

THE FILMMAKER

by

Daniel J. Toemta

Revision January 20, 2007

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

J.P., a man in his forties, walks in and steps up to the front desk.

The lobby is fairly busy, with a few people in suits and normal clothes walking in and out.

CAROLINE SUMMIT, a beautiful woman in her early twenties, blonde and wearing pink, sits behind the desk talking on a headset.

CAROLINE
I'm sorry, Mr. Manero but Mr. Shear
is out on business at the moment.

J.P. waits patiently and politely.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
If you'd like, you can leave your
number and I will pass it on to his
secretary, or I can give you his
secretary's number and you can call
him back later yourself?

J.P. looks at Caroline's name tag.

CAROLINE
No, I'm sorry, I'm afraid I can't
give you his cellphone number.

J.P. looks around the lobby.

CAROLINE
Look, sir, I'm not being difficult
with you, I just can't give you
his...
(pause)
Sir?

She looks up to J.P.

CAROLINE
He hung up.

She smiles and acts like she's sixteen and flirting with the teacher.

J.P.
Some people are rude like that.

J.P. smiles, friendly, back at her.

J.P.
No use thinking about it.

CAROLINE
I'm over it.

She giggles.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Don't think he'll call back either,
he sounded pissed.

J.P.
What did he want?

CAROLINE
He wanted to talk to Mr. Shear,
said it was urgent. But I think he
just said that to get through
faster.

J.P.
The nerve of some people.

She smiles again.

CAROLINE
Yeah, I gotta deal with his type
every day. Didn't matter what he
said either way 'cause Mr. Shear
had to step out about an hour ago.

J.P.
It's a damn crime.

CAROLINE
Excuse me?

J.P.
You working here in a place like
this. It's a damn crime. You should
be in movies.

Caroline blushes.

J.P.
I noticed you the minute I walked
in here. I thought you looked so much
like Gene Tierney. Anyone ever tell
you that?

She smiles.

CAROLINE
No.
(blushes)
What can I do for you?

J.P.
I'm here to see Mr. Shear.

CAROLINE
Mr. Shear is out on business. He
should be back soon if you want to
wait in his office.

J.P.

Sure, that's no problem.

CAROLINE

It's on the fifth floor. Just take
the elevator over there,
(points towards the
elevators)
get off when the counter hits five.

J.P. is amused.

J.P.

Thanks.

CAROLINE

(smiling)
You're welcome.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

The elevator door opens and J.P. steps out. He looks around and sees a few people walking back and forth. He looks towards a couch where two men in suits are sitting having a conversation. They're both drinking coffee

J.P. steps over to a water cooler, pours himself a cup and leans his back against the wall, listening in on the conversation.

The two men are named WALTER, in his thirties, and BILL, in his twenties.

WALTER

So, I'm sitting there trying to enjoy this movie my sister got me for my birthday, right? She's been bugging me for ages to watch it since I didn't watch it when I got it. Whenever I get DVD's for presents, I just put it on a shelf and I'll probably never watch it but I made the dumb mistake of telling my sister that, right?

BILL

Right, yeah.

WALTER

And so, anyway, she keeps asking me, keeps asking me. "Have you seen it yet? Have you seen it yet? It's a great film. One of Wilder's finest. I wanna talk to you about this movie. Have you seen it yet?" Just driving me fucking insane, right?

BILL

What movie is it?

WALTER

I dunno, some black and white classic or something. "Stag" I think, I dunno, anyway, I finally say that I'll watch it 'cause I'm sick of hearing it. So I get off work early one day, I have the house for myself for a few hours. My son is with his lady friend and my wife is still at work. So I sit down and watch it and I'm actually starting to enjoy it when I get a call from Josh's school.

Bill laughs.

BILL

Man, what he do?

WALTER

I hear the voice of this stuck up old woman saying, "Sir, today your seventeen year old son broke into the auditorium and exchanged the tapes scheduled for viewing by the sixth graders this morning with a pornographic film."

BILL

You're kidding!

WALTER

(laughing)

I'm serious, man, I'm dead serious. That's what she said. Apparently he thought that the kids needed to see it for educational purposes.

BILL

Shit, man what a crazy kid.

WALTER

Yeah, the only reason I didn't ground him is because I couldn't stop laughing after I heard it.

They both laugh. That last remark also makes J.P. smile. He throws the cup in the garbage and walks over to them.

J.P.

Hey, could any of you tell me where Mr. Shear's office is?

BILL

Yeah, it's the last door down that hall.

Bill points to a hallway.

J.P.
Appreciate it.

J.P. turns around and walks down the hall.

WALTER (O.S)
So, anyway, my wife comes home,
right? And I still can't stop...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

TIFFANY LELAND, a beautiful woman in her early twenties, sits down behind her desk, fixing her makeup with a compact.

The office is pretty big for just a secretary, with many big movie posters (all by the same producer, Alex Shear) in large glass frames all around the room with titles such as "The Stabbing", "Frank Miller's Batman: The Dark Knight Returns", "Stephen King's The Long Walk" and "Grand Theft Auto". The door to the inner office is closed.

J.P. walks in. Tiffany looks up from her compact. J.P. smiles genuinely when he sees how beautiful she is. He closes the door.

J.P.
Good afternoon.

TIFFANY
What's so good about it?

She closes the compact and puts it down on her desk. She doesn't smile back at him.

J.P.
Whatever you like. The sun, the sky,
the hot weather.
(pause)
The fact that you're the most
beautiful woman I've seen all day?

She cracks a smile.

TIFFANY
Thank you. What can I do for you?

J.P.
I'm here to see Mr. Shear.

TIFFANY
He's out on business at the moment.

J.P.
I know, Miss. Tierney told me
downstairs.

TIFFANY
Do you have an appointment?

J.P.

I was hoping I wouldn't need one, me and Alex are old friends from college. We haven't seen each other since then and I'm only in town for a couple of days. I thought I'd come down here and surprise him.

TIFFANY

I'm sure that's fine. You can wait here till he comes back, it won't be long. Could I get you anything while you wait?

J.P.

A coffee, thanks, I really appreciate it. I'm sure Alex will be thrilled to see me again, we used to be really good friends in college.

TIFFANY

Oh, really?

She gets up and heads for the door.

TIFFANY

Any good stories?

J.P.

I might have a few.
(sly)
I'll tell you when you get back.

TIFFANY

(seductively)
Can't wait.

She opens the door.

TIFFANY

I'll be back in a moment.

J.P. smiles back at her.

J.P.

Lots of sugar.

TIFFANY

Certainly.

She exits and closes the door. J.P. looks at his watch.

He quickly walks over to the door leading to the main office. He tries the door but it's locked. He walks over to Tiffany's desk, crouches down and goes through all the drawers. He finds several movie scripts with titles such as "A Boy Named Sue", "Cutting Corners", "Bases Loaded" and "Children of The Dead", but he doesn't appear to find what he's looking for. He puts it all back.

J.P. gets up and calmly walks over to a cabinet. He opens it and goes through everything in there. Mostly just papers and letters. He looks at his watch. He puts everything back together the way it was, closes the cabinet and sits himself down in a chair in front of the secretary's desk.

At that precise moment Tiffany walks in with a cup of coffee in her hands. She hands it to J.P..

TIFFANY

Here you go, Mr. ... You know, you never told me your name.

She sits down behind her desk.

J.P.

You never asked. Never give out your name to people who didn't ask for it. In my family that was considered rude.

TIFFANY

Interesting. Where are you from?

J.P.

Northern Europe. I learned most of my English from movies actually.

TIFFANY

You've been to northern Europe?

J.P. stirs his coffee.

J.P.

I grew up there. I hardly ever go home anymore 'cause my wife's afraid of flying.

TIFFANY

That's a shame.

J.P.

Yeah. She's tried to overcome it, but nothing helps. Not even the tip from Die Hard helped her.

TIFFANY

So you live here now?

J.P.

Yeah, I came here to go to college and then I met my wife in my third year and just never left.

TIFFANY

I always wanted to go there. To Europe, I mean. But when I finally did, two years ago, I didn't like it much.

J.P.

Why? Where'd you go, by the way?

J.P. takes a sip of his coffee.

TIFFANY

Denmark actually. My father has some friends there. I didn't like it much though because I felt like I couldn't relate to anyone there. I felt totally alone in a way. It was scary, it was like sitting in a corner at a party not knowing anyone there and being to afraid to talk to anyone.

J.P.

We've all been in that situation before.

TIFFANY

I suppose. I called my grandpa in Maine every night just so that I had someone to talk to. He's such a great man, he's the only person in the world who's really understood me.

J.P.

What about your boyfriend?

TIFFANY

Who said I had one?

J.P.

The way you behave. I can always tell. I'm right aren't I?

TIFFANY

I guess. No, he'll never understand me. No one ever will.

(pause)

But there's no need to talk about that. You'll get to know the wrong side of me.

J.P.

What side do you want me to see?

TIFFANY

The funny one! I love to make people laugh. I used to perform these Monty Python skits, which I had unwillingly memorized from watching to much of it, to my grandpa. I loved doing that. I remember this one time, I came home and I hear grandpa upstairs listening to "Man In Black" by Johnny Cash, and I knew he was

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
depressed because he always
listens to his records when he's
down. I cheered him up by
performing all the skits I knew for
him that day. It was one of the
best days of my childhood.

She smiles.

J.P.
It sounds wonderful.

TIFFANY
Yeah, those were The Golden Days.
Anyway, I'm rambling on, I'm sorry.
I always tend to do that.

J.P.
I don't mind at all, in fact, I'd
like to see one of those skits.

J.P. smiles.

TIFFANY
What are you kidding? I haven't
done that in years. Besides, it's
way too embarrassing.

J.P.
Now, don't be embarrassed.

Tiffany smiles.

TIFFANY
Tell you what, you tell me your
name and I'll make an attempt.

J.P.
Are you asking?

TIFFANY
No.

J.P.
Why not, all you have to do is ask.

TIFFANY
I wanna see if you're able to
contradict yourself. You said that
you don't give out your name unless
people ask, I wanna see if you
really believe in that. Just tell
me your name and I'll do the skit
for you, honest. But I'm not
asking. It's entirely up to you if
you want to or not. It's your
choice.

J.P. smiles.

J.P.
That's not fair.

Tiffany laughs.

TIFFANY
I know.

The door leading to the hall opens. J.P. sits in a chair with his back turned to the door.

The man who walked in is ALEX SHEAR, in his fifties, dressed in an expensive black suit and a coat.

SHEAR
Hey, Tiff.

TIFFANY
Hey, Mr. Shear.

He takes off his coat and hangs it on a coat hook by the door.

SHEAR
I'm running a little late today,
would you mind getting my wife on
the line?

TIFFANY
Right away, Mr. Shear.

SHEAR
Were you laughing just now?

TIFFANY
(smiling)
Yeah, there's someone here to see
you.

SHEAR
Oh?

Mr. Shear walks up to the side of Tiffany's desk and sees J.P. sitting in the chair. He puts on his business smile.

SHEAR
Hi, what can I do for you?

J.P. remains silent. His face has turned completely serious ever since Shear walked into the room. He gets up.

J.P.
I'll only ask you this once.

SHEAR
What?

J.P. calmly reaches into his jacket and pulls out his Colt pistol. He doesn't point it at anyone.

Tiffany's eyes go wide. Shear tries to remain calm but looks rattled.

SHEAR
Now look...

He takes a step back.

SHEAR
There's no need for that. Just tell
me what you want.

J.P.
Where is it?

SHEAR
Where's what?

Not taking his eyes off Shear, J.P. swings his gun to Tiffany's head and pulls the trigger. She collapses violently in her chair, dead.

Shear cringes. He's not crying or whimpering, but he's so full of fear, it's as if his body is imploding.

J.P. remains calm and cool. He points his gun at Shear.

J.P.
Where is it?

SHEAR
The-- The--

Shear can't get a word out.

J.P.
Alex, calm down and take a breath.
Can you do that?

Shear does it.

J.P.
Very good. Now, where is it?

SHEAR
In my office.

J.P.
Where in your office?

SHEAR
Top desk drawer.

J.P.
Very good.

He lowers his gun.

J.P.
Show me.

Shear reaches into his pocket and pulls out a key. He unlocks the door to the inner office. His hands are shaking.

J.P.
Calm down.

SHEAR
How can I be calm when you've got a fucking gun pointed at me? You killed Tiffany.

J.P.
That was your own fault.

SHEAR
Please don't kill me.

J.P. walks towards Shear and the door.

J.P.
We'll see about that.

Shear gets out of his way. J.P. Opens the door to the inner office.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - INNER OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Shear's office is several times bigger and nicer than the secretary's office. There are many large movie posters in here too with titles such as "Over There", "The Devil Incarnate", "Memory" and "Secret Agent".

J.P. pushes Shear inside and they walk up to his desk.

SHEAR
Look, whatever he's paying you, I'll match it.

J.P.
Stop acting like a mark. Take it out.

Shear walks over to the drawer.

SHEAR
It wasn't my fault. I tried getting it back to him, he didn't have to send you.

Shear gets on his knees in front of the drawer.

J.P.
It's too late now. Take it out.

SHEAR
Just five more hours, that's all I would have needed.

J.P.
It's too late.
(points his gun at
Shear)
Now, take it out.

Shear opens the drawer and goes through it. He takes out a thick brown envelope and hands it to J.P.. Shear doesn't get up.

J.P. takes it. He lowers his gun.

SHEAR
There, just take it an leave.

J.P.
It's not gonna be that simple.

Shear sweats. He stares at J.P.'s gun.

A long uncomfortable silence.

SHEAR
Tell him I'm sorry.

J.P.
He knows.

J.P. points his gun at Shear's head and pulls the trigger. He collapses on the floor, dead.

J.P. holsters his weapon, puts the thick brown envelope under his right arm and walks out the door.

FADE OUT:

THE END