

# THE REEL LIFE

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PROLOGUE

EXT. THE NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE, PRESENT DAY -- DAY

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON BUILDING HOUSING "SHIRBERT FILMS,"  
ITS SIGN FEATURED PROMINENTLY ON THE STRUCTURE -- CONTINUOUS

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOBBY OF SHIRBERT FILMS -- MORNING

THE OFFICE IS A HUB OF ACTIVITY. PEOPLE ARE RUNNING ABOUT,  
PHONES ARE RINGING. THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS POSTERS OF  
PREVIOUS SHIRBERT FILMS, ALL DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE  
SEXUAL CONTENT OF THE FILMS. BIG-BUSTED WOMEN IN  
PROVOCATIVE OUTFITS ADORN THE POSTERS. TITLES INCLUDE:  
"THE NAKED WEREWOLF," "LESBIAN VAMPIRES DINE OUT,"  
"ZOMBIES WITH CHAINSAWS," AND, OF COURSE, "THE NAKED  
LESBIAN VAMPIRE MEETS THE NAKED WEREWOLF" -- IN SMALLER  
PRINT, THE LAST POSTER ADDS " ... WITH A CHAINSAW."

NATURALLY, WITH SUCH HIGH CONCEPT FILMS, SHIRBERT IS A  
PHONE-RINGING SUCCESS.

THE CAMERA PANS TO OFFICE MANAGER BARBARA CLARKSON, AT HER  
DESK. SEATED AT A SMALLER DESK IS SUSIE CHO, ALSO ON THE  
PHONE. BELOW THE POSTERS ON A LONG COUCH SIT THREE  
ACTRESSES, EACH DRESSED TO KILL. THEIR DEMEANOR INDICATES  
THEY ARE ANXIOUSLY WAITING TO BE SEEN. BY THE FRONT DOOR,  
A CLUSTER OF REPORTERS STAND, ALSO WAITING.

BARBARA

(Into phone)

No, sir. As I said the last fifteen times,  
Shirbert Films does not accept unsolicited  
scripts or treatments ...

VANESSA HOWARD, A YOUNG BLACK INTERN, ENTERS FROM THE HALLWAY,  
CARRYING A STACK OF PAPERS. SHE STRIDES PURPOSEFULLY TOWARD  
SUSIE.

VANESSA

They in, yet?

SUSIE

(Hand over mouthpiece)  
Not yet, Vanessa.

VANESSA

(Returning to her even smaller desk set between a number of other small desks at which sit the numerous interns working for Shirbert)  
Damn!

BARBARA

(Into phone)  
... Oh, really?  
(matter of factly)  
Well, sir, if you choose to send it anyway, be advised our policy is that anything sent to us unsolicited is not returned and becomes our exclusive property. Thus, should you ever attempt to market the ideas you *claim* are yours, we will sue you for theft of intellectual property...

RANDY THOMPSON ENTERS FROM HALLWAY, HURRYING TOWARD BARBARA.

RANDY

(Anxiously)  
They here, yet?

BARBARA

(Hand over mouthpiece)  
No, Randy. Not yet.

RANDY

(Crossing to coffee area, casting an evil glance at Vanessa as he goes)  
Damn!

BARBARA

(Back into phone)  
No, sir. We're in the movie business. We have no interest whatsoever in ethics or legalities.  
(Beat as she listens)  
Because we have attorneys on retainer who will happily tie you up in litigation for the rest of your natural life, after which your estate will be litigated until all your descendents live as miserable paupers – all because you couldn't take no for an answer!  
(Listens to response on other end)  
Yes, sir, that does suck. Welcome to show business.  
(Beat)  
Have a nice day.  
(Hangs up; picks up papers from desk)  
Susie, these contracts better be on their desk when they arrive or there'll be hell to pay.

SUSIE

(From her desk)

Right.

(Over to Randy)

Randy, take care of that, will you?

RANDY

(Slamming down his coffee cup, spilling on himself)

What am I? Your slave?

SUSIE

(Wickedly laughing)

You wish!

CAMERA FOLLOWS RANDY AS HE CROSSES TO BARBARA, TAKES THE PAPERS AND HEADS TO DOUBLE-DOORS, ON WHICH THERE IS A PLAQUE WITH THE NAMES OF THE COMPANY'S CO-FOUNDERS, NATHAN AND NORMAN GOLDSTEIN. BELOW IT, SCRAWLED IN MAGIC MARKER, IS THE PHRASE "ABANDON HOPE, ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE."

RANDY RACES IN, DROPS THE PAPERS ON THE LARGE PARTNERS' DESK AND RETURNS.

BARBARA

Thanks, Susie.

SUSIE

No problem.

RANDY

Why are you thanking her? I did the damn work.

BARBARA

Yes, but she made you.

SUSIE

He *wishes* he made me.

RANDY

(To Susie)

I'd rather drink raw sewage!

VANESSA

(Adding her two cents)

That would explain the coffee you made this morning.

A DELIVERY MAN WALKS IN, TAKES A QUICK LOOK AROUND, AND HEADS STRAIGHT FOR VANESSA.

DELIVERY MAN

Urgent delivery for Mr. Nathan Goldstein.

BARBARA

(Noticing the delivery man for the first time)  
Is that you, Mr. Lee?

THE DELIVERY MAN TRIES TO HIDE HIS FACE.

BARBARA

Much better costume this time, Mr. Lee. But you know the rules.

DELIVERY MAN/MR. LEE

Aw c'mon, Ms. Clarkson. I'm telling you, they're gonna love my script.

BARBARA

(With actual compassion)  
Tommy, I'm sure it's terrific. But if I break the rules for you, I've got to break them for everybody. And at Shirbert, broken rules lead to broken necks. In this case, mine. Nice try, though. Better luck next time.  
(She points toward the door and he leaves)

A GROWING CLAMMER IS HEARD OUTSIDE THE FRONT DOOR, PORTENDING THE ARRIVAL OF THE GOLDSTEIN BROTHERS.

REPORTER ONE

Is that them?

REPORTER TWO (A woman)

It must be them!

REPORTER THREE

Can't be. My camera crew's outside. They're gonna call me on my cell when they spot them.

INTO THE ROOM STRIDE NATHAN AND NORMAN GOLDSTEIN. NATHAN LEADS THE WAY, FOLLOWED BY SEVERAL MORE REPORTERS, INCLUDING ANOTHER WOMAN. NORMAN ENDS OFF THE REPORTERS WHILE NATHAN TALKS INTO A CELL PHONE.

NATHAN

(Into phone)  
Yeah? Well, you can tell that sonofabitch Sommersby he can kiss my ass, my brother's ass, my mother's ass and then he can kiss his own ass goodbye, because that pan he gave our Macbeth is gonna make him the laughingstock of the industry. That's right! A *laughingstock!* Everybody - everybody loved it, but him!

NORMAN

(Tapping Nathan on shoulder)  
Actually, Nathan, most of the reviews are negative.

NATHAN

(To Norman)  
Negative? (waving phone) This prick wasn't negative. He was vicious. He went way over the top. Clifton Sommersby got personal. He made Mom cry.

REPORTER FOUR

(Running in)  
Mr. Goldstein? Mr. Goldstein? May I have my phone back?

NATHAN

(To Reporter Four)  
NO!

REPORTER FOUR

(To Reporter Three)  
I couldn't call you – he copped my phone as he walked by.

NATHAN

(To Reporter Four)  
For crissakes, can't you see I'm talking on the phone here?  
(Back into phone)  
That's right! You tell that cocksucker Sommersby that Nathan and Norman Goldstein predict the multitudes will rally en masse into cinemas nationwide to see our spectacular new "Macbeth." You tell him that Will Shakespeare would have creamed himself over this movie; that Kanye and Kim Kardashian are the best Macbeths the big screen has ever seen! You tell him the words "Out, damn spot" have never been uttered by a broad with a better ass than in our motherfucking movie. You got that?

REPORTER THREE

Can we quote you on that, Mr. Goldstein?

NORMAN

No. He's delusional.

NATHAN

Will you be quiet? I'm still on the phone here! On this shitty little cell phone from one of the wolf pack hounding my every step!

REPORTER ONE

(To Norman)  
Is your brother always like this?

NORMAN

No, this is one of his good days.

NATHAN

(Back into phone)  
You got all that, sweetheart? Will you give that fucking asshole the fucking message? ... You will? Good! ...  
(His tone changes)  
You *what*? ... You'll tell your *Daddy*?  
(Turns ashen)  
You're not that cocksucker's secretary? You're his daughter?  
(Reporters laugh in background, NORMAN chuckles, too.)  
What's your name, sweetheart? ... Janet?  
(Sweetly) Janet's a nice name. And how old are you, precious? ... Nine-years-old?  
(Nathan looks helplessly toward Norman, then back to the phone)  
Sorry, wrong number.  
(Nathan clicks off phone, tosses it back to Reporter Four)  
What kind of crap phone did you palm off on me?

REPORTERS START THROWING QUESTIONS AT THE BROTHERS.  
"WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE REVIEWS?" "IS IT TRUE THIS IS THE WORST OPENING IN FILM HISTORY?" "ARE THE REPORTS OF PENDING CHAPTER 11 TRUE?"

NATHAN

You lousy bastards!  
(Nathan starts to lunge for the nearest reporter but is held back by Norman)

NORMAN

(Calmly)  
Gentlemen – and ladies – we'll have a formal statement for you shortly. Barbara, a little help here.

BARBARA DRAGS NATHAN OVER TO A TRIO OF WAITING ACTRESSES.

BARBARA

Nathan, perhaps you'd like to meet some of the ladies who will be auditioning today.

REPORTERS PRESS IN WITH FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS, LIKE "BUT, WE'RE ON DEADLINE" AND "JUST A FEW MORE

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!" RANDY STEPS OVER TO SHIELD THE GOLDSTEIN BROTHERS FROM THE REPORTERS WHO HE BEGINS USHERING TOWARD THE DOOR.

NATHAN

(To Norman)

I think that went rather well, don't you?

NORMAN

You were awe-inspiring, Nathan – in a train-wreck sort of way.

NORMAN DRAGS NATHAN AWAY FROM THE TRIO OF WAITING ACTRESSES, AS THEY HEAD TOWARD THEIR OFFICE.

NATHAN

I told you we made a mistake not hiring David Lynch to direct *Macbeth*. He would have understood our vision! Granted, he hasn't done anything exceptional since that *Carnival* thing on cable and that old TV show of his ... What the hell was its name?

BAMBI, ONE OF THE THREE WAITING ACTRESSES, RISES AND RIPS OPEN HER BLOUSE, EXPOSING HER NOTEWORTHY NAKED BREASTS, IN HOPES OF GETTING ATTENTION. IT WORKS!

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(Stares at breasts a beat, to NORMAN)

"Twin Peaks!" That was the fucking show's name. Good show. A bit bizarre, but so is this whole fucking industry.

(Looks at the girl's breasts again, touches) Nice. Good feel to them. Norman, have a feel.

NORMAN

No, thank you.

NATHAN

Touch the tits, Norman.

NORMAN

I don't want to.

NATHAN

(Amazed)

You don't want to? You don't want to? Two of the greatest boobs in the history of boobies... (sinks his head into them and then pulls back) And you don't even want to touch em?



NORMAN

No.

NATHAN

Norman, this life has few pleasures: The radiant sunrise; the full-moon, reflecting on a calm sea; the sounds of Sinatra, anytime, anywhere. And this, Norman – this. Behold, the boob!

NORMAN

Which one? I see three.

NATHAN

Come on, Norman. Touch the pretty titties.

NORMAN

No!

NATHAN

All right. A boob, Norman. Not both. Just one!

NORMAN TRIES TO GET AWAY BUT NATHAN PUSHES BAMBI IN FRONT OF NORMAN. BAMBI'S BREASTS ARE IN NORMAN'S FACE. HE BACKS AWAY BUT BAMBI AND NATHAN FOLLOW.

NATHAN

They're wonderful, Norman. Bodacious ta tas! And believe me, I know bodacious ta tas when I see and touch them!

BAMBI

So, do I get the part?

NATHAN

What part?

BAMBI

Any part!

NATHAN

I'm assuming you have no problem with nudity.

SHE NODS HER HEAD ENTHUSIASTICALLY

NATHAN(Cont'd)

Leave your headshot and resume with Barbara. I'll be in touch.

*...Much Later In the Film...*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRIARS' CLUB CHAPEL — THREE DAYS LATER  
ASSEMBLED MOURNERS INCLUDE NATHAN, NORMAN, TODD, SHIRLEY,  
BARBARA, SUSIE, RANDY AND VANESSA.

CAMERA SHOOT FROM BACK OF CHAPEL, REVEALING ROWS OF  
MOURNERS. AS IT MOVES IN CLOSER WE SEE TODD STANDING AT  
THE LECTERN, NEXT TO AN ELABORATE URN.

TODD

Before we continue, let me point out this isn't  
a roast. We came to bury Dunston Fairview, not  
fillet him. At this time I'd like to introduce  
Dunston's only child, his beloved daughter  
Stasia.

MOURNERS GASP AUDIBLY AS STASIA ENTERS AND STEPS TO THE  
LECTERN, NOW LOOKING LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN STEVIE NICKS AND  
ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK, BLACK FLOWING EVERYWHERE.  
SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS DIM.

SFX: A CLAP OF THUNDER

SFX: A MOURNFUL CHIME SOUNDS THREE TIMES

STASIA

(In performance mode)

Father, oh father. Were you my father? What  
is father? What am I? Was I the little girl  
you carried? Were you he whose sperm flowed  
forth creating life which is me? No! No! No!  
Life begins, life ends. Circle, circle,  
circle. Death is but a beginning. But where  
father? Father did I know you? Mother swears  
she didn't. Did you know me? Who knows?  
(PICKING UP THE URN) You spewed forth and gave  
me life! I now spew forth and set you free!

WITH THIS, SHE OPENS THE URN AND FLINGS HANDFULS OF ASHES  
ONTO THE STARTLED MOURNERS

Fly father, fly! Now you are dust! Now you  
are free! Now you are ME! Ashes, ashes, we  
all fall down!

SHE SITS, SOBBING HEAVILY. THERE IS SHOCKED SILENCE FROM  
THE ASSEMBLAGE

TODD

(Returning to lectern) Well...that's Dunston  
all over. (Beat)

Anybody got a dustbuster? Would anybody else  
care to say a few words?

(Staring directly at Nathan)  
Who wants to follow *that* act?