NINA

We'll look for some cuts in the budget.

LUCIUS

Cuts? You need amputations. If you wanna suffer agony for someone else's happiness, you do it on your own time. Now go away.

They exit, along with the flunkies, leaving Nina alone. She looks around, uncertain as to which way to get out of this place.

CUT TO:

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

For the first time, Nina is intimidated.

NINA

Lucius, for god's sake, what are you saying?

LUCIUS

Don't talk to me about god. I'm talkin' about god the destroyer, not god the savior.

NINA

Can we stop kidding around?

LUCIUS

Why? Why should I? I can do whatever I want. We're not accountable to anybody. We cross lines. We bend truths. This is a business. You better get that into your pretty little head and stamp it on your brain.

NINA

You know, this concert is supposed to be about helping people in trouble.

LUCIUS

I'm in trouble. You're in trouble. We're in trouble.

NINA

Well, maybe we can get somebody to sing for us.

LUCIUS

Apparently not. You've got no pull. You know charity is not about losing money. Charity is like any other business. It has to show a profit, some kind of profit, or it doesn't go on. Now, you might find that ironic, but I don't. It makes perfect sense to me.

VALENTINE

I think we should pull the plug.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

UNCLE SWEETHEART

You're only worried about your legacy, honey. That's all you've ever cared about. I can help. I have a personal relationship with death. Death is my dancing partner.

NINA

It doesn't matter at this point who your dancing partner is. The things you need to say are not the things I need to hear.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

What are you fighting against, anyway? Why are you so opposed to divine judgment?

NINA

Who says I was?

Undaunted, he sidles up to her at the mirror.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I can read right through you. You're a woman with a man's heart. And I'm going to treat you like a man.

NINA

You don't understand. When they heard Jack Fate's name mentioned there was complete silence.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Like reverence. Like prayer.

NINA

I was doing the praying. That they wouldn't cancel the whole thing.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Don't they understand who Jack Fate is?

She pivots around him again.

NINA

Nobody knows who he is anymore. Nobody cares. He doesn't make records. He doesn't tour.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12 INT. NINA'S TRAILER - DAY

12

Nina, cramped in her trailer, harangues a lascivious Uncle Sweetheart, in a dynamic that resembles Groucho Marx and Margaret Dumont.

NINA

You have put me in a very bad position.

Uncle Sweetheart moves in on her.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I can put you in a very good position. I know a lot of them. I bet you do, too. Why don't we go back to your place?

NINA

And do what?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I could teach you farming in your living room.

NINA

You know, Uncle Sweetheart, I'm not your straight man.

She pushes past him. He follows behind, attempting to kiss her neck.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I'm a straight man. Isn't that what you're looking for?

NINA

(as she resists)
What was I thinking? I know what I was thinking. I was thinking, "I'm not going to discuss this with you." You're not going to help. You're gonna hurt me.

But, she hurts him instead, delivering an elbow to the solar plexus leaving him doubled over as she coolly fixes herself up in a mirror.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

NINA (cont'd)

He doesn't do interviews. He doesn't do anything!

UNCLE SWEETHEART

He don't have to. He's a legend. Does Jesus have to walk on water twice to make a point? And, he's virtually free. Who else can you say that about?

She moves to door and readies to exit.

NINA

Virtually free. If he's virtually free, he's the only one I know...

UNCLE SWEETHEART

You know, I thought I saw a hubcap in the sky last night.

She exits. He follows.

NINA

Oh, did you. Maybe they were just bright lights from a Japanese squid boat..

On the soundstage floor he pulls out his bottle and unscrews the cap.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Let's try the kickapoo cure.

NINA

(disgusted)

You're like a Trojan horse pregnant with Greeks.

She leaves him alone. He drinks to her.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. BUS STOP

13

A local, PROSPERO, sits and waits for the bus. Jack Fate, with a small bag and a guitar, joins him.

JACK FATE

Hey, Prospero. What's happening?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

PROSPERO

You missed it. Two eagles just killed a pregnant rabbit.

JACK FATE

Rabbit must have done something. Where you headin'?

PROSPERO

I'm going down to west Florida. Got a brother-in-law down there. A butcher looking for a delivery boy. My brother-in-law, he's a true friend. One of the purest gifts from god.

JACK FATE

It's good to have at least one true friend.

PROSPERO

(he notices Jack's guitar and bag)
You leaving town?

JACK FATE

Yeah.

PROSPERO

By choice, this time?

JACK FATE

Not really.

PROSPERO

Nothing ever really is. Where ya heading?

Jack motions north.

JACK FATE

That way.

PROSPERO

That's a good direction. I've done that a lot. One of my favorites. You know what else is good? That way.

Prospero motions south.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

JACK FATE
Maybe next time.

PROSPERO
You think there's going to be a next time?

JACK FATE
For you, maybe.

We hear the rumble of the oncoming bus.

PROSPERO
You ever coming back?

JACK FATE
I did come back.

With that, the bus arrives, Jack Fate gets on.

CUT TO:

14 INT. BUS - DAY

14

It is a rickety but colorful bus filled with peasants/farmers and the disenfranchised. They carry their children, their belongings, their livestock. Jack fits right in and yet stands apart. He climbs on and addresses the BUS DRIVER.

JACK FATE
Does this bus go across the border?

BUS DRIVER
No, sir, you're going the wrong way.

JACK FATE
OK.

Ignoring the befuddled driver, Jack Fate takes a seat. The mystified Bus Driver presses on.

CUT TO:

15 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

15

We angle on TOM FRIEND'S desk. There are numerous awards and citations for journalistic excellence, but they look old and worn and frayed.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

We see old photos of Tom Friend, smiling, happy with three different women, a dog, and a boy. Then, we see Tom Friend himself, a burnt out journalist, numb to all the horrors, except of his own existence, sits reading a magazine. When he's finished, he rises. As he does, we see he has an electronic monitor strapped to his ankle. He walks through the newsroom to the EDITOR'S office. The EDITOR sits at his desk, working and drinking, inside a cubicle. He holds the first edition. The headline reads: Transvestite Jumps To His Death. Outside around him is a nest of journalistic activity. Tom Friend enters.

EDITOR

What're you working on?

TOM FRIEND

You know, I'm working on a few things.

EDITOR

Like what? Give me an idea.

TOM FRIEND

I don't know...

EDITOR

Exactly, you don't know.

TOM FRIEND

What are you drinking?

EDITOR

What am I drinking? I'm drinking my life away. What's the difference?

TOM FRIEND

No difference. It looked like you stopped.

EDITOR

The doctors made me stop for awhile. You want some? It will make you forget that you're poor.

TOM FRIEND

Yeah, but I'm not gonna have any.

EDITOR

Well let me know if you change your mind.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

TOM FRIEND

What's up?

EDITOR

What's up? I got reporters wounded. Held captive. Held hostage. I got two reporters dead. I got reporters on the front lines. I got reporters undercover. With the insurgents. With the counter-insurgents. I got people inside the capitol. In the office of the President, himself--

TOM FRIEND

I've done all that.

EDITOR

People are still dying out there.

TOM FRIEND

People have always died. So what's new? You can't abolish death. Writing about it doesn't change anything.

EDITOR

You used to believe it did.

TOM FRIEND

I can't write that. You don't write that. You just rewrite it. Over and over again. Everybody's doing the killing now. Everybody's doing the dying. You can't tell the difference. We're all under the sentence of death. What else is new.

EDITOR

Where does that leave you? Are you a journalist or a novelist?

TOM FRIEND

Same thing out here. What's this all about? I got things to do. I got my awards, I got my scars. I got nothing to prove to you. Look at you. You live peacably. You live a private life, while below you the earth reeks with desolation and runs with blood.

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