

SENIOR PROJECT

EXT. MGM STUDIO 1979 - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT

We open with a birdseyes view shot that transitions into an establishing shot of the MGM studio. As the camera moves closer to the ground we can see inside of a window. Two people are having a meeting.

Inside the office we see LAURA and DAVID. LAURA has blonde hair tied tightly back and is wearing a stiff suit. She's in her mid fifties. DAVID is in his early thirties, he has messy black hair and his clothes are not ironed.

Camera stops at window, LAURA and DAVID are facing opposite each other at LAURA's desk. They are looking at each other, and judging one another. LAURA's movie posters and awards bedeck the interior of the of the MGM office. There's a large gap between two posters that needs to be filled with another.

INT. LAURA'S OFFICE - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT

LAURA finishes reading DAVID's screenplay. It's clear some time has passed. LAURA closes the screenplay that DAVID sent her two months ago. LAURA is a very busy executive producer and DAVID is an unknown writer, desperate for someone to take a liking to his screenplay.

LAURA sighs and slides the stack of papers back to DAVID.

LAURA  
I don't get it.

DAVID'S heart drops. He feels defensive.

DAVID  
How?

LAURA  
Listen. I get sent hundreds of  
screenplays from guys just like you  
every single day.

MEDIUM SHOT FACING DAVID.

As LAURA continues speaking we can see the posters for the movies LAURA has produced over the past decade, Saturday

Night Fever, Star Wars, Taxi Driver, just to name a few. LAURA has made a name for herself in Hollywood during the past ten years.

LAURA CONT.

It's well written, but David, where the action? The pizzazz? The star power?

She runs her hands aggressively through the screenplay and has a flustered look on her face.

LAURA CONT.

I can't even tell if this story is high or low concept. I mean, this almost sounds like you're pitching me a documentary with a few fictional that characters we're following around.

MEDIUM SHOT FACING LAURA.

LAURA CONT.

Look, I'm not producing this. I don't like it and I don't like it because I don't get it. But humor me Danny, what was your vision behind this screenplay, this story? Because, frankly my dear, I'm lost!

MEDIUM SHOT FACING DAVID.

DAVID

My name is David first of all.

LAURA rolls her eyes. She could care less.

DAVID CONT.

What don't you get? It's a film that tells the story of the Counterculture movement from the perspective of the people who were a part of. It's an attempt at humanizing the movement. It's almost the 80s man, I really think people want to see this sort of thing.

MEDIUM SHOT FACING DAVID LOOKING OVER LAURA'S SHOULDER.

LAURA

Because it was almost twenty years ago? Movies are about the future, and your screenplay is just taking us back into the past. And not the past that people want to relive. Non peaceful protests? The Vietnam War? Why are you bringing this stuff up? What's the point, "man"?

LAURA uses finger quotes, she can't believe DAVID would refer to her as "man". LAURA starts pointing at her posters.

LAURA CONT.

People buy tickets to the cinema to escape from their sad, boring lives for a couple hours. America wants to see Harrison Ford act like a space cowboy and fall in love with a space princess. America wants to see Robert DeNiro attempt to save Jodie Foster from child prostitution. America wants to see John Travolta do a Brooklyn accent and dance his heart out at the disco. America doesn't want to see a weird, bleak, experimental movie about the hardships of the 60s.

DAVID knows this should have felt like a punch in the gut. But he feels ready to defend his screenplay.

DAVID

I strongly disagree.

CLOSE UP OF LAURA

LAURA looks at her watch, then back up at DAVID. She smirks at him, surprised that he hasn't said thank you and goodbye yet.

LAURA

I have a meeting with Brian De Palma in ten minutes. Prove to me in the next ten minutes why I should put time and money into this story.

DAVID looks at her, and his mind suddenly went blank. Even though he had worked for months on creating this epic story about hippies, protests, cowboys, wars, and the origins,

extent and influence of the counterculture movement on his generation, somehow, he couldn't tell her why this movie was more than just good, why it was important.

There's a deafening silence.

WIDE SHOT

LAURA

You know what? I think we're done here.

She gets up to shake DAVID's hand.

DAVID

Wait. Please wait.

CLOSE UP ON DAVID, QUICK CUT TO THE SCRIPT, THEN BACK TO DAVID.

DAVID takes a deep breath.

WIDE SHOT

DAVID

This story is important because the 60s was an important decade. There has never been a movie made before that goes in depth on just how important this decade was on people my age.

LAURA (LAUGHING)

Besides just doing drugs and protesting at anything that went against American ideals and cultural norms?

DAVID feels defensive.

DAVID

I mean yeah, kind of. My screenplay is important because your generation didn't experience what my younger generation did. Yeah there were drugs and protests but it's a hell of a lot deeper than you're making it seem. Drugs were a way that many people reached spiritual enlightenment. And protesting was a way of rejecting the

all American ideals that we've been told we have to respect since birth. Consumerism, capitalism, the Vietnam War, those were matters that deserve protesting!

LAURA looks at DAVID, and she strokes her chin. He realizes he started to rant, and he is embarrassed, but seeing his passion makes LAURA more intrigued.

LAURA

Keep going.

DAVID

Well... What I mean to say is that this culture of rejection of tradition, the counterculture movement, affected society in a way that I want to show through my film, because movie making underwent changes as well. Part of what has made the last decade so incredible for film is because important filmmakers rejected tradition. Lucas, Coppola, Bogdanovich, Scorsese, whether you know it or not, went against Hollywood cultural norms and used unorthodox techniques to get their movies made.

This information surprises LAURA because she has worked with many of the people DAVID just name dropped.

LAURA

What do you mean, unorthodox techniques?

DAVID

These directors are called "film brats" for a reason. They got so much of their inspiration from previous international film movements like the French New Wave and the Italian Neorealism movement because they studied them in school. These previous new wave movements made way for the American New Wave which incorporated more intense themes like sex, drugs, and violence. And because these directors are part of my generation they used more unorthodox techniques to get their movies made exactly how

they wanted them to be made. You know why San Francisco is now a media capital in this country? Because these directors needed to break away from the creatively confining studio system here in Los Angeles!

DAVID realizes he just ranted and yelled at an important Hollywood producer. He feels like he may have just blew his opportunity even more than he already did.

LAURA is shocked at DAVID's knowledge, and impressed. It's rare for someone to walk into her office and know more about something movie related than she does, but nothing is impossible in Hollywood. LAURA remembers what this industry is all about. It's about taking chances and telling stories. And DAVID is doing both those things with this screenplay.

MEDIUM SHOT OVER LAURA'S SHOULDER

LAURA stands up and reaches her hand out to shake DAVID'S.

LAURA

My meeting with Mr De Palma is in three minutes, I gotta run. But in the mean time go to my secretary and tell her we're meeting this time next week with my whole team. We need to assess casting and shooting locations.

THE SAME ESTABLISHING SHOT AS IN THE BEGINNING.

LAURA leaves the office and DAVID gets up and looks at the the large gap between two of the posters. He smiles because he knows that that's where his poster is going.

FADE OUT.

THE END.