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Date: Mon, Aug 18, 2008 at 3:45 AM
Subject: Just Give Up
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You would think, by the 92 page word document I've attached, that I have enough material to make an entire script - or maybe two of them because a script has much less text than a word document page. But these are mostly scattered ideas and scenes. There are also versions of the same character.

Stephanie is in one version a wife and in another someone he meets for the first time.

But Stan is always Stephanie's brother. He works at a bookstore and symbolizes doing what you love - he plays video games all day and doesn't care what anyone thinks of him.

I think the idea that David Arland, the main character, is the founder of a website which struck rich by pure coincidence, Sparkl.com, and tries to understand his own success.

I would say I've left out more content. It might be a 100-140 page document, but I haven't looked through all the files.

These are just some ideas. Big ideas. Story ideas. Scenes I really liked. But I did leave out some of the stuff.

So you can read it but if anything know this:

I did not design this to be easy to follow. All these versions only are clear in my head. This was not intended to be shared - it is like a rough sketch or handwriting only its maker can read because he didn't intend anyone else to read what he wrote.

I hope you can follow a lot of it. That's the challenge for you. But just remember:

David sees his success may be due to luck. He decides to meet people who have bought his book to see if he has improved their lives. They have a wide variety of problems - intellectual, romantic, athletic, artistic...

I left out Ivan Duve.

If you like the writing, I'll tell you all about Ivan Duve, who I think is one of the most memorable characters I've written. But only if you read it.

I don't know if you'll read all 92 pages. If you even GET THROUGH all of that, that means it's not the worst piece of shit ever written.

Love,
Tin

These are just thoughts in progress.

Just Give Up

Advice from the founder of the self-degradation genre, David Arland:

If you don't try something, I guarantee you there is a one hundred percent chance you will not fail.

Confidence doesn't change a thing.

Fear of failure is the most natural, healthy phenomenon. It is like your body telling you to avoid physical pain. Ignoring your body as well as your mind is foolish. You have a fear of failure because millions of years of evolution have decided that that is a positive trait.

Don't try to be creative. You aren't successful because all your ideas are stupid. Leave it to the experts.

Some say you are what you think you are. You are not what you think you are. There's this thing called reality. It shows you the only and real you.

Attitude is nothing. Whether you can solve a problem or not is determined solely by your physical and mental capabilities, not your attitude. Mozart is a better musician than you even if he has lost all his self-esteem on a given day. I believe in genetics. You are severely limited in life by your genes, the conditions of your upbringing, and pure luck or timing. We rely on luck to get ourselves noticed and not get struck by lightning. You are in no way in control of your life.

Learn how to think negatively. Actively avoid all opportunities and challenges presented to you. The more challenges you face, the more you fail, and the smaller your self-esteem becomes.

Defeat is not a learning experience. Defeat is a humiliating experience. Defeat scars you for life. Defeat makes you lose your reputation. Defeat makes you look like a fool. Avoid challenges at all costs if you want to preserve what's left of your minimal happiness.

David Arland goes on Larry King Live for an interview on his new book, Just Give Up.

Larry: Joining us this evening is professor David Arland...

David: Good to be here.

Larry: First off – how do you respond to the recently published best sellers All Hope is Lost, Embracing the Inner Sheep, and Leave the Dreams in Dreamland?

David: These are obvious forgeries of my work. Everyone wants to make a buck off someone else's idea. But it doesn't upset me. Imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

Larry: In your book, you talk a lot about conformism. What do you believe is its purpose in society?

David: Conformism is a survival instinct that evolved over millions of years, just like breathing, walking upright, and masturbating. A more positive way to think of it is compromise. We are a social species – we are dependent on each other for survival and so we need to compromise our beliefs if we want to have a functioning society.

Larry: How is masturbating a survival instinct?

David: Masturbation is the father of civilization. The most powerful male desire in any species is that for sex, and for a healthy, legitimate reason: we couldn't reproduce without it. Prior to our species' discovery of masturbation, most males could only satisfy their sexual desires by raping women. With the discovery of masturbation, males could significantly restrain their desires to rape women and therefore bring newfound order in the tribe, allowing the village to expand to a town, the town to a city, and eventually a global economy. So as you can see, there is a direct correlation between how advanced a society is and how much its citizens masturbate. If we want to have a true global community, we need to masturbate a lot more.

Larry: Okay. That's – let's go to commercials.

David: You can even trace the progress of a civilization with its pornography. That's all art is. First we started with the Venus of Willendorf, then simple paintings, print making, the Renaissance, which was just an era of naked people on walls, then Playboy, film, TV, and finally the internet, which is a world-wide network dedicated to porn. Every technological advancement, every groundbreaking moment in the history of human civilization is about porn. And soon we will have world peace.

Larry: World peace?

David: In no more than fifty years. We will have virtual reality, high definition, prostitutes for every man and teenage boy in the world and there will be no need for war because no one will have to rape to have the unbelievable sex.

Larry: Do you really think people have wars because they want to have sex with someone?

David: Helen of Troy.

Larry: Okay, but...

David: Tell me I'm wrong.

Larry: Okay, well – let's just go to commercials.

In a Q & A session:

“What about Gandhi?”

“Gandhi was a poser. Gandhi was the only person in the world who became famous for not doing something. His list of greatest accomplishments includes not getting up after being pushed down, not reacting after being beaten to the head, not eating meat, not dressing up in normal clothes, and not resorting to violence. If Gandhi actually *did* anything in his life, I might have more respect for him. Next question.”

With talk show host, Ken Price:

Ken: All of the sudden you call your self a doctor. Where exactly did you get your medical degree, Dr. Arland?”

David: That's a fair question. The word doctor doesn't necessarily have to refer to the medical field. There are many kinds of doctors – like doctors of engineering or doctors of philosophy, but I most closely associate myself with a doctor of psychology. I believe

what I do is heal the minds of people all around the world, by ridding them of a disease known as confidence.”

Ken: Confidence... is a disease?

David: Yes. It’s a very serious illness, I believe. One generally does think very clearly during the occasional outburst of confidence. Confidence induces a hallucinogenic state in which one believes he can achieve goals which would otherwise seem impossible to him. Confidence is most commonly found in children, but thankfully, with age the condition lessens to virtual nonexistence.

Random:

David’s anti-motivational speaking TV special is called “Losing Hope”.

Q & A in Losing Hope:

“I’m a good singer, but I need to find a way to make my voice sound unique. I sound just like all my favorite artists, but I need to be different.”

“Okay. Here is my idea to make your voice sound unique. Go to the sink and put some water in your mouth.”

“Okay.”

“Then lean back and record yourself singing.”

She thinks for a second.

“Wouldn’t that sound like gurgling?”

“Yes it would. But no one’s tried it. People have done screaming, yodeling, whispering, even barking, but I’ve never heard anyone gurgle. Write a few songs and release an album called Mouth Wash. It’ll be an overnight sensation.”

“I don’t think that’ll work.”

“No, it won’t. That’s why you should stop singing.”

The singer smiles awkwardly.

“Thank you.”

She sits down, embarrassed.

“Next question.”

A conversation:

What exactly do you want from people, Mr. Arland?

I want to crush their dreams.

What?

They need to be crushed. They are a threat to the happiness of all individuals.

At Q & A session:

(A woman in her mid thirties stands up and speaks into the mike)

“I’ve been dating for twelve years now, and I just want to know, when will I find Mr. Right?”

“The funny thing about Mr. Right is I’ve never heard about Ms. Right. Have you? I’ve heard many women talk about Mr. Right but I’ve never heard a single guy say to one of his friends, “Bill, I want to get married so badly but I’m still looking for Ms. Right.” This is because a guy doesn’t worry about getting married when he’s old. There’s nothing wrong with a fifty-year-old guy getting married to a twenty-five-year-old woman. But women know sex is important to a guy and their looks will fade so they need to hurry up or they’ll never get married.”

(The woman nods, looking down for a moment. She looks back up.)

“So what can I do?”

“Oh, you can get married without a problem. You don’t have to deal with the shallow expectations of men if you don’t want to.”

“How?”

“Become a lesbian.”

More Q & A:

(A guy stands up and speaks into the mike)

Hi. My name is Pallallo Deeds. I’m an aspiring short story writer. I’ve written fifty plus short stories and even though I’ve tried *very* hard to publish them, for some reason people are *very* reluctant to buy my work. But, anyway, I’m unemployed so I’m *very* willing to take any work...

Okay I’ll give you my advice. First of all, I can already tell you suck at writing. “Very” is a *very* unnecessary word. Got it? It’s for people who don’t use concise adjectives. Get a vocabulary.

Okay.

Secondly, what is your full name including your middle initial?

Pallallo H. Deeds.

Yeah, see – that’s my point. Use a pen name for God’s sake. You can go by your first name and middle initial followed by your last name, like J. R. Tolken or T. S. Elliot, to make yourself more commercial.

So, I should go by... P. H. Deeds?

P. H. Deeds... That would certainly make a clever porn star name if you're always dressed up as a doctor. Do you have a nine inch plus penis?

I have fifty plus short stories...

I'm sorry; you won't get a job anytime soon.

Thanks.

(Pallallo sits down)

The famous closing speech (very end):

And besides, success isn't everything. It's more important to take the time to do things you enjoy, even if you're not great at them. As one of my close friends, who recently passed away, said: Life is not about the kill-to-death ratio; it's about the joy of trying to kill someone.

Some actual script – very beginning:

FADE IN:

SERIES OF SHOTS - RETROSPECTIVE

A black and white yearbook picture of a dorky-looking white kid with glasses, TEENAGE DAVID ARLAND. We hear the voice of his adult counterpart, who will simply be referred to as DAVID.

DAVID (V.O.)

If there were a least likely to succeed category in my senior year high school yearbook, I'm about ninety percent certain I would've won the title. My only competitor was my best friend, --

A picture of TEENAGE GHANIM MITRI, an average looking Middle-Eastern kid wearing a turban and moderate facial hair.

DAVID (V.O.)

Ghanim Mitri.

CUT TO: Teenage David and Ghanim walking through school during passing period together.

DAVID (V.O.)

We lived in a pretty much all

Catholic community so you can only imagine how hard it was on him to wear that turban everywhere he went for thirteen years of public education. He was actually the coolest guy I ever met, but no one knew him because parents probably told their kids not to talk to him for some stupid reason.

CUT TO: A scattered group of SECOND GRADERS, including YOUNG DAVID and GHANIM, jog through a dusty field on a scorching summer day. David wipes his sweaty forehead. Their masculine P.E. Teacher, MRS. ELLIOT, crosses her arms in the distance. She takes a nice long sip of her water bottle.

DAVID (V.O.)

I remember in second grade our asshole P.E. teacher made us run laps every morning. To escape her sadistic, child-abusive wrath we hid behind the wooden part of the fence in the baseball field.

Young David and Ghanim look back and then drop down against the protective fence. They're not cute Hollywood actors. They're just two thirsty, goofy-looking second graders.

DAVID (V.O.)

It was perfect. There was shade, a nice view of other kids running like labor camp prisoners while we just relaxed, and, if you had a good look-out partner, a water fountain.

Ghanim looks at a water fountain a few yards out in the open. David peers above the wooden shield. Ghanim, in a track position waits for the signal.

YOUNG DAVID

Go!

Ghanim flies into the open and begins devouring the sub-standard water. David turns urgently.

YOUNG DAVID

Mrs. Elliot's turning back!

Ghanim scurries back next to David. He hyperventilates and wipes his mouth with his forearm in sweet satisfaction. David suddenly gets a curious look on his face.

YOUNG DAVID

Ghanim.

YOUNG GHANIM

Ah?

YOUNG DAVID

Why are we here?

YOUNG GHANIM

Behind the fence?

YOUNG DAVID

No. I mean, like... life?

Ghanims responds matter-of-factly:

YOUNG GHANIM

To be happy.

David nods.

YOUNG DAVID

Okay.

Ghanim picks up a stick and starts digging a hole in the ground. David gets another curious look.

YOUNG DAVID

Ghanim?

YOUNG GHANIM

Ah?

YOUNG DAVID

What number goes before zero?

Ghanim suddenly stops digging. The two of them ponder for

YOUNG GHANIM

That's a hard question.

Ghanim starts digging again.

CUT TO: Teenage David and Ghanim sit at a lunch table together.

They stare at some mysterious group of POPULAR KIDS in awe.
We don't see their faces because they're too good for us.

DAVID (V.O.)

Both mine and Ghanim's dream in high school was to sit with the popular kids. One day Ghanim had enough and took me with him to ask if we could hang out with them.

Ghanim stands up and bravely leads the way to the popular table. And so we finally see their faces - to our surprise, they are all extremely nerdy looking. Even more so than David and Ghanim one could say.

DAVID (V.O.)

They said on one condition - we had each had to beat Scott Pizinski in a game of chess. We knew we were doomed from the start.

CUT TO: SCOTT PIZINKSI taking a picture with a certificate in an ultra-nerd award ceremony.

DAVID (V.O.)

Scott ranked thirteenth in some prestigious National Young Chessman's Competition and was -

CUT TO: All the "popular kids" stand in a dramatic shot looking at the camera, way too cool for us, with Scott in the middle, holding a set chess board.

DAVID (V.O.)

- also the captain of the school chess club.

The picture snaps and we see it in the yearbook.

CUT TO: A flat profile shot of Ghanim and Scott facing each other in a game of chess. It's Ghanim's turn. Scott gazes with a dull, conceited expression.

DAVID (V.O.)

It was a massacre.

Ghanim makes a hesitant move and immediately gets check-mated. Scott shoots out his hand for his opponent to accept defeat. Ghanim shakes hands miserably.

DAVID (V.O.)
Scott beat Ghanim in only seven
moves.

CUT TO: Now it's David's game. David looks confident while his
opponent boils with hatred.

DAVID (V.O.)
I held out longer because I played
a more defensive game.

David makes a move and Scott fires up.

SCOTT
You can't just keep moving your
horse in and back out like that!

CUT TO: It's David's turn. He sighs hopelessly.

DAVID (V.O.)
I eventually forfeited.

He stands up to leave but Scott stands up as well, insisting his
opponent shakes his hand to accept defeat. David reluctantly
decides to shake it and leaves with Ghanim.

DAVID (V.O.)
But we found a way to get over it.

CUT TO: A non-dramatic shot of David and Ghanim looking blankly
at the camera, holding a set checkers board together.

DAVID (V.O.)
Later that week we founded Harrison
Addams High School's very first
checkers club.

Ghanim hears something and turns his head. The picture snaps in
we see it in the yearbook.

CUT TO: Another flat profile shot, this one of David and Ghanim
playing a game of checkers.

DAVID (V.O.)
We agreed to determine who would be
president and vice-president in a
friendly match. Ghanim beat me, -

David puts his hand out in defeat. Ghanim pushes David's hand down.

DAVID (V.O.)
- but he eventually let me be
co-president to cheer me up.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROMAN PLAZA - DAY

We see a lot of tourists walking by the Trevi Fountain

DAVID (V.O.)
I don't know what happened to
Ghanim after high school. For some
reason we just never spoke again.
I'm reminded of him whenever I see
a checker board. I wonder what he
would have thought of me now.

Two guys play checkers. We hear the approaching sound of a repetitive Polka tune we are all familiar with but don't know the name of.

A depressed ACCORDION PLAYER wearing glasses and a hat which he uses to hide what's left of his self-esteem strolls to the checkers players and forces a smile.

The CHECKERS PLAYERS look at him and order him to get lost with their hands.

The accordion player turns and looks down. He keeps

DAVID (V.O.)
Don't worry. That's not me.

Suddenly, we hear quiet CLAPPING in rhythm. It slowly becomes louder until it is very enthusiastic. The accordion player looks up in surprise.

The real David Arland, now 45, average-looking, well dressed, and wearing no glasses, stands before him clapping. The two checkers players laugh at David, but he doesn't care. Random TOURISTS behind him stop to see what all the excitement is about. They don't feel like clapping, but David glances at them and so they clap along out of guilt. Pretty soon there are a dozen people clapping.

That made the accordion player's day. David takes out his wallet and holds up a hundred dollar bill. The musician stumbles after noticing it.

DAVID
Keep playing.

The accordion player nods and David takes off the man's hat, puts the hundred in it, and puts it back on. David begins singing to it:

DAVID
LA LA, la la, LA LA, la la, LA LA
la-la-la-la-la...

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

David, in a lavish, spacious hotel suite, sits behind a grand piano. Our view snaps directly in front of him, the piano at the bottom of the screen, his face above. He plays the jazz favorite Autumn Leaves rhythmically with quick, dazzling, virtuosic improvisation. He sings along to this as well:

DAVID
Ba! Ba-da! Ba-da-da-du-bap! Beep,
ba doo boo doo boo du-du-du bap...

Suddenly the sound turns off - this confuses us as well as David. He is left singing in awkward silence for a second.

DAVID
Da, ba! Da...ba...

David turns his head as he continues fingering. Evidently he's been pretending to play, his fingers moving stupidly a few inches off the piano keys. He puts his hands on the bench.

DAVID
Why'd you turn it off?

STEPHANIE, 35, a beautiful girl with a minute accent of some sort, stands by a sound system. She is calm, confident, and fashionably dressed. She puts down her purse on a bed as she speaks:

STEPHANIE
The front desk clerk told me people
were complaining about music being

turned up too loudly.

David faces her on the piano bench.

DAVID

So they can afford to put a grand piano in a suite but they can't afford to sound proof it? That's just ridiculous.

David gets up and then sits on the ground.

DAVID

Steph. Check out what I made.

STEPHANIE

Mm?

Stephanie walks up to see a hundred souvenirs on the ground beside the bed. She says mildly surprised, not shocked:

STEPHANIE

Oh my God.

David pats on the ground and she sits down next to him.

DAVID

So I'm Michelangelo's David. See? Looks just like me. Same name and everything.

Inside a Roman Coliseum souvenir is a small replica of the muscular Michelangelo's David surrounded by various warrior souvenirs. Stephanie laughs.

STEPHANIE

They got the penis down right.

David is playfully spiteful for a second:

DAVID

Shut up.

David takes his miniature self and moves him

DAVID

Okay. So I have to beat all the other gladiators, take over the tower of Pisa, steal a chariot,

travel hundreds of miles across the Mediterranean,
an Odyssey if you will, –

David moves a Venetian rowboat two feet.

DAVID

- steal control of the world from
the Vatican, -

Inside the ring of columns in the Vatican is a snow globe, which
David snatches.

DAVID

- and give it to you.

David hands her the snow globe and she puts her other hand
to her chest in exaggerated gratitude.

STEPHANIE

Thank you. But one, you already
have control of the world, and two,
the Odyssey is Greek, not Italian.

DAVID

But we're going to Greece next
week, right babe?

Stephanie smiles and stands up to put the snow globe on the bed.
She lays down, staring up at the ceiling. She looks really
innocent for some reason.

David plays around with the chariot.

STEPHANIE

I'm so happy people like your book.
Did you see the reviews in the
paper?

DAVID

I didn't understand anything but
the five stars.

Stephanie rolls over to pick up and unfold a single
newspaper page from her purse. She curls up with it in her
hands as David gets up to sit down next to her.

STEPHANIE

It says...
(in Italian)

Arland's work redefines the
self-improvement genre.

David puts his arm around her. She translates:

STEPHANIE

(in English)

Arland's work redefines the
self-improvement genre.

(in Italian)

His fresh perspective as a leader
of the global economy and visionary
of the future of technology
radiates new hope to the aspiring citizens
of Italy as well as the world.

(in English)

His fresh perspective as a leader
of the global economy and visionary
of the future of technology
radiates new hope to the aspiring citizens
of Italy as well as the world.

She puts down the page. David has been looking at her
blankly.

STEPHANIE

What?

DAVID

What language don't you speak well?

Stephanie laughs to herself and lays back on his lap.

STEPHANIE

English.

DAVID

Are you kidding?

STEPHANIE

No, I'm not that good.

DAVID

You're flawless.

Stephanie laughs again and kisses him. They start to make out.
Suddenly she is disturbed and jumps off his lap. She looks
at him wildly.

STEPHANIE

What was that?

DAVID

You said I had Michelangelo's
David's penis. You were close, but
mine is harder than marble.

Stephanie's eyes open widely. She slaps him as hard as she can.
David knows saying anything will only make it worse.

STEPHANIE

You're disgusting!

Stephanie frowns at him and picks up her purse.

Another version of the story – another beginning:

FADE IN:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The house lights of a packed auditorium go down. A brief enthusiastic
applause. A **SERIOUS BLACK MAN** wearing glasses and an expensive
suit stands by a podium center stage.

SERIOUS BLACK MAN

Words cannot describe the man I am
about to introduce. He is brave,
passionate, confident, strong,
motivated, friendly, funny,
spontaneous, and most of all,
loving. It is impossible to find
any word at all that can describe
this man. Ladies and gentlemen,
David Arland.

DAVID ARLAND, 45, an average-looking well-dressed white guy, enters stage left and shakes hands with serious black man as the audience roars with excitement. David is left alone on stage with the audience.

David is calm and charismatic - he has a very attractive personality, especially to women. Think Bill Murray at the end of Groundhog Day. However, he has a habit of saying ridiculous things and not even noticing it. Maybe because he's so blindly confident...

David nods and waves appreciatively, waiting for them to quiet down. Then he presses a clicker in his hand and looks behind himself for a moment. The title screen of a PowerPoint presentation appears behind him and on a laptop on the podium. It reads: "What makes us happy?"

DAVID

What makes us happy?

David glances across the audience with a firm expression.

DAVID

Food? Women in lingerie? Palm trees?

David shakes his head.

DAVID

These are just things you see on commercials. Things that are supposed to make you happy. But real happiness comes from knowing you have done something with your life. Many of you know me as the founder of sparkl.com.

David flips to slide showing the sleek logo of "sparkl.com", which has a star for a period, and the image of a hardback book entitled "Never Give Up", which features David on the front crossing his arms and smiling over a solid white background.

DAVID

I recently published a book about my journey from an everyday life insurance salesman to the founder of an acclaimed multi-million dollar online business. But I write

about a lot more than myself. I discuss the principles which inevitably led me to my success and how you, the readers, can apply them to your own lives. It didn't take long for me to decide upon a title. "Never give up" has always been my advice to others, and, at times, myself. I believe in the American dream. I believe it is alive and well and I am living proof of that. I come from a lower-class household; we lived underground. Neither of my parents spoke English; for some reason, they always ignored me. I was held back in second grade. I was held back twice in third grade. Fourth grade I did okay. I was fired from seven jobs, all of them as a life insurance salesman working for different companies. But I never let anything hold me back. I always kept faith and knew that as long as I kept trying, I would become someone I am proud of.

David flips to the next slide, a complex flow-chart with stylish labeled icons.

DAVID

For anyone who isn't familiar with sparkl.com, and those of you are and want to know a little more, I'll go over our business design.

David uses the clicker as a laser-pointer.

DAVID

Our company, over here, buys large quantities of a variety of colored glitter spray cans from the Seizure Dust manufacturers over here, and stores them in these containers over here. Customers make orders via the internet

—

He has separate icons for customers and the internet, which he depicts as some kind of magical explosion of binary code.

DAVID

- and send anything they want to our factory, which we like to call the Powder House. For some reason, many drug addicts also come and ask for our services at which point we call the police and they take them to jail.

“Anything they want” is represented by a teddy bear. The Powder House, the drug addicts, the police, and the jail all have separate icons which David points to.

DAVID

We spray the object to the customer's specifications, who then has the option of sending the completed item back to himself or to a friend, a family member, or that special someone for a variety of occasions: Christmas, Birthday, Other Holiday, and Nothing.

This is a very complicated mess of arrows and icons.

DAVID

You wouldn't believe the wide range of items people have sent to sparkl.com. There are no limitations of any kind. We spray items of any size, material, and weight, guaranteed.

David flips through several "before & after" slides depicting items which have become rendered useless after being completely covered with glitter (David sees nothing wrong, of course):

DAVID

Telescopes. Camouflaged hunting vests. We have sparkled an entire bus before. Patriotic Americans have sent us their flags. Aquariums. Measure tape. Passports, inside and out. Golden jewelry. United States Intelligence launched a program to sparkle its stealth reconnaissance jets. We have added finishing touches to great

paintings like this one by some guy named Albert Durer. People have even sent us their pets.

The next slide presents the words, “How did you come up with the idea for sparkl.com?”

DAVID

People always ask me how I came up with such a simple, yet commercially brilliant idea. Anyone who has worked with me has already heard me tell the story of how I came up with the idea of sparkl.com. You’ll find it in chapter four of my book, and now I’d like to share it with you.

Brief applause.

David proudly holds up a CD case from his jacket.

DAVID

I have little treat for all of you tonight. To help tell the story, I drew my company’s resources together and hired Morgan Freeman to narrate it.

The crowd cheers, awestruck. David takes out the CD.

DAVID

Also, at the last second this morning I went to have the CD sparkled to show you how one of our completed products looks like in real life. See? Okay.

David holds up the CD, then inserts it into the computer. He waits. And waits. Something’s wrong. He tries to fix the problem on the computer. He hesitantly decides to lookstoward the back of the auditorium.

DAVID

Is the sound working?

In a moment, the unsympathizing-asshole voice of the SOUND GUY resonates through the auditorium, loud and clear.

SOUND GUY (V.O.)

Yes.

DAVID
It's not working.

SOUND GUY (V.O.)
Is everything plugged in right?

DAVID
Yeah.

SOUND GUY (V.O.)
Is your computer on?

David looks offended.

DAVID
Yes. It is.

SOUND GUY (V.O.)
Did you check the volume?

DAVID
Yes I did. The volume's at a
hundred percent.

SOUND GUY (V.O.)
Is the CD scratched up?

David sighs and shakes his head. He ejects the CD. He holds it up and rotates it. Suddenly, he covers his mouth in realization. The glitter has made the CD completely unreadable. He says under his breath:

DAVID
Great. It can't read it. Glitter
all over it. Great job, Dave.

The serious black man tries to catch his attention behind

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
David!

David turns, startled.

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
Is everything plugged in alright?

DAVID

Yes, it is. Didn't you listen?

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
Is your computer on?

DAVID
Yes, my computer's on! Have you considered paying attention once in a while?

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
I'm sorry. I'm just trying to help.

David is annoyed.

DAVID
You don't have to apologize.

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
No, really. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to upset you.

David exhales sharply and looks at the audience for a second.

DAVID
It's okay. I forgive you.

SERIOUS BLACK MAN
We're still friends, right?

David grinds his teeth.

DAVID
Yes, we're friends.

David faces the audience and tries to cool down.

DAVID
We're not going to use the Morgan Freeman narration.

The audience "awww"s. David speaks quickly, trying to

DAVID
I think this CD was made for PC and this laptop is a Mac so it's incompatible, or some lame unconvincing excuse like that - but

it's okay. I'll just tell it like I
always do.

David takes a breath. He stretches his shoulders up and cracks
his neck, getting in the right, narrative mood.

DAVID

I was in Atlanta, Georgia, one
spring. It was a relatively humid,
cloudy day. I was there visiting a
distant relative, whose real name
was Alan, but everyone called Jack
because he was a lumberjack for
fifteen years up by the Great Lakes
near the Canadian border. He and my
father used to camp in the
mountains when they were young -
they were no more than two years
apart. Jack and my father's parents
were both divorced so they could
easily relate to one another and by
the time they were both in middle
school they became the best of
friends. My father even played
quarterback in their high school
varsity football team his senior
year while Jack, only a sophomore,
played wide receiver - in the
junior varsity team. I was walking
down a sidewalk when I noticed it
looked sparkly. I asked a man, who
was quite tall, roughly six foot four,
blue eyes, stuck in rush hour
traffic in his Honda Civic, why the sidewalk
was sparkly. He said he didn't
know, because he was from out of
town. I assumed his family was on
spring break because he had two
children in the back - one about
seven, the other thirteen. I said,
do you know what time it is? He
said he'd tell me but he didn't
have a watch and his car clock was
set to a different time zone.
Suddenly it hit me - why don't I
start an online business where
people send me anything they want
and I make it sparkly? I founded
sparkl.com the next day and the

rest has just been...

David puts his hand on his chest.

DAVID

An extraordinary, life-changing journey, full of hardship but also hope.

The audience claps, inspired. David takes a reflective pause.

DAVID

My company has had its fair share of struggles, just like any other small business. In 2005, the price of Seizure Dust increased dramatically - from one dollar a can to three dollars and twenty five cents, in a new three-for-one offer. I was devastated. For about half an hour I seriously considered closing down the company. Then I remembered the words of songwriter Paul Simon. He once said, "Sail on, silver girl. Sail on by. Your time has come to shine. All your dreams are on their way" And that quote resonated so much with me. It was like he was speaking directly to me. I had a dream, I was in the business of making things shine, and I didn't mind sailing. So then I made one of the most important decisions in my life. I took a risk. I would keep doing exactly what I was doing before and not change a thing. And I never gave up. In three years I turned a simple idea into an annual company profit of fifteen point four million dollars.

David looks around.

DAVID

I'm a real person just like you. I was full of hopes, dreams, unfulfilled childhood ambitions, and sexual

fantasies, just like you. I made a commitment
and kept going no matter how
impossible it seemed. No matter
matter how many people told me
sparkl.com was too complex for me
to handle. And look at where I am
now.

David smiles and laughs to himself.

DAVID

It was worth every second, every
moment of fear and uncertainty,
every time I had to run to the sink
to wash the glitter out of my eyes.
And what did I lose? Just sight in
my left eye. If I achieve my
dreams...

David smiles. A shot flat in front of his face. It zooms
in...

DAVID

Anyone can.

...and then transitions into a montage with nice, simple music
- guitar and vocal:

MONTAGE - MEET THE READERS - TIME VARIES

In this version of the story, Morgan Freeman narrates the very end. Just like the first recording he was supposed to give, here he rants on about completely unimportant details to get to a few uninteresting points about what happened to David afterward. And wonderfully irritating conclusion.

One variation of the Ken Price show. Ken Price is like Bill O'Reilly:

INT. TV SCREEN

We see news pundit KEN PRICE's talk show, The Price Hour, as it appears on TV. He splits the screen with another formally dressed man.

MARTIN

I don't think you understand the magnitude of this issue, Ken.

KEN

Alright.

MARTIN

You're not even listening to me!

KEN

Alright.

MARTIN

Well. You know what? Forget it.

KEN

Alright, that's all we'll hear from you, Mr. Martin.

MARTIN

Frankly, I think that's a good thing.

KEN

So do I. We'll see you next time, Mr. Martin. Well, hopefully not.

MARTIN

Yeah, blow it out your ass, Ken Price.

The show cuts off Mr. Martin's feed. Ken pretends to laugh.

KEN

Next we have -

He laughs.

KEN

Oh, that Alan Martin was always a clown. Next we have the author of a self-improvement book entitled Just Give Up.

Ken laughs.

KEN

I don't know what's with that title. I think someone must be making a prank on teleprompter. I'll be honest with you. I have no idea who this person is. Joining us from Washington is David Arland.

David appears in front of a tacky background in a split screen. Behind him is the Washington Monument. He turns around.

DAVID

Is that the Washington Monument?

David turns back to the camera.

DAVID

I'm in Washington State, right now, Ken.

Ken laughs and says sarcastically:

KEN

I'm sorry, Mr. Arland. My mistake. And it couldn't have happened to a worse person, since you ARE such an important guest on our show.

David shakes his head and squints his eyes.

DAVID

What are you doing?

KEN

Pardon?

DAVID

Why do you have to be such a dick?

Ken laughs.

KEN

A dick? You realize, Mr. Arland, that we have a number of guests who are ready to come on the show right now, and we can take you off the air any time we want.

DAVID

Yes, I realize that. But you don't even know me. And you've already insulted me at least... three times.

KEN

What's insulting, Mr. Arland, is what I'm seeing on the teleprompter right in front of me. First of all, are you a comedian?

DAVID

No, I'm actually known to have little to no sense of humor.

KEN

Okay. Can you describe to me your book?

DAVID

Well, it's just like the title says. Just Give Up.

KEN

Just Give Up?

DAVID

Yes. And I say that because -

KEN

Hold on. You're a motivational speaker, right? Correct me if I'm wrong.

DAVID

No, no. I'm a former motivational speaker.

KEN

A former motivational speaker. And what happened, Mr. Arland? Did you have a bad day and decide because you haven't accomplished any of your dreams no one else should, too?

David pauses and looks around for a moment.

DAVID

Ken.

KEN

Yes, David?

DAVID

Can you do me a favor?

KEN

And what is that?

DAVID

Can you stop insulting me?

Ken laughs.

KEN

I wouldn't insult you if I didn't think you deserved the insults. You say over and over in your book, "Give up your dreams," and "You can't do it", not "Can". "Can't". You say, "There is such an impossibly small chance of you to succeed in any serious endeavor in your life that are you are much better off not not waste your time, energy, and precious self-esteem. Just give up." How do you respond to that?

DAVID

Well, it's true. When I was a motivational speaker I would just, you know, talk to large groups of people and they'd clap and everyone would go home. But I never saw the actual effect of my lectures. About three months ago I started visiting hundreds of people who I had spoken to and recorded the actual difference I had made in their lives. And it was basically nothing at all.

KEN

Did you ever think that maybe it's just you? Maybe it's not that people can't accomplish their dreams but you can't... do your job well enough?

DAVID

Yes I have. I've spoken to many other motivational speakers, community leaders, politicians, and such, and met the people they have touched and tried to change and - the same thing. No effect, whatsoever.

KEN

Really?

David nods.

DAVID

Yeah.

KEN

And how do you explain, Mr. Arland, people who have actually accomplished their dreams? Take me for example.

DAVID

Um. A variety of factors are involved, mainly luck. But other than that your background, genetic traits, um, by whom and where you were raised --

KEN

Woah. Hold on.

Ken laughs.

KEN

Luck?

Ken shakes his head and looks away from the screen. He looks back. Then he points his finger.

KEN

Let me tell you something, Mr. David Arland, you money-grubbing, get-rich-quick liar, impostor, con-man and low-life, I did not get on this stage because I was "lucky".

DAVID

Well, as I said. Other things are involved. In your case you had a special trait, to which you can attribute your success, that made you stand out from the rest of your competitors.

KEN

And what is my special trait, Mr. Arland?

David tries to find the right words.

DAVID

Um. you're a very... fiery, energetic, douche bag.

Ken is offended and furious. He backs off from the camera and looks away from a moment, adjusting his tie. Then he points again at the camera, suddenly PSYCHOTIC.

KEN

And to what do you, Mr. Arland, attribute your own success?! How do you explain the millions of copies your worthless, piece-of-shit stack of papers has sold all across America?! How did you become successful, Mr. Arland, as opposed to me?!

DAVID

I... told the truth.

A pause.

DAVID

I think the book isn't a fairy tale, but it's the truth. And people want to hear it. That's why it's sold a lot of copies.

Ken tries to ignore David.

KEN

Alright. That's all the time we have for you.

DAVID

Okay.

KEN

That's all.

DAVID

I - I know.

KEN

We won't see any more of you on the Price Hour.

DAVID

Okay. I know. Okay. It's fine.

KEN

Goodbye, Mr. Arland.

DAVID

Bye.

KEN

I don't want to see your lousy face on my show again.

DAVID

We're... we're still on? Can I leave? I need to go somewhere.

KEN

Goodbye, Mr. Arland.

A book signing. Here David is not married to Stephanie nor does he know her.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

A gigantic line is outside a book signing by David Arland. Signs are displayed everywhere. Fans wait enthusiastically.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

A short line to David. He is busy signing something. The person hugs David and leaves.

A BALD GUY goes up. A pretty woman, STEPHANIE, waits next in line.

BALD GUY

Mr. Arland, you're my hero. I don't know how to thank you.

David smiles and nods as he signs the guy's book.

DAVID

You're welcome. Who do I sign to?

BALD GUY

Baldie.

DAVID

Isn't that a bit derogatory?

BALD GUY

When they called me Comb Over - now that was derogatory. But you've convinced me not to even try to look like I have self-esteem. I don't even wear a beard anymore to compensate for my baldness. I have no hair and I've accepted the needless, unfair cruelty of life.

DAVID

Good for you.

The bald guy walks away joyfully. Stephanie approaches a bit nervously.

STEPHANIE

Hi.

David just looks at her for a moment, in a trance, then he tries to pretend like that never happened.

DAVID

Um... Who do I sign to?

STEPHANIE

Stephanie.

David nods and writes. He gives it to her and looks at his desk for a moment.

Stephanie laughs and looks at David awkwardly.

STEPHANIE

"I love you?"

DAVID

What?

David is a bit confused. He is in a trance again as he looks at her. Suddenly as if awakened by a nuclear bomb, he takes the book from her and sits on it. His eyes move frantically.

The people in line are startled and confused.

Stephanie doesn't know how to respond. She tries to act like nothing happened as well.

David reaches for a copy of the book nearby, signs something quickly and gives it to her.

STEPHANIE

Thanks.

DAVID

You're welcome.

David clears his throat.

DAVID

Next in line.

Stephanie walks out slowly, looking back at David periodically.

I imagined David going on the Ken Price show a second time in one version. This is his second appearance on the show:

INT. TV SCREEn

Another broadcast of the Price Hour. Ken Price is arguing with someone of course.

GEORGE

The separation of church and state. You're saying there isn't a separation of church and state?

KEN

That's exactly what I'm saying. Where does it say that?

GEORGE

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof! Does that ring a bell?

KEN

What? The constitution? You mean that old-ass piece of paper?

GEORGE

Yes, that old-ass piece of paper! That's what I'm talking about! The old-ass piece of paper!

KEN

It's an old-ass piece of paper! Would you really allow an old-ass piece of paper restrict the powers of your government?!

GEORGE

Yes!

KEN

Alright. Alright, that's enough.

GEORGE

You are insane.

KEN

Alright.

GEORGE

You need severe medication and an exorcism.

KEN

Alright. That's all for you George. Goodbye.

George gets off the screen.

KEN

Next we have the best-selling author of Just Give Up. Its sky-rocketing sales in the past month have made it the most successful self-help book in history. Joining us from Mexico City is Mr. David Arland.

David comes on the screen.

KEN

Good to have you here, Mr. Arland.

DAVID

Really? That's your intro? Like nothing happened between us?

KEN

Tell us about your book.

David looks off screen for a moment, squinting his eyes.

DAVID

Is that Machu Picchu?

David leans to the side and we see the back drop is, in fact, Machu Picchu.

KEN

Tell us about your book, Mr. Arland.

DAVID

I'm in Mexico City.

A long pause. David sighs.

DAVID

Alright. My book. Well. As you know, it's about not believing in your dreams, not trying, um... just losing confidence in yourself in general.

KEN

Is it true that it's been translated into more languages than the Bible?

DAVID

Yes, it has.

KEN

I didn't know there were that many languages.

DAVID

We translated into basically everything there is and one extra language.

KEN

A language you invented?

DAVID

Yes, it's a special language designed for people who fear improving their English comprehension skills and vocabulary but because the activity constitutes a goal.

KEN

Laymanian, is it? Based off of the concept of layman's terms?

DAVID

Yeah. It's just standard English with omission of conjunctions, prepositional phrases, pronouns, adverbs, words with more than four syllables, all figurative language, and semicolons. It's designed to make sure the reader has no risk of becoming more intelligent upon completing the book.

And I don't have anything after that in the scene, although there must be.

This is where David changes his mind and begins to question Never Give Up. He has doubts about his promises of success. He goes to the house of someone who is supposed to have written good mail for him.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - DAY

He looks at an envelope. On it is an address. David looks up and sees a gated lot. A mansion.

EXT. RUBENSTEIN RESIDENCE - DAY

David rings the doorbell. Suddenly he hears Mozart's fiery 40th Symphony. He his expression turns awkward.

INT. RUBENSTEIN RESIDENCE - DAY

A MAID opens the door shortly.

MAID

Mr. Rubenstein will be with you in a moment.

David covers his ears. He can only think about how loud the music is.

Soon MR. RUBENSTEIN arrives. He greets David with a welcoming smile and handshake.

RUBENSTEIN

Nicholas Rubenstein. I'm sorry. You look familiar but I don't remember where I've seen you.

DAVID

David Arland. Never Give Up.

Mr. Rubenstein is very surprised and confused.

RUBENSTEIN

What brings you here, Mr. Arland? You must have received my letter.

DAVID

Yeah. You were the only person who actually sent me fan mail. Everyone else wrote hate mail.

RUBENSTEIN

What? I'm sorry. I can't hear you because of the symphony.

DAVID

Um...

RUBENSTEIN

Come. We'll go to my office.

INT. RUBENSTEIN OFFICE - DAY

David sits down at a chair in front of a luxurious desk. Mr. Rubenstein closes the door and finds his own seat behind the desk.

RUBENSTEIN

So you liked the letter I wrote you?

DAVID

Yeah, I thought it was really positive, healthy feedback. You didn't even call me an imposter. Anyway, you were in the -- area, so I thought I would stop by and see what kind of a difference my book has made in your life.

RUBENSTEIN

It has made a tremendous difference in my life. As you can see.

Rubenstein spreads his arms out. David looks around proudly.

DAVID

Are you telling me you amassed all of this wealth because I taught you to believe in yourself?

RUBENSTEIN

Oh, no, I inherited all of this. But all the awards and certificates around the walls are my son's. You made me push him and become a more responsible father. Peter really is everything to me now.

David gets up and looks at a wall.

DAVID

Wow.

RUBENSTEIN

Peter's well on his way to becoming a Harvard graduate.

DAVID

Are these... are these all -- best effort certificates?

Mr. Rubenstein stands up and walks over to David and looks at the wall proudly.

RUBENSTEIN

I'm so proud of Peter.

DAVID

How... old is Peter?

RUBENSTEIN

Seven.

David looks at Mr. Rubenstein, shocked.

RUBENSTEIN

I know. I know. He is already so bright and ambitious.

Mr. Rubenstein gets back to his seat. Then David does so also, slowly, giving Mr. Rubenstein a strange look.

RUBENSTEIN

You know our doorbell?

DAVID

What doorbell?

RUBENSTEIN

The one playing right now. Mozart's 40th symphony.

DAVID

That's your door bell?!

RUBENSTEIN

My wife and I believe classical music is very beneficial to a child's development so we made Mozart's 40th symphony play whenever we have a guest.

DAVID

It's kind of lengthy for a doorbell, don't you think?

RUBENSTEIN

Oh, no. It's only the first movement. You know, Peter is preparing for a national spelling bee. He's a born speller, just like his old man. I think it runs in the family.

DAVID

Really? Because... I couldn't help but notice how many words you misspelled in your letter.

RUBENSTEIN

What?

David takes out a paper from his pocket and gives it to Mr. Rubenstein.

RUBENSTEIN

Where? I don't see any spelling errors here. "Your book is an inspiration to my family."

DAVID

Before that.

RUBENSTEIN

What do you mean? There's nothing before that.

DAVID

No, the heading.

RUBENSTEIN

You mean, "Deer Mr. Arland"?

DAVID

Yeah. It's not supposed to be "deer" like the animal. It's supposed to be D-E-A-R.

RUBENSTEIN

Oh.

Mr. Rubenstein pauses.

RUBENSTEIN

Well, you learn something every day. Anyway --

Mr. Rubenstein puts down the letter quickly.

RUBENSTEIN

Would you like to meet Peter?

DAVID

Um, sure. Why not?

David chuckles.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY RUBENSTEIN RESIDENCE - DAY

Mr. Rubenstein walks with David down a hallway. They stop at the door.

RUBENSTEIN

Oh. I forgot.

DAVID

What?

RUBENSTEIN

He's busy right now. He's studying single-variable calculus.

DAVID

Oh. Should we leave?

RUBENSTEIN

No, no. We can make ten minutes of room in his schedule.

DAVID

Okay.

RUBENSTEIN

No -- eight minutes. No more than eight minutes.

DAVID

Sure.

Mr. Rubenstein knocks on the door.

RUBENSTEIN

Peter.

Quiet. Nothing. Mr. Rubenstein tries to open the door but it's locked. Mr. Rubenstein becomes very upset.

RUBENSTEIN

Peter, what is this? Are you locking your door again? Peter! Open the door.

The door opens. Peter is inside. He's a standard, cute little seven-year-old boy. Mr. Rubenstein enters outraged, and David stands by a wall.

RUBENSTEIN

Why did you lock your door?

PETER

I'm sorry, Daddy.

RUBENSTEIN

That's not a reason. You're avoiding the question. Why did you or did you not lock your door?

PETER

I'm sorry.

RUBENSTEIN

You're avoiding the question!

Mr. Rubenstein sighs. He looks around angrily.

RUBENSTEIN

Where is it?

Mr. Rubenstein searches the room -- the desk, under the bed, in the closet. Then Mr. Rubenstein stands up straight and adjusts his hair. He looks at Peter fiercely.

RUBENSTEIN

I am going to give you five seconds to hand it over to me.

PETER

But, Daddy!

RUBENSTEIN

One. Two.

PETER

Please!

RUBENSTEIN

Three. Four.

Peter takes out a poster paper from his pillow case. He gives it to Mr. Rubenstein who immediately rips it in half.

PETER

NO!!

RUBENSTEIN

Multiplication tables! You are seven years old and still using multiplication tables?!

PETER

No, no!

Peter cries.

RUBENSTEIN

Do you want to learn calculus?

PETER

Yes.

RUBENSTEIN

Really? It doesn't sound like you want to learn calculus.

PETER

I do!

RUBENSTEIN

I can't hear you!

PETER

I want to learn calculus!

RUBENSTEIN

I still can't hear you!

PETER

I WANT TO LEARN SINGLE-VARIABLE CALCULUS!

RUBENSTEIN

Okay. Come here.

Mr. Rubenstein crouches down, hugs Peter, and kisses him. David stands around awkwardly, trying to ignore them.

RUBENSTEIN

It's okay. It's okay. Do you want to practice spelling now?

Peter nods. Mr. Rubenstein stands up. He looks at David and smiles.

RUBENSTEIN

You want to help him out? I have a few calls to make. I mean if you're not busy --

DAVID

No, no. It's okay. I'll... try to help him.

RUBENSTEIN

Good. Thank you for this. I appreciate it.

DAVID

No problem.

Mr. Rubenstein walks out of the room and closes the door. David looks at Peter who takes out some kind of list and gives it to David.

PETER

You say the word and I try to spell it.

DAVID

Okay.

David nods and sits down on Peter's bed. Peter sits down in a cross-legged position on the ground.

DAVID

Okay... um...

David shakes his head for a second and takes a breath.

DAVID

I don't really know how to pronounce this, but I'll try. Nasturtium?

PETER

Nasturtium. N-A-S-T-E-R-T-U-M.

DAVID

Um, no. It's close. Very good job. It's actually N-A-S-T-U, not E, -R-T-I-U-M. I, U, M.

PETER

Next.

DAVID

Okay. Um... pharmaceutical.

PETER

F-A-R-M-A-S-O-O-T-I-C-A-L.

DAVID

Um...

David shakes his head.

DAVID

That's not too close, actually. Peter.

David looks at him with a concerned face for a moment.

DAVID

Do you want to try a few easier words?

Peter looks around, frantically.

PETER

DADDY!

DAVID

No, no. Shhh. Stop. It's okay. It's okay. We'll just try a few easier words and that's alright.

Peter stares at him for a moment. He breathes heavily and then finally nods.

DAVID

Let's see...

David puts down the list.

DAVID

Duck.

Peter takes a deep breath. He says quietly:

PETER

Can I have the language of origin?

David squints his eyes awkwardly.

DAVID

I have no idea. It's duck. Quack. Quack.

PETER

What are you doing?

DAVID

I'm imitating a duck.

PETER

You sound stupid.

DAVID

Okay. Do you want to try to spell it?

PETER

Can you use the word in a sentence?

David puts his hand to his forehead and sighs. He looks back up at Peter.

DAVID

The duck swam in the pond.

Peter thinks for a moment.

PETER

Can I hear the word in its original pronunciation?

DAVID

DUCK.

Peter thinks. He takes a breath.

PETER

DUCK. D-U-K.

David looks down, sighs, and shakes his head. He looks up at Peter.

DAVID

No.

PETER

No?! But that's an easy word.

DAVID

I thought so, too.

Peter begins to cry.

DAVID

Hey, why are you crying? Why are you crying?

Peter cries louder.

DAVID

Shh! Stop crying! Stop! Stop it!

Peter stops and jumps on the bed. He lays there motionless and quiet. David feels really sorry for him.

DAVID

Peter.

Peter doesn't respond.

DAVID

Peter. I want to tell you something.

Peter takes his pillow and puts it over his head.

DAVID

Peter, have you heard of spell-check?

Peter takes the pillow off his head and looks at David.

PETER

What's spell-check?

INT. DAVID'S CAR - DAY

David drives. He hears his phone ring and picks it up.

DAVID

Hello?

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

You son of a bitch!

DAVID

Hello? Who is this?

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

This is Peter Rubenstein's father!

DAVID

Oh, hi.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

Did you tell Peter about spell-check?

DAVID

Um... no.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

Really?

DAVID

Really.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

Then how do you explain the fact that ever since you left he's been on his computer, screaming, jumping up and down all day, typing in words and watching them be automatically corrected?

DAVID

I don't know... I don't know how that happened.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

You told him!

DAVID

Well, Mr. Rubenstein... he was going to find out anyway.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

No he wasn't! You are responsible for this!

DAVID

Okay, maybe I am.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

Why did you do it?!

David stays quiet.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

You let him give up his dream.

DAVID

No, not really. It's your dream.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

But you encouraged him to give up.

DAVID

That's right. And I think it's the best thing that's ever happened to him. He can't do it. He can't spell. And he has to live with that.

RUBENSTEIN (V.O.)

Wonderful. Well, you're a fraud and a hypocrit. Enjoy your life.

DAVID

You, too.

David hangs up the phone. He stares absent-mindedly at the road. Then he looks a little bit down, ashamed of himself.

David goes to a bar in this depressed state after seeing Peter Rubenstein can't spell and he is truly a fraud. He doesn't believe everyone can succeed anymore.

INT. BAR - DAY

David finds a seat in a bar. The BARTENDER comes up to him.

BARTENDER

What can I get ya?

DAVID

Um, what do you have?

BARTENDER

Uh. The usual.

DAVID

I'll have beer then.

BARTENDER

What kind?

DAVID

Anything. Anything.

The bartender goes over to get him a drink.

BARTENDER

You don't drink much, do you?

DAVID

No. I think alcohol is for people in denial.

BARTENDER

In denial of what?

David tries to remain quiet.

BARTENDER

In denial of what?

DAVID

That they... can accomplish their dreams but choose not to because instead of doing something they drown away all their hope with a glass of whiskey.

BARTENDER

And what does a glass of beer make you? A person who's still barely holding on?

DAVID

Pretty much.

The bartender serves him a beer and drinks it all down.

BARTENDER

The way I see it, every person in this bar had a dream at some point. But...

The bartender laughs.

BARTENDER

The reason they call it a dream is because the dream world and the real world are two very different things.

DAVID

I'll drink to that. You can't accomplish your dreams.

The bartender gives David a refill. David chugs it all down again.

BARTENDER

So what do you do for a living?

DAVID

I'm a motivational speaker.

The bartender looks at him seriously for a moment and then breaks out in laughter.

DAVID

I'm not kidding.

The bartender keeps laughing.

DAVID

I'm not.

The bartender smiles at him.

BARTENDER

Then you're just about the worst motivational speaker I've met in my entire life.

DAVID

That's true.

David plays around with his glass. The bartender leaves him to help another customer.

This is an earlier version of the beginning of the movie:

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

DAVID ARLAND, a man in his forties, opens the front door of his less than impressive house and walks over to his mail box. He carries a cup of coffee and puts it on top of the mail box, which he opens. It's empty. David assumes the mailman hasn't arrived yet. He takes the coffee again.

David looks around waiting, and sure enough, a mail truck arrives promptly.

The MAILMAN stops the truck by David.

MAILMAN

Morning, Mr. Arland.

DAVID

Bob.

The mailman gets out and walks over to the trunk.

MAILMAN

How was Honolulu?

DAVID

Great, great.

The mailman closes the trunk and brings a box David, who is surprised and puts down his coffee again.

DAVID

What's this?

MAILMAN

Fan mail, I guess. You just published a self-improvement book, right? Never Give Up, or, something like that?

DAVID

Yeah, that's it.

MAILMAN

Alright. Take care.

DAVID

You too, Bob.

The mailman walks over to his truck.

INT. DAVID'S living room - Day

David sits down on his couch and puts the box to his side. He opens it and sees hundreds of envelopes of all colors and sizes. He opens the first one and reads to himself.

OLD MAN (V.O.)

Dear Mr. David Arland. My name is George Forber, and you changed my life. I've been a truck driver for forty five years, so you can guess how old I am. I'm not an educated man. No. Barely finished high school. No one in my family ever made anything of themselves. I always thought I was no one from nowhere and I had no choice but to be no one to nowhere my whole life. Two weeks ago, I bought your book, Never Give Up, and I finished it that very same day. My entire life changed. Because you gave me the courage,

the confidence in myself to do what I know I am capable of simply as a member of the human race, as you so eloquently wrote in chapter four, I demanded a raise, and received much more than that - I was made manager of the entire station. I also visited my son Nick in California who I hadn't spoken a word to in seventeen years, and got back together with my ex-wife, Elizabeth. All of this could never have been possible without you. Sincerely, George Forber.

David begins crying to this letter.

EXT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

Somehow we are back outside. David is holding the box and crying. Then we see the mailman looking at him awkwardly from his truck.

MAILMAN

Mr. Arland.

David turns to the mailman in surprise and quickly wipes off the tears.

DAVID

What? Huh? I didn't know you were still there.

MAILMAN

Are you okay?

DAVID

Yeah, I'm fine.

David begins to turn away with his box.

MAILMAN

Were you crying?

DAVID

No.

MAILMAN

It's okay if you were.

DAVID

No, I had something in my eye.

A silent moment.

MAILMAN

What?

DAVID

I don't know. Something. Something must have fallen from a tree into my eye.

MAILMAN

But there aren't any trees near you.

DAVID

I got it before.

MAILMAN

When?

DAVID

I don't know! In Honolulu. What do you care?

The mailman shakes his head and drives off.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sits down on the couch and opens the box eagerly. He is shocked. He puts his head closer to see what's in there. He takes the box and flips it upside down, dropping only four to his side.

He opens one of them and begins reading to himself.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - DAY

David, furious, although he tries to hide it, drives around some suburban neighborhood. He wears a meticulously clean suit and tie. He looks to his left and right sides constantly, looking for an address. He finally seems to find it.

The number on the house is 11045. He looks at an opened envelope and sees the number 11045 again. Then he looks over to the house again and sees a man in his twenties carrying a basketball, JAMES, tying his shoe laces and stretching in his driveway.

David then goes forward and tries to find a parking space. Nothing available. He figures he has no choice and pulls over into James' driveway.

EXT. OUTSIDE James's HOUSE - DAY

James, after deciding he doesn't know David, tries to stop him from pulling in.

JAMES

Hey. Hey!

James points away, but David turns off his engine. He opens the door.

JAMES

Do I know you?

David steps out smugly. He looks so proud in his fancy suit and tie and waits to be recognized.

Suddenly James is ecstatic.

JAMES

It's you! Um...

He tries to remember the name.

JAMES

David Arland!

David just looks at him calmly. Then James suddenly covers his mouth.

JAMES

Oh, you're not here because of the letter I sent you?

David nods.

JAMES

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't mean anything I said.

DAVID

It's okay. Can I come in?

James thinks it's kind of strange but agrees anyway.

JAMES

Um... of course.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

James walks into the house and starts to look for something frantically.

David takes off his shoes.

DAVID

Are you looking for something?

James keeps searching, trying to ignore David.

JAMES

No... it's uh...

David walks in and finds a copy of his book on a chair. He lifts it up and shows it to James, smiling.

DAVID

It's my book.

On the cover is David, in the same suit he is wearing now, crossing his arms and smiling. It reads "DAVID ARLAND" on top, "NEVER GIVE UP" on the bottom, and in a bubble, the slogan, "GUARANTEED TO SUCCEED".

James isn't smiling. He quickly takes the book.

JAMES

Yeah, I'm just going to put it away now.

DAVID

Wait - hold on. I want to talk to you.

James is quiet.

DAVID

You said that no matter how hard you try, no matter how much you believe in yourself, you can never be in the NBA.

JAMES

Yeah. That's what I wrote.

DAVID

I want to show you that that's not true. I want to show you that you can do it and nothing is impossible.

James is quiet for a moment. Then he laughs to himself.

DAVID

What? What's so funny?

JAMES

I was stupid to even buy the book.

David looks very concerned.

DAVID

No, no you weren't. Everyone should read it. James, you're just self-deprecating. That's rule number one. Don't sell yourself short. Here.

David takes the book from James and flips to a page, then flips back. James looks away.

DAVID

Did you rip out a page?

James looks back.

JAMES

Yes.

DAVID

This is page one fifteen, Achieving Your Childhood Dreams.

James takes a tense breath.

JAMES

It is impossible for me to be in the NBA. In fact it's impossible for almost anybody but a few people to be in the NBA. Very few people can actually achieve their childhood dreams.

DAVID

Everyone can achieve his childhood dreams.

JAMES

No.

James looks resigned. After a moment:

DAVID

You have a basketball hoop out there, right? I thought I saw one.

James nods, annoyed.

DAVID

We are going to go out there and make some free throws. you are going to make five free throws in a row. And if you can make that much progress in a single day, imagine what you can do in a lifetime.

EXT. OUTSIDE JAMES'S HOUSE - DAY

The two of them go back into the driveway. James carries a ball.

JAMES

What are we gonna do about your car?

DAVID

Just ignore it. Give me the ball.

James passes to David, who takes a breath and then makes a free throw.

DAVID

If I can do it. You can do it. All you have to do is be focused.

James laughs again and grabs the ball. He walks over to David. He takes a much longer breath and looks down.

DAVID

You know, one of my favorite quotes is by a fellow athlete like your self. And it really applies to basketball. He said, "you miss one hundred percent of the shots --"

James misses the backboard completely. David looks at him awkwardly.

JAMES

It's okay, I'll get the next one.

James takes the ball and tries another free throw but completely misses again. And again. David says to himself, quietly:

DAVID

You miss one hundred percent of the shots.

James tries again and misses. The ball hits David's car's hood.

DAVID

Hey, watch out.

JAMES

I thought you said to ignore your car.

DAVID

I know, but I didn't think you'd almost break my windshield.

James loses what's left of his confidence.

DAVID

It's okay. It's okay.

JAMES

You really think I can make it in the NBA?

DAVID

You can do anything you want. You just can't give up. You can't give up after one week of intensively practicing free throws. If you keep practicing, eventually, I promise you, you will be a player in the NBA.

James takes a hard breath. He has a surge of ambition. He hugs David. David is surprised by the hug, but allows it.

Suddenly, we see the mailman from before passing by the driveway on his truck. He stops for a moment to stare at David hugging another man.

MAILMAN

Mr. Arland?

David is alerted and sees the mailman. He quickly walks over to him.

DAVID

I'm not gay. I'm a motivational speaker.

MAILMAN

I didn't say anything. I'm just passing by.

David walks back to James.

DAVID

So you'll keep practicing.

James nods.

JAMES

Keep practicing.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - DAY

David looks at an envelope as he drives downtown.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

David gets out of his car and looks up.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

David walks over to a door and knocks. He waits. The door opens. A scary looking MAN smoking a cigar opens the door. He's kind of chubby, Hispanic, and has relatively long hair.

DAVID

Hi, uh, are you... Greg... Patrick?

The man replies with a thick Spanish accent:

MAN

No, the question is who are you?

The man comes closer to David and intimidates him. David gulps and looks away for a second and then back at the man.

DAVID

I'm David Arland. I'm a motivational speaker.

The man is quiet for a moment, then slowly begins laughing until he almost dies of laughter. David pretends to laugh along with him.

MAN

A motivational speaker. What exactly do you do, eh?

DAVID

Well, I speak to groups of people, or individuals, and try to convince them that, if they understand the mechanics of success, they can make their dreams come true.

The man becomes very serious. He speaks slow nonchalant:

MAN

And Mr. Arland, what are your dreams?

The man blows smoke into David's face. David is extremely nervous. He thinks for a moment.

DAVID

I want to help people, because that's what I do best, and all that matters to me.

The man nods slowly.

MAN

You want to know my dreams, Mr. Arland?

David says hesitantly:

DAVID

Sure.

MAN

Come closer; it's a secret.

David comes a bit closer to the man, who grabs him by his suit.

MAN

I wish little men wearing fancy suits and ties would stop interrupting me when I am in the middle of conducting business.

DAVID

What is your business?

MAN

You find to find out? Eh?

DAVID

Um...

Suddenly the man takes out a knife and holds it up to David's neck. He then pushes David into the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

David puts his hands up and runs to a far wall.

DAVID

Please! Don't hurt me! I don't - I didn't mean to interrupt you --

MAN

You think you're the first person I had to kill for knocking on my door at the wrong time, eh, white boy?

David curls up into a fetal position in a corner. The man grabs David by the collar. He puts his knife against David's neck.

MAN

Is that what you think, white boy?!

At this point David is more scared than he's ever been in his entire life.

Suddenly, SOMEONE knocks on the door.

MAN

Who is it?!

SOMEONE (V.O.)

Greg, what are you doing in there?

MAN

Go away!

David gets a skeptical look on his face.

DAVID

Did he just call you Greg?

The man becomes even more intense.

MAN

No! You wanna die, eh, white boy?!

SOMEONE (V.O.)

Greg, I want my mouse back!

The man steps back and sighs. He opens the door. David just watches in confusion.

The someone is a NEIGHBOR who lives in the apartment right next to the man, whose name is in fact GREG.

NEIGHBOR

I want my mouse back.

GREG

How am I supposed to use my computer without a mouse?

NEIGHBOR

How am I supposed to use MY computer without a mouse?

GREG

Why do you even need a computer? I thought you said were against porn or something.

NEIGHBOR

It's just my religious belief. I think watching pornography is immoral.

GREG

Why?

NEIGHBOR

It doesn't matter why. It's my mouse and I want it back.

Greg sighs.

GREG

Fine.

Greg goes to another room. The neighbor looks at David, crawled up in a corner.

NEIGHBOR

Who are you?

DAVID

I'm not sure who anyone is at this point.

Greg comes back to the room with an unplugged mouse.

GREG

Here.

The neighbor takes it and then quickly looks back at David.

NEIGHBOR

Greg, who is this?

GREG

Why do you care?

NEIGHBOR

Just tell me who he is.

Greg looks at David for a second.

GREG

He's an acting partner. From the studio.

The neighbor turns to David and looks fascinated.

NEIGHBOR

He's really good.

GREG

Yeah, yeah.

NEIGHBOR

No really.

Greg starts to close the door on his neighbor.

NEIGHBOR

He was like, "I'm not sure who anyone is at this point," and he looked really, genuinely scared.

GREG

Right.

NEIGHBOR

He's a lot better than you.

Finally the door shuts. Greg turns to David.

GREG

Don't mind the neighbor. He's a real religious freak.

David looks confused and scared at the same time.

DAVID

Greg, if that is your name -

GREG

Yeah.

DAVID

I don't think you need a motivational speaker. I think you need a psychiatrist.

GREG

No, relax. I was just in character. Come on. Get up.

Greg helps David up.

DAVID

That was all in character? You were just acting?

GREG

Yeah.

DAVID

You're really good.

GREG

No...

DAVID

Honestly. I don't what you were talking about in that letter. You said you were a hopeless actor.

GREG

I am a hopeless actor. That character that you saw...

DAVID

Yeah?

GREG

That's my only character.

DAVID

What?

GREG

It's true. The only character I can do is Hispanic thug. And I don't respect any actor who can only play one role.

David takes a breath. He loosens his tie.

DAVID

Can I get a drink?

GREG

Yeah. But, actually, before that, I want to say I'm sorry. I - I had no right to pull out a knife on you like that.

DAVID

It's alright. It was just a fake knife anyway, right?

GREG

No.

DAVID

That was a real knife?

GREG

Yeah.

Greg begins to get David a drink.

DAVID

Have you done that before, Greg?

GREG

Don't criticize me, but yes, I have. That's because the first rule of acting is if you want a real character you need to use a real knife.

DAVID

Really?

GREG

Also, you need to submerge your character into the real world and see how he responds to certain situations so you can find out as much as you can about him. Once you understand how your character thinks, then the acting takes care of itself.

DAVID

Wow. You -

David laughs.

DAVID

I don't know how I can help you. You already seem like an expert.

GREG

Well, I'm not. I've read everything about acting. I've taken classes for years but everything I do is infected with this one character!

DAVID

Hispanic thug?

GREG

Yes!

David smiles.

DAVID

That's ridiculous. All you need is a little confidence. Here. Now, I'm not an acting teacher or anything like that but I want to do an exercise.

GREG

Okay.

DAVID

Let's sit down.

The two sit down on a couch. David sips his drink.

DAVID

I'm going to describe a character in some situation.

GREG

Okay.

DAVID

And you are going to act it out, and in thirty seconds I am going to choose a new character in a new situation.

GREG

Right. Standard exercise.

DAVID

Okay. Here we go. Are you ready?

GREG

Ready.

David looks up and thinks for a second. Then he looks back at Greg.

DAVID

You are a soldier... in the Vietnam War. And you just witnessed a grenade fatally wound best friend. You are watching him die. What do you say to him?

Greg nods and then suddenly he falls off the couch and gets on his knees. He looks down at the ground, very emotionally, pretending his friend is dying there. Then Greg says in a thick Spanish accent:

GREG

What are you doing? You think can die on me, eh? You think we can be best friends and then all of the sudden you decide to die on me? Is that what you think, white boy?!

Suddenly Greg pulls a knife on the imaginary dying friend. Greg looks intensely at him for a moment.

DAVID

What are you doing?

GREG

What? Was that not good?

DAVID

No... you're supposed to be playing Vietnam War soldier watching his best friend die, not Hispanic thug.

Greg sighs and stands up disappointed.

GREG

I did it again, didn't I? Isn't that what I told you? I'll never be a good actor...

DAVID

No, Greg, no. You're a great actor. You just need to stop referring to people as white boy and stop pulling knives on them. Easy as that.

Greg gets an angry look on his face.

GREG

You sound just like one of them.

DAVID

Like one of who?

GREG

Everyone.

Greg mocks him:

GREG

It's so easy! All you have to do is stop pulling knives on them!

Then he comes up to David.

GREG

If it's so easy then why don't you do it?!

David rebuffs.

DAVID

Greg... I don't mean to sound like one of them, but... how hard is it to not carry around a knife?

Greg takes a tense breath. Then he looks down. And then back at Greg.

GREG

You're right. I should just stop carrying around a knife with me.

DAVID

Right.

Greg slowly gives David the knife.

DAVID

See. That was easy. Right?

GREG

Yeah.

DAVID

Okay, so next situation.

GREG

Okay. I'm ready.

David sits down.

DAVID

You find out your wife has been cheating on you with your best friend.

Greg nods. He then begins acting again, feeling a bit out of place since he has no knife, and speaks with the thick Spanish accent:

GREG

Hey... wife. Come here. What do you think you're doing? Is that's my best friend you been sleeping with? Eh?! What do you think I'm gonna do now?

DAVID

Stop, wait.

David closes his eyes for a moment. Then he looks at David.

DAVID

Stop using the Spanish accent. Stop saying "eh?", and stop being so threatening. Have some variety.

GREG

Wow.

Greg looks stressed.

GREG

That's a lot of things for me to change at once. I don't think I can remember all of that.

DAVID

Okay... then, we'll do it one step at a time, okay?

GREG

Yeah.

DAVID

Try it again with no Spanish accent.

Greg nods. He starts speaking again, but with no knife and and an American accent he feels very stressed, confused, and out of place.

GREG

Wife... Come here... Do you think you can cheat on me, eh? Is that what you're trying to do? With my best friend... eh?

Greg looks unsure of his acting. David nods slowly.

DAVID

Okay... I think we might be making some progress.

Greg turns very cheerful.

GREG

Really?

DAVID

Yeah. Yeah. Now, what we're gonna do is try to not say, "eh?".

GREG

"Eh?"

DAVID

Yeah.

GREG

I say that?

DAVID

All the time.

GREG

Hmph. Okay.

Greg smiles and begins acting again, much, much worse than last time.

GREG

You. Come here. My wife... you've been cheating on me. With my best friend... You think you can just get away with that? Is that what you think?

David looks hopeless.

GREG

What's wrong?

DAVID

Nothing's wrong.

GREG

I thought you said I'm making progress.

DAVID

You are.

David sighs.

DAVID

One last time. And all you have to now is remove the threatening tone. And try to be creative.

Greg laughs defensively.

GREG

I'm not creative?

DAVID

No, you are. I just... want you to emphasize your creativity.

Greg has a confused look on his face.

GREG

Okay...

DAVID

Go.

Suddenly he becomes the worst actor in the history of the planet. He sounds like he's reading off a traffic sign.

GREG

Come here... wife... now you, please - listen to what I have to say... Isn't it true... that my best friend, who you met last year in a stable...

Greg looks at David again for a second.

DAVID

Creative.

GREG

Isn't it true, that you slept with him... on New Year's Eve. Tell me the truth... now.

Greg stops and looks at David.

GREG

What?

David puts his hands on his face for a second.

GREG

What?

DAVID

Show me how you did it as a Hispanic Thug again.

GREG

Why?

DAVID

So I can see how much progress you've made.

This is where, in a version, David meets Stan and Stephanie, brother and sister. Stan is a geek and Stephanie is hot. He thinks they bought his book when they didn't. He promised one of the people in his office a new car just for getting him a list of all the people who bought the book – he wants to meet some of these people and see if they have improved their lives after the book.

David: Hi, I'm conducting a door-to-door survey. Did you purchase a copy of Never Give Up?

(Stan shakes his head.)

Stan: Sorry.

(Stan is about to close the door when Stephanie, wearing a track suit, shouts behind him.)

Stephanie: Wait!

(David peers inside. Stephanie is extremely hot. David looks back and forth between Stephanie and Stan as she comes up.)

Stephanie: David Arland?

(David nods and smiles. Stephanie's face lights up.)

Stephanie: What are you doing? Do you want to come inside?

Stan: No, he doesn't. He's just conducting a survey.

David: Actually –

(David looks at Stan and then back to Stephanie)

David: I've been driving around people's houses surveying all morning, and I didn't even eat breakfast.

Stephanie: Aw. You want me to get you something?

David: Well...

(David bobbles his head, pretending to think)

David: Okay. Thank you.

Stephanie: You're welcome.

(David walks in. Stan closes the door behind them. David sits down. He puts his car keys on the table.)

(David looks at her track suit and then at her ass. He says under his breath.)

David: Wow...

Stephanie: What would you like?

David: Ass.

(Stephanie looks at him. David pretends to cough very quickly)

David: Aspirin and some cereal. I have a headache.

Stephanie: Cereal? Really?

David: I don't understand why everyone doesn't eat cereal in the morning. It's full of calcium and fiber. It's especially good if you jog.

Stephanie: You jog?

David: Yeah.

Stephanie: Me too!

(David says playfully:)

David: No!

(Stephanie laughs she shows him the aspirin container)

David: Actually, I'm good. I just lost the headache.

(Stephanie nods and thinks of something to talk about as she makes the cereal)

Stephanie: I loved your book.

David: Thank you. Speaking of the book, would you like to participate in the survey?

Stephanie: Of course. How are the results so far?

(David lies quickly and efficiently.)

David: Absolutely phenomenal. Terrific.

(David picks up the board)

David: Okay. Listen. Are you listening carefully?

Stephanie: Yes.

David: On a scale of negative ten to positive ten –

Stephanie: Huh?

David: Just listen. On a scale of negative ten to positive ten, how would you rate how positively or negatively the book as impacted your life? Negative ten being you're contemplating suicide and positive ten being you've won the lottery three times consecutively.

Stephanie: Hmm...

(Stephanie gets David the cereal as she thinks.)

David: I'm good.

Stephanie: You don't want the cereal?

David: No thanks.

Stan: I'll take it.

(She gives the cereal to Stan)

David: Well, what's the verdict?

Stephanie: Seven.

(David nods. He's satisfied but wishes it were higher)

David: Can you offer a specific reason?

Stephanie: Let's see. The past month has been great. I bought a Lamborghini.

(David puts down the board)

David: You bought a Lamborghini?

Stephanie: Yes.

David: And you didn't have to sell your house and children for it?

Stephanie: No. And I don't have children.

David: That's good.

Stephanie: What? That I don't have children?

David: Definitely.

Stephanie: Why?

David: Because...

(David checks her out. Then he sees Stan watching and looks away.)

David: Never mind. So you said you got a Lamborghini. How is that not an automatic ten? My book has been a Godsend to you!

Stephanie: I have other cars like that, already.

David: Other cars like that? How rich are you?

Stephanie: I'm... pretty well off.

David: Then what are you doing living in this shit-hole?

(Stephanie looks away. Stan looks down.)

David: I'm sorry. Am I missing something? Is this not a shit-hole compared the mansion you should be living in?

Stephanie: It's not my... shithole, it's Stan's... shit-hole.

David: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Stan.

(David looks back at his list.)

David: Hey, so you're Stan. It says here on my list that you bought a copy of my book. You said you didn't buy it.

Stan: I didn't. You must have gotten the wrong list. I work in a bookstore that sells your book.

(David shouts to himself:)

David: Son of a bitch!

(David says under his breath:)

David: I give them a free car and they give me the wrong list.

Stephanie: Hey, can I ask you a question?

David: Anything.

Stephanie: How did you survey all those houses this morning if you had the wrong list the whole time?

(David thinks. He starts to panic.)

David: You want an autograph?

Stephanie: Really? I would love to have your autograph!

(Her smile fades)

Stephanie: Oh... But I don't have my book with me.

David: Don't worry. I always carry the pocket edition with me. To remind me to never give up. But I'll let you keep it. I can always get a new one.

(Stephanie smiles brightly. She likes David.)

David: You want to have dinner with me Friday night? And take off those clothes?

(Stephanie just looks at him, offended. In two seconds she went from liking him to hating him. David suddenly realizes what he just said.)

David: I mean the tracksuit. So you could wear something more elegant.

(Stephanie tries to ignore him)

David: I'm sorry for hitting on you.

(David pretends to laugh)

David: I don't know what's wrong with me. Sorry, Stan.

(David looks at Stephanie)

David: Are you two married? Divorced? You got the mansion and Stan got the shit-hole? I mean house. Sorry, Stan.

(Stan and Stephanie look at each other awkwardly and then at David)

Stephanie: Nooo... He's my brother.

David: Wow. I'm really sorry for hitting on your sister, Stan.

Stan: It's fine. Lots of guys hit on her.

David: So you're single?

(Stephanie just looks at him.)

Stephanie: Um...

David: I'm sorry. I'm hitting on you again. I'm sorry, Stan.

(Stan sighs.)

David: So you said you wanted my autograph.

(Stephanie looks unimpressed)

Stephanie: Sure.

David: "Sure"? Before it was "I would love to have your autograph"!

(Stephanie fake smiles)

David: I didn't catch your name.

Stephanie: Stephanie.

David: Stephanie. Steph and Stan! Brother and sister.

(David looks at the two of them for a second and then writes something down. He gives the book to her.)

David: Here you go, Stephanie.

Stephanie: Thanks.

(Stephanie looks around.)

Stephanie: I have to get going.

David: Sure, and... sorry for the comment I made. It was really inappropriate.

(Stephanie suddenly changes her mind about him. She nods and smiles genuinely.)

Stephanie: Okay. Well, apology accepted. Bye. Bye, Stan.

Stan: See ya.

(Stephanie leaves and closes the door. David goes to the window to stare at her ass.)

(Stephanie opens the pocket edition on her way to the car and sees there's no autograph. Just a number, "555-4689" and "love that ass". She drops her jaw, and turns furiously to see David staring at her from the window. David smiles. She throws the book directly at the window. David turns, surprised.)

David: Did she play baseball in high school?

Stan: Probably. She's always been really athletic.

David: Have you?

(Stan laughs. He pats his beer belly.)

David: I'm just asking.

Stan: It's okay. Family members often have less in common than complete strangers.

David: Hmph. Did you just come up with that?

Stan: No, it's true.

David: That's not what I meant...

(David changes the subject)

David: So you sell copies of my book?

Stan: Yep. Best-seller.

David: You didn't want to read it?

Stan: It crossed my mind, but I've worked at the bookstore for ten years.

David: I don't get it.

Stan: It's like...

David: Like what?

Stan: It's like how a showgirl choreographer loses interest in seeing naked women after doing his job every day for a year. At first it's amazing, paradise, but eventually, because they're everywhere, all the time, he gets tired of it.

(David looks amused.)

David: That's a great analogy. A guy who works at a bookstore. A showgirl choreographer. They're at about the same level.

Stan: You get the point. When I first got the job, all I did was read. After ten years, I'm really not that interested.

For the record, I'm a rich bastard who always brings a date home Friday night and I have yet to get tired of seeing naked women.

(Stan nods)

So what do you do in your spare time now?

I play FPS.

What is that?

(Stan laughs)

Stan: How old are you?

(David looks a little bit offended.)

David: Forty five. What is it?

Stan: First person shooter. It's a type of video game. Get with the program already.

(David nods)

David: Hmph.

(David suddenly bursts into laughter)

David: How old are you?! Jesus! You're like, what, forty and still playing video games?

Stan: Almost forty.

David: And you don't find that embarrassing?!

Stan: The only people who find it embarrassing are posers who are unwilling to try video games because they think they're too cool.

David: Are you calling me a poser?

Stan: Maybe. You wanna give it a shot? There's a controller over there by the TV.

(David shakes his head)

David: Nooo... no thanks. Sorry. Call me a poser, but no.

Stan: Poser.

(David bursts into laughter again.)

David: Well, it's been nice meeting you, Stan. It's been a real pleasure. Enjoy your...

FPS.

(David leaves laughing his ass off as he shuts the door. Stan just watches in embarrassment. Well at least he's gone. Stan continues eating his cereal. We just watch him eating for a long, boring thirty seconds. Suddenly the door knocks. Stan gets up. He opens it. It's David and he's still laughing his ass off.)

David: I'm sorry. I left my car keys on the table.

(David passes by Stan, who just stands there, humiliated, and picks up his car keys. He keeps laughing hysterically as he leaves. Stan shuts the door behind him.)

This is near the beginning – after the speech David makes about sparkl.com. He listens to his creative people tell him about new ideas. One of them Barbara, a fat woman, tells him about sparkling cup cakes – a business proposition. She puts a plate of cupcakes on the large table with several businesspeople around so they can see the cupcakes with edible glitter. I will mention the names of some office members.

David: Barbara.

Barbara: Yes, Mr. Arland?

David: Can I be honest with you for a second?

(Barbara nods.)

David: That's an awful idea. It would never work.

Barbara: But –

David: No – you – it's just – it just wouldn't work. It's ridiculous. Why would people pay to have their food sparkled.

(Barbara laughs)

Barbara: Why would people pay to have anything sparkled? That's what I'm wondering.

(Everyone in the room is ill at ease. They try to look away. David looks at her seriously.)

David: Excuse me?

Barbara: I'm sorry. I didn't mean that.

David: Barbara, do you like your job?

Barbara: Yes, sir, very much.

David: Good. You're fired.

Barbara: But –

David: Shut up.

(Barbara becomes quiet.)

David: Get out.

(Barbara starts to cry)

David: What are you crying about?

(She keeps crying)

David: How old are you? Stop crying.

(David becomes very uncomfortable. Everyone is looking at him.)

David: Could you at least leave and cry in the privacy of your own home?

(Barbara looks pathetic. She just stands still and looks down.)

David: Somebody take her out of here.

(David looks around. No one volunteers.)

David: Hello? Martin.

(Martin is a tall, strong looking guy)

Martin: Yes, sir?

David: Carry her out.

Martin: No offense, Barbara – but, sir – she is kind of heavy.

Barbara: Thanks a lot jackass!

David: Martin, do you like your job?

(Martin thinks for a moment.)

Martin: No. I hate it...

David: Really? Do want to be fired?

Martin: I thought you were going to fire me if I said I liked it.

David: No. It's not a trick question.

Martin: Then, sir, I love my job.

David: Good. Carry her out or you're fired.

Martin: I thought you said –

David: Shut up and do as you're told. Come on.

(Martin sighs. He gets up and walks over to Barbara. He doesn't know how to approach the situation. He moves his hands around, trying to think of ways to pick her up. Barbara puts her hands up.)

Barbara: I'm leaving.

David: Finally.

(Barbara starts to leave. Martin goes to sit down. But Barbara turns around to say a last word. David snaps for Martin to get back over there – he gets next to her but lets her speak)

Barbara: And you. And your book. Pretending to be someone who earned his success. I meant what I said. It blows my mind that anyone actually wants to use this... ridiculous website.

David: I thought you said you were leaving.

Barbara: You were just lucky.

(She turns and leaves)

(David laughs and sighs in relief. David signals to Martin:)

David: Pass me those cupcakes, will you? Make yourself useful for a change.

(Martin hands them to him and sits down. David starts to eat the cupcakes. In a moment he speaks with his mouth full:)

David: Can you believe that?

(He waits a moment then looks around at his employees)

David: The answer is no.

(All of them say “no” or “absolutely not, sir” or some variation of that)

(David swallows his bite to speak loudly and clearly)

David: So who here, by show of hands, thinks that the only reason I achieved my dreams was luck?

(No one raises his or her hand.)

David: Come on. There has to be someone.

(Still nothing. He waits.)

David: I won't fire you.

(Still nothing. The employees try not to attract attention, but peek at him once in a while)

David: I promise. You can sue me if I do. Okay, how about not pure luck but at least partial luck?

(After a moment, one hand goes up)

(David begins eating again and speaks with his mouth full again)

David: Dustin. I appreciate your honesty.

(Dustin nods. Someone else raises his hand.)

David: Phil. Very good. Okay, we have two people.

(Then almost at once all of the other hands go up)

(David swallows involuntarily in surprise, clearing his mouth.)

David: All of you. Well. At least you're honest. But you're wrong. So can I hear some editorials? Come on, are there never any volunteers in here.

Joseph: The site is stupid.

(David nods and takes a new cupcake)

David: Okay. Constructive criticism. I can already see, by your powerful argument, that I am clearly wrong and you are right.

Phil: Why do people want us to sparkle their items when they could just do it themselves?

David: I'll tell you why, Phil. People are stupid and they'll fall for anything.

Herbert: Like your book?

(Everyone recognizes that was a low blow but Herbert himself. David stands up, outraged. He marches right up to Herbert's seat.)

David: Get up.

(Herbert adjusts his tie and stands up.)

Herbert: It's about time we told you what we really think.

David: Who's we?

Herbert: Everyone!

(All of the others protest in their own way at once)

Martin: I have no idea what he's talking about, sir.

David: Shut up and get me another cupcake.

Martin: Yes, sir.

(Martin does as he's told)

David: What is this great truth that you've been hiding from me for so long?

(Herbert shakes his head.)

Herbert: We think the book is a scam.

(David turns to the rest)

David: Really?

(David turns back to Herbert)

David: I believe everything I wrote in that book.

Herbert: But you're wrong. You completely missed the reason this company succeeded.
(David comes up closer to Herbert)
David: And what is the reason?
Herbert: I have no idea! No one knows! I baffles me and everyone else in this room! This company should've been dead broke its first week.
David: And so you assume it was all...
(David holds up his hand, and waves it around for an instant, signaling in his own mind "fairyland".)
David: ...because of luck.
Herbet: What else could it be?
(David laughs)
David: What else could it be?! Determination, confidence, commitment, motivation, hard fuck work!
(David looks around the room frantically)
David: Do you know how many nights I spent spraying painting tricycles so you people could have jobs?!
(David looks around in all seriousness. Dustin can't help but laugh.)
David: What are you laughing at?
Dustin: It's just a funny image.
David: You're fired.
Dustin: But sir –
David: Fuck you! Get out.
(Dustin leaves, ashamed. The door shuts. The room is extremely quiet and tense. David looks around)
David: Who else likes their job? Huh?
(David then leaves and shuts the door behind him. Everyone looks at each other. Suddenly they all burst in laughter)
Lauren: Tricycles!
Joseph: All night!
(Herbert imitates David and pounds his fist on the table)
Herbert: Do you have any idea how many nights I spent? Huh?! Spray painting tricycles?! Do you have any idea?!
(They all make fun of him at the same time and imitate his frustration. Travis even jumps up on the table and does a battle roar.)
Travis: I spray-painted tricycles!!
(Travis imitates king-kong, pounding his chest and screaming like a monkey)
(Suddenly David opens the door and the room becomes quiet. Travis just stands there on the desk. There is no excuse in the world he can use.)
David: By the way you're fired.
Herbert: Who?
David: All of you.
(David leaves the room and closes the door. Everyone becomes depressed. Travis begins his king-kong impression again)
Lauren: Shut up.
Joseph: It's not funny anymore.
(Travis looks upset by that comments.)
(In a while, David gets back in. He looks down and sighs. Then he looks up.)
David: Okay, planet of the apes. Get down from there.
(Travis gets down)

Travis: It's king-kong...

David: By the way, whoever wants to keep his job has to get in a line and kiss my feet.

Herbert: Are you serious?

David: Yes, you first.

(Herbert exhales angrily. All of them form a line. Everyone fights for last. Herbert goes to the front and kneels down and kisses one of David's feet.)

David: No. More than that.

(Herbert holds the kiss. David shakes his foot.)

David: Get off of me. Don't make-out with it. Now the other foot.

(Herbert kisses the other foot. All of them in the line eventually proceed to kiss David's feet. When the last person finishes they all stand there waiting for David to say something.)

Herbert: Well. Do we get our jobs back?

David: No.

(David leaves.)

(In a moment David comes back into the room.)

David: Whoever wants to keep his job has to give me a blow job.

(David looks around the room and begins to unbuckle his belt.)

David: I'm serious. Anyone. No?

(David frowns and fixes his belt.)

David: It was worth a shot.

(David leaves.)

Travis: I was gonna do it.

(Everyone looks at Travis)

David tries FPS (First Person Shooter, a video game) with Stan near the end of the story. He loses all understanding of what success means and he wants to see how Stan doesn't care. David has a blast playing. Stan tells him the "kill-to-death" ratio line.

David, wakes up after playing games all night. He just does nothing and blows on the product tag on the end of the blanket to pass the time. He sees Stan standing next to the bathroom, looking forward.

David: What are you doing?

Looks at David and turns his head back forward.

Stan: I have PSS.

David: What's PSS? Is that anything like FPS?

Stan: No, it's post-shit syndrome. Everyone gets it once in a while. It's where after going to the bathroom if you move a muscle you feel extremely uncomfortable.

David nods. A moment passes.

David: Can I tell you something without you freaking out?

Stan: Of course.

David: I'm in love with your sister.

Stan: You son of a bitch!

David raises his hands to cover his head. After a moment, he puts them down nervously.

David: Are you going to hit me?

Stan: Yes! But not yet. That would feel too uncomfortable. I won't move for at least another thirty seconds.

David suddenly decides to get up and run out of the house.

More Advice in Q & A session:

Dr. Arland, what do you believe is the key to success?

Patience. You need to have an extreme amount of patience. Keep doing what you're doing and if you're lucky something will happen to you one day in the future.

In the early stages of the story, David is trying to find out how he can help people realize their dreams, but fails to make an actual impact. One of the people is this guy. I use the recurring joke about "that's just a funny image" from the business meeting script version.

Guy who used to write for infomercials, but is now unemployed, can't get anyone to go on a date with him.

Why do you think you get rejected all the time?

I have no idea. Every time it starts out so well. I always try to start with a conversation. I never immediately ask the girl out.

Right. That's a good idea.

Yeah. And then by the time I ask her out she wants to kill me.

Wow. Hmm.

They go to a fancy restaurant. David tells John that's a great place to meet women. John asks how – they're always with someone, boyfriend, family. David says that's not true. Beautiful girls always get stood up in fancy restaurants. She's probably going out with some rich asshole who doesn't care at all about her. Doesn't think of her as anything more than a sex object.

John: How do you know?

David: Experience.

Now she's at her absolute most vulnerable moment. This is the perfect time to go for it.

(John sits down in the opposite seat. He sounds extremely confident, which is also extremely surprising.)

John: Hi.

(Gale is startled. She was in the middle of drinking her soap. She looks around for a second.)

Gale: Hi.

John: Are you tired of boyfriends who promise to spend time together with you but back off at the last second?

(Gale puts down her spoon, completely agreeing with him)

Gale: Yeah.

John: Frustrated with boyfriends who insist on showing off around their friends?

(Gale takes a napkin and wipes her mouth, thinking about what he said. She puts it down.)

Gale: Yeah... I am! I mean, how mature is that?

John: I'm John Rolland!

(Gale is taken aback by his intensity.)

Gale: I'm... Gale.

John: Do you want my number?

Gale: Um...

John: If you call within the next two days, I'll be your boyfriend.

Gale is intrigued.

Gale: Really?

John: But wait, there's more. I won't flirt with any other girls, I won't hesitate to share my feelings with you, and I won't scratch my crotch in public.

Gale: Wow.

John: But wait, there's more. I won't curse in front of you, I won't smell like cigarettes or alcohol, and I won't act too possessive.

Gale: How do I know you're not just saying that?

John: If you're not completely satisfied I'll refund your money.

Gale: What money?

John: Well, nothing's free. I charge a hundred dollars an hour.

Gale is repulsed.

Gale: Oh, my God!

John: I'll tell you what. I'll cut your price in half. A hundred dollar value, yours for only forty nine ninety nine.

Gale: Are you some kind of... male prostitute?!

John: I accept all major credit cards. Visa, Mastercard, American Express...

Gale: I will never go out with you!

John: Are you sure? Offer expires in ten seconds.

Gale just looks at him furiously for a moment. Then she slaps him as hard as she can.

(David gets up and sits in her seat. He begins eating her food.)

David: So... Why'd you quit your job?

John: They didn't pay me enough.

David: You're right. Whatever they paid you, you deserved twice as much.

John: Why would you say that?

(David laughs)

John: Something about our conversation?

David: That wasn't a conversation. That was an infomercial.

John: Hey, she was into me!

David: She was. Until you told her about the money back guarantee.

John: What's your point?

David: Women are not your customers. They're your catch. You don't tell a fish, will you please attach yourself to my hook? I promise I won't hurt you and I'll be really nice to you, unlike those other fishermen. No. The person who actually catches the fish is the one uses bait, has a sense of timing, and knows where to find them when they're most vulnerable. Then he can put it back in the sea so someone else can have the pleasure of fucking it.

John: Why would you talk to a fish?

David: It's an analogy. Have you heard of analogies?

(John sighs.)

John: I can't do this.

David: Yes you can. All you have to do learn how to talk to a woman.

(John looks nervous.)

David: Relax. We'll start with something simple. We'll make up a pick-up line.

John: A pick-up line?

David: Yeah. Make one up. Right now. Pretend I'm a woman.

(David waits for a while, then loses his patience)

David: Come on!

John: If you were a woman I wouldn't want to go out with you.

David: It doesn't matter what kind of woman I am.

John: You're just not my type.

David: We're pretending. We're using our imagination.

(John sighs. He thinks of something.)

John: No boyfriend? No problem. John Rolland here -

David: No – stop. That's a slogan, not a pick-up line. A pick-up line is something like this:

(David looks deep into John's eyes)

David: I'm a millionaire.

(John flails up his hands)

John: That's not a pick-up line!

David: Yes it is. I use it all the time and it always works.

John: Well either way I can't use that.

David: I don't want you to. Don't steal my ideas. Come up with your own.

(John shakes his head.)

John: You have it so easy. Just made all that money out of nowhere.

David: Out of nowhere? Do you have any idea how many nights I had to stay up spray painting tricycles?

(John tries to keep a serious face but bursts into laughter)

David: Stop laughing.

John: I'm sorry. It's just a... funny image.