

"The Talent"

by

(Shannon Hargreaves)

Shannonrhargreaves@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. FILM SET SOUND STAGE - HOLLYWOOD - MORNING

JENNA (27), Associate Producer, ridden with anxiety while searching set.

She hastily walks past the initial slow going assembly of set as C-stands are hung over the shoulders of men championing black cargo pants.

She continues past them where she sees a young man looking at paperwork while holding fifteen walkie talkies but still manages to grip his juul.

BILL WOYLE, (24) Key PA. He hits his juul.

BILL
Oh god. What's wrong now?

JENNA
Have you seen the Director... Like anywhere?

Bill pauses mid exhale. The cloud briefly fills the space.

BILL
What do you mean?

JENNA
Her call time was two hours ago.

BILL
Ah no I have not. Did she ever arrive on set?

CUT TO:

EXT. SECURITY GATE - 10 MINUTES LATER

A SECURITY GUARD holds a clip board, looking up at Jenna and Bill.

SECURITY GUARD
Her car never left the lot.

The security guard points to a yellow Jeep Wrangler across from them.

CUT TO:

Jenna, Bill, and the security guard's face all press against the glass windows of the Director's Jeep Wrangler. They open the door. An agenda sits on the passenger seat. Jenna grabs it.

JENNA

It says she has a meeting this morning in Room 206 of the Paramount at 7:30am. What's at Room 206 of the Paramount at 7:30 am?

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM 206 OF THE PARAMOUNT - 9:50 AM

THREE HIPSTERS appear stressed while running around large white tables with model set builds laying on them. Thousands of green paint samples cover the entirety of the room.

ART DIRECTOR

Oh we're the art department.

SUPERVISING ART DIRECTOR

We were supposed to decide what kind of green she wanted. She just said "green"- what the fuck am I supposed to do with that.

Jenna, Bill, and the security guard stand in front of the art team.

JENNA

Well where is she?

ART DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR

We assumed she was running late. She's been really stressed about lighting for that musical number.

CUT TO:

INT. LIGHTING GRID - CONTINUOUS

Jenna, Bill, the security guard, and the art team look up.

A grip balances atop the lighting grid trying to secure a tungsten light.

GRIP

Man this musical number is gonna be a fucking nightmare. Of course she should be stressed.

The BEST BOY approaches the group with his phone out.

BEST BOY

Yeah she sent a voice memo to us
last night saying she wanted to
check in this morning but I think
she was really tired or something.

The best boy hits play on the voice memo.

BAILEY

So I was thinking- for the musical
number there HAS TO BE 250 tungsten
lights all suspended in the air and
we can match the temps with the
LEDs. I want this puppy to
SHINEEEEE.

Softly in the background a muppet song begins to play.

BAILEY (CONT'D)

Ah- hellll yeahhh. Okay man I'll
see you in the A.M gotta go.

The voice memo ends.

JENNA

Ok...what does that mean.

MAXWELL DYLAN, (22) Bailey's Personal Assistant, emerges from
the crowd of crew.

MAXWELL DYLAN

I know exactly where that is.

EXT. SET ACROSS THE LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The set's crew follows Maxwell. Everyone halts outside of
giant lot doors that are slightly propped open. Max and Jenna
slowly push the giant doors.

INT. HOLLYWOOD SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

There appears to be a rainbow connection adjacent scene. At
the center is a canoe and pond while the hit song "man or
muppet" plays faintly in the background. Studio lights and
monitors are on.

Max and Jenna frantically approach the wooden canoe.

From the viewing monitors that display the scene, we see the discovery of an arm slumped over and hanging off the side of canoe.

Out of focus people stand by as Max holds his phone to his ear.

We see the fixed image on the monitor of the arm jostle as Jenna steps into the canoe.

BAILEY (39), the dead director.

EXT. HINCKLEY YACHT, CAPE COD - DAY

A weathered Hinckley gently rocks in the water alone.

OLIVER, (41) well dressed but disheveled.

Oliver leans against the captain's chair while eating a fluffer-nutter sandwich. He wipes excess fluff off the corner of his mouth and begins to open a lime green envelope.

The sender is NBC Universal addressed to Oliver Quincy.

OLIVER

Bang!

Oliver pulls the check out and the amount is \$00.14.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Streaming really is ruining everything.

He finishes his sandwich and folds up the check into his worn leather wallet.

Oliver walks around clearing lines and sets off.

As Oliver fights his way through the Canal he spots a familiar face.

Bailey appears at the edge of a jetty. As Oliver instinctually turns his entire body towards her direction, it is revealed that nothing is there.

He redirects his body back to his navigation and spots a passing boat. The people on the boat wave. Oliver, shaken, still waves back. As he looks at the individuals on the boat that he passes at the tail end of the boat Bailey waves too.

Oliver's hand falls down to the navigation system and takes off at a high speed. He looks back frantically as water sprays him from all sides while he battles waves.

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD - DAY

Oliver quickly docks. He hastily walks into town carrying a leather messenger bag. As he passes the quaintness of the Vineyard he spots Bailey sitting at a coffee shop then she appears in the window of a store. Oliver quickly finds shelter in the local community center.

INT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Oliver enters the building's doors and close them quickly behind him. Instinctually, he pulls his phone out and opens up Bailey's contact. The last text between was from eight years ago. It's a pdf that says "The.Talent.014". Her location says California.

OLIVER.
What the shit.

Oliver turns away from the door. An older man in a floral shawl and thick glasses approaches Oliver startling him.

LEROY WILKINS, (73) runs the community center in Martha's Vineyard.

LEROY
Looking for someone or someone
looking for you?

They walk down the community center's hallway.

OLIVER
Just you know-delusions.

LEROY
I thought you needed to be famous
to be stalked.

OLIVER
Yeah I suppose I'm retired from
that lifestyle.

LEROY
Well, I thought I saw you run which
seems out of character.

Oliver and Leroy arrive at a door to a classroom.

OLIVER
I just thought I saw someone I
knew.

LEROY

Like an ex or an enemy of some kind?

OLIVER

No, a very dear old friend.

LEROY

And so you ran and hid?

OLIVER

Correct.

LEROY

I see... Well maybe after things calm we can chat about offering another class next summer or if you are around in the late fall perhaps?

OLIVER

Yeah- We'll see. I'm pretty busy.

LEROY

Busy? You busy? With what?

OLIVER

I have been thinking about writing again.

LEROY

You've thinking about writing? You know you can just write.

OLIVER

Leroy, thinking about writing is 80 percent of writing.

LEROY

Maybe when you are done thinking about writing you can begin thinking about teaching a fall or winter session.

OLIVER

Yeah I'll think about that. Right after I think about writing.

INT. CLASSROOM IN COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Oliver stands in front of the classroom sharing his vast wealth of knowledge.

OLIVER

My hope is that if there is anything to takeaway from our time together- it is that you should become haunted by your stories. They must live alongside you and fester in your morning coffee until you close your eyes at night. Remember, the most valuable tool a writer can have is their false sense of genius and you must feed this creature. Keep it alive as it will scream at you to write. And to write... is what you must do.

Oliver looks around the class.

The students he addresses are all senior citizens.

Oliver glances at a side window. Bailey walks past. Oliver pauses but ultimately finds his train of thought.

OLIVER.

Sorry...I was told when I first started in this industry that writers write and I feel at your core each of you are writers because of that very thing. It can be as simple as that and I hope you all continue to work on your projects. If you have any questions I will stay here for a little while.

The class of elderly individuals give a cute yet weak round of applause. Slowly, and I mean *very slow*, the class of senior citizens get up to leave. A few shuffle past Oliver.

GLADDIS, (91), was a nurse during a war probably.

OLIVER

Gladdis, I'm serious about submitting your Moby Dick Musical to a screenwriting contest. I never thought "call me Ishmael" could be so elegant yet snappy.

The old woman chuckles and wanders out the door. Another old woman approaches Oliver.

MARYANNE (87), Perhaps was a Rockette at one point in her lifetime.

MARYANNE

What a wonderful, wonderful course
this has been.

Oliver gathers his things and looks up at the shriveled
endearing woman.

OLIVER

Thank you Maryanne.

MARYANNE

Do you think you will offer any
other courses? I was unsure after
the news of your friend. I was just
so sorry to hear about that.

Oliver halts.

OLIVER

Do I have a friend in the news? I
did see that Pam is dating Mr.
Neeson but that's been a thing for
some time now.

Maryanne takes a step closer.

MARYANNE

That Director one. Bailey...Bailey
Irish... Cream?

OLIVER

Bailey? Bailey Graves?

MARYANNE

Ah yes that's right.

Oliver unable to respond. He glances at the back of the
classroom. As the elderly slowly vacate all chairs are empty
except one. Bailey sits in that seat.

OLIVER

Excuse me Maryanne. I have to go.

MARYANNE

Oh dear! Are you going to go cry?

OLIVER

I'm not feeling it as of right now
but it's possible.

Oliver throws the rest of his things in his bag and leaves
the room. He passes all of the older people that had left his
classroom in the hallway.

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Oliver sprints down the various streets of Martha's Vineyard to the dock and leaps onto his boat. He quickly undocks and sets off as fast as he can.

He races out of the harbor while trying to find any kind of media that announces the death of his friend.

BOAT, OCEAN, CAPE COD - DAY

He looks up and what appears to be a flailing body smacks the windshield of his boat. Oliver hits the kill switch which causes the entire boat to stop in the middle of the ocean.

BAILEY THING (23 ish) This is not exactly Bailey. This is a Bailey Thing. The purest form of Bailey that Oliver remembers.

He walks around to the side of the boat and looks down at the water. Behind him without his awareness, Bailey Thing awkwardly pulls herself aboard.

BAILEY THING
Are you fucking serious right now?

Oliver backs himself toward the nose of the Hinckley.

BAILEY THING (CONT'D)
YOU JUST HIT ME WITH YOUR BOAT
OLLIE.

Oliver nods his head "no".

BAILEY THING (CONT'D)
HELLOOOO?

Oliver's survival instincts kick in. He instantly faints.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. BOAT, OCEAN, CAPE COD - 14 MINUTES LATER

Oliver regains his vision and sees Bailey Thing standing over him.

BAILEY THING

I'd like to be the first to apologize. My behavior was not great a few moments ago and I recognize that. I guess I just felt betrayed when you hit me with your boat.

Oliver slides to the corner frantically.

OLIVER

It's a Hinckley.

Bailey Thing steps towards Oliver.

BAILEY THING

It was not very boater safety conscious.

OLIVER

It's a yacht not a boat.

Oliver visibly unwell.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Am I dead too?

Oliver grabs his phone and googles his name and begins to scroll. Headline beginning with "rehab" and "disgraceful" pop up.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Thank god.

BAILEY THING

Are you googling your name to see if you are dead?

In this moment an oyster boat with a few crew on it peacefully float by. They wave. Oliver hesitantly waves back.

BAILEY THING (CONT'D)

Why would you think that?

OLIVER

Because Maryanne told me you died and E news is really running with it.

Oliver shows Bailey Thing an E News headline that reads "director dead" with the most unflattering photo of her mid sneeze.

BAILEY THING
Aww man. That's not hot.

Oliver backs away.

BAILEY THING (CONT'D)
Just because I am "dead" doesn't necessarily mean you are. You could easily have a tumor or something. I am willing to bet you have anxiety about making doctors appointments still.

OLIVER
I just don't know what I'm going to be doing on a random Tuesday in April! You know what? Stop it. I don't need a lesson on past, present, and future. I am perfectly content. I teach old people!

Bailey Thing is taken aback from this comment.

BAILEY THING
That's messed up Ollie. They prefer to be called the "Elderly".

OLIVER
Yeah well half of them can't hear me anyways!

BAILEY THING
You're being really aggressive. Don't direct your big emotions onto the elderly community.

Oliver stands up.

OLIVER
Get away. May the power of Christ compel you!

Bailey stands blank faced.

BAILEY THING
CATHOLICISM?? WE ARE BOTH GAY
OLLIE!!

OLIVER
THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT IT COULD WORK!

Bailey takes a step closer.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
LEAVE ME ALONE LEAVE ME ALONE LEAVE
ME ALONE!!

BAILEY THING
WHY? YOUR MY BEST FRIEND!

Oliver marches to the navigation system of the boat.

OLIVER
No. I'm not.

BAILEY THING
Where are we going?

OLIVER
Don't speak to me. Don't talk to
me.

BAILEY THING
Why?

Oliver starts the Hinckley's engine.

INT. HOSPITAL ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD - DAY

Medical machines hum and beep.

Oliver lays flat on his back in an MRI machine and gets
scanned. Bailey stands in the scan control room curiously
looking around.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Oliver visibly eager to get his results. Bailey tries to grab
objects in the room but can't. She tries to grab a tissue box
but struggles. Bailey looks at the jar cotton balls.

OLIVER
Stop.

BAILEY THING
I'm not even doing anything wrong.

The doctor walks in.

DOCTOR SOOSE, (45), stereotypical straight edge doctor. Is
actively working to be a children's book author on the side.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Oliver-You are healthy and your
brain is normal.

OLIVER
That simply can't be.

DOCTOR SOOSE
But it is... and you are. Does that
disappoint you?

Oliver looks at Bailey.

OLIVER
It would just make things make
sense. If that's makes sense.

DOCTOR SOOSE
It does not.

Bailey Thing sits next to Oliver. He scooches away.

OLIVER
I think I'm experiencing delusions.

Doctor Soose turns his full attention toward Oliver puts the
file in his hand down.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Delusions?

OLIVER
Just a theory.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Do you hear voices.

OLIVER
Really just one recent addition.

DOCTOR SOOSE
I can prescribe something for that.

OLIVER
No- that's really not necessary. I
don't do meds.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Given your history, I understand
your hesitation around medication
but treating existing mental health
conditions is apart of recovery and
can be beneficial toward avoiding
relapse.

Oliver looks at Bailey thing.

OLIVER
You know Doctor...

Oliver looks for his name on his badge.

It says "Soose".

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Soose...since I'm not dying of
brain cancer I really don't want to
burn anymore of my money being
here. I guess that's what I get for
being kicked out of the union and
have no insurance! Ha!

DOCTOR SOOSE
Oliver hold on now.

Oliver ready to walk out of the room but turns in defiance of
Doctor Soose.

OLIVER.
You know what? Fuck you Doctor
Soose. This has been a complete
waste of my time.

EXT. HOSPITAL BUILDING - DAY

Oliver walks out of the hospital. Bailey Thing follows after
him with the cotton ball jar in her arms.

Doctor Soose runs out.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Oliver wait!

OLIVER
Whoa man, hippa.

DOCTOR SOOSE
Have you ever considered
alternative medicine? It could
really change your life. It changed
mine. Now I'm pursuing my dream of
writing children's books.

Doctor Soose hands Oliver a card. It says "NANCY CHAPOOTU
CRYSTELI NEW ENGLAND MEDIUM"

DOCTOR SOOSE (CONT'D)
It might be worth a shot.

INT. PSYCHIC READING - DAY

Bailey holds the cotton ball jar in her arms.

She examines a cardboard cut out of an older woman holding a crystal ball that is propped up near a bookshelf.

BAILEY THING

This is not alternative or
medicine. This is a main stream
medium. I suspect she had a lesser
known career as a reality tv
medium.

She continues to look at the various strange decorations half
are merchandise and half are animals skulls.

BAILEY THING (CONT'D)

I'm concerned with how many skulls
this woman has next to her straight
to DVD series.

Oliver is seated at a table waiting patiently.

OLIVER

Stop.

BAILEY THING

I'm not hurting anyone by being
curious Ollie.

In this moment the Psychic Medium throws the curtain entrance
to the side. She glides into the small room and takes a
gentle seat at the table where Oliver is sat.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI (67) New England psychic, thick
Boston accent, the most ratchet medium ever seen.

Nancy the psychic puts a cigarette in her mouth and lights
it. Nancy then lights a candle with her cig. She shimmies her
body into an ideal position to do a psychic reading. She puts
her hands out expecting Oliver to put his hands out to her
palm.

OLIVER

Are you smoking?

Nancy grabs his hands and lets out a fat cloud.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI

It's herbal relax.

Nancy takes a very deep breath.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI (CONT'D)
 Now... Oliver, my child, tell me
 what it is you seek.

OLIVER
 Well... you see...It appears that
 I've been visited by something. And
 I would love for that something to
 go away.

BAILEY THING
 Wow. Tell me how you really feel.

Oliver fights against acknowledging Bailey Thing. She sits
 down at a stool at the table next to Oliver visibly upset.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
 Ah yes. I sense a presence.

Oliver and Bailey Thing side glance at each other.

BAILEY THING
 No fucking way.

Nancy feels the air with her fingers but in the opposite
 direction of where Bailey Thing sits.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
 Is it perhaps a grandparent or past
 lover?

OLIVER
 Hmm. No... concerned as to why
 those would be giving off the same
 vibe.

Bailey sneezes. The candle goes out.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
 Dear god.

OLIVER
 What?

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
 The presence is much stronger than
 I anticipated.

OLIVER
 I don't know if "strong" is the
 right word. She's more of a
 athletic twink perhaps.

Bailey angrily stands up and slowly walks to the light switch toward the entrance of the room. Oliver signals at her aggressively to stop. She flicks the switch on and off. In this moment Nancy is terrified as she clearly has never actually encountered a paranormal situation.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
DEAR GOD AHHHH!

Oliver attempts to calm her.

OLIVER
It's truly not that serious.

Nancy quickly pours Oliver a cup of herbal tea.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
Hurry, drink this.

Oliver chugs the entire tea.

Nancy motions for Oliver to give her back the tea cup to be able to read the herbs at the bottom. She looks at the bottom of the cup and back at Oliver with serious concern.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI (CONT'D)
Oh gosh.

OLIVER
What is it? What do you see?

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
Nothing.

Oliver puts his hand to his mouth deeply afraid.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI (CONT'D)
No. Sweetheart. Did you swallow all the herbs in the cup?

Nancy shows Oliver the empty tea cup.

OLIVER
Oh shit was I not supposed to?

BAILEY THING
How is she supposed to do the reading?

OLIVER
Oh god. Will that make me sick? Am I going to be ok?

BAILEY THING
Pull trig right now.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
I need you to listen to me very
carefully.

Oliver and Bailey lean in.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI (CONT'D)
You need to pull trig right now.

OLIVER
Nancy! For gods sake -I need you to
help me! What do I do?!

BAILEY THING
Why are you asking this poor failed
theatre actress for help on a
Tuesday afternoon Ollie?

Oliver shifts his attention from Nancy toward Bailey Thing.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
Is it talking to you now??!

OLIVER
Yes. It's terrible. Please help me.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
Its gotta be one of those
unfinished business things. I'd bet
my shop on it.

BAILEY THING
Does she not have a home to bet? Is
that not how that saying goes? I
suppose it would be hard to afford
one in this economy with a psychic
salary.

NANCY CHAPOOTU CRYSTELI
There's not much I can do. I'm
sorry my child.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PSYCHIC MEDIUM SHOP - DAY

Oliver walks outside the small shop. Bailey follows still
holding the jar of cotton balls she stole from Doctor.

BAILEY THING
Welp, Doctor Soose fucked us twice
today.

Oliver stops and begins to have a meltdown.

OLIVER

What is it? Haven't I given you everything and haven't you taken enough? I haven't seen you in eight years and now this. Why? Why me? Why not someone more important. There are people you love probably wishing and praying for a sign from you. Give someone else your signs!

Bailey braces Oliver's words by hugging the jar of cotton balls.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

And that. That stupid fucking jar you stole? What's the deal with that? A jar? You can conjure up a burst of power and you chose to steal a fucking jar from a doctors office?

BAILEY THING

It's the only thing I can hold.

Oliver's phone rings. He pulls it from his pocket and answers it.

OLIVER

Yeah. Hello?

Oliver looks at Bailey Thing with some remorse.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Yes- I'm sorry. I heard. Thank you for calling. I'll be there.

The call ends. Bailey still hugs the jar of cotton balls.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

I have to go to New Hampshire Friday.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - STUDIO PARKING LOT - FRIDAY MORNING

Jenna Vern dressed in business formal stands in the parking lot with two key members of production.

MICHAEL RUNE, (37), The DP.

PAT JOY, (49), Creative producer, and honorary set father.

JENNA

Listen up.

The men give Jenna their full attention.

MICHAEL RUNE

I just think sending Bailey's personal assistant is a bad idea.

PAT JOY

We've discussed this already. He is less likely to attack a personal assistant.

JENNA

We are sticking to the plan that is already in motion. Now we just need to stall the suits upstairs for a couple days.

MICHAEL RUNE

Does anyone know what the hell the kid is gonna say to convince him to come back to L.A?

PAT JOY

I told him yesterday to speak from the heart. He won't expect that.

They walk toward the building. Jenna looks at Pat.

JENNA

Did Neil respond?

PAT JOY

Yeah. He's upstairs.

MICHAEL RUNE

I still don't think we are on the same page.

JENNA

How's that Michael? What page are you on?

MICHAEL RUNE

This all feels like just another Hollywood gimmick.

JENNA

Then leave. I'm not gonna let you be the reason this story doesn't get told.