

# *TERRAPIN STATION*

Written by

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**FADE IN**

**EXT. LAKE MAGNOLIA 55+ COMMUNITY - FLORIDA - DAY**

Shaky camera work zooms in on a large banner that hangs over the slightly dilapidated entrance: "Welcome to Lake Magnolia's 20th Terrapin Rescue Block Party!".

The camera then pulls out, revealing a grid of 70's style mobile homes and the hood of a car right beneath the camera.

JASON LITTLE (V.O.)  
Here, in this fifty five and up  
community resides one of Florida's  
most rare and endangered terrapins.

The car moves forward, causing the camera to spin for a moment, inadvertently showing the freckled faced driver, SHAWN LITTLE (17), and the legs of our cameraman who seems to be videotaping through the sunroof.

**EXT. LAKE MAGNOLIA - TERRAPIN ENCLOSURE - DAY**

Again, shoddy camera work as the operator struggles to focus on what's behind the wire fence, but keeps focusing on the fence itself. You can kind of make out it's a turtle.

JASON (V.O.)  
This is a Ruby Eyed Diamondback the  
community named, Cherry Garcia.

Camera pulls back, showing the enclosure with a better view of it's terrapin inhabitant and Shawn's twin, JASON LITTLE.

Jason points at a hand painted sign, "TERRAPIN STATION, HOME OF CHERRY GARCIA", with several "keep your distance" type warnings underneath.

JASON (V.O.)  
To raise money for the care of this  
endangered terrapin, each year the  
residents of Magnolia Lake throw a  
fundraiser block party. This year,  
they have something extra to  
celebrate. It seems Cherry Garcia  
has found a mate.

Camera shot widens, to reveal a second terrapin.

JASON (V.O.)  
This is Jerry, who mysteriously  
showed up a few weeks ago.

**EXT. BLOCK PARTY - DAY**

Music plays in the background, all types of people mill about. There are game booths set up, food stands, craft tables. It's a festive atmosphere.

Facing the camera are ancient hippies, LEONARD and LIZA ROSENBERG (80's), in tye-dye Grateful Dead, Terrapin Station shirts and Birkenstocks that showcase their gnarly old toes.

LEONARD

We first started caring for Cherry twenty six years ago. Found her wandering in our yard...the same day Jerry Garcia left this earth.

Simultaneously, Leonard and Liza cross themselves and blow a kiss up to the heavens.

LEONARD

We believe she was sent by the legend himself, to help us mourn his loss.

LIZA

You see, we spent most of our lives following the Grateful Dead.

**INSERT FRAMED PHOTO**

A much younger Leonard and Liza (30's) at a Dead show, in tye-dye shirts and Birkenstocks, with much better looking feet.

**BACK TO SCENE**

LEONARD

We chose not to have a family. The Dead were our family. But Cherry, she's like the child we never had.

Leonard looks at Liza, who's expression saddens at his last words. Arm around her, he gives her a squeeze.

LEONARD

And now, with Jerry here, we might even get to be grandparents!

Liza musters a smile. Leonard is beaming.

**EXT. TERRAPIN ENCLOSURE - DAY**

Jason faces the camera. Behind him, Cherry and Jerry sun themselves on a log.

JASON

The difference between terrapins and turtles is terrapins are semi-aquatic. This enclosure was designed to satisfy Cherry's land and water needs. But who better to explain this than the architect himself, Buck from Buck's Landscaping.

The camera shot widens, showing BUCK (30), a super scrawny guy in cut off shorts, cowboy boots, and a flannel shirt with the sleeves cut off, standing next to Jason.

JASON

Now Buck, this is quite an impressive habitat you've constructed here. Can you explain the importance of the waterfall? Is it a filtration system?

Behind them, at the edge of the lake is a small, manmade waterfall.

BUCK

Mister Rosenberg said he wanted a waterfall, so I done it. Everything you see he asked for. Really, that turtle don't need any of it. Turtles are just as happy living in mud and **\*\*BLEEP\*\***.

Taken aback by Buck's cursing, Jason composes himself.

JASON

I see. But since terrapins live on both land and water, this must have been constructed with that in mind. And the fencing was designed to keep Cherry safe, correct?

BUCK

Mister Rosenberg wanted it fenced in. I'm telling ya, if a predator wants to get in, it'll find a way in. Birds, racoons, foxes. There's always a way to get in. My ex-wife tried to lock me out of my own **\*\*BLEEP\*\*** house once, but believe me, I got in. Got five years for it, but I sure as **\*\*BLEEP\*\*** got in.

Stunned by Buck's confession, Jason scans his notepad in search of an out, but it doesn't come quick enough.

BUCK

Now they want me to build a roof.  
That ain't gonna keep nothing out,  
but as long as they pay me, I'll  
keep building. They're nice enough  
folks. Misses Roseburg makes me  
special brownies sometimes, to help  
with my anger. Everybody likes the  
Rosenburgs'...except that **\*\*BLEEP\*\***  
Jim Bob Cooter.

With a scowl, Buck nods toward Jim Bob's mobile home, located on the other side of the terrapin enclosure.

**EXT. JIM BOB COOTER'S MOBILE HOME - PORCH - DAY**

Everything about this place screams white trash, especially JIM BOB COOTER (75). His stained white t-shirt barely covers his fat stomach that hangs over his shorts.

JIM BOB

That dang turtle never brung me  
nothing but grief. People come  
always coming around...gawking at  
the thing. It's a **\*\*BLEEP\*\*** turtle  
for cripes sake! I grew up round  
here. We ate turtle soup on the  
regular. Ate snakes too. Just  
talking about it makes me hungry.

Jim Bob yells toward the screen door.

JIM BOB

Hazelene! Bring those snacks out  
this way, will ya?

HAZELENE (O.S.)

Alright, already!

The screen door opens and out comes HAZELENE COOTER (70), tray of snacks in hand, followed by a cute BEAGLE. Hazelene is a bit rough looking but has kind eyes and a nice smile.

She looks right at the camera, places a platter down.

HAZELENE

I made special turtle salad  
sandwiches just for you boys.

Camera focuses on a pile of white bread sandwiches, then back up to a stone faced Hazelene and Jim Bob.

Suddenly they both start laughing.

HAZELENE

I'm just pullin' your leg. It's tuna salad. Turtle is just plain nasty. Like chewin' on rubber.

Jim Bob bites into his sandwich, talks with his mouth full.

JIM BOB

Like I was saying, it's just a dang turtle. I don't like them people walking in my yard. Some here everyday like those two spinsters, Ruth and Betsy. Not natural, two ladies who never been married and never had kids, living together.

HAZELENE

They're very nice, Jim Bob. They just never found the right man.

JIM BOB

Something ain't right. I seen their flags.

HAZELENE

I think they just like rainbows.

Hazelene looks directly at the camera.

HAZELENE

Really, they're very nice ladies.

JIM BOB

(mumbles)

It ain't natural.

**EXT. TERRAPIN ENCLOSURE - DUSK**

A beautiful sunset reflects off the lake.

Outside the enclosure, wearing bright nylon track suits, are BETSY and RUTH (70's). They unlock a hinged window and pour fruit and vegetables onto the feeding platform inside.

JASON (V.O.)

As we were completing our first round of interviews, we saw Betsy and Ruth at the enclosure. They didn't want to be interviewed, but let us know they feed Cherry and Jerry every night, to supplement what they get from the lake, like lettuce and strawberries.

Betsy closed the window and locks it back up. She and Ruth head back to their home, next to the Rosenburg's.

**EXT. BLOCK PARTY - DAY**

On a small stage, a BAND of four really old men, finishes playing. Leonard steps up and takes the microphone.

LEONARD  
Let's give it up for our house  
band, The Geriatrics!

The fifty or so people still in attendance, clap.

LEONARD  
Before we end this year's party, I  
want to thank you all for being  
part of such a special day. Your  
generous donations will go toward a  
roof for our terrapin enclosure,  
thanks to the master craftsmanship  
of Buck's Landscaping!

Leonard points to Buck, who appears to be pretty drunk.

BUCK  
You know it, Lenny!

LEONARD  
A roof will keep our newlywed  
couple safe while they work on  
repopulating their species!

Buck gives Leonard a drunken thumbs up, then looks over toward the camera. He mouths the word, "NO WAY", then laughs.

LEONARD  
And thanks to Jason and Shawn  
Little for documenting this event  
for their senior project. Good  
luck, fellas. I'm sure you'll...

Someone screams! The camera turns toward the direction of the terrapin enclosure where there's some kind of commotion.

Buck takes off running, the camera follows him over.

**EXT. TERRAPIN ENCLOSURE**

Several people watch as Jim Bob chases his beagle, Hubert, who has one of the terrapins in his mouth.

Buck joins the chase. Leonard arrives in a panic.

LEONARD

How did that damned mutt get in the enclosure?!

Liza puts her arm around Leonard's waist, tries to calm him.

LIZA

Looks like he dug his way in there. It'll be fine. I don't think he can hurt it. He's a small dog.

Meanwhile, Buck and Jim Bob continue the chase.

LEONARD

Don't you understand? They cannot be disturbed! It's a miracle Jerry showed up in the first place. But if their traumatized, they might not be able to conceive. I want Cherry to have children. She deserves to have a family. If she doesn't, she won't ever be truly happy. I can't let that happen to her. I just can't bear for her to be unhappy. I just...

Liza reaches up, turns Leonard's face to hers.

LIZA

She'll be fine, Lenny. And she'll be happy. Just as I am. I wouldn't change a thing.

Leonard looks at Liza, his eyes melt into hers. They kiss.

BUCK (O.C.)

Got him!!

Camera swings around to Buck, on the ground holding the terrapin. Jim Bob tries to catch his breath while Hazelene holds back Hubert, who obviously wants it back.

Leonard rushes over, grabs the terrapin. He looks at the underside of it's shell.

LEONARD

Oh my. It's Cherry. Poor sweet thing. What an ordeal you've had.

JASON (O.C.)

How can you tell it's Cherry?



LEONARD

Her underside is flat. A male's is concave, so he doesn't slide off while mating.

Leonard shows the underside to the camera.

LIZA

I don't think that's Cherry, hon.

LEONARD

Of course it is.

LIZA

Look at her shell. The markings are different, and not as bright. That's not Cherry.

Confused, Leonard looks inside the enclosure. His eyes widen.

LEONARD

You're right. My God. Jerry is a female.

JIM BOB

I don't understand. How will they mate then? Like this?

He holds up his hands, makes a V with his fingers (like scissors), then bumps them together.

Jim Bob laughs. No one else does.

Disgusted, Hazelene picks up Hubert and heads home. Leonard and Liza return Jerry to the enclosure. Buck helps.

Everyone else disperses, leaving Jim Bob standing alone.

JIM BOB

(mumbles)

It ain't natural.

**SUPER: ONE WEEK LATER**

**EXT. TERRAPIN ENCLOSURE - DAY**

The enclosure now has a new roof and it's adorned with several rainbow flags.

A new sign hangs, "TERRAPIN STATION, HOME OF CHERRY AND GERALDINE GARCIA".

**FADE OUT.**