

A STEP IN TIME

by

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Principal characters:

George - Bryan Cranston type. Flawed, Beaten, struggling to maintain a forward moving life.

Grandfather - Anthony Hopkins type. Free spirited, young at heart.

Dave - George Lopez type. Positive, relaxed.

George's Ex - Laura Linney type

FADE IN:

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

Sitting in his lawyer's office GEORGE listens as the lawyer reads the final statement and hands him the document, which he signs. The lawyer takes the document back and excuses himself.

LAWYER

It'll be just a moment while I have my secretary notarize this.

As the lawyer leaves, George gets up and walks to the window overlooking the ocean. George closes his eyes and his mind drifts back to when he was a boy fishing on the ocean with his Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

What are you thinking about?

EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

Young George and his Grandfather are fishing on the ocean in an old rowboat.

YOUNG GEORGE

Ah, I don't know.

GRANDFATHER

You have been sitting there the whole time not saying one word, you must be thinking about something.

YOUNG GEORGE

Well everything is changing.

GRANDFATHER

Changing? Changing how?

YOUNG GEORGE

Well, I have to go to a new school this fall. I have to pick my classes. Half my friends are going to a different school and the one girl I like is moving away because her father is in the Navy.

GRANDFATHER

Boy you do have a lot on your mind. But you are only twelve, so they are just a step in time.

YOUNG GEORGE

A step in time? What does that mean?

GRANDFATHER

Well, when you are young, a lot of the things that you feel are major events are not really so big, and in time become like steps you take. You may be thinking about each step as you walk down the street but as you walk each step fades into your memory.

YOUNG GEORGE

George has a puzzled look on his face.

YOUNG GEORGE

So, these things, they don't bother you anymore?

Grandfather sits there quietly fishing, pauses, and looks at George

GRANDFATHER

Well the best answer I can give you is at my age you recognize them quicker than at your age. If you are lucky, when you get to be my age, there will be fewer of them.

YOUNG GEORGE

Why is that?

GRANDFATHER

When I was younger, I worried about things just like you, but I grew up, got a job, raised a family and now I am retired.

YOUNG GEORGE

So, when I am retired, I'll have less to worry about?

GRANDFATHER

I can't say that, but you'll understand better when you are retired like me.

YOUNG GEORGE

How did you get retired?

GRANDFATHER

I worked very hard in school, went to work for a very good company, worked smart for that company and when I turned 65 they started paying me a nice pension.

YOUNG GEORGE

Pension?

GRANDFATHER

A pension is what you receive as payment for working hard and being a good employee. You'll be surprised at just how good it will make you feel to work hard each day and in doing so become a part of a company that grows.

Grandfather goes back to staring at the water.

INT. LAWYERS OFFICE - DAY

George opens his eyes as the lawyer reenters the office. George stares out the window, his mind still caught up in his thoughts.

LAWYER

It's all notarized and official, you're divorced. Look, I know that we've been friends for a long time. Don't think of this as an ending but as a beginning.

George turns and shakes the lawyer's hand.

GEORGE

It's nothing more than a step in time.

George quietly leaves the office and closes the door.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

George is back in the office and BOB catches him just as he enters his office to talk about what happened.

BOB

How did it go?

GEORGE

Ah, it was great, I signed it and it's over.

BOB

It was great?

GEORGE

(PAUSE)

No, it sucked. Four years in the making and the act of signing those damn divorce papers felt like I had failed at the whole marriage.

BOB

Failed at the whole marriage?

George sits down and leans back in his chair.

GEORGE

Not the whole marriage but it sure felt like that when I put the pen down. I didn't even get to have lunch. Speaking about lunch do we still have an IT department?

Bob takes a step into George office to make the conversation more private and closes the door.

BOB

They let two more people go right at twelve.

GEORGE (GETTING DISGUSTED)

What's up with that? Who decided that people should be fired at 12:00 noon? Does management feel it will make them feel better about it if they can go and enjoy a longer lunch? I don't understand management anymore, it seems like just about every decision goes against what we know to be right.

BOB

Ya, and I have to tell you, I worry that I'm next with every round of layoffs.

GEORGE

We don't have to worry, we have tenure, besides they need us.

BOB

They don't seem to need anyone anymore.

GEORGE

I'm not worried, I've spent the last 22 years working smart and helping the company grow. It really has been a pleasure becoming a part of the company.

BOB

But we've had zero growth in the past 3 years due to overseas contractors.

GEORGE

It'll come back and we'll start growing again. Maybe then they can buy us some working paper towel dispensers for the bathroom.

The two men laugh. Bob leaves the office and George returns to work.

EXT. PARKING LOT AT OFFICE - DAY

George is thought as he walks to his car with his briefcase, gets in and leaves.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

George is still in thought as he drives through traffic.

EXT. PARKING LOT AT APARTMENTS - DAY

George gets out of his car with his briefcase and walks to his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

George is cooking in the kitchen, finishes and walks into the living room to eat. He places the food on a small table in front of the couch and turns on the TV. Just after he gets settled in the phone rings.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Ah damn it, can't anyone respect a guy's right to eat a meal without the phone ringing.

George grabs the phone as if to rip off the small table.

GEORGE (IN A SOFT VOICE)

Hello?

GEORGE'S EX (O.S) (SOBBING)

The lawyer called and said you signed the papers today.

GEORGE

Yes, I did.

GEORGE'S EX (O.S)

Now you're going to start making my car payments the beginning of next month, right?

GEORGE

Yes.

GEORGE'S EX (O.S)

And you know that Heather's college tuition will be due no later than the last of this month right.

GEORGE

Yes.

GEORGE'S EX (O.S)

I'm sorry I can't help with her college tuition but with paying the mortgage and utilities I'm just about broke at the end of each month.

GEORGE (GETTING AGGRAVATED)

And you think I'm Rockefeller? I'm paying rent on an apartment that I'll never own.

GEORGE'S EX (O.S)

I didn't call to fight, I just called to say I heard from the lawyer and it just upset me.

George begins to fidget and picks at his food irritated by the call.

GEORGE

It's ok, it's ok you don't have to cry. I'll just add them to the list of things I have to pay each month. Look I just sat down to eat and it's getting cold, I'll talk to you later, goodbye.

George sets the phone down, picks up the remote and turns the TV off then drops the remote on the table. George gets up and carries his plate out to the balcony.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - DAY

George sits down to watch the sunset. He puts he his feet up and begins to eat.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

George is falling asleep in front of the TV. George gets up and goes into the bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

George undresses and gets into bed. George tosses a few times to get comfortable then falls asleep.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

George drives into a parking space, visible in the rear window is a stuffed Garfield stuck to the glass. George gets out of his car with his briefcase and walks into the building with a relaxed smile on his face.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George is in his office when Bob stops in.

BOB

Hey, did you hear about the storm?

GEORGE

Ya, it's turned out to sea.

BOB

No, during the night it turned back and could make land fall by early tomorrow morning.

GEORGE

Did they say where?

BOB

They are projecting somewhere in the Keys then into the gulf and turning north.

GEORGE

Just as long as it doesn't come up the coast and spoil our weekend.

BOB

Isn't that beech house your Grandfather left you in the Keys?

GEORGE

Yes, it is, but it's small and it's survived everything that nature has

thrown its way since 1929 so I'm not worried, besides its insured. Hey maybe the storm will sweep it out to sea that way when I'm ready to retire the property will be clear for a nice new retirement home. It's all-good.

BOB

They don't call you mister positive for nothing, I'm going to lunch.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

As George is leaving his office, Jim his boss stops him.

JIM

Ah, George do you have a minute.

GEORGE

What's up?

JIM

Come in and close the door please.

George follows Jim into his office.

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - DAY

George follows Jim into his office and closes the door behind him. Jim's office walls are covered in framed awards. Jim gestures to the chair in front of his desk as he sits down.

JIM

Have a seat.

George sits down.

GEORGE

You know I've cleared my desk and I'm ready to start first thing Monday on the new project.

JIM

Yes, we have to talk about that, we're going to have someone else work on that project.

George can tell Jim is uncomfortable. Jim is not looking George in the eyes.

GEORGE

Someone else? You know that I'm the only one here who can do the work, let alone be counted on to get it done on time and under budget.

JIM

We would like someone else to work on it just the same.

GEORGE (CONFUSED)

Who, who do we have here that can do the work?

JIM

We've decided to outsource the whole project.

GEORGE

Outsource the project, we'll get reamed on the consulting costs not to mention that any outside company is going to try and lock us into a support contract. We can't afford that with the budget our parent company has dropped on us. (pause) If we have to, we have to. I'll manage the project, which will save us a bundle and support it after so we do not have a support contract hanging around our necks.

JIM

George the contracts have already been signed and ongoing support is part of it, management has made its decision.

GEORGE

Don't they realize how much that is going to cost us in the long run?

JIM

George, that's not something you have to worry about.

GEORGE

Not worry about it? We just lost two people yesterday, how will we ever get them back when the business comes back if we are locked into a support contract?

JIM

We have to talk about that.

GEORGE

I'll say, this is just another one of those decisions that upper management makes without taking into account what it will cost us in the long run.

JIM

No, what we have to talk about is you.

GEORGE

Why? What project will I be working on come Monday?

JIM

George, management has decided that we're going to have to let you go.

GEORGE

They what?

JIM

We're going to have to let you go.

George sinks into the chair as if 10,000 pounds has been dropped on him and stares at the desk in front of him.

GEORGE

I'm fired?

JIM

You're not fired, upper management has eliminated your position.

GEORGE

Upper management? Upper management doesn't know my name even though I provide with the reports they run the

company on. Upper management knows your name because you manage the department and you control the work. Just say it, you decided to eliminate my job. I can't believe this, I just can't believe this. I dedicated the past 22 years to this company. I created more systems than anybody hear. For god sake I have given you everything you have asked for. I can't even remember the last time I took all of my vacation in one year.

JIM

It's not what they want it's just business and everyone is outsourcing projects. We are going to give you a severance package.

George stands up and leaves Jim's without another word.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

George walks into his office, picks up his brief case and leaves.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

George walks out of the building heading for the parking lot.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

It's morning and George is asleep in bed. George wakes up and slides to the edge of the bed, rubs his face and then his stomach because he has not eaten since yesterday. The phone rings and George picks it up.

GEORGE (IN A CRACKING VOICE)

Hello?

BOB (O.S)

George, George are you ok?

GEORGE

I guess so, what's up?

BOB (O.S)

That's what I called to ask you. All hell is breaking loose here. They had a group of consultants walk in very early this morning and shut everyone out of the systems, then they began scanning for viruses and anything out of the ordinary. They had a police officer at the door and the HR director was checking badges as people entered. They told the managers to stay at home. They even shut down the firewall and phone system. What's going on?

GEORGE

You're asking the wrong person, they fired me yesterday.

BOB (O.S)

That's what I heard, they said after telling you that your job was eliminated you just walked out like a zombie with a blank stare on your face. You did not sign your termination papers, gather your things or turn in your badge.

GEORGE

I guess I did.

BOB (O.S)

So, did you do it?

GEORGE

Do what?

BOB (O.S)

Plant any system time bombs or viruses?

GEORGE

Are you kidding me? Do you really think I would do that to the systems I spent the last 22 years creating?

BOB (O.S)

No, but they do.

George sits there shifting positions.

BOB (O.S)

They're scared George, you had control of most of the systems here including payroll and were responsible for just about everything developed since we started using PCs, they're scared. I'm scared too, if they can eliminate you then they can eliminate anyone including me.

GEORGE

They don't have anything to fear from me, but if I were you, I would be looking for a different company to work for.

There is a knock on the George's door.

GEORGE

There's someone at the door, I have to go.

BOB (O.S)

Ok George, give me a call when you figure out what you are going to do.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT FRONT DOOR - DAY

George with his head in a daze answers the door. It is the DIRECTOR of HR and the DIRECTOR of Benefits.

DIRECTOR OF HR

George, we need to talk to you.

Without a word, George motions them in. The Director of Benefits is carrying a box with George's personal effects.

INT. GEORGE'S APPARMENT KITCHEN - DAY

DIRECTOR OF BENEFITS

These are your things from your office at work.

He hands the box to George who places it on the kitchen counter.

DIRECTOR OF HR

George, you left without signing some forms and turning in your badge. With the way you left, we felt it best that we come here to check on you.

GEORGE

You don't have to worry about me I'm fine.

DIRECTOR OF HR

Well we were concerned George.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

George walks to the couch and sits down with the Director of HR and the Director of Benefits following him into the living room.

GEORGE

You were concerned about me? Me? You don't even know me let alone the people working directly for you. If you knew me you would know that I could not do anything to jeopardize the work I have done for the past 22 years Everything they are doing down at the office is a waste of time and money in consulting fees. That's one of the biggest problems with management today they do not know the people who work for them.

DIRECTOR OF HR

Just the same George we need you to sign the termination form and confidentiality form.

GEORGE

A confidentiality form?

DIRECTOR OF HR

Yes.

GEORGE

What is that for?

The Director of HR hands George some forms and a pen.

DIRECTOR OF HR

You did not sign one when you came to work for the company, and we need you to sign one now.

GEORGE

Ya, it's called trust, you trusted me, and I trusted the company. One of us got screwed.

DIRECTOR OF HR

All the same George we need you to sign it.

GEORGE

What does it say?

DIRECTOR OF HR

It says that you will not discuss any of the work or share any of the development you have done for us with other companies.

GEORGE

You kick me to the curb and expect me not to use what I have developed to get another job? You really don't know anything about me and that idiot of a manager you have sitting in the IT department does not either. Or should I say hiding at home avoiding responsibility. If either of you did, you would know that everything including documents, CDs and files are stored in my office under lock and key for safekeeping. What is not there is in the vault to protect them from fire.

DIRECTOR OF HR

Well we still need you to sign the forms and turn in your badge.

George picks up his badge from the coffee table and hands it to the Director of HR.

GEORGE

Here is my badge.

George signs the termination forms. He crumbles the confidentiality form into a ball then drops it to the floor. George gets up, hands the forms back to the Director of HR and motions to the door.

George walks them to the door and opens it. The Director of HR and Director of Benefits step out.

DIRECTOR OF HR

George if you need anything or have any questions please give us a call.

GEORGE

Need anything? Look around here, what do you see? I don't have a house, I don't have a family, all I had was my job.

DIRECTOR OF HR

George every company is faced with the same situation we are, and outsourcing is one way we can cut costs to stay competitive.

GEORGE

Cut cost? If that idiot IT manager had a brain, I would still have a job. You're going to need several consultants to cover the work I did and the systems I maintained. You don't get it do you?

DIRECTOR OF HR

Get what?

GEORGE

No one knows what I did for the company, least of all the IT manager and no one in upper management gets it either. I never did put together enough credits for a college degree but that's because to be good at my job I was constantly learning and evolving. Upper management including you two have your degrees hanging on the wall, but you have not learned one

thing since you hung them there. What is the number one cost cutting effort in American business today?

DIRECTOR OF HR
Labor and employee benefits.

GEORGE
So, why as Directors of HR and Benefits are you in charge of this? You do not have a degree in accounting, you are not business analysts and you never set in on any of the finance meetings. With all the jobs you have cut in the past two years and the rise in benefits rates why have profits continued to drop like a stone? Think about it!

George shuts the door in their faces. George turns around and pauses.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)
Food I need something to eat.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF APARTMENT - DAY

George walks to the diner across from the apartment building he lives in.

INT. INSIDE OF DINER - MOMENTS LATER

George enters the diner, walks to a booth and sits down.

WAITRESS
Hi George, what are you doing today?

GEORGE
Nothing, I'm just getting a late start.

George did not know how to answer the waitress. He came in here most mornings during the week for breakfast just to avoid cooking.

WAITRESS
So, what would you like?

GEORGE
Just two eggs and bacon please.

WAITRESS

Ok George.

George sits staring out the window. The waitress returns with coffee and then again with his meal. George eats his meal and then sits there staring out the window in thought.

WAITRESS

George, is there something else I can get you?

GEORGE

No, I have to get going.

WAITRESS

Ok George have a good day.

The waitress lays the check down on the table.

GEORGE

Ya, a good day.

George gets up and lays a few dollars on the table. Then walks to the register and pays his bill

EXT. OUTSIDE OF DINER - MOMENTS LATER

George tries to cross the street but is stopped by the traffic. Confused by all the traffic he makes his way across the street. George stops and picks up a paper at the new stand.

YON (RUSSIAN ACCENT)

Good morning George.

GEORGE

Hi Yon, what's with all the traffic?
Why aren't these people at work?

YON

George, it's Saturday the busiest morning of the week. Everyone is off from work except for me.

George pays Yon and heads down the street for his Saturday morning routine.

EXT. CITY STREET WITH STORES - DAY

George walks to the drycleaners and enters the store.

INT. DRY CLEANERS - MORNING

George enters and walks up to the counter

DRY CLEANER

Hi George, you picking up?

George searches through his pockets. He has nothing to drop off and no ticket to pick things up.

GEORGE (CONFUSED)

Ah no, ah I'll be back.

EXT. CITY STREET WITH STORES - DAY

George walks down the street and enters the supermarket, again searching through his pockets.

INT. BUSY SUPER MARKET - DAY

George picks up a shopping basket and begins to wander through the store checking items but puts nothing in the basket.

George makes his way to the exit and drops the empty basket on the stack of baskets as he leaves the store.

EXT. CITY STREET WITH STORES - DAY

George heads back down the street past the dry cleaners and back to his apartment complex.

George enters the front door.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX MAIN FLOOR - DAY

The doorman TOM is sitting on his chair and greets George but does not open the door.

TOM

Hi George, how are you doing today?

GEORGE

I'm fine yourself?

TOM

I'm good George have a nice day.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

A nice day.

George stops in his tracks thinking to himself and turns towards Tom.

GEORGE

Tom, you're the doorman, right?

TOM

Yes, I am.

GEORGE

So, if you're the doorman, then why don't you open the door for everyone who lives here?

TOM

Management wants me inside so I can watch the lobby and mailboxes.

GEORGE

Then why don't they hire a watchman or better yet have the security company put a surveillance camera in the lobby?

TOM

Gee George, I don't know.

George with no interest in the conversation turns and walks to the elevators and enters the open one.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

George is sitting on the couch, staring at the TV, thinking about what to do. There is a knock at the door, and he goes to answer it. It's STEVE from work.

STEVE

Hey George, how are you doing?

GEORGE

I'm great.

STEVE

Really?

GEORGE

No, I lost my job yesterday and still don't know what to say. (pause) Come on in.

George opens the door and they both walk into the living room.

INT. GEORGE'S APPARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

George sits on the couch and turns off the TV, Steve sits in a chair next to the couch.

GEORGE

You were off yesterday, how did you hear about it?

STEVE

They called me in this morning.

GEORGE

Great, not only do they fire me, but they ruin the weekend for my friends at work.

STEVE

Things are crazy down there George.

GEORGE

I can imagine.

STEVE

You have not heard the least of it. Besides paying overtime, they brought in a group of consultants.

GEORGE (SARCASTICALLY)

Haven't you heard? Consultants are the new work force of the future.

STEVE

Not at these prices.

GEORGE

What do you mean?

STEVE

In order to get them in the door and run a full analysis they had to pay

them a \$50,000 retainer and \$20,000 in advance for the next week.

GEORGE

Are you kidding me? \$20,000? I could not get \$1,200 dollars for a new printer two weeks ago and that project would have saved the company \$2,000 a year.

STEVE

That's not the half of it.

GEORGE

What do you mean?

STEVE

I saw the proposal for supporting the payroll reports you provide each month and it was over \$50,000.

GEORGE

Come on, that's outrageous. All the monthly reports are on the network.

STEVE

Ya George, but you're not there to modify them to run each month and if we need one changed it's an additional change. What is worse is I have seen the quotes for HR and Finance also, they are going to be paying these consultants over \$125,000 a year and that's just what I have seen.

GEORGE

How can the company afford that? That's insane, what are they thinking? Well you know what? That's not my worry anymore. I worked hard for 22 years and they felt I was not needed.

STEVE

What do you mean they?

GEORGE
Upper management.

STEVE
What's upper management got to do with hiring and firing employees for IT? That's the IT manager's job. The decisions are all his to make.

George sits back in the couch and stares at the blank TV.

STEVE
Don't you get it George, he's playing with the money.

GEORGE
How is he playing with the money?

STEVE
He shows one less employee, raises the cost to the individual departments and pays the consultants through a different cost account than the one used for IT salaries.

GEORGE
What I get is that the company with all my benefits added up was spending about \$105,000 a year to employ me for the work that I did and now it will cost the company over \$125,000 for the same work.

STEVE
You got it.

George leans forward on the couch.

GEORGE
I know why my job was eliminated.

STEVE
Why?

GEORGE
IT is over budget and over budget means no bonus for the IT manager. By eliminating my position, and two others

that reduces the costs by reducing salaries. With more cash being transferred from the other departments into the IT accounts, IT is no longer over budget. My job was eliminated to save the Manager's bonus and done so with upper managements blessing because he was cutting the head count.

STEVE

But it's still costing the company thousands more a year.

GEORGE

That's not my problem.

STEVE

I'm glad that you're Ok because I was worried. If I hurry, I can still spend most of the afternoon with the kids.

GEORGE

Say Hi to the wife and kids for me.

STEVE

Ok George if you need anything give me a call.

Steve gets up and walks out of the apartment. George remains sitting on the couch in thought and stares at the blank TV. George reached for the remote and sees the termination papers laying on the coffee table. George picks them up, reaches behind his head, and drops them behind the couch.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Filed!

George begins to scan the channels looking for a program that he can escape into. After going through cartoon after cartoon he looks at the remote as if there is something wrong. George stops on auto racing, sets the remote down and relaxes back into the couch.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

George is still sitting on the couch watching TV. George looks at his watch and slowly leans forward. George points

the remote at the TV and turns it off. Looking around George gets up and heads into the bedroom.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

George changes his shirt and shoes to something more casual for dinner.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT- EARLY EVENING

George walks through the apartment and out the door.

EXT. CITY STREET OUTSIDE OF APARTMENTS - EVENING

George exits the apartment complex and heads down the street. George turns at the corner and heads down a street with more stores and restaurants. George stops outside a pizza shop and looks in. George sniffs the air and smiles. George turns and heads down the street and crosses to the next block. Halfway down the block George enters an Italian restaurant.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The crowded restaurant catches him by surprise. A GIRL greets George as he steps up to the counter.

GEORGE

Can you tell me what the wait time is?

GIRL

About twenty minutes.

GEORGE

Are there any seats in the bar area so I don't have to wait?

GIRL

I can check.

The Girl turns and walks towards the bar. George watches her walk away noticing her tight red and white blouse and black shorts. Not bothering to walk back the Girl motions for George to come to the bar area. George walks to the bar area.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT BAR AREA - NIGHT

GIRL

You can take a seat at the bar or there is one small table at the end.

George makes his way to the table and sits down. The BARTENDER leans over the bar.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

GEORGE

I really would like to order some food.

The Bartender motions George over.

BARTENDER

Here's a menu, if you order it from me, I can get it a lot quicker than the waitress.

GEORGE (REPLIES QUICKLY)

A New York strip cooked medium, baked potato with butter, salad with some sort of Italian dressing and a glass of water with lemon.

The Bartender puts the menu on the bar and slides a glass of water across the bar to George.

BARTENDER

Have a seat and watch the news it's bound to cheer you up.

The Bartender leaves as George takes a seat at the bar and begins to watch the news on the TV above the bar. The Bartender returns with a salad and places it on the bar in front of George along with silverware. George is surprised.

GEORGE

You weren't kidding, were you?

The bar tender leaned back on the sink.

BARTENDER

Waitresses are there to serve you and make your dinning pleasurable, bar tenders are here to get what the

customers wants quickly and get it right. It's a simple fact that the faster I do my job the larger the tip grows.

The bar tender smiles and so does George. George quietly sits there alone eating his salad and watching the news on the TV. The news moved on to the weather and updates on a storm in the Keys. Watching the path that the storm has taken George realizes that the eye of the storm has passed right over Big Pine Key. The Bartender notices Georges surprise.

BARTENDER

What's wrong?

George points to the TV.

GEORGE

The storm passed right over my Grandfather's home.

The bar tender turns and looks at the TV.

BARTENDER

Man, that's a shame, did he get out?

GEORGE

No, he died a few years ago and I own the house. I spent my summers there and he taught me to fish in this leaky old boat.

The Bartender looks back at George.

BARTENDER

Did the house survive?

GEORGE

I don't know, there's no one there I can call to check.

BARTENDER

Well I hope it's ok?

George sits there with a blank stare on his face.

GEORGE

It's just a small shack and it's insured.

The Bartender walks up with George's steak and sets it down in front of him. George sits quietly eating his steak watching the TV coverage of the storm looking for the house.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The street is less crowded. George walks home in deep thought.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY, YEARS EARLIER

Young George and his Grandfather stand looking at an old rowboat that is in need of a paint job.

GRANDFATHER

Well my boy, you want to paint it yellow and I want to paint it blue. Since I'm paying for the paint and you're doing the painting why don't we paint the outside blue and the inside yellow?

Young George stands there looking at his Grandfather with a puzzled look on his face.

GRANDFATHER

That seem fair to me.

Young George and his Grandfather stand staring at the old rowboat smiling.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT CURRENT DATE

George is sitting on the couch watching TV. He falls asleep and begins to dream.

EXT. OUTSIDE GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY, YEARS EARLIER

Young George is standing in the rowboat with paint on his clothes painting the inside yellow. His Grandfather is sitting in a chair on the deck of the shack.

EXT. BEACH IN FRONT OF GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY, YEARS EARLIER

Young George and his Grandfather push the newly painted boat into the water and climb aboard.

INT. BOAT DAY, YEARS EARLIER

Young George climbs to the front and picks up the bailing pale while his Grandfather begins to row.

YOUNG GEORGE

Why do I have to bail this leaky old boat, why can't I row?

GRANDFATHER

By boy, if you were to do the rowing, we would never leave the shore. Your arms are just not up to the task. Besides you do such a great job bailing and you only have to bail until the wood swells up and stops leaking. I have to row all the way out and all the way back.

INT. GEROGE'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY, CURRENT DATE

It' morning and George wakes to the sound of the wind whipping through the apartment. The storm has turned north, and the outer edge is passing by. George gets up and walks to the window. George stands there and closes his eyes. George smells the ocean air.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

George walks into the kitchen still a little asleep and opens the refrigerator to get a drink.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

George walks into the living room with a drink in his hand and sits down on the couch. He places the drink on the coffee table and picks up the TV Remote. George clicks on the TV and scans channels until he reaches the weather channel. A WEATHERMAN was in the Keys with a live story.

WEATHERMAN (ON TV)

Here in the Keys things are starting to come back to life with the storm moving up the Florida coast.

George scans the pictures going across the screen to try and catch a glimpse of something he recognizes and his Grandfather's home.

WEATHERMAN (ON TV)

As you can see the damage is sporadic across Big Pine Key, with a few houses completely destroyed.

GEORGE (TALKING TO THE TV)

What homes were destroyed?

George continues to scan the images but does not see anything he can recognize. George turns the TV off unable to draw a conclusion on what might have happened to his Grandfather's home. George gets up.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

George exits the apartment complex and crosses the street. It's overcast and windy. George enters the diner.

INT. INSIDE DINER - DAY MOMENTS LATER

George sits in the booth eating breakfast. George is thinking of ways to get information on his Grandfather's home.

EXT. OUTSIDE DINER - DAY

George crosses the street and stops at the new stand.

GEORGE

Morning Yon.

YON

Morning George, what do you have planned for Today?

George is flipping through the paper for news of the storm.

GEORGE

Not a darn thing Yon.

George standing there with his face buried in the newspaper. George looks up with his face lit up.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

I can drive down.

GEORGE

Scratch that Yon, I'm going to take a drive down to the Keys.

YON

You know the storm passed though the Keys?

GEORGE

That's why I'm going.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

George walks down the street and back into the apartment complex.

INT. GEORGES APARTMENT - DAY

George wanders through the apartment gathering things. He throws some cloths into bag, grabs his backpack and checks the small tent and sleeping bag.

INT. APARTMENT ENTRANCE - DAY

George exits the apartment with the few bags that he has packed.

EXT. APARTMENT PARKING - DAY MOMENTS LATER

George goes through the storage locker in the parking area. George pulls out a box and begins packing it with a flashlight, lantern, radio and camp stove. George pulls out a cooler and puts everything into the trunk on his car. He stops at the car door with a surprise look on his face. He had never just dropped things so easily to go on an adventure. George slides into the front seat and pulls out.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

George pulls up, gets out of his car and enters the store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

George picks up a basket and begins shopping with a purpose. George puts several sodas and water in the basket. George begins picking snacks off the shelf at random including beef jerky, gum and gummi bears. George empties the basket on the counter and the CLERK rings them up.

CLERK

Is there anything else I can get you?

GEORGE

I'm going to need a bag of ice.

CLERK

I'll ring that up, but you have to get it out of the icebox outside.

George pays the clerk and leaves.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

George exits the store with bags in hand, opens the car and puts the bags with the food on the passenger's seat. George walks to the trunk, open it and puts the drinks in the cooler. George walks over to the icebox and get out a bag of ice and heads back to the car trunk. George drops the bag on the pavement to break it up then pours it over the drinks and closes the cooler along with the trunk. George walks back to the front door of the car, opens it and slides in.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

George is making his way south to get on to route 1. As George drives across the bridge and on to Key Largo, George cannot help but notice how much it has changed. As a boy Key Largo seemed more like another world to him. George thinks about his Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

You know boy, at one time the Keys where run by Pirates.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

They call this progress.

EXT. OVER WATER - DAY

From above you can see George driving in his car across the Keys.

INT. CAR - DAY

As George drives, the commerce thins out. With the music playing and the windows rolled down, George works his neck

back and forth as if the tension is easing up. The drive is relaxing him.

INT. CAR - DAY

Reaching Marathon Key George begins to hit traffic heading south and he's brought back to reality.

INT. CAR - DAY

As George enters the Bihia Honda Start Park everything seems fine, some of the palm trees seem a little bard but others are fine.

INT. CAR - DAY

As George reaches Big Pine Key it is a different story, some palm trees are laid on their sides and debris is scattered everywhere, you can tell a storm had come through.

INT. CAR - DAY

George pulls on to Long Beach Dr. and slowly makes his way through the debris. George's Grandfather lived on a finger of land on the south side of Big Pine Key. George thinks about his Grandfather.

YOUNG GEORGE (V.O)

Why did you build your house here?

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

I built it here because it is detached from the main key, there are few people living here and because I won the property in a card game.

Debris is scattered everywhere. As George makes his way further and further, George is surprise at how one house is destroyed and the next is not.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

George pulls up to his Grandfather's property and it is obvious that the shack was not spared. The shack is reduced to nothing more than a pile of lumber. George backs his car in and gets out. George is not really too surprised at what he finds.

George walks around the shack and on to the beach. The sand is soft, and the ocean is just as green as George remembers.

George walks up what is left of the wood slat walkway and around the other side.

As George rounds the corner George is surprised at what he finds. Sitting by itself, where it had always been kept, is the leaky blue boat, upside down, just as George had left it when he boarded the place up.

George walks up and turns the boat over. There tied to the inside are the oars, seat cushions, bailing pale and makeshift sail his Grandfather had made. George turned the boat back over then continues to look around. All George can find is wood and tin from the roof of the shack.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

George is standing in front of what is left of the shack when DAVE ORTIZ walks up.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George is that you?

GEORGE

Yes, Dave?

Dave comes walking up with his hand stretched out.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

How have you been my friend?

George, standing in front of what was his Grandfather's home thinks the question is a little stupid but grabs Dave's hand and gives him a half hug.

GEORGE (CONFUSED)

Where are you coming from, the restaurant is back by the highway?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Ah, we built a new home last year about a quarter mile down the road.

GEORGE

How did it stand against the storm?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

A lot better than your Grandfather's shack.

They both stand there looking at what is left.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Our place is going to need some work on the roof but basically it's intact. This one on the other hand is going to need more than work on the roof.

Dave points to something in the middle of the shack rubble.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George, is that a showerhead sticking up there?

GEORGE

Ya, and somewhere below it is the bathtub. Do you know how many showers I took in that thing?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

No George I don't, does it have some sort of sentimental value?

GEORGE

No, but that stupid thing stood in the corner of the shack with no walls around it at all. In order to take a shower, you had to get naked and climb in with no privacy.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Didn't the floor get wet George?

GEORGE

No, it had a curtain, but anyone in there could see you naked before you climbed in.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

It looks like you lost everything.

GEORGE

You're telling me.

George points to the boat.

GEORGE

The only thing left is that stupid boat over there.

George and Dave walk over to the boat.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Boy George, I can't tell you how many times that boat got carried away by storms. Your Grandfather would not tie it down. Sometimes I think he liked it that way, just to see where it would end up. Do you remember Miss. Rivera who lived down the road?

GEORGE

Yes.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

One storm parked that boat on her front lawn and your Grandfather and her really hit it off.

GEORGE

What do you mean, I don't remember anything special about Miss. Rivera?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Well you don't, but except for the summer when you were here, your Grandfather and Miss. Rivera really gave the town something to talk about. Especially whenever they were spotted skinny-dipping.

GEORGE

Dave, come on, are you kidding me, Miss. Rivera?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

She may have been old, but she had a great body and could cook. Your Grandfather was a man after all.

George stands there with a perplexed look on his face pulled between the memory he had of his Grandfather from when he was a boy and the thought of seeing his Grandfather

running down the beach with Miss. Rivera naked. A mental picture he cared not to see. George shivers.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
So, George has the FEMA inspector been by?

GEORGE
No, you're the first person I've run in to since I got here a while ago.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
Well he should be here soon.

George and Dave sit down on the upside-down boat to wait.

GEORGE
Dave Ortiz, I always wondered why you had an American first name rather than Cuban.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
Cuban? What are you talking about, I'm Mexican.

GEORGE
You're what?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
I'm Mexican and proud of it.

GEORGE
What is a Mexican doing living 100 miles from Cuba surrounded by Cubans?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
I'm unique.

GEORGE
So, that's what you call it.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)
Ya unique. My father and mother moved across the country in a truck picking fruit. They ended up in the fields surrounding Orlando, but my father worked as a mechanic wherever he went because the pay was better. He always

said a greasy hand full of dollars is better than a clean hand full of pennies.

GEORGE

Your father said that did he, quite the philosopher.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

You got it. Anyway, they kept moving from place to place until they ended up down here in the Keys where I was born. The doctor did not understand Mexican Spanish and neither did the Cuban interrupter, so it reads Dave Ortiz on my birth certificate.

GEORGE

Did you ever ask what your mother and father wanted your name to be?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Every time I did, my father told me that I was a scrawny baby and Dave was good enough. Anyway, while I was growing up my father would bring home the Cubans that worked with him to help work on our house and my mother would feed them dinner. Word got around about how good a cook my mother was and the restaurant down the road offered her a job. The next day a hurricane hit the Keys and the restaurant owner's home was destroyed. When my mother showed up to work, she found the owners packed and ready to leave so my father and mother made a deal with the owners and the Ortiz restaurant was open for business.

GEORGE

So, all this time I thought you were Cuban and owned a Cuban restaurant.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

It's really Mexican food.

GEORGE

Why does it say Fine Cuban Cuisine?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Well the Cubans liked my mother's cooking better than the Cuban food they were used to and what do the tourist know. They can't go to Cuba, and Mexico is on the other side of the gulf so what do they have to compare it to, Taco Bell?

GEORGE

I guess you're right, the food is great.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

A few years back when Cuban food was big, I had the Fine Cuban Cuisine sign made to attract more customers and it worked.

GEORGE

You know it's funny, I've eaten in your family's restaurant ever since I was a boy and started coming to visit my Grandfather in the summer. I never knew the difference. No wonder I stopped trying Cuban restaurants, the food never tasted right. So, you're a Mexican/American named Dave who owns a Cuban restaurant that serves Mexican food. I guess that is unique.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Na that's not unique. The other two Cuban restaurants in the area are owned by the same Puerto Rican family that retired down here from New York. I said I'm unique because you won't find another Mexican named Dave in the Keys. Well, I'm going to take a walk down the road and look for this FEMA guy.

GEORGE

Are you sure it's ok that he looks at my place, I mean I didn't call anyone or fill out any forms?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Sure, all you need is the name of your insurance company and the policy number.

Dave gets up and walks away. George watches as Dave walks down the road.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Great, all I need is the insurance company's name and policy number.

The last thing George wanted to do was call his EX WIFE and ask her for help, but she had the policy. George stands up, popped open his cell phone and hit the speed dial.

EX WIFE (O.S)

Hello?

GEORGE

It's me.

EX WIFE (O.S)

Where are you?

GEORGE

I'm in the Keys.

EX WIFE (O.S)

The Florida Keys?

GEORGE

Yes, I'm at my Grandfathers property.

EX WIFE (O.S)

What are you doing there, didn't the hurricane go through there Yesterday?

GEORE

Yes, that's why I came down here.

EX WIFE (O.S)

Was the house damaged?

George turns and looks at the rubble left sitting on the pilings.

GEORGE

It's bad enough and that's why I am calling. I'm going to need the insurance policy number for the FEMA report.

EX WIFE (O.S)

What insurance policy number?

GEORGE

The one for the homeowner's insurance.

EX WIFE (O.S)

Your Grandfather's property is not covered by the homeowner's policy.

GEORGE

Sure it is, it was an addition to our original home owners insurance.

EX WIFE (O.S)

I don't use that insurance company anymore.

GEORGE

You what?

EX WIFE (O.S)

When you moved out, I changed insurance companies to save money and dropped the insurance on your Grandfather's property.

GEORGE (GETTING ANGRY)

WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN I MOVED OUT?

EX WIFE (O.S)

Well it was your idea to move out.

GEORGE

YOU SAID YOU WANTED MY OUT. Wait a minute, I've been paying you an extra \$55.00 a month for the past four years to cover the insurance. What have you been doing with the money?

EX WIFE (O.S)

Well I have expenses.

GEORGE

When were you going to tell me you dropped the insurance? God I'm standing in front a disaster here and you're telling me I can't even collect insurance because you dropped the policy.

EX WIFE (O.S)

Well you wanted that rat shack of a house, not me. It's your responsibility.

George, infuriated, closes the phone and hangs up on her. A few seconds later, it begins to beep. George looks at the caller ID and it is her calling him back. George turns the phone off. George walks back over to the boat and sits down.

EXT. GRANDFATHER SHACK - DAY

Dave comes walking back down the road. George is sitting in the sand, leaning against the boat, holding his cell phone. Dave walks up to where George is sitting.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George, I caught up to the FEMA guy and he'll be down here in about an hour.

GEORGE

It doesn't matter.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

What do you mean?

GEORGE

It turns out that the homeowner's insurance I had on the place was canceled a few years ago.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Canceled?

GEORGE

Ya, my Ex changed insurance companies and drop the insurance on this place to save money. Not to mention the fact that I have been paying her \$55.00 a month just for the insurance on this place and she has been keeping the money.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

So, you don't even have the insurance to have it removed.

GEORGE

No, what do you mean have it removed?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

When the FEMA guy gets here, he'll condemn the dwelling and you'll have to have it removed by a demolition company.

GEORGE

What?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Ya, they will not let you leave it this way and it will have to be done in 60 days.

GEORGE

Great, something else to drain away what little bit of savings I have. What do you think that will run me?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Last year a friend payed \$2,500 dollar to have a small shack demolished but it was still standing. You could always sell it.

GEORGE

I don't think it would be very high on the list of resale properties with a demolished shack sitting on it.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

No George, there are always people looking to buy wood after a store. They use it to repair their sheds or burn it for heat.

GEORGE

How much do you think I could get for it?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

At least a couple hundred bucks and the best part is they would remove it from the pilings.

Dave looks over at the boat.

DAVE

At least the boat's still here.

GEORGE

Actually, I thought it was pretty strange that the house was destroyed, and the boat was still sitting where I left it.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Strange?

GEORGE (GETTING ANGRY)

No Dave, strange would have been that the house was still sitting here, and the boat was gone considering that the houses on both sides were destroyed. It would also have meant that I at least had some luck left in my life.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Gees George, I'm sorry. Do you want any help digging around to see if there is anything left?

GEORGE

No, I completely emptied the place when I boarded it up, it was just a shell.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

What's that green box under the back door?

George looks over at the back of the pile and under what was the back door there is some sort of green box. George stands up and puts his cell phone in his pocket.

George and Dave walk over to the back of the rubble and stare at the green box.

GEORGE

I'm not sure, give me a hand.

Working together, they manage to free the box and it turns out to be a small closet that stood in the kitchen by the back door. They stand the closet up and open it. Inside is George's Grandfather's fishing poles and gear.

GEORGE

Well look at that.

George pulls a long fishing pole out.

GEORGE

This one was my Grandfather's and the small one is mine.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

At least they made it thought the storm.

GEORGE

I don't find that very exciting, if the shack were still standing and the poles were broken in two that would be exciting.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George, you have to turn your attitude around and look on the bright side. Well I'm going to head over to the restaurant, you come by for dinner on me, OK George?

GEORGE

Sure Dave, maybe my car can break down on the way.

DAVE

Ah George, you worry too much, I'll see you later.

George puts the fishing pole back and leaves the closet standing there with the door open. George walks back to the boat and sits down. George stares at the open closet and the fishing poles. George thinks about what Dave said and how quickly his adventure had turned to disaster. George's cell phone begins to vibrate, and the caller ID reads work. George flips the phone open.

GEORGE

Hello?

BOB

George it's Bob.

GEORGE

What's up Bob?

BOB

George, I just spent an hour with management and a bunch of the consultants they brought in being questioned about what you were working on and what I could tell them.

GEORGE

What did you tell them?

BOB

What do you think I told them? I told them everything, which was nothing, because I don't know anything. You know George there are a lot of rumors floating around here about you and what could happen.

GEORGE

Well Bob, if it is scaring them, I can give you a few more rumors to spread.

BOB

Come on George this is serious.

GEORGE (GETTING ANGRY)

Serious Bob? I don't have a job, I'm sitting in front of what was my Grandfather's home that I just found out has no insurance on it, and you want me to take managements issues as serious. You've got to be joking. I don't work for that company anymore and the fact that management brought in a group of consultants that know as little as they do, actually, brightens my day. Not to be rude Bob but have a nice day.

George closes the phone and hangs up on Bob. Recognizing his need for a diversion, George walks to the car, pops the trunk, opens the cooler and pulls out a diet Dr. Pepper. George walks back down to the beach, props himself up against a piece of driftwood and begins to relax.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

There is no reason to get worked up,
it's not going to solve a thing.

EXT. BEACH IN FRONT OF GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

It's late afternoon, and George, now relaxed walks to the car and pulls the tent and sleeping bag from the car trunk.

George walks back to the boat and begins to make himself a nice campsite next to it.

EXT. NEXT TO GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

George is standing next to the tent. George zips the tent closed. George walks back to the road and begins walking towards the restaurant.

EXT. OUTSIDE CUBAN RESTAURANT - DAY

The sun is going down. Dave is outside the restaurant standing at a barbecue cooking on the grill. George walks up and looks around the parking lot.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George, I see you made it, did your car
break down?

GEORGE

No, I decided to walk so that way it
couldn't break down.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

That's positive, I think.

George walks over and sits at one of the tables sitting
near the barbecue. Dave stops turning meat and closes the
barbecue.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

What do you want to drink George?

GEORGE

What will get me drunk without killing
the taste of the food?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

I have just the thing, tequila.

GEORGE

Are you kidding me? I think I'll stick
with a rum and coke.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Suit yourself. I think the cokes are
still cold, we lost electricity about
an hour ago and that's why we're eating
outside.

GEORGE

Whatever you have Dave is fine with me.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Hey SUZETTE bring out the rest of the
food and some rum and coke.

GEORGE

Dave, your wife Suzette, is she Mexican
too?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Na, she's from Brazil, and it's a good
thing I married her before my mother
passed so she could teach her how to
cook.

GEORGE

Suzette, did her parents have a bad interpreter also?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Na, she didn't like her name to begin with, so she changed it when she came to the states.

Suzette comes out carrying a tray of food and drinks. She walks over to the table where George is sitting.

SUZETTE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

How have you been George?

George gets up and gives Suzette a hug.

GEORGE

You would not believe me if I told you.

SUZETTE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Well you're here now and we have lots of food because the tourists are staying away, so let's eat.

The three of them sit down and begin to eat. They spend the evening eating, drinking and talking about life with a side story or two about George's Grandfather and Miss. Rivera.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

George comes walking up a little unstable and makes his way into the tent.

EXT. NEXT TO GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

George wakes up early and looks around the tent. There, in the corner of the tent is George's wallet, cell phone, sunglasses and flashlight. George picks up the sunglasses and climbs out of the tent. The sun is up, and the sky is blue. George is half asleep and half hung over. George walks over to the bushes and pulls down his shorts to pee. George scratches his head as he completes nature's call. When George finishes, he pulls his shorts up, walks over to the car and retrieves a toothbrush with a bottle of water.

George stands there brushing his teeth and spitting the water on to the ground. George puts the toothbrush back in the car and splashes some water on his face then wipe his face with a towel. George is awake and ready to go. George rubs his stomach but it's still full from last night's dinner. With his water in hand George walks down to the beach to relax.

EXT. ON THE BEACH IN FRONT OF THE SHACK - DAY

George looks at the driftwood he had been leaning against the day before and walks over to a piece of plywood laying nearby. George picks it up and walks back. George fashions himself a lounge chair from the plywood and the piece of driftwood.

EXT. ON THE BEACH IN FRONT OF THE SHACK - DAY

George looks up toward the shack from the beach and sees the closet sitting there with the door still open. George can see the fishing poles and looks over at the boat. George looks back at the ocean and thinks for a while.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Why not? It's not like I have anything else to do.

George gets up and starts working.

George walks up to the boat, flips it over and drags it down to the water's edge.

George walks back to his car and grabbed the snacks, cooler and radio from the car.

George walks back to the boat and puts the things into the boat. George then headed back to the shack and the closet for the fishing poles.

George pauses looking at his Grandfather's fishing pole. George pulls it from the closet and looped around the reel of the pole is the tattered canvas bag containing fishing gear. His Grandfather's fishing hat with its wide brim and neck strap is also attached to the pole. George pulls his pole out also and heads back to the boat.

George unties the bailing pale from inside the boat and heads for a clump of debris that has been pushed up by the

waves. George begins flipping over pieces of debris and gathering hermit crabs.

On the way back to the boat George finds a kid's sand bucket that he dumps the crabs into then returns to the boat.

George re-ties the bailing bucket back in the boat, puts the sand bucket up against the stern and unties the oars. George pushes the boat into the water and jumps in.

INT. BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

George drops the oars into the oarlocks and fastens the safety latches over them. Oars in place George begins to row at a steady pace over the small breaking waves and away from shore.

EXT. IN BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

A quarter-mile out George drops the ends of the oars into the boat and turns around. The leaky old boat has an inch of water rolling below the floorboard slats. George pulls a section up and with a few quick scoops bails out as much as he can. George looks at the anchor line which is fastened to the bow but there is no anchor at the other end. George thinks about his Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

You know someday, I'm going to buy an anchor for that anchor line.

George turns his attention to the fishing poles laying against the bow. Rather than picking up his pole George picks up his Grandfather's pole. For George this was the pole he had always wanted to use. Pulling a hook, leader and weight from the canvas bag George begins tying things up.

GEORGE

Now for some bait.

This was the part that George hated. George pulls a hermit crab from the bucket, wedges it under a loose seat board and with a sharp blow crushes the shell apart just like his Grandfather had done. Just as he did when he was a boy, George looks at the crab and cringes. George cringes again

as he hooks the crab with the fishhook. George lowers the line into the water and begins to fish.

EXT. IN BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

George pulls the pole and feels the line for any tension. George reels it in to make sure the crab was still there and lowers it back down. George checks the shore and notices the current has moved him northeast along the shore. George thinks about his Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

When your fishing adrift in a boat, the most important thing is to know where you are going because getting back depended on it.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George is beginning to get hungry, so he opens up the potato chips from the snack bag.

After a good amount of chips George began to get tired so he puts the bag away, loops the line used to tie in the oars around the reel, placed the pole between his legs and leans back against the bow of the boat the same way he had seen his Grandfather do some many time.

George pulls the brim of his Grandfather's hat down and as he closes his eyes, he can hear his Grandfather talking.

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

It's ok to take a nap but that's no reason to lose your pole overboard.

George smiles thinking of the simplicity in that but wondered if his Grandfather had to lose a pole overboard before he did too.

EXT. IN THE BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

George wakes up with a pinching pain in his leg. He looks down and the line looped around the reel is creasing his leg. George grabs the pole and pulls back to release his leg. The heavy shaft on the pole is bent ninety degrees and George has a hard time holding it up. George stands up to get into a better position, then sits on the middle seat. George sits there in complete surprise with his

sunglasses hanging down the front of his chest and his hat hanging down his back. As he began to gather himself, George is quite surprised that he has even managed to hook a fish. George pulls back on the pole and feels the strong pull of the fish. George notices a strange taste in his mouth and reaches for a bottle of water. After a few swallows he tastes again and recognized what is causing the taste, it is the adrenaline flowing through his body, something he had not tasted in a long time. Leaning back, George pulls against on the poll. After a few minutes, George realizes that his hands are becoming numb. The surprise and adrenaline had frozen his hands to the pole. George pulls one hand loose from his grip and flexes it. He can feel the blood pulse through his palm as he looks at his hand and fingers. After a few seconds he does the same with the other hand and eases his grip on the pole. George starts to relax a little. George puts his sunglasses and hat back on and calms down. George pulls the pole again and realizes he is not sure what he should do. As a boy all they ever did was reel the fish in, here was a fish that was not going to be reeled in so easily. George looks around and notices a wake behind the boat, the fish is pulling the boat. George leans back on the pole. George stares off into the distant ocean and deep blue sky. George looks to see just how far from shore he is then whips back around. Back and fore his head goes but he cannot see the shoreline. Dropping the pole, George stands up. The pole wedges up against the bow held fast by the line attached to it. George looks around again and all he can see is ocean in all directions because a haze has moved in. George sits back down and begins to think about what he should do. George looks at the sun and cannot get any bearing because it is right overhead. George looks at his watch and it is just after noon so that explains that.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

What do I do?

George reaches into his pocket for his cell phone, but it is not there.

Looking at the floorboards of the boat George realizes he has left it in the tent sitting next to the flashlight. George looks at the line in the water and can see that the fish is pulling him to the right rather than straight.

George looks around the boat and takes stock of what is there, the cooler full of drinks, the bag of snacks, the oars, bailing pale and makeshift sail. With his hands clasped tight, George sits there and realizes that he is not in any immediate danger.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF NERVOUSLY)

I've got food, water and I can raise the sail or row. In a little while the sun will have moved, and I can get my bearing.

George could hear his Grandfather voice in his thoughts.

GRANDFATHER (O.S)

The Keys are a long chain of islands with a bunch of bridges. All you have to do is row northwest and you can't miss them.

George relaxes his clinched hands and looks at the pole still wedged against the bow by the pull of the fish. George reaches down and picks the pole up. The fish is strong and except for the pull he could not feel anything at the end of the line. George pulls the pole back and begins to crank the reel, pull and crank just like he had seen on the TV shows. After a few repetitions, the reel begins to spool the line out. George reaches for the drag but cannot turn the knob any tighter, the salt-water corrosion has frozen it solid. A few more repetitions of pulling and reeling and again the line spools out.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

This is one strong fish maybe a shark or marlin.

EXT. IN BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

George can feel his stomach moving and a few seconds later it growls. The big dinner the night before was no longer there to make him feel full. George lays the pole back against the bow, pulls over his bag of snacks and begins to look through it. George pulls out the bag of gummies. Sliding his legs over the side of the boat and relaxing against the other side George begins to eat.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Not exactly lunch but then again, I did
have a big dinner.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

The ocean is very calm, and the boat is rocking easily up and down. George feels at ease just the way he did when he was a boy. George finishes the bag of gummies. Looking around the boat George spots the radio and clicks the switch to turn it on. The sun feels good as the music plays, George closes his eyes and soon he is asleep.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

It's early evening when George wakes up with a cold chill all over his body. A small storm has come across the ocean and the drizzle mixed with the breeze has quickly cooled him off. Swinging his legs back into the boat George can feel pain coming from several parts of his body. As a boy he could sleep in any position in the boat but now as a man the sharp angles are more than he can take. George stands up to stretch and looks around. All he sees is ocean in all directions. George looks at his watch and it reads 5:30pm but with the storm he cannot see the sun. George looks down at the pole and the line is tight. With what he can make out on the horizons in all directions the boat is heading west. George reaches down and picks up the pole. Surly the fish is tired by now. George begins to reel the fish in slowly pulling and cranking the reel. Soon the first red marker appears on the line. His Grandfather had marked the line with red dye every ten feet clear up to fifty, so he had an idea about how deep he was fishing.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

That's the Fifty feet marker.

George continues to crank and now he can see the ten-foot mark coming out of the water.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Ten-foot mark, just about there.

Just as the ten-foot mark reaches the tip of the pole the fish makes a run and within a few seconds the fifty-foot mark has disappeared below the surface. Once it stops,

George begins again. When the thirty-foot mark clears the surface, the fish is no longer in front of the boat but right alongside. George leans over the boat and looks down into the water. The dark clouds above make it hard to see but he can make out a shadow that is thin and longer than the boat. George strains to make out an image but between the dark clouds and the drizzle landing on the surface of the water a shadow is all he can see as the fish makes another run.

EXT. IN BOAT ON THE OCEAN - DAY

George looks down at his watch and it is nearly 7:00pm. After nearly two hours of fighting the fish he is no closer to bringing it in.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Boy this is a strong fish. How can he
keep going?

The sun is below the dark clouds and the fish is pulling him towards the sun, west. George can see what appeared to be land right below the sun so with little time left George decides to cut the fish loose. George puts the pole down and begin looking for a knife. His Grandfather always kept a knife in the boat, but he cannot find it. George looks around for something suitable to cut the line but except for what he brought aboard, the boat is empty. George pulls the line in by hand, wraps it around each hand and pulls. The line pulls deep creases into his hands. The nylon line does not stretch, and the harder George pulls the deeper the creases. George grimaces in pain. He slowly pulls his hands free. George looks around again but there is nothing in the boat he can use to cut the line. Looking to the horizon again, George can still see what he thinks is land and can see that the fish is still pulling him in that direction. Pulling the oar handles up George begins to row with the fish. The rowing warms George up and feels good since the drizzle has made him quite cold. George rows at a steady pace.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

The sun is fully set, and George can no longer see what appeared to be shoreline but he keeps rowing.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

Darkness is complete, George stands up on the seat to look around, but he cannot make out anything in any direction. The storm has passed, and the stars are out. George's Grandfather never taught him how to read the starts so he cannot navigate by them.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Grandfather, why didn't you teach me
how to read the starts?

George pulls the oars in and begins feeling around for the bag of snacks. George pulls a bag out and opens it. The smell of corn chips fills the air and George begins to eat. The salt tastes good, because of all the rowing his body is now craving salt. George sits there in the dark crunching chips and looking for lights on the horizon. The fish is still pulling the boat. George feels around in his snack bag and pulls out the bag beef jerky and eats some. George feels for the cooler and reached inside. It is still half full of ice and he quickly finds a diet Dr. Pepper. George feels water on his feet so he finds the pale and bails a few scoops into the ocean. Sitting there George thinks about his Grandfather and wondered if he had ever been out on the ocean at night. Behind him George can hear a horn from a boat far off in the distance and George begins to feel alone. George reaches around and finds the radio laying on the floor. It's a radio and flashlight in one that runs off of electricity that is generated by cranking it up.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

I thought this was one of the stupidest
things I ever bought but I'm glad I
have it now.

As George cranks the music begin to come through again, so he sits there cranking for several minutes. George stands up and he can see several lights in different directions, so he relaxes. The night air is really starting to pull the warmth from his body. George turns the flashlight on and unties the makeshift sail from the side of the boat. George sits down, leans up against the bow and pulls the sail over him to keep himself warm. George looks up at the stars. A little drizzle begins to fall again so George

pulls the sail over his head and lays down. George stuffs one of the seat cushions under his head. Laying there George can feel the pole against his shoulder. George reaches over and runs his hand down the pole and along the taut line. George does not understand why but he can feel a vibration coming through the line. George pulls his arms in tight and begins to warm up. George turns the light off and with the music playing George begins to drift off to sleep.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George wakes up with the extreme urge to pee. Pulling the sail back George can see that the sun is already up, and the sky is clear. That does not matter though because his bladder is just about ready to burst. George pulls himself up and leaning against the side of the boat then takes care of business. George stretches back and forth trying to work the kinks out of several parts of his body. George wraps and ties the sail back to the side of the boat. George notices that between the rain the day before and the ocean the boat had swelled up and the leaking has stopped. George stretched again and looks at his watch, it reads 7:45am. With the sunup and the time, George can now reference his location better. George looks off to the east and can see a large ship sitting on the horizon. To the west George cannot see a thing but scanning to the north George is able to make out what appeared to be a structure maybe a lighthouse.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Well I can still see shore.

George looks down at the pole and the fish is still pulling him west. George sits down. The taste in his mouth is a strange mixture of beef jerky and corn chips, which is not going away without some help.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Breakfast!

George reaches for a bottle of diet Dr. Pepper sitting in the cup holder. George takes a swig and rinsed back and forth then spit it overboard.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Well, that's not mouthwash but at least it tastes better than the taste I woke up with.

George looks through his bag of snacks. George smells the corn chips and wrinkles his face up.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

No chips this morning.

George opens the cooler even though the drinks are cold the ice is all melted. George pulls out a Gatorade and sits back to finish waking up. George cranks on the radio for a minute and a morning drive talk show comes on the radio. George moves the dial until he hits the oldies station.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Ah, much better than that constant blather.

George looks at the bottom of the boat and it is no longer leaking.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Well at least the wood has swelled up and no longer leaking.

Figuring by now that the fish had to be tired, George picks up the pole. George slowly begins to rock and reel, rock and reel. Again, up comes the fifty-foot mark, then the forty and then the thirty. George tries to look down through the water but again all he sees is a shadow before the fish makes a run and pulls out most of the line. George sits the pole back down.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George looks for land, the structure he saw is gone but two ships are still visible. George sits quietly and eats the rest of the chips. George looks at the oars and moves his arms then winces. The fish is still pulling him west. George looks in the direction the line is going in. George puts one oar in the water then begins to row on one side. He soon finds that he can change the fish's direction and has it towing him northwest, so George puts the other oar

in the water and begins to row. George feels quite content sitting there rowing with the music on and chewing his gum.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George looks down at his watch and it is just about 5:45pm. George rotates his shoulders and winces with pain. George can no longer see any ships or land. The wind is picking up and blowing in some very dark clouds. At one end of the cloudbank George can see the occasional lighting strike.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Great, more rain is coming.

George continues to row with the sun over his right shoulder and changing the fish's direction by dropping an oar in the water and letting it drag. George's arms are getting tired. The skin on his arms is irritated by the sun and salt air. George continues to row, even after the sun goes down.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

The storm is now over him and the boat is pitching and rolling in the heavier seas. Lighting strikes are hitting the water at a steady pace. The lighting is like a flash bulb going off. George is quite taken by the view with each strike. The waves are a soft green with the ocean black below them. As the waves pushes the boat up and down, each lighting strike creates a different scene. From floating in the bottom of a bowl of water to sitting on the top of a hill of waves. Behind the lighting comes the rain and George wants to stay dry so he unties the sail and climbs under it with the radio and his bag of snacks. Dinner is beef jerky and a few corn chips from the bottom of the bag. The taste is less than appealing. George is dry and with the passing of the lighting the ocean calms down. George climbs out from under the sail. George leaned back against the bow and the seat cushion. George reaches over and places a finger on the line of the fishing pole. Lying there in the dark George can feel the string vibrating.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

George is shaken from his sleep by a violent bump on the hull of the boat. It is still dark, and the moon is up

providing George with enough light to see the rest of the boat. Bump again and again. Something is hitting the boat. George stands up and looks around but cannot see a thing. George struggled to find the radio and begins cranking to get enough power to light the flashlight. The bumping continued from all around the boat while George cranks as quickly as he can. With a flick of the switch the flashlight is on. George leaned over the side and shines the light into the water just as something hits the boat and sends a splash of water into his eyes causing him to drop the radio overboard. George lunges for the radio and pulls it back into the boat. After wiping his eyes, George slowly leans over the side again. This time George has a tight grip on the radio as he points the flashlight down. The bumping continues and all George can see are shadows moving under the boat. George shines the flashlight on the surface of the water and there is the answer. Fins, George can see fins wherever he shines the light.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Sharks.

George sits down. The sharks continue to bump the boat and strike it with their tails, testing to see what it is. As George sits there in the middle of the seat as the bumping goes on for several minutes, then begin to subside. George has a strange taste in his mouth and he can hear his heart beating. George begins to shake a little, more from the adrenaline than fear but he cannot tell the difference. George looks at his watch and it's 5:15am. George can just make out the hint of the sun's glow coming up on the horizon. George stands up and looks around. All he can see is a few faint lights far away. The fish is pulling the boat east, further out into the ocean and George begins to panic. Quickly George grabbed the line tied to the bailing pale and unties it. George slides the line through the handle of the pale and radio then tied it tight again.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

I don't want to lose this overboard
again.

George pulls the right-hand oar in and starts dragging it in the water. Slowly the boat begins to turn.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

The sun breaks the surface of the horizon and the fish is again towing the boat west into the setting moon. George switches oars and begins turning the fish northwest.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

With the sun bright in the east George looks around and can see a ship heading north but that is all.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George's morning breath is growing worse each morning and with what is left of some lemonade, George tries to wash it away. George wrinkles his face up from the taste. George raises his arm and smells. George is also beginning to smell. George picks through what is left of his snacks but does not eat. George picks up the radio and begins cranking. George turns the radio on but this time there are fewer stations to tune in. George opens up the cooler and what he finds is one bottle of water, one bottle of diet Dr. Pepper and one bottle of Gatorade floating inside. George stares at the cooler for a minute and pulls out the diet Dr. Pepper. As he takes a drink, George notices the water dripping from the bottle the looks in the cooler. The cooler has at least a gallon of water sloshing around inside. George gathers up the few empty bottles and begins to fill them one by one, capping them. George looks at his watch and then at the sun, it is just after 9:00am. George cranks of the radio a few more times. George pulls the oars in and starts to row. His shoulder makes the first objection and then his arms as he winces. George is sore from fingertip to fingertip and all the way across his back.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

What I wouldn't give for some
Ibuprofen.

George continues to row keeping the sun behind him and a little to his right. George rows all morning stopping only to drink and crank the radio.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George looks around and far off in the distance and squints. Ahead of the boat George can see a shoreline. George goes back to rowing.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George stops rowing and looks at his watch. It's nearing 3:00pm. George looks around and the shore is defiantly closer, but George cannot make out anything to the right or left. George goes through his snacks for something to eat and sits there eating for a while.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George picks up the pole and gives it a pull. For the first time George feels the fish pull back. George pulls again and so does the fish. George begins reeling the fish in slow but sure inch by inch. When the fifty-foot mark clears the surface, the fish makes a run pulling out the line George has reeled in. This time thou, something is different, George can see the line is moving away from the boat, the fish is rising. George watches as the point where the line enters the water is getting further and further from the boat. George leans back on the pole and watches as that point disappears. The fish, no more than one hundred feet in front of the boat, breaks the water. It sailed up and out with its whole-body flailing from side to side. With the pressure on the line released and pole snaps back against George's chest and sends George sliding off the seat. Before George can pick himself up the fish disappears below the surface of the water. George sits there amazed at what he saw. The fish appeared longer than the boat. George pull himself up and sit back on the seat.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

What was that line? "We're going to need a bigger boat"

George smiles and sits there with his heart beating and a dry mouth. George gently lays the pole against the bow and reached for some water. George takes a drink and stares off into the distance. What looks like the shoreline is now on the left side of the boat, so George eases the left oar into the water and hold on while the fish begins to turn.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

With the boat now heading in the right direction George begin to row not noting any pain in his arms or shoulders.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

George rows well into the night and he can see what appeared to be house lights on the shoreline. It is warm this night and George is very tired. George sits and eats some more of the beef jerky. He cranks the radio up and lays across the seat with his feet dangling overboard and his head propped up on the other side. George watches as the couple of lights he can see bobs up and down as he drifts off to sleep. George begins to dream about his Grandfather and his Ex.

INT. GEORGE'S HOME BEFORE HE MOVED OUT - DAY

The dream finds George in his former home, George has just returned from visiting his Grandfather. George sits watching TV and his WIFE is in the kitchen.

WIFE

I really don't understand why you even go down there to see that old man. You only end up wasting the whole weekend and don't get anything done. Then when you get home, you're too tired to do anything. I don't want you wasting the time or money to go down there anymore.

GEORGE

He doesn't have any family left but me. No one to visit him.

WIFE

And why do you think that is? No one but you can stand him. He always smells and that shack he lives in is horrible. It's falling down.

GEORGE

It's all he has. What do you want, he's old.

WIFE

He doesn't have to live like a hermit.

George sits there in a daze tuning out what his wife is saying. The dream takes George to his Grandfather shack after his Grandfather death. George is standing on the porch of the shack knocking harder and harder on the door expecting his Grandfather to answer. George can hear his Grandfather voice calling his name from inside.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

GRANDFATHER (V.O)

George, George.

George is knocking on the door to the shack. George begins to cry, the harder he knocks the harder he cries. The knocking begins to fade in sound and begins to sound like drumming.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

George's eyes flash open and he is awake, but George can still hear the drumming from his dream. George is lying on the seat of the boat curled up. George sits up but cannot get his bearings, is he still asleep or awake. The drumming is coming from all around. George grabs the seat of the boat and tries get himself under control. George reaches for the radio and begins cranking, flipping the switch to the flashlight before there is enough charge. As George cranks, the flashlight comes to life and George points it over the side of the boat. The water is teeming with sharks all around. George slides to the center of the seat and hold on to the flashlight with both hands. The combination of the dream, the sharks and the darkness has him shaking all over. George doesn't even look around for lights on the shoreline he just keeps the flashlight pointed on the cooler with his eyes focused on it too.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

Slowly the drumming begins to fade as well as his fear. George slowly moves up and lays against the cushion leaning against the bow. George can see the moon beginning to rise and he slowly begins to dose off, twitching at any noise.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George wakes up with the feeling of rain falling on his face. George reaches for the radio and pulls the sail over his head. George is tired, tired from the night before. George cranks the radio and begins turning the dial but all he can get is a twenty four hour a day weather channel that was calling for 5-10 mile an hour winds coming out of the south, over cast skies and rain off and on during the day. George cranks the radio more thinking it just needed more power and nothing else will come in. George pulls the sail off and stands up to look around. George cannot see a thing. The shoreline is gone, there are no ships in the distance and the sun is blotted out by the clouds. George stands up on the seat of the boat trying to get a better view but there is nothing to see on the horizon all the way around. George looks at his watch and it read 8:45am then he looks up to the sky. As hard as he tries, he cannot make out any outline or brightness to indicate the suns location. The wind is blowing his hair back and blowing in his face. He turns his head back and forth to get a direction on the wind.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

The radio said the wind was blowing out of the south and it's blowing in my face.

George looks at the line and it's pointing straight out in front of the boat.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

South, that means the boat is heading south. SOUTH! The fish is pulling me south away from land, away from the Keys.

George places his hand on his chin and begins to think.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

How far south has it pulled me? Just last night I could see lights and shoreline now it's all gone, not even a ship in any direction. I've got to get the boat turned around.

George drops to the seat and begins to row with one oar as hard as he can, but the boat is not turning so George switched oars and rows even harder. But still the same. Slowly George begins to panic, George grabs the pole and begins to reel the fish in. George fights frantically but every time he gains a few feet the fish pulls it back out. George fights harder convinced that fish has to tire or give up but the fish fights on. Sitting there with his hands, arms, shoulders and back aching George stops and starts to think.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

What would Grandfather do?

Surprise flashes across George's face.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Cut the fish loose.

The surprise turns to a stupid expression.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF SARCASTICALLY)

Well there's an idea I have not come up with. Now if I only had a knife?

George throws the pole down and watches as it wedges up against the bow under the pull of the fish. George sits down, grabs the last bottle of Gatorade from the cooler and drinks it down. As he begins to calm down he looks at the pole and tries to come up with a way to cut the line.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Cut the line. I can untie the pole and let it go.

George picks up the pole and sits there looking at it.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Grandfather's pole. (pause) I don't want to throw it overboard. But at the same time, I don't want to die out here on the ocean.

George begins to work on the line tying the pole to the boat. George had looped the line around the reel and passed it between the pole and fishing line so the loop

could not come off. The pull of the fish has tightened the knot he tied to the point that it will not budge. George looks at the knot on the other end attaching it to the boat but that has become one solid ball. It was no use, even if he could bring himself to throw it overboard, he could not get it free. George begins to get angry and the anger is fueling a fight. George throws the pole against the bow and begins rowing against the fish as hard as he can, cursing it with every stroke.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Dam fish. Should have been dead by now. What's keeping it alive, it hasn't eaten in the past few days.

The more George rows the angrier he got, pulling like he has not pulled before when he notices the pole move and then slide to the side. George stop rowing and watches as the pole bends and begins to turn the boat around. Slowly George feels the wind move from his face, to the side of his head and then to the back of his head.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

North, he's heading north, but to where? He could be heading north up the eastern seaboard or north up through the Gulf of Mexico. Heading northeast I'm bound to hit land, but it could be days before I reach the coast of Florida or a week to the coast of Mexico. Either way northwest is my only choice.

George drops the left oar into the water and keeps it dragging until he can feel the wind blowing behind his left ear. George pulls the oar in. George gets up and goes to the front of the boat. George raises the makeshift sail to take advantage of the wind. Soon he is bobbing over the waves pulled by the fish and pushed by the wind. George tries rowing also but he is just too tired to keep up, so he sits down and begins to eat what is left of his snacks. The last of the beef jerky goes down hard and the smell of the last few corn chips make him sick. Reaching into the bag, the only thing left is gum.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

What I wouldn't give for a piece of
Dave's barbecue.

George looks at his watch and it is just past noon. George sits there watching the horizon for a sign of anything, land, ship a lost seagull but there is nothing and now the wind is beginning to die down. George looks at the radio lying there silent. George picked up the seat cushion and makes his way to the front of the boat. George pulls down the sail and lays it to the side. George puts the seat cushion up against the side and sits down.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

God what do I do now?

The words surprised him, and George places his hand over his mouth. George closes his eyes and remembers a conversation with his Grandfather.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

Young George is fishing with his Grandfather.

YOUNG GEORGE

I'm confused.

GRANDFATHER

Confused about what?

YOUNG GEORGE

My parents have taken me to a few different churches, and I'm confused about what religion I am. What religion are you?

GRANDFATHER

My boy, I was raised a Baptist and I really took to it because it was all about love of Christ, family and neighbors. It was easy for me because I really did not feel anger or animosity towards anyone but then I entered high school and things got complicated. You see, I liked a number of girls and being nice to them, they liked me but boy did that cause a lot

of problems. Some of these girls were Baptist and some were not. The confusing part was that not only were the Baptist girls fighting with the non-Baptist girls, but they were also fighting with me. It didn't help when my mother told me it was all my fault for being nice to them. I was a Baptist I was supposed to be nice, but now that was what was causing all the problems. Very confusing. After high school I went into the service and right off to war. It really opened my eyes to how much hatred flourished in the world. After witnessing some of the horrors of war it really made me question my faith in a god that could allow such things to happen. After returning home I went back to the Baptist church, but it seemed pointless because I had soured to the idea. I began reading about a lot of religions from Catholic, Judaism, Buddhist, and Muslim. None of them really took. They all had the basically the same idea of worshipping god and treating others with respect. But you see every religion has a history that included horrifying acts performed against mankind by men acting in the name of god. And I'm not just talking about one religion against the other but Catholics against Catholics and Muslims against Muslims.

YOUNG GEORGE

That does not make any since.

GRANDFATHER

Your right. You see I can't tell you what to believe, you have to discover that on your own and just joining a church won't do it. You need to get out there in the world and discover for

yourself what religion, if any, is for you. I can tell you this, what I discovered was that your spiritual relationship with whatever god you choose to believe in is between you and him and no one else's business no matter how hard they try to nose their way in. After all my boy, no one is going to be standing there holding your hand on judgment day.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George opened his eyes. George sits there still thinking. George closes his eyes and thinks about a conversation he had had with Dave when he closed up the shack.

EXT. ON THE BEACH IN FRONT OF GRANDFATHER SHACK - DAY

George and Dave are sitting on the beach having a few beers.

GEORGE

Dave what religion are you?

DAVE

Catholic, you?

GEORGE

I'm not sure.

DAVE

What do you mean not sure?

GEORGE

I have lived my life to the best of my ability and treated people with respect, but the idea of praying and asking God for help, at times, feels futile and half-shameful.

DAVE

That's all I ever do is ask for help. What's wrong with that?

George smiles.

GEORGE

My service time brought me face to face with some horrible things and caused me to commit some of them. Why would God care to help someone who had done such things?

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

George opened his eyes. It's getting late and the sun has finally made an appearance just as it is setting. George stands up to check the direction and the fish is still pulling him northwest. George stands there for several minutes on the seat of the boat looking for signs of land and life. Still no shoreline and no ships on the horizon. George sits down and picks up the pole. George just sits there holding it. No desire to reel it in and no desire to fight the fish any longer. George placed his finger on the line and the vibration is still there.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

It is getting late and George is beginning to fall asleep, so he makes his way to the bow and places one cushion on the floor and one against the side then eases into them. George lays there against the side of the boat holding the pole because he does not want to let it go for fear of breaking the connection with his Grandfather. George looks up and the sky has finally cleared so the stars are shining bright. If only he had learned the stars as a boy maybe they could tell him where he is, besides lost on the ocean. George drifts off thinking about the stars and fall into a deep sleep.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - NIGHT

George wakes up in the dark wondering where he is. The pole is pulling against his shoulder and releasing like a wave up against the boat. All he can see is stars and they are everywhere filling the sky. George gets up and sits down on the seat with the pole in his hands. George can feel the pull and release in his hands and there is a rhythm to it. The moon is rising, and Georg can faintly see the surface of the ocean in front of him and it is calm. George sits there and can feel that the rhythm is

slowing. The fish is growing weak and tired and George can feel it. George sits there holding the pole pull by pull until it stops altogether. George is now staring at the pole as if something is going to happen, but it does not. George puts his finger on the line, and he can no longer feel the vibration, but he can feel something. It was like a tapping one the line, a beat, a heartbeat. George looks out on the surface of the water and he can see the line moving away from the boat, inch by inch until he had to strain to see it in the moonlight. The fish is rising, coming to the surface. The line begins to vibrate again, and it becomes taught. George strains his eyes to see it and now it is his heartbeat he can feel pounding in his chest. When George can no longer see the line in the water, he notices something stirring in the area of water near the end of the line. Straining to see there is a lot of movement all around the same area. It's the sharks and they are after the fish. George drops the pole, grabs the radio and cranks with a fury. George flips the flashlight on and shines it on the area. George can see the fish and the sharks attacking it. George screams.

GEORGE

You bastards leave him along, get away.

George looks for something to throw but there is nothing there. George leans out of the boat and begin slapping the surface of the water to get their attention, but it doesn't work. George screamed again.

GEORGE

Goddamn you leave him alone.

Without thinking, George yanks the radio loose from the line and throws it into the circle of sharks, but they keep attacking. George grabbed the pole and begins to reel the fish in. George thinks if he can get it close, he can fight off the sharks with an oar. George cranks the reel as fast as he can and just when the fish gets close to the boat it makes another run. It disappears beneath the surface and George can tell by the line that it is going deep. George sinks down to the seat and sits there holding the pole with his finger on the line. It is vibrating again interrupted by tugs on the line, the same type of tugs that fish make when biting the bait. It's the sharks,

they are still attacking and there is nothing George can do about. George sits there with a helpless look on his face and tears running down his cheeks. After a while, the tugging stops but the line is still taught and vibrating. George is exhausted so he makes his way back up to the bow and sits down still holding the pole. George drifts off to sleep and begins to dream about fishing with his Grandfather.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

It was a beautiful day with blue skies and calm waters. Young George and his Grandfather are quietly fishing and drifting along in the old boat. George is content to just sit there and fish. George can hear a seagull calling. He looks around but he cannot see it. He looks some more but cannot tell where the sound is coming from. George looks at his Grandfather and he just smiles back. The seagull calls again.

EXT. IN BOAT ON OCEAN - DAY

It's morning and George opens his eyes. The seagull calls again, and he blinks. George is not sure if he is awake or still dreaming. George just lays there and looks around and the seagull calls again. The boat is listing to one side and with the next wave George can feel the boat bump against something. George rises and can see palm trees, so he puts the pole down and pulls himself up on his knees. The boat has washed ashore. George pulls himself over the side of the boat and stands there in the edge of the surf struggling to hold himself up by the side of the boat. A flash of sunlight catches his eye from inside the boat. George reaches in and raises the floor slats of the boat. There laying on the floor is the knife he had been looking for. George picks it up and places it in the pale. George looks down the beach but cannot see anything but palm trees.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

Where am I?

George looks back in the opposite direction and sees an opening in the tree line. George can see a car and a platform with steps. The car has a Florida license plate.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

I must be somewhere along the coast of Florida.

George looks back down the beach but still cannot make out anything. George looks back at the opening in the tree line and the platform. There is something sitting on it. It appeared to be a platform for a small house and sitting in the corner is a tub.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

How odd is that.

George looks back at the car to see if he can see anyone, and in the rear window, George can see a stuffed animal. It's Garfield.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

I have the same Garfield in my car.
(with excitement) Wait that is my car?
Yes, that's my car and over there is my tent.

George cannot believe what he sees.

GEORGE (TO HIMSELF)

That's my car and my tent but what happened to the shack? The fish towed me back to right where I started. The fish?

George pulls himself around the end of the boat but there is nothing there. George looks at the fishing pole and the line is running out into the water, so he picks it up and began to crank the reel. There is no more fight, no more vibration but there is something on the end of the line. As George walks out into the water cranking the reel, up comes the dye markers one by one. Then from below the surface comes the fish. Pulling the fish to the shore George can see that the sharks have ravaged the body of the fish. George reaches in the boat and unties the bailing pale. George takes the pale and knife and wades out to the fish. George rinses out the bailing pale and carves from the carcass a large piece of meat then places it in the pale. Allowing the pale to float at his side George pulls the hook from the fish's mouth, turns the fish around and

pushes the carcass out into the water. George watches as what is left of the proud fish sinks below the surface, to be consumed by the very ocean that gave it life.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

George walks up to the platform with the pale in his hand. The shack is gone. The only thing left is the pilings, the floor and that stupid tub with the showerhead sticking up in the air.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George? Where have you been?

George turns around to find Dave standing there.

GEORGE

Fishing.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Fishing?

GEORGE

Ya, what happened to the shack?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

You told me to sell it and I did. I got you \$300 bucks for the wood and materials.

GEORGE

But where did it go?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

What do you mean?

GEORGE

Well it was just there and now it's gone.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

George, that was a week ago, they brought in two dumpsters and in a few days, they were gone.

GEORGE

Why did they leave the tub?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Well it still works, and I figured if you were going to rebuild you would need a tub. Besides I thought it had sentimental value. They also put the closet over by your tent.

George looks over to the tent and there it stand.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

What do you have there George?

Dave is looking at the pale with the large chunk of fish.

GEORGE

I told you I went fishing. Do you think Suzette could cook this up for lunch?

George hands Dave the pale.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Do you want me to barbecue it?

GEORGE

However you want to cook it is fine with me, I'm going to savor every bite.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

It sounds like you have a big appetite.

George smiles.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Ok George, you head down to the restaurant in a while and we'll have lunch ready for you, I can give the \$300 bucks.

GEORGE

Thanks Dave.

EXT. BOAT BY THE EDGE OF THE WATER - DAY

George walks back down to the boat. George rolls the makeshift sale and ties it to the side. George ties in the oars and seat cushions. George takes the knife and cuts the leader, weight and hook from the end of the line then neatly tucked them back into the canvas bag. Looking at

the knife George pulls up the line that was tied to the end of the pale and ties it around the knife. George reeled in the line and pulls the loop off that kept it from going overboard. George gathers up the fishing gear along with the cooler and carries them to the tent then set them down.

George places the gear back into the closet.

George walks back to the boat and begins to drag it up the beach making his way to the tent. George flips it over and stands there looking at its blue hull as if it had transformed back into the leaky old thing that was waiting for him when he got there.

Scratching his chin, George becomes aware of just how bad the taste in his mouth

EXT. OUTSIDE TENT - DAY

George walks up to the tent. George opens the tent to retrieve his toothbrush. There lying next to his overnight bag of shaving gear is his cell phone. George picks it up and flips it open. The screen is blank, and the battery is dead.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR - DAY

George walks up to the car, gets in and plugs in his cell phone. Unable to stand the taste in his mouth any longer he heads back to the tent.

EXT. OUTSIDE TENT - DAY

George pulls his toothbrush and paste out of his overnight bag and proceeds to brush his teeth. George opens the cooler and with the last bottle of water, washes the bad taste out of his mouth. George reaches down and picks up the overnight bag and his towel then turns and heads for the shack.

EXT. GRANDFATHER'S SHACK - DAY

Walking up the stairs he walks over to the tub, pulls off his T-shirt and shorts, grabs a bar of soap from the overnight bag and steps in the tub. Standing in the tub on this beautifully warm day George never notices the chill of

the water. Nor does he notice the cars driving by. But everyone in the cars sure notice him. Getting naked in what was left of the old shack did not bother George any longer, because there he was standing naked for anyone to see. As George steps from the tub and dries himself off George cannot remember the last time a shower felt so good. It didn't even bother him that he needed a shave. George wraps the towel around his waist and heads back to the tent for some cloths.

EXT. OUTSIDE TENT - DAY

After putting on some clean shorts and a clean T-short, George runs a comb through his hair.

GEORGE

I'm ready for lunch.

George strolls over to the car.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAR - DAY

George slides into the front seat but does not start the engine. George just sits there for a few seconds. George smiles, the idea of driving to the restaurant feels very unappealing. George notices the cellphone flashing with a voice message, so he unplugs it and gets out of the car.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

As George begins his walk to the restaurant, he flips the phone open and presses the button to retrieve his messages.

MESSAGE VOICE (V.O)

Message 1

BOB (V.O)

George, its Bob you need to call me.

MESSAGE VOICE (V.O)

Message 2

BOB (V.O)

George its Bob you need to call me as soon as you get this message.

MESSAGE VOICE (V.O)

Message 3

BOB (V.O)

George its Bob where are you, call me
when you get this message.

MESSAGE VOICE (V.O)

Message 4

BOB (V.O)

George its Bob call me I really need to
talk to you. I don't care what time it
is.

George deletes each message as it finishes. After number
four George begins deleting them as soon as he hears "Its
Bob". After number eight, the last message, George presses
the recall button and Bob answers after only one ring.

BOB (V.O)

George where have you been?

GEORGE

Hi Bob, how are you doing?

BOB (V.O)

How and I doing? How and I doing? I
was about to send out a search party to
begin looking for you. I have been to
your apartment five times and the
doorman said you have not been there in
days. Where have you been?

GEORGE

I was fishing.

George is strolling down the road with a smile on his face
as if he does not have a care in the world.

GEORGE

What's up Bob?

BOB (V.O)

George, we need to talk, can you hold
on while I conference in Bill?

GEORGE

Bill who?

BOB (V.O)

Bill Summers from the accounting department.

GEORGE

Bob I really don't care what is going on back there, I don't work for the company anymore.

BOB (V.O)

Neither do I or Bill and we need to talk to you, hold on.

George continues to walk and after a few seconds, George can hear Bill come on the line.

BOB (V.O)

George are you still there?

GEORGE

Yes Bob.

BOB (V.O)

I've got Bill.

GEORGE

Hello Bill?

BILL (V.O)

Hello George.

GEORGE

Bob is about to jump out of his skin, can you tell me what's going on, because I'm on my way to the restaurant and when I get there I'm hanging up. You have about ten minutes.

BILL (V.O)

Bob you didn't tell him?

BOB

No Bill, this is the first time I've talked to him in a week, he said he has been fishing.

BILL (V.O)

Well George, about thirty minutes after you left, they called me in and offered

me a new position, as a clerk in accounting. They figured they no longer needed a department head and by reducing me to a clerk, which is part time, they would eliminate my benefits, convert my salary to hourly pay and cut my pay by half. They thought they would back me into a corner and there was nothing I could do, so I walked out like you.

GEORGE

Good for you Bob, there are other jobs out there.

BILL (V.O)

I walked out without saying a word. After I left, I called Bob and told him what had happened. Management called him in Monday morning, as head of payroll they were going to offer him the same deal. Bob didn't even wait for the offer, he gathered his things and walked out.

GEORGE

You guys have got to be kidding me. Good for you.

BILL (V.O)

Here's the best part. The consulting company began doing an audit and found over a hundred laptops unaccounted for. They questioned the Infrastructure manager for two hours then went to talk to the IT manager. From there they went to talk to the CFO. By the time they were done, all three were walked out by security.

GEORGE

Really.

BOB (V.O)

The Infrastructure manager told them everything they needed to know. The IT

manager and CFO were working together. The IT manager would have the Infrastructure manager order equipment and the CFO would approve the order. Then they were selling the equipment on Ebay, had been for a few years.

GEORGE

I knew something was going on.

BILL (V.O)

The consulting company is running scared. They've terminating the contract and returned the \$50,000.00 retainer because they don't want to get caught up in the mess.

GEORGE

What about the company?

BILL (V.O)

Corporate headquarter flew people in the next day and they are trying to contain it.

GEORGE

How are they going to do that, they lost us and fired the only ones that were holding things together?

BILL (V.O)

That's why we have been trying to reach you. Bob went in and offered us as a solution.

GEORGE

What do you mean?

BOB (V.O)

I told them we had formed a consulting company and we were ready to walk in and take over Monday morning.

GEORGE

That's great, good for you. I know you'll do a good job.

BOB (V.O)

George, you don't understand, without you it will not work.

GEORGE (LONG PAUSE)

Guys, I'm flattered but I can't go back in there.

BOB (V.O)

Why not, the management that was causing all the issues is gone. Now we'll be the management. Besides, they're giving us the \$50,000.00 retainer. We figured we would take \$10,000.00 each and use the remaining \$20,000.00 to setup the consulting company.

GEORGE (LONG PAUSE)

You don't understand, I want to spend my weekends down here in the Keys.

BOB (V.O)

So, why can't you. In fact, you can work remotely from down there if you want. It's our company. With the fees we'll be charging, your salary will make a big jump and we can work for other clients.

BILL (V.O)

The first goal is to get in there Monday morning and get things stabilized. What do you say George, are you in?

George stops in front of the Restaurant.

GEORGE (LONG PAUSE)

What the hell, I'm in. I'll see you first thing Monday morning.

BILL (V.O)

Thanks George.

BOB (V.O)

Yes, thanks George.

GEORGE

Have a great day.

George ends the call, drops the cell phone into the pocket of his shorts and walks into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

SUZETTE

George how are you doing?

Suzette walks up and gives George a big hug.

GEORGE

I've been fine.

SUZETTE

Dave said you went fishing and he brought me the fish you caught.

George just smiles as Suzette walks him to the booth by the kitchen. George slides in the booth.

SUZETTE

You sit here and I'll bring you your lunch.

In a minute Suzette comes back and placing a plate in front of George and a tray in the center of the table full of fish steaks and vegetables. Dave follows with a bowl of salad.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Here George, I remembered that you liked salad.

GEORGE

Thank you Dave, everything looks perfect.

Dave looks at Suzette.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Now, what are you going to make me for lunch?

George interrupts.

GEORGE

Please, sit down and eat with me,
there's plenty here.

SUZETTE

Are you sure George?

GEORGE

Yes, please it would make me happy if
you did.

Dave motions for Suzette to sit down and heads back to the kitchen while Suzette slides into the booth. Dave returned with some drinks and two plates then slides in too.

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

You know George, the two women that live next-door to us came in a while ago and said they saw a man showering in a tub, naked, just down the road. You wouldn't know anything about that would you?

GEORGE

Are either of these women single?

DAVE (HISPANIC ACCENT)

Well, yes that's why they live together so they can share the expenses.

George sits back and smiles.

GEORGE

Well the next time you see them, tell them that the guy they saw showering naked will be here every weekend and if they see him again naked or otherwise, they should not hesitate to stop in and say hello.

All three begin to laugh.

The camera zooms out and rolls back as George, Dave and Suzette sit eating and laughing.

fade out: