

5-2017

True Form of Greatness

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True Form of Greatness



Michael Terry

Senior Capstone

Literary and Film Analysis

Creative Project

Division of Humanities and Communication

Spring 2017

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Capstone Proposal

Howdy there! My name is Michael Terry, and my concentration is in Literary and Film analysis. For my capstone, I have decided to write a “screenplay” titled *True Form of Greatness*. The story will be fourteen pages and cover a few scenes. There are a few themes, but the bulk of sustenance addressed is discontent with authority; revolt is always followed by an eventual repentance of the rebelling party, and, as time will tell, you will recognize the upheaval. This screenplay will be based on fictional events and focus on flashbacks as its important mode of interpreting time. In non-linear storytelling, readers take in different moments that have created a certain feeling or situation, while also being subjected to time’s internal and external movements. Let’s forget all of that for a second. Here’s a synopsis of the film without spoilers: “In the summer of 1997, succeeding a substandard run-in with the Owls of *Rice University*, childhood friends Jacob Brossard and Vincent D’Avino go on an excursion of a lifetime. Coping with defeat, recompense, bereavement, and everything in between, the Stanford University soon-to-be seniors will devote a triage of heedless months wandering along the littoral sodded shorelines and quaint, picturesque villages on Cape Cod, MA. Contending in the prestigious Cape Cod Collegiate Baseball League with a band of foolish misfits for teammates from all corners of the country, Vincent, Jacob, and those closest with the two must choose whether to embrace or detach themselves from romanticized liaisons that have epitomized an illusory pedestal of tangible love and factual accomplishment. Dawdle in a three-thousand-mile flashback escapade, a journey which pronounces the angst that left its mark all over the nineteen nineties and trounced its way into the new millennium.”

One of the more beneficial takeaways I learned while doing this project is the impact a storyteller can have on an audience’s conception of reality...for the time being. This is one

of the reasons as to why in my story I target various aspects of everyday life that we as humans deal with. One of the themes I target is that of defiance. I target disobedience, not in a strayed relationship, but an underlying friction between a father and son on one specific topical issue. How can two people brutally holler in each other's faces and still carry out a casual conversation? Family conflicts can usually be solved two ways—either you're a family that needs your space to let cooler heads prevail, or you're the type of family that can't go to sleep angry. Dean is the type of guy who can't go to sleep upset, and Marco is becoming the man whose own ego won't allow his conscious to have any weight in his decision making. The father and son have mutual love and admiration for one another, but both have different opinions on how one should conduct themselves. Another one of my underlying themes I hope to divulge is the impact of words. To be bluntly honest, I didn't exactly know how to do that, because I am such a novice when it comes to creative writing. My biggest hopes are to set the table and create something with some real meaning. I wanted Dean and Marco to throw some punches at Vincent about his weight so that I could later set up some of Vincent's hardened insecurities. I wanted to touch on the idea of love, especially first love; "puppy love" is something that sticks, thoroughly, with every reader, and no matter how hard we fight it, a part of it will never exit our personalities. Addiction with prescription drugs, alcohol, and tobacco will be discussed in due time. I highlight a couple action sequences with Dean and a specific brand of cigarettes to give hints to the audience of something looming with his health.

You know that everyday marvel when you lose an allotment of time? Then, eventually, when you snap out of this clock-stopping stupor, there's no recollection of the castle you erected, except the unvarnished truth of the apparition in your mind is far superior to the gnawing fidelity in your forefront? Yes, that transfixed brain seminar that confiscates

time is the ecstasy I visit when a spark ignites my fuse and the fingers hit the keyboard. When I stop, it's not as if I'm dreading the practicality that chalets outside my reticent ivory tower. How can I dread it when the community I inhabit is a major building block to structuring a full-length, or potential full-length, novel, screenplay, etc.? I'd be off my rocker to not acknowledge my surroundings.

The meditation that I have fixated on within my major—literary & film analysis—employs the judiciousness of contextualizing literature & film studies in social, cultural, and historical settings. In no form am I a certified screenwriting erudite, so one could say I took a leap of faith on this one. However, what I lack in veritable experience, I make up for with rigorous resolve. The most distinct format in my movie-loving mind that I could think of, that connects with our Capstone's theme, was taking a crack at a script. How hard could it be? Well, I was in over my head at times. Now, I have never written one of these, so, please bear with me. The story starts out in 1997 and moves quickly to 1991. It is a non-linear outlook. Why? Because those things are interesting. The theme of time that we broadly discussed in Dr. Fletcher's Capstone section helps in any story. When one can show the development of a character and give them strong dialogue (not saying mine is good, but I'm trying hard), you really don't need this innovative, reinvent-the-wheel story to get people's attention; although, you must be brutally honest and in the moment in your attempts. Honesty comes from taking life experiences and spinning them in an entertaining way. People and stories from your inner circle and everyday life become the adhesive, and not always in a direct sense.

Two elusive writers on staff at CSU Monterey Bay helped me in ways I will never forget. Dianna Garcia and Jennifer Fletcher are equally versed in galvanizing students to extract harbored agony that subsists payment free in your body and transcribe your emotions

via written word. The ripening of my dexterous imagination as a writer at California State University, Monterey bay, piloted me to the land of prosperity. This prosperity escalated me to the terminal of providence and “overnighted” me to a haven where the desolate skies had never issued such clangorous benevolence. Sometimes, on lonely nights, I will time travel to distinct epochs of dubious decrees and convalesce opposite conclusions; sometimes...manufacturing yourself as a hero or conjuring a fairytale like climax can mend harrowing lacerations.

I’m not a sage who waits for the stars and the moon to line up, but I do, however, trust in something called destiny. Destiny should have personal enrichment and community involvement. As a writer, one of the trickiest achievements is authenticity—taking a two-story, two-bedroom, two-bath, white picket fence house in rural Indiana and reconstructing that looked over anonymity into a germane bachelor and/or bachelorette townhouse in the Upper East Side. The purpose of my project is to, hopefully, appeal as well as conquer some connection with readers who know what it feels like to have lost a loved one. Every delightful story has a clear villain, so if I didn’t have one, I’d be an absolute dingus. I should say every story has someone who twists fate or manipulates what could have been; this certain someone is looking to derail the bridge that connects us to the "holy grail." If I had to give a specific demographic and audience age group, anybody of any color or any age would enjoy it. The genre of this story falls under coming-of-age, comedy, drama, and romance. Coming-of-age films tend to always be period films and revolve around time. Time helps the protagonist work through an issue and discover methods of becoming a better person. Time can even prove to turn the antagonist into someone we can root for.

The focus of my project within the major learning outcomes consist of *MLO 1*, which is a focus on communication skills. My ability to understand what people want to hear is a

massive tool in my belt. I'm not a con-man, but when it comes to intricate characters, that's where I try my hardest to make my presence known. Within *MLO 1*, we, the students, are supposed to communicate empathetically. The best way to show empathy is to understand that we must be gracious to people; I think I did my best to do that. *MLO 4*, philosophical analysis and understanding ways of being and knowing, helped me develop a story where the main characters have open but honest minds. There is a part in my story where I have a camera shot (the last shot in the project) of a philosophical passage on a wall poster, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world" by Ludwig Wittgenstein. This quote is not only to illustrate what I learned but to set a precedent for the characters love of literature, philosophy, and film. *MLO 5* is something that I wanted to explore. Since I loaded myself up on philosophy courses these last two semesters, the *Plato* quote is sort of a fresh-on-my-mind tribute to some of my professors' final words of wisdom. Later in the story I hope to explore racial divide. I didn't have the time to write something with true meaning like I wanted, and I didn't want to write something for the sake of saying I covered a "base." *MLO 8* happened to be one of my favorite major learning outcomes, because there was a necessity for examination into creating my own world. I took a big shot in the dark with doing this screenplay, but as I look back, I have not one regret of the decision I have made.

Proposal Timeline

- 1. February 27th:** This draft is an excellent start. After the helpful workshop, I feel like I should be able to easily finish this before the 27th. I need to set aside three to four hours of editing in the next week to complete the proposal.
- 2. March 6th:** By this time, I hope to have been completed with at least fifteen pages of my rewrite. My plan, once we go over the drafts and I meet with the professor, is to start writing two or three hours a night.

3. **March 13th**: If I keep up with my dates above, this will go hand and hand with everything else.
4. **March 27th**: I have only a working draft, so I need to set aside a couple of hours a week to reformulate this draft and get it online. I will more than likely set aside a lot more time for this project.
5. **April 10th**: At this point and time, I really hope to have set in stone the length of the story.
6. **April 24th**: I have been documenting my research and progress extensively.
7. **May 1st**: The resume I have prepared will not consume or mix in with my creative project because I'm not published.
8. **May 8th**: Have a final copy prepared and be ready to do any final revisions before I upload the final document into the Digital Commons database.

Creative Capstone Project

True Form of Greatness

By

Michael V. Terry

FADE IN:

INT. COTTAGE BEDROOM - PALO ALTO, CA - PRESENT-DAY 1997 - DAY

Good morning. A nimble, fit as a fiddle, and woolly-headed MAN neurotically sits over the foot of his BED. This nervous Nellie reminiscing with an anguishing PHOTO of antiquity is VINCENT D'AVINO, 20.

Vincent looks like an absentminded athlete on fellowship at a preparatory school who wants to keep up his quarrelsome, freewheeling persona of class wisecracker; nevertheless, underneath it all, he's a steadfast highbrow.

While Vincent glares at the concealed PHOTOGRAPH in his tingling hand, a silver saint Michael pendant dangles in and out of his flocculent chest tresses.

Ramparts of Vincent's room have aesthetic POSTERS of icons *Bill Walsh, Ronnie Lott, and Mike Mussina.*

On the wall is a clearheaded, charismatic PICTURE of Vincent pitching collegiality for *Stanford University.*

While Vincent's hands tremble, the OBSCURED picture frame careens in his wobbly fingertips like a slimy Sockeye out of water. Vincent places his hand on his head, his elbow to his knee, and then he suspends the picture frame listlessly above the flooring.

SMASH CUT:

QUOTE OVER BLACK SCREEN

"The beginning is the most important part of the work" - *Plato.* Our metaphysical incitement diminishes. Deafening crack of a WOOD BAT explodes as if a *Winchester* reverberated in the open range of Helena Valley.

OPEN TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - SACRAMENTO, CA - FLASHBACK - 08/91 - DAY

Title cards, credits, and whatever else needs to happen. Skirted by skyscraping suburban forestry lies the source of childhood dreams. FOUR FIGURES taking batting practice. Bust out the apple pie, Nathan's hotdogs, and Chevrolets. I pledge, right hand over heart, this is neither a *Pepsi* nor a *Little League World Series* commercial; instead, we are simply making a motion picture, baby!

Atop of a dilapidated chain-link and plank-paneled BACKSTOP, a star-spangled PENNON ripples amidst the twilight gust, an aeriatic better known to a constellation of basin counties as "The Delta Breeze."

Pussyfooting into shallow RIGHT FIELD is curly-haired conquistador MARCO D'AVINO, 18. He makes the careless shoestring catch before the "frozen rope" tramples any brown blades of Kentucky Blue. Marco then shuffles his feet and flicks the BASEBALL with coldhearted strife.

Accidentally-on-purpose, Marco's throw aviates to the side of the MOUND and passes a startled MAN with a chevron moustache and blatant tip-of-the-boot ancestry. DEAN D'AVINO, mid 40s, watches the ball..

Scot to the batter's box. Surpassing a chunky, chummy, and cheeky 14-year-old, the ball ricochets off the impermeable balustrade (backstop). Finally, the ball halts at the heels of VINCENT D'AVINO'S Nike slasher cleats. Music stops. Credits fade.

Vincent steps out of the batter's box, boots the 5-ounce baseball, and then polishes the dirt off his peach fuzz face. Vincent sets the bat on his hip and dramatically unstraps & straps the Velcro on his batting gloves. Title cards and such dither away.

Dean sponges the secretion on his forehead. He then humorously gases "balmy air" on Vincent, closest target, for lollygagging.

DEAN D'AVINO

God Blessid, Vincent, step your wobbly ass up to the damn plate, or else the next pitch I'm buzzing your tower! I-I like the pre-pitch routine, and I applaud -- actually, I'm surprised that you had excess room in your lunchbox to pack a little piss 'n' vinegar. Despite the enthusiasm, we're uh, we're losing rays. Unless you want to gather everyone around for a fucking "Sun Dance," I suggest you roly-poly yourself.. back into the soil, Obi-Chubby-Wan.

Seemingly "unfazed," Vincent taps the margins of the plate with his club. With an obedient poker face, Vincent gallantly erects the Canadian maple paddle like a crusader wielding a blade through the Byzantine smolder.

Dean winds up as if he were the ace of a pay-your-way-in men's league staff. The pitch comes in...

Ahead of his time and the pitch, Vincent flails and insufficiently trickles the ball down the THIRD-BASE foul line.

In LEFT FIELD is a lofty, lengthy, and self-assured KID. Quick-witted JACOB BROSSARD, 14, is wearing a mesh Oakland Athletics Rickey Henderson practice Jersey.

JACOB BROSSARD

(to himself)

Fancy footwork for a humpback, though.

(thinks and then shouts towards Vincent sarcastically)

Bro, now we are cooking with kerosene on the Kingsford's, fool! On the real, set down the saber and liberate yo'self from The Battle of your overlapping Belly Bulge. Take a lap!

(makes a circular motion with his finger like a Phys Ed coach)

Discouraged and mealy-mouthed, Vincent steps out of the sandbox. Dean exits behind the L-screen and passionately walks towards Vincent.

DEAN D'AVINO

(walking, he yells to Vincent)

Geez Louise, don't have a hissy. The nubber happened,

(arrives in front of the plate)

but it doesn't mean the world's caving in, doofus.

Now standing on the edge of the infield meadow (grass), Dean tries to add a coherent oar to the canoe Vincent is steering alone.

DEAN D'AVINO

Not the time to hit the panic button. Just hit the baseball.

(laughs to himself, and then gets serious)

Kidding aside, why do you think that roll-me-over grounder happened?

VINCENT D'AVINO

...Because... your calcified ass rushed me like the diner on Broadway was giving away trash bags of *Sweet 'N Low*

DEAN D'AVINO

(zealously)

Get serious! The only thing that's allowed to be laughing is that baseball... at you. So, I'll repeat myself. Why'd it happen?

VINCENT D'AVINO

...I wasn't ready to hit?

DEAN D'AVINO

Yes, no shit, Sherlock. Vinny, the crux of the matter doesn't require a snorkeling/fishing expedition to discover our deep-seated emotions. A blind man parked at the City College Light Rail could see that you weren't present. The ball's middle away, (points mitt to the plate) covering a-about a... third of the dish. A fat -- a very hittable -- a fucking beach ball. (points at Vincent's eyes) Your fastball-happy eyes - those are telling me a story. Those fucking wishy-washy retinas lit up and you got an itchy trigger finger. You blew your own lid off, and don't tell me different, dippy. (reaches for Vincent's bat)

Complacent yet dissonant, Vincent indecisively hands Dean his bat. Dean methodically spreads his legs into an athletic stance, raises the bat behind his head, and then lifts his front foot.

DEAN D'AVINO

(puts foot down)

If you get your foot down too early on softer stuff, even fastballs, keep those hands back. When your top-heavy body starts leaning, (tilts weight forward) you still have bat control through the whole zone. As long as you avoid being caught flat-footed, no hitches, no hiccups, no excuses. (follows through with the bat slowly)

VINCENT D'AVINO

(grabs bat from Dean)

...But I can take that outside pitch to left with power all day, full steam. I am a dead pull hitter.

DEAN D'AVINO

BUT, instead, you barely fucking nicked the thing. You are not a dead pull hitter. Pull it back in your premature pants and have some plate discipline before you take a "whack" at it. The method of our madness is to have predetermined intent behind every rep, not swing out of our asses. In a jam, every pitcher's ace in the hole -- every pitcher feels comfortable dotting glove and arm-side strikes on the corners of their dish. It's a safety net, and he, the pitcher, thinks it's one that will wrap you up. "Spoil a good two-strike pitch!" experts say. Fuck spoiling a good pitch... and fuck the experts. Your occupation at the plate consist of three things: you wake up, you shorten up, and, most importantly, you make that chickenshit feel demoralized by covering every inch of YOUR dish with scrupulous authority. Spontaneity seldom exist in this sport, but when being great means going three for your last ten, then consistent commitment to practice is the only security carpet safeguarding you from not stubbing, or in your case nubbing, your toe on the hardwood more than seven out of ten times.

Dean backpedals towards the mound with a principled anecdote.

DEAN D'AVINO

(sarcastically)

Vincent, see the ball, hit the ball. Be the ball, don't eat the ball.

VINCENT D'AVINO

OK. One more, baseball shaman?

Dean turns from the rhetorical question and settles behind the L-screen.

DEAN D'AVINO

(turns and holds ball up)

You know the drill, you little ball-breaker!

(puts ball in glove)

Barrel it... up the middle or off-center towards right. Get the picture? No flares.

(maneuvers towards right field and points)

And to that side of the field.

Vincent nods. Dean winds up and delivers the pitch to Vincent. Vincent licks his chops with great precision and punishes a "pea rod" back up the chute. The knuckling "at 'em ball" travels over the head of the bowing Dean and off the tips of his duct taped Spalding glove -- knocking him to the ground.

Hurried and colorless, Vincent abruptly tosses the bat in worry while rushing towards the mound.

VINCENT D'AVINO

(running)

You decent, old man!?! Panties clean?

(becomes stress free he as walks near L-screen)

The Pink Floyd laser show almost blinded you, Pop.

Dean crouches to pick up his *Sacramento Solons* hat, his paperboard pack of *Viceroy*, and his newly frayed *Maui Jim* sunglasses.

DEAN D'AVINO

Yackety-yak, fuckhead!

VINCENT D'AVINO

Hey, Dad, if you're going to lay there deceased, should I gather up everybody for that "Sun Dance," or did you just want an *Orange Sunkist* from the cooler?

Vincent lifts his hand out for help, but his father slaps it away jokingly.

DEAN D'AVINO

(lifts off ground murmurs to himself)

Upsy-daisy.

(standing up)

Ahh, no, nuh-uh. You caught it thin, but, screw it, we'll call it even-Steven.

(smiles and pats Vincent's stomach)

Must've missed the trademark if I had time to get out of dodge.

Marco and Jacob converge from the outfield to the infield.

JACOB BROSSARD

(walking towards the mound)

Mr. 'Vino, you aight?

DEAN D'AVINO

(looks back at Jacob and casually nods yes)
Take the tough with the smooth, Jacob.

JACOB BROSSARD

Built like a shit brickhouse, Mr. 'V!

MARCO D'AVINO

(drops balls on the ground and looks to his dad)

That does the trick, doesn't it? Some of us, unlike these scrubs, have social shit to keep on top of. Tired of watching you conduct opera-long hitting lessons

(points in the direction of Vincent and Jacob)

for Tons of Fun and the Human Pez Dispenser.

Vincent and Jacob simultaneously flip Marco the proverbial bird.

JACOB BROSSARD

Shut up, pussy-whipped soda cracker.

VINCENT D'AVINO

Yeah, shut up, poor man's Andy Garcia. I feel a growth spurt coming, and this lard, like your baseball career, going on a permanent sabbatical.

Marco D'AVINO finds it essential to scornfully make fun of his brother's stagnant heft, which is a quintessential brotherly torture technique, but it is also a pointless attempt at pubescent persecution. Not cool, bro.

MARCO D'AVINO

Scoffing on artificial peanut butter crackers and hiding the plastic wrappers under the bed from mom and dad aren't exactly scientific steps to perfect a Chuck Norris lifestyle, thunder-thighs.

(cynical recollection)

Oh, my mistake. That was the plate of midnight 'chos with week-old cheddar layered on that Hogan found under the bed and started licking, wasn't it? Wider they are, the harder they fall, kid --

VINCENT D'AVINO

(rowdy)

-- At Least I don't steal my parents' express cards --

DEAN D'AVINO

(drops bucket and calls to his sons)
--All right already! Will the two of you please knock off the pissing contest.

VINCENT D'AVINO

Pops, he started it.

DEAN D'AVINO

(to Vincent and Jacob)
For crying out loud, I don't give a rat's ass which one of you assholes started chirping first! I'm the fucking cat, so you two fucking canaries pipe down.

MARCO D'AVINO

Yeah, Pop, you're a pussy all right.

DEAN D'AVINO

Marco, don't you dare fucking test me. Say that crap again, and we'll find out who the pussy is.

(to Vincent and Jacob)

Vincent, Jacob, make yourselves valuable and pick those balls.

(collects his thoughts)

Take a quick breather, and please grab my fungo in the dugout. It's by my gym bag.

(looks at Marco)

Regardless of Marco's allergies to ethics, there are still things to be done.

Down in the dumps, Vincent and Jacob walk off to the shaded water fountain and BLEACHERS.

Marco meanders right by his dad like he's the grooviest invention since sliced sourdough. Dean's eyes blacken and his wrinkled forehead becomes one with his bushy brows. As he forcefully twists Marco's arm, Dean ritually proselytizes with his verbal "pen."

DEAN D'AVINO

Ease up on your brother, Marco. And what backassed plans do you have!?! Plans to get liquored up? Maybe pass around a party bowl and fry some more brain cells with Samantha?

Right here, right now - this should be all you see. Where's the fucking tunnel vision?

MARCO D'AVINO

Samantha and her cousins - we're going to see *R.E.M.* at the *Memorial*. Vision is tunneled towards that. Plus, my dish didn't just have one thing on it today, Deano. You're in the restaurant business, so why don't you solve this riddle. Even -- even -- even if it were a one course meal and I were starved, why would I still say I was fuckin' plump 'n' full? Want the answer to that enigma? It's simple: I am a grown ass adult who doesn't need his daddy bogarting his time any longer.

DEAN D'AVINO

(apeshit)

Grown? That's a laugh. Grown! Nothing could be further from the fucking truth. No, don't go to the concert. You should go home and write a stand-up routine. What a fucking joke!

The DIAPHANOUS CLAMOR of the song "Venus" by the band *Television*.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK STREET - SACRAMENTO, CA - 1991 - DAY

Music playing. A tree-lined street. A dull SUV with three passengers pulls up to a cobblestone curb.

INT. FOUR RUNNER - SACRAMENTO, CA - 1991 - DAY

Music plays. An allocentric nightmare that goes by the name SAMANTHA SUTTON, 16, rigidly puts the car in park. The petty and preppy WOMAN then crassly turns the knob on the radio dial.

Samantha's prim and proper hand reaches into frame. A cassette tape is vehemently ejected from the dash.

Toddling the tape in her hand, superficial Samantha burns a shallow grave into a vagrantly holistic and artistic vagabond in the PASSENGER SEAT. The 14-year-old beach blonde riding shotgun is Samantha's cousin LEONORA SUTTON.

SAMANTHA SUTTON

(holds four fingers up)

I told you to turn it down like five times since we left Cumby's -- Shell station.
(holds five fingers up)
Like five -- ugh, that noise made me lose my train. I asked you to turn this garbage disposal off like five times, I thought.

Leonora retorts in her thick-ish Rhode Island accent.

LEONORA SUTTON
(sarcastically)
Like, you're totally right.

SAMANTHA SUTTON
(narcissistically turns and looks at Leonora)
Doiii, I know I'm right. That's why the theatrics.

LEONORA SUTTON
(puts her feet on the dash)
Excuse me for breathing, glamour puss. Are you going to scold me if I ask how long we'll be parked here like predatory plumbers for, too? On the prowl for "mystery meat."

In the BACK of the car, GENEVIEVE "GIGI" SUTTON, 13, tries to hold in laughter. Gigi slinks over the center console. Gigi dresses scanty, yet she speaks with a well-to-do, top-drawer, Alcott-esque dialect.

GENEVIEVE SUTTON
That was mega creepy, Leo'. But, dido, I agree with Leonora, Sam. It's basically dark, and the second set of the concert is going to be underway when we order our food. If we order food...

SAMANTHA SUTTON
(snappy)
Nobody asked you, Gigi. It'll just be a New York minute.

GENEVIEVE SUTTON
Um-hum. Mokay.

LEONORA SUTTON
(holds all fingers out in a fraudulent tone)
We've like, waited like, ten.
(lowers hands)

Bug-eyed Samantha rolls her head.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - SACRAMENTO, CA - DAY

Marco and Dean have moseyed on over by the chain-link fence that nurses the DUGOUT'S protection. Dean daubs the perspiration from his temple while studying the vacuous sky. With his roguish Latrine lips smacking, Marco spits out a wad of original flavored *Big League Chew*.

MARCO D'AVINO

(steely)

What are you waiting for? Lighting to strike and light one of your cancer sticks?

DEAN D'AVINO

(looking up still)

Nope,

(looks at Marco)

I am waiting for the skies to weep for you, son.

MARCO D'AVINO

Psychobabble bullshit, really? Pop, why are you so fucked up and manipulative, man? What's your damage?

DEAN D'AVINO

(casually agitated)

My damage? My damage? You want to know what my impairment is,

(mawkish hippie voice)

man?

(back to normal state of agitation)

Yes, let's do this. Let's pull the checkered past sympathy card. My fucking damage is that I fucking care too much. That's the whole reason this conversation has become a fucking ordeal every single time I bring it up. My fucking damage is that there is daylight left and we're not taking ground balls, broadening your horizons. My damage is that your mother is at the restaurant busting tables, seating guests, and pouring drinks with just your pregnant -- eight-month pregnant -- sister there for help, whereas you go to a fucking concert. These other first-year students and returning hungry redshirts arriving with you to Cal this fall - I am sure they aren't resting on their laurels, cutting corners,

hoping for the best. You know, all the ingredients you've been using --

MARCO D'AVINO

(perverse)

--If those losers redshirted, obviously their laurels aren't something you'd want to hang your hat on. One way or the other, my work's been carried out. Not your way, but my way... for fucking once in my life. For me, patrolling center field is the only summit, and I've climbed to the top and planted the flag. That's my horizon, Dad.

DEAN D'AVINO

(enraged)

--What are you, high already!?! Sneak a toké when I wasn't looking? That was your takeaway!?!? It's that devil may dipshit charade right there, Marc. That's the x-factor, you fucking hear me? This fucking what-have-you-done-for-me-lately attitude you're copping in a public park is your ticket ensuring you'll have an unobstructed view of center field from the fucking dugout. Three of us came out here in a non-pressure environment to get better, but you've had an Alaskan-sized log rammed up your ass since the word go --

MARCO D'AVINO

Time flies when you live life vicariously through expendable scapegoats.

DEAN D'AVINO

Okay, you have it all figured it out, don't you? Solved your daily Rubik's cube, huh, genius? You fucking clown! Fucking Bozo the fucking Clown.

Marco doesn't want to bicker any longer, so he keeps his head down while walking past his sweltering father.

DEAN D'AVINO

"And Responsibility Watched Him Walk Away."
That'd be the name of your biography.

Marco stops by the dugout entrance for a second but then continues to walk.

CUT TO:

**INT. MARCO'S LIVING ROOM - SACRAMENTO, CA - PRESENT-DAY 1997
- DAY**

Morning. SportsCenter is on the tube, no volume. Resting on a MANTLE is a Casio wristwatch as well as a blurred piece of paper. The watch turns from 5:57 AM to 5:58 AM. A betting slip on the same mantle has circles over "Tyson's a lock at 2 to 1 with Halpern out as ref."

Marco, who looks like he just got out of the drunk tank, leans up off a couch and over his glass coffee table. Next to Marco's bottle of WHISKEY are BUSINESS CARDS.

SUPER ON BUSINESS CARD:

Coldwell Banker. Marco D'Avino, Realtor. CA BREA No. 196367512. Phone: (916)508-1099. Mailing: 4715 Fair Oaks Blvd. Sacramento, CA. Email: MarcoCloses@AOL.com.

Marco turns the television off and grabs the whiskey from the table. Marco walks to the MANTLE.

In the MIRROR above the mantle, 24-year-old Marco briskly unscrews the cap on the snakebite medicine, throws the plug down, raises the bottle, and then lowers the alcohol for a moment. Marco incoherently and timidly takes a graceless swig of WHISKEY.

CUT TO:

INT. TAUNTON, MA - SWEETS KNOLL STATE PARK - PRESENT-DAY 1997 - DAY

A dewy advection clouds a river trail. A joyful five-year-old girl appears from the mist with a gap sweatshirt around her waist and a Disneyland-sized smile on her face. CARROLL SUTTON, 5, happily runs down a rock-strewn riverbank.

CARROLL SUTTON

GAAAAAAAAAAH! AAAAAAAAAAAH!

The little girl must've only eaten just the marshmallows from her *Lucky Charms*. She exits frame. Entering frame is a woman in a black turtleneck and long black jacket. SAMANTHA SUTTON, 22, closes her *Nokia 6110* cell phone and slides it in her coat pocket while chasing her daughter.

SAMANTHA SUTTON
(watching her steps)
Carroll, this is not funny! Slow down! You'll
fall. Damn it.

Samantha slips on slick terrain, and as she is on her way
down...

CUT TO:

INT. VINCENT'S ROOM - PALO ALTO - PRESENT-DAY 1997 -

DAY

Vincent lays horizontally on his bed. The same MEMOIR of
compunction and incumbrance is now face-down on his belly.

The Title reads "*True Form of Greatness.*" Title card fades
and a new one reads "*19 June 1997. Palo Alto, CA. Off-campus
cottage near Stanford University.*"

Like that of the *Undertaker*, *WWE* wrestler, Vincent propels
himself up and exits frame. The picture does a 180-degree flop
and lands faceup on the bed. Title card fades. The photo is
now visible...

SUPER ON PHOTO:

Vincent's family and friends are on the steps of Sacramento's
Portuguese Hall, lodge of community and cultural preservation,
for *Día da Liberdade (Carnation Revolution)*. Dean, Jacob,
Vincent, and Marco are in their Sunday best. Next to the free-
spirited and striking LEONORA SUTTON, 17, is mocha-skinned
matriarch CHRISTINA D'AVINO, late 40s.

On Vincent's wall is a picture of early 20th-century Austrian
philosopher *Ludwig Wittgenstein*. The photo has an excerpt in
block lettering: "The limits of my language mean the limits of
my world."

FADE OUT...FOR NOW

Reflecting on Storytelling

Let's go subterranean into the notions embodied in between the lines of *True Form of Greatness*. Deciding how to start this darn thing was an absolute pickle, and the pickle wasn't a nickel. After weeks of contemplation, I opened the story with the symbolism of the baseball memory, the photograph, and all the characters' networks. The picture frame in the opening is an object of connection for how Leonora and Vincent will eventually meet. Later, Leonora and Vincent date when she moves with her sister in 1993 to Sacramento, CA. The theme of finding and losing love will eventually be clear, but what I hope to bring up to the audience is the issue of using first love so that I can develop a meaning of true love. With Vincent being upset and hungover, I wanted to show that he has a drinking problem, and any active reader could make those correlations of Vincent's drinking to his father and to his relationship with Leonora. On the other hand, the same can be said for Marco. What are Marco's problems? Why is he drinking whiskey at six o'clock in the morning? Is Samantha's daughter his daughter? The story is a reminder that grandiose things come in small packages as well as small dosages. This repetition of heat as well as intense arguments is to show a parallel of the scenery to the audience. I tried my best to create useful imagery—which under screenwriting guidelines, they say, “The less description, the better”—alliteration, and other literary elements to give the reader a background story. Another thing—from what I've been reading, movie scripts do not typically indicate which song is being played unless absolutely vital to the scene, e.g., characters are singing, or a concert is being attended; therefore, it was a little unprofessional for me to include music, but in doing so, more personality was given to my voice. Excessive use of vulgar language for comic relief is distasteful. I hope my use of language doesn't offend anyone. Mentor texts are something that will save your life. I have had three important texts that have helped me along this semester. I didn't read or view them

all for the first time this semester, but, in the long haul, they were unbelievably helpful advisors.

The summer after my junior year of college, I avowed intent to jot down daily notes for a screenplay that had been bumbling in my head. Starting out was threatening, but day three or four is when it began to be a little less Greek (still a bevy of wisdom to soak in). Around that fourth day, right as I were hitting a gloaming brick wall and bracing for impact, a movie I had seen a thousand times was running on the tube. A few minutes passed by and I have my Lenovo propped open. All of the sudden, I'm sitting there, dewy eyed, scrolling on page ten of the 1993 original script *Dazed and Confused*. *Dazed and Confused* happens to be a celestial coming-of-age film from the mind of the critically acclaimed writer-director Richard Linklater, co-founder of *The Austin Film Society*. The film's remembered for the birth of Matthew McConaughey's iconic phrase, "alright, alright, alright," and, I guess the start of his career. You know, marijuana may be the footprint carbonated in the title of this masterpiece, but it's not the true memorandum. In my view, *Dazed and Confused* does what all motion pictures ought—privies the spectators to certain tangibles to subsidize for the climax of enquiring intangibles. The main character, Randy, of Richard Linklater's piece seems like an odd cat; Randy and his friends rule the school, yet he is unhappy and indecisive during the whole movie. In a picture where most scenes are eyewash for comical enjoyment, one of the last acts portrays the protagonist ranting on about his Catch-22s with authority. The camera pans from Randy's comrades to a brackish Randy. Then, Randy's knuckleheaded friend gives a pragmatic declaration: "Well, all I'm saying is that I want to look back and say that I did the best I could while I was stuck in this place. Had as much fun as I could while I was stuck in this place. Played as hard as I could while I was stuck in this place." The hanger is revealed: while Randy can't wait for his exodus from the cupola of "Trivial," Texas, others

around him cherish their high-school freedom. Randy's under the microscope as a person, and the patrons of the movie fall deeper into the plot. Suddenly, the picture becomes a docket of reflection, a window into the ambiguity of young adulthood.

Now, time for a different mentor. Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Richard Russo weaves back and forth from the present and past like a skilled Grand Prix driver whipping corner turns in the streets of Monaco with his 2005 teleplay *Empire Falls*. Sometimes, novelists who get their work adapted don't have the say they'd like. Russo adapted his own novel, so I suppose that is why the flashbacks occur so appropriately and the imagery appears as true on screen as it does off. The story is threaded in flashbacks—one second, we're in 1950s Martha's Vineyard, and the next second, it's present-day Maine. In those few minutes of exposure to these foreign soils, I'm completely captured; I start to feel like I've lived there my whole life, or at least I've wanted to. The quaint simplicity of a mill-contingent metropolis where the inaudible deficiency of freewill rings in the riddles of who handles the chain of commerce in population 4,500 gives me goosebumps. What can I say? Now, I can't drop a name like Richard Russo and let my other "pal" John Irving to fall by the wayside.

John Irving doesn't need my adoration, but he has it. Irving published *A Prayer for Owen Meany* in 1989, and a decade later he was approached about the exhibition of his novel to the big screen. Long story short is that Irving thought his work couldn't be exchanged into another form of "entertainment currency." Hollywood went ahead and made an adaptation anyway. In 1997, *Simon Birch*, the adaptation of *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, hit the multiplexes. Unpleasant would be putting this risorgimento of sorts mildly. I hold the film business accountable for letting an international bestseller get dragged through the mud in a morbidly morose display of acting and recreation, but I digress. Best foot forward, right? Right. In my capstone project, the brief doubt of the existence of God after catastrophe tries

to rip away the epicenter of a household is an essential element to the overall premise. In *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, God isn't necessarily on "trial," but he or she is held liable in the misfortune of appearance and, by luck of the draw or shortest straw, which régime copulated your birth. I mentioned earlier but wanted to reiterate that I won't, and never would, try to step on any toes while writing fiction just so that I could have content. For that very reason, no storyline I could think of at the present time would suffice for broader inquiry from peers. If I can toot my own horn for a second, the tension displayed with the cruel summer sun setting and Dean's anger increasing with every waking second was something that didn't take a terrible amount of creativity, but it was impactful to "corroborate" the sun with the antagonism and issues of family ideals. I have John Irving to thank for his quivering explanations of humid New Hampshire summers.

I think a lot of students can relate to the awful dread of picking up a book in high school. If that doesn't apply to you, that's my bad. I can recall detesting reading full-length books and avoiding them at every turn; it really wasn't until I started writing in my spare time that I found myself engrossed in these lengthy novellas. I realized by the beginning of high school that if I genuinely wanted to improve myself, I would have to move past skimming through books briefly. That doesn't mean I didn't read what I was assigned in school, because I totally did. Anyhoo, when I started to stop just reading for key points and tell myself "Line by line," reading, expediently, became less of a hassle and more of a reward. Now, since my concentration is in Literary and Film Analysis, I still sway, from a literary standpoint, more to the side of watching and analyzing adaptations. My studies have been profound in quenching my thirst for film. I pray that one day I can turn this tiny section of a movie script into the whole thing. That's the next "goal." Wish me luck. It won't be easy. I need a whole lot help from a whole lot of peers to steer my stuck-in-the-mud vehicle

out of the uncharted trenches that I'll be wiggling' in. "Help! I need somebody! Help!"

Beatles reference to prove how cool I am.

Synthesis of *True Form of Greatness*

I may sound redundant, but storytelling is one of the most powerful applications in the existence of humankind. If I never got my grubby mitts on Strunk's, White's, Elbow's, or Thomas Newkirk's work, then there would have been no shot of my new appreciation for narrative. "The healing power of a story relies on the interpretation of what one is reading" (25, Newkirk). This passage hit home: it says that every piece of literary work can be used in some way to heal someone somewhere. Towards the later part of the semester, in Dr. Fletcher's Storytelling Capstone, we had a class discussion about each student's all-time favorite novel, short story, essay, or whichever published work you fancied or could think of in the moment. Taking in the veracity in which my classmates spoke was some real up-out-of-your-seat provocative stuff, and I loved every minute of it. Hearing why and how these stories affected their lives was immensely helpful in the final few weeks of the semester. After that session in class, now when I read or tell a story, I consistently think of why the author drafted the book and who they were trying to reach. I should have been doing that all along, but don't laugh at me.

You know, I'd like to be an exclusive subdivision of driftwood and concoct some creative cock-and-bull story, but I can't. Why? Oh, because I love a good flashback in a romance novel or film like the next sap. My point is that my love for romance films is another aspect of why I made my "screenplay." Again, can't implore enough that the key word is "try." I wouldn't have taken the gamble if it weren't for a classmate of mine. When a peer acknowledges your effort, a wave of luster is set off that can't be explained. To sound cheesy, it's like hitting the game-winning bucket, or it's like getting the last *Butterfinger* in the vending machine. This base of peer editors, Dr. Fletcher's students, allowed us to network and to marvel in the beauty of others' capabilities. Independently, even though I did

not do a research paper, a lot of strenuous, unconventional research was involved. I didn't know where the heck to start for the longest time. On a collaborative scale of reference, taking in advice from others means the world. Taking in stories on a regular basis allows for connection of broader reading materials, but watching people interact is the key to help with writing for fictional characters. Did I mention how hard it is to write dialogue? You really don't understand how bad of a listener you are until you try and write dialogue. This is the part where I would write "lol." Oh, guess I just did that. Anyhow, I have a set list of themes described in the longevity of my abbreviated project. Most of them can be felt in the preliminary stages of the screenplay. A major issue I address is anger. In films where an argument goes on in a public place, it's hard to make it seem genuine. You want to make it harsh, but you want it to lay it out on an even keel. That even keel of realism is what I wanted to bring to the opening argument between Dean and Marco, but I didn't have enough time this semester. I think I did an okay job of setting the table to distribute the wealth of "family feuds." I always liked it in films when directors or writers told us a million things in one moment. Writers and directors can set up so many possibilities with one image or one phrase, and those moments are what capture the essence of a piece.

It was Andy Goodman's piece *Storytelling at Best Practice* that illustrated even getting up and going to the bathroom is a story. Andy Goodman said, "Ask yourself: Who's involved and who has something at stake?" What a riveting saying! So, I asked myself, and I sat down to figure out what the character's in my story were striving for. Uh, that was just as hard as the dialogue, but with time and elbow grease, it became a little less daunting. One of the other main themes visible in *True Form of Greatness* is reconciliation. Reconciliation may not be clear in the first few scenes, but we can get a sense that through the argument of Marco and Dean, there must be a rainbow at the end of this draw-out storm. The rainbow

isn't shown, but like I said, we see Marco in present day, and he has years of regret on his grimacing face. His dusk will become dawn. The regret is what he wants to expunge from his record. On the Sacramento baseball field, Marco is brash towards his father, but it becomes clear that he's tentative in his decision making. Dean is depicted as a gentle man...until Marco flips a switch within Dean. This flip is a "stay with me move," which is a staple of Wayne C. Booth's teachings. I try to target the audience by making Marco's frustration seem so skewed that people follow along. Hopefully, the readers want to continue and find out what the causations of the gripes really are. These "pragmatic" moments with Marco and Dean in this scene are my stamps on situations without having the characters say anything. They both have extensive dialogue, but their demeanors are what make the scene. Reconciliation can also be tied in to my theme of love and desire. Vincent "needs" the reconciliation of seeing Leonora to put his everlasting thoughts to bed. This also goes back to the beginning of the story and what picture Vincent was staring at.

Wayne C. Booth has had more influence on me during this semester than anyone could in a lifetime. In chapter two of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Booth speaks to the intensity on truthful illusion and emphasizes the strong suit of imagery in a story rather than commentary. I tried to commit to story rather than commentary with everything I had in my heart, but it was so hard for me to get in the flow of action, then dialogue, and then back to action. I smoothed out some edges when I connected chapter three of *Minds Made for Stories* to the idea of *Becoming Heroes of Our Own Stories* by Shelley Taylor. Shelly Taylor, a seasoned psychologist, summarizes that "A range of studies to argue that this heroic representation of self, although not fully realistic, has major positive benefits for personal happiness." Shelley Taylor is asking the writers to base fiction on reality. When you can dip into your emotions that make you feel, I found that dialogue becomes easier to think of in

certain situations. To get personal, this story reflects a lot of my “shortcomings” as a baseball player and my failures in relationships. Such a laminating process!

I want to spend some time before I wrap up with narrative as a form of time. From a rumor, a legend, or the truth, time is necessary for anything to develop. The story is set in the decade of the 1990s to explore older music, different culture, and “lack” of technology that we had then. Although the internet is blossoming, the lack of technology was to simply make it harder to see what is going on in someone else’s life, i.e., no social media stalking. While making that movement, clarity on how people who yearn and hold onto the past can change over a stretch of time suddenly came over me. Published authors have syndicated the aspect of narrative I was trying to get across—but they just do it better! If we limit who we can be by sticking in certain social structures, then it only hinders the ability of all personal growth. I was upset that I did not get a chance to expound on the Suttons’ dialogue in the opening as much as I wanted to either. I, of course, was able to introduce all three Suttons, but I feel I fumbled with the dialogue, mainly because they were not involved in the first twenty minutes of the script. To dull the knife of my “innovative wit” and my “innovate charm” and let you in on a secret, Samantha’s daughter is also Marco’s daughter. There, I gave you a lil’ sumthin’; however, I didn’t let you have the whole thing. I showed you some of my cards but not the whole hand. I didn’t tell y’all that Marco gets shitcanned from Cal, did I? Shoot, I just did. Ahh, whatever, you don’t care. Thanks for the read, whoever you are! Seriously, if you’re reading this, thank you, and I hope you are having an easier time with your project than I did. “Goodnight and Good luck!” That’s a George Clooney reference, guys. One last piece of advice: If a challenge ever seems to hard to accomplish, look yourself in the mirror and say, “yes I can!” I don’t mean to sound like a motivational speaker, but little do you know that when you want to take a chance, even if you don’t think people will be there, they

somehow are. Confidence through others doesn't hurt. By the way, if you want to take a risk, the worst thing to do is overthink it. That's it, I'm finished.