

NEXT

Written by Anonymous
for the April 2017 OWC

Copyright © 2017 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author

FADE IN:

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

MICHAEL, mid fifties, sits at his desk facing the picture window of his home office.

Moonlight illuminates the treetops in the back yard.

The lights of homes across the valley outline the horizon in the distance.

Michael smiles. He pours a bit more Scotch into his glass and turns his attention back to his laptop.

A CREAKING of the floorboards.

A look of concern crosses Michael's face.

Michael swivels his chair to look toward the door, behind him.

A man stands in the doorway. This is MIKE. He is the spitting image of Michael but fifteen, possibly twenty years younger.

MIKE

Hello Michael.

MICHAEL

What the hell? Who the --

MIKE

How are you?

MICHAEL

How am . . . ? What do you want?
Please, just take whatever --

MIKE

I'm not here to rob you. Or to hurt
you.

Michael picks up his cell phone.

MICHAEL

I'm calling the police.

MIKE

There really won't be time for
that.

Michael freezes.

MICHAEL

You're not here to hurt me but
there won't be time?

Mike motions toward the window.

MIKE

Look outside.

Michael hesitates.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'll stay right here.

Michael swivels back toward the window.

Far over the horizon there is a red-orange flash. A burst. It brightens the sky like a neon light. Lasting less than a second.

MICHAEL

What the hell?

MIKE

There is something I need you to understand. But first I need to explain.

MICHAEL

(Yelling)

Janet? JANET! GET THE GUN!

MIKE

Michael, Janet has been dead for almost two years.

MICHAEL

My son will be --

MIKE

Seth lives three hours from here. Emily is in Seattle. You're alone here.

MICHAEL

Who the hell are you? How do you know?

MIKE

I'm sort of your twin.

MICHAEL

My twin? You're a little young to be my twin.

MIKE
Not a biological twin.

MICHAEL
What? A primordial twin?

MIKE
Not sure that makes any sense. More
like a parallel universe twin.

MICHAEL
A parallel? And that makes sense?

The lights in the house flicker.

MIKE
Do you remember when you were
young? Your bicycle accident?

Michael looks around the room.

MICHAEL
What was that?

MIKE
There isn't time, Michael. Do you
remember?

MICHAEL
My bike? I broke my wrist and my
collar bone.

MIKE
No, before that.

MICHAEL
What? Get the hell out of my house!

Another blue flash brightens the sky outside. A second and
it's gone.

MIKE
Broadview Street. You were ten.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

A TEN YEAR OLD MICHAEL pedals hard down a tree-lined street
in an older neighborhood.

He'd riding a gold bike with butterfly handlebars and a
banana seat.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
My stingray?

MIKE (V.O.)
You tried to beat the car at the
corner.

Ten year old Michael cuts a hard right turn at the
intersection of the two narrow streets.

Behind him a car enters the intersection.

Ten year old Michael loses control of the bike and slides
sideways, laying the bike down, sliding on the pavement.

Car tires SQUEAL loudly.

Ten year old Michael curls into a ball on the concrete.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
He stopped. He didn't hit me.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

MIKE
That's not quite how it happened.

Michael glares at Mike.

MICHAEL
You're out of your mind.

MIKE
The bumper shattered your spine.
The tire went over your head.

Michael stands, enraged.

MICHAEL
Get out! Get the hell out.

MIKE
You don't have to accept it. But if
you could, if you could, it would
make the next step easier.

Michael takes a couple of steps toward Mike.

MICHAEL
You're not going to hurt me? Then
back off. Back off!

Mikes backs into the hallway.

Michael walks quickly out of the office, across the hall and immediately into the bedroom on the other side of the hall.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Mike steps to the bedroom door. A dim light comes from the master bathroom.

The bedroom is a bit larger than the office. The same style of picture window overlooks the back yard.

Michael moves quickly around the bed to the night stand.

Michael opens the drawer of the night stand. He pulls out a small Snub-Nose handgun.

MIKE

That really won't make any
difference.

JANET, in her bathrobe, appears in the doorway of the bathroom. She is in her early fifties, petite, shoulder-length hair.

MICHAEL

Janet!

JANET

Michael, listen --

MICHAEL

Janet?

Michael wheels the gun toward Mike.

JANET

Michael, Please listen to him.

MICHAEL

What the hell is this? Sick prank!

He pulls the trigger. BAM! The muzzle flash cracks through the room.

MIKE

I thought she could help to
explain.

Michael pulls the trigger again. BAM! And again. BAM.

MIKE (CONT'D)
That's really not necessary.

A bright red-orange light illuminates the trees outside. The light is brighter, lasting longer than before.

MICHAEL
That's not my wife.

Michael looks back at the bathroom door.

The woman is gone.

MIKE
Actually, it was.

MICHAEL
Is she dead? Is she?

MIKE
She just . . . moved.

MICHAEL
You're insane! She's --

Michael points outside.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
What the hell is going on?

MIKE
You know what's going on.

MICHAEL
I guess it doesn't matter because I'm dead. I've been dead for forty-eight years.

MIKE
It's just, ten year old Michael changed. He moved.

MICHAEL
I moved? And then I had children? I had a wife!

MIKE
Yes.

A steady, strong WIND blows through the trees outside. It continues.

MICHAEL

Yes? Just, yes? Make some God damn sense.

MIKE

We move. From parallel to parallel.

MICHAEL

So I haven't been dead?

MIKE

You moved from that other parallel when you were ten.

MICHAEL

So I am alive in this parallel? Are you dead?

MIKE

It really doesn't matter.

MICHAEL

It doesn't matter?

Michael puts the barrel of the gun to his temple.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Does this matter?

MIKE

It, it might make things more difficult.

MICHAEL

More difficult?

MIKE

We have to move now.

Michael lowers the gun.

MICHAEL

Move? Where? Why? Aren't we going to die right here?

MIKE

It's a change.

MICHAEL

A change? A fucking change! Like, no big deal?

MIKE

No. This is a very big deal.

MICHAEL

So you're not dead? You're twenty years younger than me but you know I died twenty-eight years before you were born?

MIKE

My time line runs a bit different from yours.

MICHAEL

Oh? Really? And what the hell is Janet's time line?

MIKE

She had to move.

MICHAEL

Move?

MIKE

Yes. Seth has moved.

MICHAEL

Seth?

MIKE

Yes. The first flash you saw. That's when Seth moved.

Michael turns. He stares out the window.

MICHAEL

The flash was Seth.

MIKE

No. You know what the flash was.

MICHAEL

I know.

MIKE

This entire parallel is going to cease. It was a mistake.

The WIND outside slowly dies down.

MICHAEL

A mistake? This? This entire universe is just going to cease? Just, fucking, poof?

Michael raises the gun to his temple again.

MIKE

Please don't. It would be a mistake.

MICHAEL

Like the self destruction.

MIKE

Yes.

MICHAEL

So there are rules.

MIKE

Of course there are.

Michael drops the gun.

MICHAEL

Seth moved. And Emily?

MIKE

Yes.

MICHAEL

And Janet?

MIKE

Yes.

MICHAEL

When I was hit by the car, I moved then?

MIKE

Yes.

MICHAEL

But I didn't know it.

MIKE

No.

MICHAEL

Will I know it this time?

MIKE

Yes. That's why I came here. To explain. You are going to know. This time.

MICHAEL

Will I see Janet? Or the kids?

MIKE
It's possible.

MICHAEL
It's possible? How soon?

MIKE
In a few seconds.

Michael, weakened, defeated, gazes out the window.
He smirks.

MICHAEL
Will I be alive then?

MIKE
Are you dead now?

MICHAEL
I have no idea.

MIKE
You'll understand. Soon enough.

MICHAEL
I guess . . . we just watch?

Michael turns to face out the window.
Mike walks over and stands next to him.
A bright red-orange flash.
The light becomes brighter and brighter.
The world turns blinding white.

FADE OUT.