

Overlooked Draft

written by

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LITT23796 Writing the 7 Minute Screenplay
Prof. Candida Paltiel

NATHANIEL (late 50s) is cleaning up his study. Several boxes partly filled with files and paperwork. There is a calendar on the wall. The previous days are marked/crossed off and the current date has a note 'Return Work Materials', exactly a week from it says 'Family Fishing Trip'

Packed with files and paperwork the study is neat and tidy. He moves boxes out of the study. He is cleaning his desk, at first placing things gently but as the boxes fill up, he begins throwing things in, more aggressively. He picks up a worn picture, the back says 'first case'.

NATHANIEL

Can't believe that's what I looked like. Astrid was right, that tie was did look silly.

He picks up an award/trophy which says 'In recognition of outstanding service'

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

First time they recognized my talent. Didn't take them long put it to work. More hours, more cases, more slipping through the cracks.

He smiles as he packs 'thank-you' letters. He comes across newspaper clippings and becomes more aggressive packing. Family photos, souvenirs and a mug are left on his desk. He tries to carry multiple boxes, stacking them so high he can't look down. But trips on a child's toy scattering the boxes.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

(angry)

Fucking hell! I told her to...

(sadly)

... put it away later. Then later I had to leave.

He sets the toy aside and cleans up his mess. A picture catches his eye. He picks it up gingerly and scans it.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

(excitedly)

This is the missing link!

He reorganizes the documents he packed away, revealing a folder labeled 'The Red Angel: CLOSED' but the word 'closed' is circled with a question mark at the end in pen.

2 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

2

Checking the date on the calendar he dials a number.

NATHANIEL
(into phone)
Hey Luke, how's it going?

LUKE
Nate. Not bad, not bad. Slow day in
archives today.

NATHANIEL
Hey you know how I promised Leica
that I'd drop off the case files
yesterday.

LUKE
That you had to do a week ago.

NATHANIEL
Yeah well something's come up. I uh
- forgot about a fishing trip.

LUKE
Really Nate? Your time management
skills outside work is terrible.

NATHANIEL
Yeah you're right. So about that...

LUKE
(he sighs)
You want me to lie to Leica and
tell her you dropped it off? Sure I
guess I could.

NATHANIEL
Thanks Luke

Nathaniel returns to his work after brewing a pot of coffee.

3 TIME LAPSE - MONTAGE

3

Nathaniel moves back and forth from his desk to the coffee
pot depleting it with each trip.

4 INT. STUDY - DAY

4

The room is messy and Nathaniel is asleep at his desk, his
coffee mug empty.

Sunlight gradually shines through an open window, illuminating newspaper clippings, "Detective cracks case but breaks law".

5 FLASHBACK - INT. OFFICE - DAY

5

LEICA (early 30's) Nathaniel's superior reprimands a younger NATHANIEL.

LEICA

Nathaniel! Keep this up and you'll set a whole new record!

NATHANIEL

That bastard is using loopholes to-

LEICA

Use that prodigious brain of yours and think of the consequences
(sighs)
Just... go home. Spend time with your family.

6

END FLASHBACK

6

MONTAGE SEQUENCE OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES and PHOTOS

1. "Detective captures suspect but not before roughing him up first" of cameramen aggressively trying to question him.
2. "Once famous Detective can't solve family issues, Wife claims Divorce and full custody of son."
3. "Red Angel Killer shot to death? Foul play? A cover up?"

7 INT. STUDY - MORNING

7

Sunlight hits Nathaniel's face and wakes him up.

NATHANIEL

Ugh damn sun.

He checks the calendar and marks off the previous day - now 5 days until fishing trip.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)

Gotta get this done before Amy's Birthday. Can't believe she said she wanted to catch a shark.

8 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 8

The kitchen has dishes piled up. He investigates the fridge but it's empty. He orders food. He puts on another pot of coffee, pouring it into different 'grandpa' labeled mug.

NATHANIEL
How many of these did they get?

9 INT. KITCHEN - LATER 9

The kitchen has more dishes and a lot of food boxes. Nathaniel checks for coffee, but the pot is empty.

NATHANIEL
How much... has that been?

10 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 10

Nathaniel drops on the couch and falls asleep. Date on the calendar shows 3 days until the trip. On his computer a decoding program is running, time until completion: unknown.

11 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING 11

Sunlight wakes Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL
(tiredly)
God fucking dammit.

He makes coffee and orders breakfast. He searches for a mug and finds one far back in his cupboard. It is says 'awesome dad'. It's old, discolored, handmade with a crude design.

12 FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 12

Nathaniel receives the 'awesome dad' mug from young boy, his son MAX(9) as a birthday gift.

13 END FLASHBACK 13

NATHANIEL
Can't believe this was still in the house. Thought it was lost. Ah right it had a hole. That's why I never used it and hid it away.

He sets it aside and returns to his desk to use different one. He reaches for the desk but there's a flashing alert on his computer screen. 'Cipher Decoded'

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
(excitedly)
This... This is it!

He grabs The Red Angel murders file folder and enters the information he has.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
If I'm right about this.

The program shows a date, time and location.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
That egocentric bastard kept
leaving clues.

He matches it with the second case and finds that they are identical.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Like it was a fucking puzzle.

He types in information from the second case and it points to the third.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
But he left a bigger clue than he
thought.

He's on the 7th case but the program says invalid.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Fuck! Was this planned! No. No.
Calm down. Everything else fell
into place. Then what? The data?

Nathaniel calls Luke.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Hey Luke.

LUKE
Nate, are you-

NATHANIEL
The autopsy for the last Red Angel
case, was there an updated version?

LUKE
Huh? Uh.

Sound of typing over the phone.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Yeah, looks like there was updated version.

NATHANIEL
Can you send it to me?

LUKE
...I thought that you were done with all this. Weren't you?

NATHANIEL
Yeah, of course I just wanted to make everything was correct. For archives. I'll be by soon.

At his computer and he brings up the database. He scrolls over a program labeled 'last resort'.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Dammit. If this gets out, it's not just losing my pension but criminal charges. But if - No. I am right.

He runs the program, it hacks into the database and he copies the file he needs and quickly closes the program. He runs the decoder again and gets a proper result, a date that coincides with his fishing trip.

NATHANIEL (CONT'D)
Yes! But wait that's -

The doorbell RINGS. Nathaniel looks through the peephole first. Surprised, he ignores the door, runs into the living room and grabs his work documents hiding them under the couch, in cabinets, behind any furniture he can.

14 EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 14

A woman ASTRID (late 50s) stands there looking at her watch. She pulls out her phone and calls a number.

15 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 15

Nathaniel's house phone RINGS unanswered and then his cell phone VIBRATES. He is still hiding documents quietly.

16 EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

16

Astrid KNOCKS loudly. No response. She finds a fake rock hidden nearby and a key falls out. She unlocks the door.

17 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

17

ASTRID

Nate. Where've you been?

(pauses and stares)

You look awful. When was the last time you slept on a bed?

NATHANIEL

Hi Astrid. Um. Last... week? It's just been a hectic couple of days.

ASTRID

In that case this trip came at the perfect time. Rose told me that Max has been working so much Amy's always asking "When's daddy coming home?" Said she doesn't know where he gets the endurance for it.

(sigh)

Didn't have the heart to tell her I knew ... or that it gets easier.

NATHANIEL

Huh that's...

ASTRID

Familiar? Right? Apple doesn't fall far from the tree. But there's no reason for them to make the same choices we did. For Amy's sake.

Nathaniel's phone VIBRATES. Caller ID says 'The Boss'

NATHANIEL

Sorry. Need to take this.

18 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

18

NATHANIEL

(into phone)

Leica, about the files -

LEICA

Save it. I got call from cyber division. Guess what it was about?

NATHANIEL

Now hear me out. I found something. I think the angel killer is still alive and he's planning another murder. And I know where... Leica?

LEICA

Nate. You're in a... delicate situation. Say you're right. You broke a half a dozen laws in the process. Only way you get out of it is rescinding your retirement. Which breaks more laws but doable.

NATHANIEL

Then just do that and -

LEICA

(interrupting)

But if you're wrong that's a whole lot of time and resources wasted. It's gonna make a lot of people angry. People will be unhappy, and when people are unhappy they make other people unhappy. Get where I'm going?

Nathaniel takes a deep breath.

LEICA (CONT'D)

If if things turn out the way you think, people might ask questions anyway. There's only so much I can do. That I have done. I can give your work to one of your colleges, Jim. He's smart and I trust him, he won't ask unnecessary questions. But it means that you any recognition. You might even get more bad press if this happens right after you leave the office. Think it through and make your decision. And think about everyone you'll affect.

19 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

19

Nathaniel returns to the room, Astrid isn't there and the study door is open.

20 INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

20

Nathaniel dashes to the room. Astrid is examining his work.

NATHANIEL

I can explain, this is -

ASTRID

You figured it out didn't you?
That's the only thing important
enough to make you go back.

NATHANIEL

It's... not... yeah. I think - no I
know I did.

ASTRID

I hope it's worth it. Because if
you can't stop now. I'm not sure
what will be enough. I'll let Rose
know. I'm sure Max will want to go
back to work if he finds out.

Astrid leaves. Nathaniel stares at his work, research, the
articles, and returns to his desk. He dials Leica's number.

21 EXT. FISHING BOAT - DAY

21

Nathaniel is standing on fishing boat. AMY(8) calls out. She
runs up to him. Behind her are MAX (early 30's), ROSE (early
30's), and Astrid.

AMY

Grandpa! Is this boat you and daddy
use to catch sharks! Can I have a
shark for my birthday!

NATHANIEL

Hey kiddo. Yeah we're gonna catch
us some big sharks even if it takes
us all summer.

AMY

(gasp)

But don't you have work on Mondays.
You're always working.

NATHANIEL

(laugh)

Not anymore. Not anymore.

The whole family smiles.