

Working Late
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. THE NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY MORNING

MUSIC UP:

The deep Merlot-colored Mercedes sports car moves through the small village streets of a rich suburban neighborhood north of New York City. The sun is still fighting its way through the morning mist, while the trees show the new birth of spring.

The twists and turns of the driver show some knowledge of the way. Portia, a woman in her late forties with long hair, makes her way home. She plays her MUSIC loudly from the CD in the auto. She smiles and sings along, without a care in the world.

She pulls into the driveway of a modest, but well kept red brick structure. Gardeners are tending to small plants in the front of the house. She pulls to one side of the two-car garage, and jumps out of the car. She closes the door and inhales deeply.

PORTIA

(takes a deep breath)

Oh, the air, the wonderful air!

She looks around the wooden area of her property and looks at two gardeners.

PORTIA (CONT'D)

Julio, it looks marvelous. Juanita,
Hacer mi flores crecen a ser
fuerte!

She opens the back door of the car and takes out a brand new dress wrapped in the plastic of a designer shop. She walks toward the house.

INT. THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Portia looks at the mail spread out in a prescribed manner on the kitchen table. One of the bills INSERT: DAVID DELOREAN, MD with a White Plains, NY return address. She looks almost disinterested and moves down the hallway to a small bedroom to the left. She lays the new dress down on the bed gently. She backs away from it, as if moving away from the Queen, then walks back to it, removes the cover, lays it back down on the bed and steps back to admire it.

PORTIA
 Christian is going to LOVE IT!
 (Posing like a model)
 I'm too sexy for my man.

Back in the kitchen, she sees the blinking light on the phone. She walks over to it and presses the message button:

INSERT: PHONE MESSAGE

A deep masculine voice is heard.

CHRISTIAN
 Hey Baby, working late
 (beat)
 Ah, we got to get this SEC filing
 tomorrow.
 (Distracted)
 And ah, well, please don't wait up.
 I'll be home, really
 (pause)
 Ah, late and . . .

Portia stops the machine before the message ends. She walks over to the counter, opens the cupboard and takes out a glass. She moves gracefully to the fridge, and gets some ice in her glass. Then to a bottle on the counter. She pours a copious amount of vodka over the ice and walks out of the room with a look of emptiness.

EXT. LARGE OFFICE BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON

Portia walks through the large glass doors of an office building. The glass doors almost too heavy for her to open.

INT. HALLWAY IN THE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Portia, with a sense of purpose, looks at every door, until she comes to one: INSERT: DOCTOR DAVID DELOREAN. She opens the door and enters.

INT. DR. DELOREAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Portia sits on a sofa with excellent posture. She has her purse on her lap, she smiles softly and shakes her head in response to something that was just said. A sophisticated man in his late fifties, DR. DELOREAN, sits in a large chair. He is wearing a conservative gray suit, but his shirt collar is open, with no tie. He holds a small colored card, part of an organization system in a note book off to the side. He places the pink card in a field of pink and blue cards.

PORTIA

I do see what you mean. But Christian is not that way. He loves me so much, almost too much at times.

DELOREAN

What do you mean by that, Portia?

She looks away and then rolls her back to eye contact.

PORTIA

I mean, he would be the last man on earth to cheat on me.

DELOREAN

Cheat? We weren't talking about being unfaithful.

(Rubbing his chin)

We were talking about how much Christian, your husband, loves you.

(Pause)

You do feel worthy of his love, don't you?

She looks down at her hands. She turns her hands over, then back into position. She looks up and smiles.

PORTIA

Yes, we have the best marriage. He's the perfect man for me. Always there for me.

(Sarcastic laugh)

Well, when he doesn't have to work late.

Delorean looks stoic, but catches her edge.

DELOREAN

Does he work late often?

Portia reaches up and starts to massage her ear lobe in a reaction to the question, attempting to calm her outward behavior. Her words are measured.

PORTIA

Lately, he seems to be working late, yes.

(Very stern look)

He seems to be working late a lot, actually.

DELOREAN

And you resent this?

She looks away, drifts away and stares into the wall.

DELOREAN (CONT'D)
 Portia, Portia, we need to deal
 with these fears.
 (Thoughtfully)
 If he loves you, and you love him,
 as you say, he isn't going to leave
 you.
 (Still waiting)
 Now, is he?

Portia slowly turns her head back to the doctor, as a smile slowly moves across her face, like the sun recovering from a large cloud.

PORTIA
 You're right, he's not going to
 leave me. He'll never leave me.

EXT. BEDROOM BALCONY - SUNSET

Portia sits on a small chair smoking a cigarette. She looks at the sunset. The wireless house phone rings next to her. She leaps out of her skin to answer it, a smile lights up her face.

PORTIA
 Christian!
 (Pause)
 Oh, Alex, hi. I'm sorry I thought
 it was. . .

She puts her cigarette out in the ashtray in an obsessive way, making sure the fire is totally out of the thing.

PORTIA (CONT'D)
 No, no, I'm fine. You know the
 deal, he is working late.
 (Making a face)
 AGAIN!
 (Forced laugh)
 Tomorrow, well nothing. I mean,
 I'll have to ask Christian.
 (Beat)
 But sure, what are you cooking,
 your lasagna I hope!

She stands up with purpose.

PORTIA (CONT'D)
 Okay baby sister, about seven
 tomorrow.
 (MORE)

PORTIA (CONT'D)

I don't know if Chris will make it,
he's been working late all this
week.

(Beat)

Okay sweetie, see you tomorrow. I
love you. Bye, bye.

She clicks off the phone, looks into the sunset and goes into
the bedroom.

FADE OUT.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Portia, with coffee cup in hand, presses the phone message
machine.

INSERT: PHONE MESSAGE

CHRISTIAN

...and babe, if you could do me a
favor, and pickup my shoes at the
cobblers... that would save me some
time... only have so much time..
(strange laugh)

She stops the message and smiles with purpose. Walks toward
the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She looks down at a row of shoes all in perfect order. TIGHT
SHOT of the space in the row where the shoes belong.

INT. BAKERY - EARLY MORNING

Portia enters the bakery and looks at all the desserts. She's
like a little girl with her nose up against the glass cases.
She picks out 4 desserts and has them box them up. She almost
skips out of the store. Her smile is back.

INT. THE SHOEMAKER - MOMENTS LATER

She walks into the shop, a man in a dirty apron stands behind
the counter. She gives him a ticket. He looks at the ticket,
then pulls a pair of men's shoes and puts them on the
counter.

PORTIA

Oh, they look great.

SHOEMAKER

They are in good shape, miss.
There's really nothin' wrong with
them. I just shined them, again.

Portia looks miffed and confused.

PORTIA

Well, okay. How much for the work?

The shoemaker looks away and shakes his head.

SHOEMAKER

(sympathetic look)

No charge, no charge ma'am.

She nods and smiles, picks up the shoes and walks out of the shop.

INT. THE KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Portia, in a hip T-shirt and tight jeans, makes her way through the house to the kitchen. She takes the box from the bakery out of the fridge and puts the deserts on the table. She walks over to phone and presses the message button.

INERT: MESSAGE PLAYS

CHRISTIAN

Honey, have you seen my blue shirt?
I couldn't find it in the closet,

She hits the stop button and stamps her foot on the floor.

PORTIA

Damn you Christian. God Damn you.

She walks over to the counter, takes the top off the vodka bottle and takes a manly swig of vodka. She breathes out hard.

EXT. DRIVEWAY ALEX'S HOUSE - LATER

She drives her car up the driveway. A bit wobbly, she gets out of the car, closes the door, then opens it again. She leans into the car and gets the pastry box out of the front seat and walks toward the house.

INT. ALEX'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Portia walks into the house, the dogs are barking wildly. She steps back toward the door because of the dogs. A petit European looking woman, ALEX, comes to her rescue and hugs her taller sister.

ALEX

You smell like the Russian Tea Room, have you been drinking all day?

(To the dogs)

Easy guys, you know Portia, she's our sister, down boys.

(Reaching for the box)

You really didn't have to. . .

PORTIA

What are you talking about, it is the least I could do.

Standing in the doorway to the kitchen, a handsome young man in his late twenties, BERT, Alex's husband, laughs at the site of the two women and barking dogs.

BERT

Hi, Portia.

ALEX

Do something with these dogs, Herbert! Would you already?

Bert gives Portia a kiss on the cheek and leans down to calm the dogs. Alex grabs her sister's arm and pulls her through the kitchen to the den.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Porch, you won't believe what we got!

Alex drops the box of desserts on the counter and they find their way to the den.

PORTIA

What is this?

Portia and Alex stand in front of the TV, the glow of the screen on their faces from a nature show in full HD.

ALEX

Voila! A FLAT SCREEN DIGITAL TV, Sis!

PORTIA
Oh my God, that's so big!

ALEX
Yes, big as me!

Alex smiles at Portia.

ALEX (CONT'D)
No more of those fucking text
messaging teenagers talking during
the movie in the theater.
(Smiles)
This, is where we watch the movies.

They both smile and hug and laugh.

INT. DINNING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bert sets the table. Portia leans against the door frame,
with a large vodka and tonic in her hands. She looks at her
sister preparing the food in the kitchen, then back to Bert.

PORTIA
I'm sorry Christian has to work
late tonight.

BERT
If that's what you wanna call it.

PORTIA
What?

Alex moves toward the dinning room with a large salad bowl.

ALEX
Bert, I told you, be good tonight.

Bert looks up and dismisses the request with a very slight
shake of the head.

PORTIA
He's working late, you know,
(Slurring her words)
On some FCC thing.

BERT
You mean S-E-C?

Portia looks at her sister for some help.

ALEX

Let's not talk about work tonight.
Let's have a nice family dinner. I
would rather talk about politics or
religion.

Alex looks at her husband with a laser stare that says, back
off and be good.

BERT

Politics and religion seem to be
getting closer together these days.

PORTIA

Well, at least the church has less
corruption.

BERT

Not so fast Portia! Did you hear
about the priest in White Plains
who was taking money from the
church to support his gambling
habits.

PORTIA

On my, maybe that is why the Pope
had to come to New York.

BERT

I guess the real problem was that
the priest was a real loser.

Portia laughs a bit. Alex shakes her head and goes back to
the kitchen.

BERT (CONT'D)

Get it, "real loser?"

ALEX

Got it Bert, we got it, dear.

INT. DINNING ROOM - HOUR LATER

MUSIC IN BACKGROUND: SMOOTH JAZZ

They all sit with empty plates, glassy eyes and red wine
glasses. The candles burn brightly. We see each person's
eyes, then faces, then full bodies.

PORTIA

But as crazy as it might sound, I truly, and I mean, truly believe that history will show that he was one of our greatest Presidents, like ever.

Bert looks on in disbelief.

BERT

You must be totally bombed. BUSH? How could any intelligent, well-educated person, like you Portia, even imagine that he could be anything but the biggest embarrassment that we have ever endured in the White House?

Alex looks at her watch.

ALEX

How about dessert?

Portia smiles.

PORTIA

(very drunk)

Yes, in the box, from the bakery, the desserts, I hope you like them.

Bert smiles and shake his head.

EXT. DRIVEWAY ALEX'S HOUSE - LATER

Alex and Bert walk Portia to her car.

ALEX

You know, you are a little blitzed, maybe Bert should drive you home?

PORTIA

No, I'm home. I mean, I'm, you know. . .

BERT

Gimme your keys.

PORTIA

How will you get home?

ALEX

He can use the walk.

Bert takes the keys and Portia moves toward the car.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I gotta clean up. Porchie?

Portia turns around, and moves toward her sister.

PORTIA
Oh yeah, I'll see ya Al.

They both hug. Alex whispers in her ear.

ALEX
You okay?

PORTIA
Yeah, I'm fine. Christian will be home soon.

Portia walks toward the car. Bert starts the car and turns on the bright lights. Alex walks back toward the house, a worried look on her face.

EXT. PORTIA'S DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Bert gets out of the car and opens the passenger side of the car. Portia gets out and sort of falls into Bert's arms.

PORTIA
Whoa, I must be pretty hammered.

BERT
Yeah.

Bert hugs a little longer than normal. He plants a loving kiss on her cheek. She finally backs away, a bit surprised.

PORTIA
Hey there, what are you doing there, big boy?

Bert smiles.

BERT
You know, with all the things on your mind, I just want you to know...
(pause)
You know, if you need me, I am here for you.

PORTIA
I'm fine Bert. Go back to your
wife, my sister. She needs you more
than me. I will be fine.

Portia punches his shoulder and taps his cheek with her hand playfully. Bert hands her the keys.

BERT
You gonna be alright?

Turning toward the house.

PORTIA
Why does everybody keep asking me
if I am alright? What is with that?

She walks to the steps and turns, sees Bert leaving.

BERT
Good night, Portia. Sweet dreams.

Bert walks into the night.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The morning light comes into the room. Portia opens her eyes. She hears the shower running in the bathroom, the door is closed. She smiles and gets up and walks to the door.

PORTIA
Honey?
(Taps gently on the door)
Honey, I'll make you some coffee.

Portia moves down the hall to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She turns the coffee maker on, then reaches up to the cupboard and takes two coffee cups down, puts them next to the coffee maker. Then she slowly walks back to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She gets back into bed and pulls the covers over her. She smiles and then closes her eyes and drifts back to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - HOUR LATER

Portia wakes up, looks at the clock, realizes she has over slept. She gets out of bed and moves quickly to the bathroom, the door is open. Portia's POV: she looks around the bathroom, nothing has been touched, everything in the room is dry and unused. She turns with a look of confusion on her face. She walks down the hall to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She walks into the kitchen and moves slowly toward the counter. The two cups sit exactly where she placed them earlier. Both are still clean. The coffee pot is full of coffee. She walks to the phone message machine and presses play.

INSERT: PHONE MESSAGE

CHRISTIAN

...Oh, yeah, I just remembered, I took that shirt to the cleaners last week. I hate to do this to you, but if you have some time to run by the cleaners... Thanks so much babe, and I LOVE YOU! I really love you.

She whispers to herself.

PORTIA

What am I your maid?

Shakes her head.

INT. DR. DELOREAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Portia sits on the edge of the sofa, she bites her lip slightly, then takes a deep breath.

PORTIA

Why would he just leave?

DELOREAN
Maybe he didn't want to wake you
up.

PORTIA
I get this feeling, this really bad
feeling. . .

Portia looks down to the floor and falls into a trance.

DELOREAN
Portia, tell me about the feeling.

She slowly looks back up.

PORTIA
I think the working late, I think
he's trying to avoid me.
(Breathing more
forcefully)
Maybe there IS someone else? Maybe
this is his way of pushing me away.

Dr. Delorean makes a note and picks up the prescription pad.

DELOREAN
Have any of your other doctors ever
recommended any medication?

PORTIA
No, I really never thought I needed
anything like that.

DELOREAN
I'm going to put you on a mood
regulator. Nothing that powerful,
just something to help you with the
mood swings.

PORTIA
(spacing on something
else)
If that's what you think I need.
(beat)
But, do you think I am wrong?

DELOREAN
Wrong about what?

PORTIA
My suspicions.

DELOREAN

You are never wrong about what you feel. But the reason for these intense feelings of abandonment, probably have little to do with your husband's work schedule. I mean, he does love you, doesn't he?

Smiles now. Delorean writes.

PORTIA

Oh, yes, he loves me very much. He's my soul mate, doctor.

Delorean smiles, and hands Portia the prescription.

DELOREAN

Let me know how you feel after taking these for a week.

EXT. SIDE WALK - LATE AFTERNOON

Portia walks down the sidewalk, then into a dry cleaners.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - MOMENTS LATER

She stands there with a receipt and talks to an Asian man behind the counter in slightly louder tones attempting to make him understand better.

PORTIA

This is my husband's favorite shirt. He dropped this shirt off last week. I don't understand, you cannot find it?

MR. KIM

No, I am sorry. Number not in my computer. I have no record. Are you sure you drop here?

PORTIA

Yes, he said he was here last week.

MR. KIM

I don't have it.

PORTIA

Please, CALL ME, please as soon as you find it. UNDERSTAND?

Portia walks out. Mr. Kim mumbles something in her native tongue and shakes his head in disbelief.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - AFTERNOON

Portia walks past the vendor's tables smelling the fruit, squeezing the produce and buying some as she walks through the tables. She walks with a bounce in her step and talks with the vendors. She smiles and holds a piece of fruit to her nose.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF HER HOUSE - LATER

The car pulls into the driveway. And she gets out and carries her grocery bags to the house. As she gets up to the door, she looks around, realizes she left something in the car. She puts the packages down by the door and walks back to the car. She leans inside and gets a yellow plastic medicine container. She looks at the container, and walks back to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She puts the groceries down, and looks at the phone. She walks over slowly, as if not to trip a bomb, she slowly reaches for the message playback.

INSERT: FULL PHONE MESSAGE

CHRISTIAN

Hey Baby, working late

(beat)

Ah, we got to get this SEC filing tomorrow.

(Distracted)

And ah, well, please don't wait up. I'll be home, really

(pause)

Ah, late and ... babe, if you could do me a favor, and pickup my shoes at the cobblers... that would save me some time... only have so much time..

(strange laugh)

Honey, have you seen my blue shirt? I couldn't find it in the closet...

(beat)

Oh, yeah, I just remembered, I took that shirt to the cleaners last week.

(MORE)

CHRISTIAN (CONT'D)

I hate to do this to you, but if you have some time to run by the cleaners... Thanks so much babe, and I LOVE YOU! I really love you.

Portia hits stop violently, lifts the answering machine the rips it out of the wall, moves to the kitchen door, opens it and throws the machine down from the balcony. She has a manic look.

PORTIA

Damn you Christian!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Portia comes out of the bathroom, moisturizing her hands. She stops for a second, and looks over at the bed. She smiles. From her POV: we see someone sleeping under the covers on the other side of the bed. Lots of pillows all around the person. She tiptoes out of the room and toward the hallway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Portia closes the bedroom door and walks toward the living room. In the corner, standing next to a grand piano, an attractive younger woman, OLGA, in a maid's uniform lovingly dusts the piano. She looks up and smiles at Portia.

Portia stops rubbing her hands and brings them down across her chest in a protective manner. She steps toward the young worker with a apocalyptic look of anger across her face. Her words come out in short single spurts, intense but at a lower volume than her intensity.

PORTIA

I told -- you -- never -- to touch --
- the piano.

Olga is startled.

PORTIA (CONT'D)

Nobody -- touches -- the piano, but
my husband. Do you -- understand?

OLGA

Yes, ma'am
(moving away from the
piano)
(MORE)

OLGA (CONT'D)

I am so sorry. I will clean the
bedroom.

Portia holds her hand up like a stop sign.

PORTIA

No, not until Christian gets up.
Please let him sleep. Do you
understand?

OLGA

Yes.

Olga moves into the kitchen. Portia takes a deep breath,
grabs a light coat from the chair near the door, and looks
into the kitchen. Olga wipes the kitchen counter top.

PORTIA

I have a doctor's appointment. I
will be back in a couple of hours.

Olga nods her head. Portia goes out the door. After a minute
of wiping, Olga moves to the window and sees Portia's car
leaving the driveway.

Olga shakes her head and walks down the hallway. She opens
the bedroom door, and looks at the bed. She moves to the bed,
pulls the cover back and reveals under the covers, two large
king sized pillows. She proceeds to take the linens off the
bed and throw them on the floor.

OLGA

(in Russian)

I cannot believe this woman lives
in such denial. She should be happy
that she is alive.

INT. LARGE OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Portia walks into the building as she has hundreds of times
before. She gets on the elevator and takes it to the doctor's
floor. She walks toward his door, and sees an envelop on the
door with her name on it. She opens the envelop and reads the
letter. INSERT: letter.

DELOREAN (V.O.)

I am so sorry Portia. I tried to
call your house, but no one
answered. Your cell phone went to
voice mail. I have an emergency and
had to go into the city. I will
call you as soon as I get back.

(MORE)

DELOREAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Again, please accept my apologies,
I am sorry.

Portia looks a bit lost and walks toward the elevator. She blinks her eyes hard, like she has a shooting pain, and starts to breath heavily. She presses the button several times. The elevator doors open, she gets in.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Portia looks at the buttons. She presses nine, then presses eleven. Then, nine again. Then eleven again. Back and forth, she melts down.

INT. BEDROOM BALCONY - SUNSET

MUSIC UP: Mournful Cello

Portia smokes a cigarette and looks at the trees and the sunset. Like a flower wilting, she takes the last drag and puts the cigarette out. She takes the whole pack and throws it off the balcony. She moves back into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dimly lit. She lights a candle. Next to the bed, on a small table is a glass of water, a spoon, and the pill container from the pharmacy. She opens the container and takes a pill out. She cuts the pill with a small pair of scissors. She dumps the white powdery contents into the glass. She takes another pill and meticulously, cuts and pours the contents again. She continues until all the pills are in the glass of water. She takes a spoon and stirs up the potion. She smiles at the glass, and slowly brings it to her red lips. She drinks her concoction. The flame of the candle flickers against the ceiling. She finishes the rest and slowly gets into bed. She pulls the covers up to her chin. She smiles and closes her eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF HER HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

On the front porch, Olga stands with her arm folded across her body. A tear falls down her cheek, sadness and disbelief dominates her face.

In the driveway, a white van with large letters on the back STAY BACK 500 FEET. On the side of the van: COUNTY CORONER. Two men close the back door and get in the van and drive away. A short man in his early fifties, SGT. McMurray, stands at the bottom of the steps. He's wearing a business jacket under a ratty looking black raincoat. He has a police badge attached to a lanyard around his neck. He has a toothpick in his mouth.

After the van clears the driveway, a new brown station wagon pulls around a couple of cars parked in the street and into the driveway. Doctor Delorean gets out of the car and walks toward the man near the steps.

MCMURRAY
Are you Dr. Delorean?

DELOREAN
Yes, Sgt. McMurray?

They shake hands.

MCMURRAY
Yeah. Thanks for coming, doc.

DELOREAN
I came as soon as you called.

McMurray lowers his voice.

MCMURRAY
Looks like a suicide.
(nods at the porch)
Maid found her this morning. Did you see this coming?

DELOREAN
Well, no, I mean, she was having some issues. Separation anxiety, mostly, nothing major.

MCMURRAY
The medical examiner will have to tell us more, but your name was on the pills, that's why I called you.

DELOREAN
Did you talk to her husband?

MCMURRAY
Why would you say that Doc?

DELOREAN
I'm sorry.

MCMURRAY

You do know, her husband died on
nine-eleven?

Long pause. Delorean tries to grasp the words.

DELOREAN

I'm . . . Ah, what?

MCMURRAY

Yeah, what I could get from the
maid and her sister, it seems that
she acted like he was still alive.

(Beat)

In total denial, isn't that what
you guys call it?

Delorean grabs his head with both hands.

DELOREAN

How could I have missed that?

McMurray takes the toothpick out of his mouth.

MCMURRAY

Well, I guess we're in the same
business. We both ask people
questions and hope to get the
truth.

(Pause)

Sometimes we get the truth, and
sometimes we don't.

DELOREAN

How would I know?

MCMURRAY

Let's take a walk doc, start at the
beginning. . .

They walk to the side of the house. Olga turns slowly and
walks into the house.

MUSIC UP

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Olga walks to the piano, picks up a dust rag and begins to
dust the piano in a slow and loving way.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END