

DOWNSIZING

Written by
Alexander Payne

EXT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

AERIAL VIEW of a small, tranquil "campus" of buildings.

SUPERTITLE: **MICHELSEN INSTITUTE**
 Bergen, Norway

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

DR. JORGEN ASBJØRNSEN -- fifties, balding, closely trimmed beard -- works alone in his private lab.

He lowers a RAT into a jar along with a cottonball soaked in chloroform. He then gives the sedated rat an injection before places it into a STAINLESS STEEL CHAMBER.

The doctor makes notations, flips a switch on the chamber, and watches an LED CLOCK count down to zero.

He's been through this routine a thousand times before and opens the chamber door with no expectation for success. But this time what he discovers inside causes his weary eyes to widen in amazement.

INT. MICHELSEN INSTITUTE - DAY

Dr. Asbjørnsen sprints down a CORRIDOR and into a STAIRWELL.

INT. MICHELSEN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE -- DAY

Bypassing the SECRETARY, Dr. Asbjørnsen bursts into --

THE INNER OFFICE --

-- where institute director DR. ANDREAS JACOBSEN looks up from his work.

DR. JACOBSEN

Yes, Jorgen?

The excitement and fear on Asbjørnsen's face tell Jacobsen all he needs to know.

CREDITS --

A SERIES of stark, clinical TABLEAUX offer glimpses of the massive impact of man's presence on the Earth -- CONSTRUCTION CRANES in a Chinese city, CLEAR-CUT LAND at the edge of a RAIN FOREST, a third-world GARBAGE DUMP stretching to the horizon, a mountain carved away by STRIP MINING, countless CATTLE herded into a feed lot, OIL REFINERIES spilling smoke into the sky.

The FINAL CREDIT delivers us to --

EXT. LISBON, PORTUGAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

SUPERTITLE: **FOUR YEARS LATER**
 Lisbon, Portugal

EXT. CONFERENCE CENTER - DAY

Badge-wearing PARTICIPANTS file in and out of an enormous center hosting exhibit halls, auditoria and meeting rooms. AN ELECTRONIC SIGN displays the name of the current conference --

GLOBAL SOLUTIONS: TECHNOLOGY FOR TOMORROW**INT. MAIN AUDITORIUM - DAY**

Conference organizer DR. OSWALDO PEREIRA is at the podium.

DR. OSWALDO PEREIRA

For several decades the Michelsen Institute has quietly been one of the few truly visionary research organizations, working entirely without government or industry sponsorship...

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

A slightly older and grayer Anne-Helene Asbjørnsen straightens her husband's tie.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

I'm nervous. Fifty-nine years old, and I am still nervous speaking to people.

ANNE-HELENE

You're going to be wonderful. If you get too nervous, imagine you are speaking just to me.

INT. MAIN AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Pereira continues.

DR. OSWALDO PEREIRA

...and I'm sure you will agree they have exceeded even those very high expectations. It gives me great pleasure to welcome my old friend Dr. Andreas Jacobsen, director of the Michelsen Institute, and his esteemed colleague and frequent Nobel Prize nominee, Dr. Jorgen Asbjørnsen.

Dr. Jacobsen emerges alone from backstage and gently sets a small VALISE atop the podium.

DR. JACOBSEN

Thank you, Dr. Pereira. Dr. Asbjørnsen will join me shortly.

(opening his valise)

We at the Institute think today is a very significant day, not only for us and for the scientific community, but also, if you will permit me this immodesty, for the future of the entire human race. To present his findings, allow me now to introduce Dr. Jorgen Asbjørnsen.

Audience members look to the wings, but they are looking in the wrong place -- for Dr. Asbjørnsen, now just FOUR INCHES TALL, climbs out of Dr. Jacobsen's valise and stands atop the podium.

At first only the closest onlookers notice, but soon GASPS of astonishment ripple through the crowd. All stand to get a better look.

DR. JACOBSEN (CONT'D)

Would everyone please be seated?

As the audience settles down, Dr. Jacobsen places a TINY PODIUM before his colleague and tilts down the normal-sized microphone. Dr. Asbjørnsen dons reading glasses and removes his speech from his suit pocket.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Dr. Pereira, esteemed colleagues. Five years ago, my research uncovered a process by which organic material could be reduced at the cellular level by a ratio of approximately six thousand to one.

(MORE)

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

First plants, then animals, and finally human beings were subjected to this process, and in no case were side effects detected. In keeping with the mission established 75 years ago by our institute's founder, Mrs. Nellie Michelsen -- that of using science to help mankind overcome the devastations of war, poverty, disease, over-population, and to prepare for other calamities unforeseeable at the time, like global climate change -- the leaders of the institute immediately understood the enormous and profound potential of this discovery and resolved to undertake a bold experiment. Please lights.

LIGHTS DIM. Dr. Asbjørnsen hoists a foot and steps on the button of a normal-sized MOUSE.

ON THE SCREEN --

A GROUP PORTRAIT of enlightened Scandinavians -- beards, natural fibers, Birkenstocks -- gathered in the Michelsen Institute parking lot.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Four years ago, thirty-six brave, forward-thinking volunteers joined my wife Anne-Helene and me as the first human beings to undergo miniaturization and live together in a self-sustaining community. This photo was taken just hours before the reduction process. It was a very exciting day.

Now a series of shots inside a WORKSHOP -- several volunteers construct SMALL HOUSES AND BUILDINGS, others sew TINY CLOTHES.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Since the project was top secret, our group members themselves performed all the preparatory work.

The next SLIDES depict the stages of building a small GLASS-ENCLOSED COMMUNITY -- roughing-in foundations, placement of the tiny houses, finishing touches on the village, and finally the completed SUPER-STRUCTURE.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Our small community was designed after a traditional Norwegian village and was built inside an impermeable enclosure to protect us from extremes of weather and threats from animals and insects.

The next slides depict a MEDICAL FACILITY where subjects are prepared for miniaturization -- including having dental fillings removed.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Due to slight discomfort in the process, subjects are placed under light sedation, such as for a colonoscopy or periodontic work. Prosthetics or implants of any type -- dental, medical, orthotic -- which cannot be removed, excluded volunteers in some cases.

Now we see a RECOVERY ROOM, where, wrapped in blankets, some of the group recline on miniature Le Corbusier lounges. On a new slide, a tiny MAN drinks from an EYE-DROPPER extended from an unseen hand.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

The process is short and relatively painless. After a brief rest, subjects are given crackers and applesaft and are back to normal within an hour or two.

Now a startling photo of a NAKED MAN, arms extended as he shows off his new TINY BODY, looking like Da Vinci's famous drawing. An enormous hand holds a METRIC RULER.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Under this process, a man of one meter 76 and weighing 80 kilograms is now 7.23 centimeters and weighs just 31 grams.

Now a normal-sized GERMAN SHEPARD on a leash. The next slide shows the same dog next to the metric ruler while a giant hand restrains him with a TINY LEASH.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Some of our volunteers refused to come along without their beloved four-legged companions.

Next, smiling group members surround a YOUNG COUPLE holding a BABY.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

We held our breaths awaiting the birth of the first baby, but I happily report little Ronni Nestrud arrived healthy and happy. Now let me show a bit of how we lived in our little utopia, how little we consumed, how little waste we produced.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER LOBBY -- DAY

As news of this astonishing presentation spreads, other attendees FLOCK into the room.

INT. MAIN AUDITORIUM -- DAY

A slide shows a giant FOOTPRINT next to a tiny DOT.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Here we see the carbon footprint of a typical Norwegian compared with the carbon footprint of our entire community of thirty six adults for four years. Can you see it? It's there.

The next slide shows the community engaged in a spirited game of VOLLEYBALL.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Furthermore, my colleagues and I can report new fonts of energy and vitality.

THE FINAL SLIDE of the presentation -- the group pausing in their volleyball game to wave farewell -- hovers over Dr. Asbjørnsen as the lights come up.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

We know the price we pay for undergoing this irreversible process is a certain segregation from most of our fellow man. Many activities of travel and leisure are no longer accessible as before. We cannot dine in our favorite restaurants or take that long-dreamed-of hike to Machu Picchu. Even a simple walk down the street is a dangerous proposal. But we must remember that living conditions for all men will decline radically and permanently if current patterns of overpopulation, excess consumption, and accompanying climate-change, outbreaks of disease and famine continue unchecked.

(MORE)

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

We realize it is unrealistic to presume that all or even most of the world's population would at this point consider miniaturization. But if, for example, just 5% of the industrialized world's population would agree to live in small communities, we would reduce carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide emissions annually by 900 million metric tons, consumption of fossil fuels by 11 billion barrels, and the need for potable water worldwide by 46 billion liters. The possibilities are only as limited as our imaginations. Dr. Jacobsen?

Dr. Jacobsen emerges from the wings to rejoin his tiny colleague, holding up a SMALL HEFTY BAG.

DR. JACOBSEN

(at the mic)

I hold in my hand all the waste produced by 36 people over four years. Four years!

The audience breaks into applause, stands, and eventually stamps its feet in unison -- an astounding reception.

At Dr. Jacobsen's signal, a CART is wheeled out atop of which the OTHER SMALL MEMBERS of the community hold hands, smile and wave. One WOMAN carries baby RONNI. Anne-Helene Asbjørnsen takes her husband's hand.

A MONTAGE --

People around the world watch the big news on TV. In every case the CAMERA assumes the position of the television, and the people look DIRECTLY AT US. The LANGUAGES of the news reports shift accordingly.

EXT. BURKINA FASO VILLAGE COMMUNITY ROOM - DAY

A group of barefoot brightly-attired VILLAGERS watch the report on the community's only TELEVISION.

EXT. PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY BEACH RESORT - DAY

Tanned SUNBATHERS peer over their dark glasses to catch a glimpse of the TV in the COCKTAIL LOUNGE AREA.

EXT. TANAGA ISLAND - BERING STRAITS - DAY

ALEUTIAN ISLANDERS pause in their work DRYING FISH to catch the news.

EXT. DUBAI STREET - DAY

Arabs watch through the window of an ELECTRONICS STORE.

INT. TROVATO'S RESTAURANT, OMAHA - NIGHT

People crowd near the TV above the BAR. Astonished DINERS rise from their tables to get a better look.

Among them is PAUL HEAFY, shaking his head in amazement. A photo ID badge hangs around his neck, and his polo shirt bears a CON-AGRA insignia.

PAUL

(to another patron)

Wow. That's wild, isn't it? Just wild.

Checking his watch, he turns to a nearby WAITRESS.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Say, Holly? You can put in that take-out order now.

EXT. TROVATO'S RESTAURANT, OMAHA - NIGHT

Paul heads to his car.

INT. WALGREEN'S PHARMACY COUNTER - NIGHT

It's Paul's turn.

PHARMACIST

Can I help you?

PAUL

Yeah, I'd like to pick up a prescription for Heafy. Kay Heafy.

PHARMACIST

(checking his computer)

Gluconase?

PAUL

I called a while ago, and they said it was ready.

PHARMACIST

Give me about ten minutes.

Paul sighs, checks his watch impatiently.

EXT. DUPLEX BACK DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Paul parks his Ford Focus and emerges carrying two BAGS -- one from Walgreen's, the other from Trovato's. He climbs the PORCH STEPS and opens one of two BACK DOORS.

INT. DUPLEX KITCHEN - NIGHT

Over the sound of a TV from the living room comes the voice of Paul's mother KAY --

KAY HEAFY (O.S.)

Is that you?

PAUL

Yeah.

KAY HEAFY (O.S.)

Oh, goody.

Paul begins transferring SPAGHETTI from a Styrofoam container onto a plate.

PAUL

You hungry?

KAY HEAFY (O.S.)

I had a Healthy Choice about an hour ago.

PAUL

You knew I was bringing you food. I called and asked you specifically --

KAY HEAFY (O.S.)

-- I know --

PAUL

-- as I was leaving work, and then you go and eat?

KAY HEAFY (O.S.)

It was just a Fiesta Chicken. I'm still hungry. Come in here. Don't make me holler.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

You can almost smell the old-lady smell. Tethered to an oxygen tank, KAY HEAFY sits in a recliner. Paul helps clear a TV TRAY before setting her food down.

PAUL

Did you see the news today?

KAY

You mean the little Swedish man?

PAUL

Norwegian. Pretty incredible, huh?

KAY

Helen Draper called me to tell me to turn on the TV. I don't know why anybody would want to do that to themselves.

PAUL

(sniffing)

Did you have a cigarette?

KAY

No.

PAUL

You're going to burn the place down.
(under his breath)
Save me the cost of cremation...

KAY

Don't be mean.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Kay wheezes up the stairs, followed by Paul toting her oxygen tank.

KAY

What's the world coming to? They can shrink people down and land on the moon, but they can't cure my fibromyalgia?

INT. MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kay lies face-down on the bed, her butt partially exposed. Paul prepares a SYRINGE.

KAY

And all that talk about the environment.
As though the world's about to end. I'm
in pain. Doesn't that matter?

PAUL

Lots of people are in pain, Mom. In all
sorts of ways.

Paul swabs his mother's hip and administers the shot.

KAY

You know, when you were a little boy, you
were so polite and sweet. People used to
stop me on the street and tell me how
sweet you were. Such a good boy. Always
helping me. I don't know what happened.

CLOSE ON PAUL, impassive as he finishes the task at hand.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Paul exits one side of the duplex and enters the other.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Just as he steps inside, an intercom SQUAWKS.

KAY (ON INTERCOM)

Are you there yet?

PAUL

Yeah, mom.

KAY (ON INTERCOM)

I forgot my book, honey. Come back and
bring up my book.

PAUL

I already did. It's right there on the
table.

KAY (ON INTERCOM)

I don't see it.

PAUL

To your right, Mom. Look to your right.

KAY (ON INTERCOM)

Oh.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul sits in a recliner seemingly just staring off into space. We hold on him for an extended moment until -- WHOOOOO -- he exhales a lungful of SMOKE.

The PHONE RINGS, but Paul lets the MACHINE pick up. He freezes upon hearing the tremulous voice of on-again-off-again girlfriend AUDREY.

AUDREY (ON PHONE)

Paul, it's Audrey. Are you there? Pick up. I was watching the news about the little people, and I just... I just had the urge to pick up the phone and hear your voice. Paul... Do you really want it to end like this? After everything we've been through? Just let it die? I can't go to work. I can't do anything. I just stay home and cry. Please, Paul. When we broke up last time, I was doing fine. You were the one who called me, who wanted to start up again. And I came back. You can't play with my heart like this. I need you, Paul. I need you next to me in bed. The least you could do is treat me like a human being and call back. You owe me that much --

Paul picks up the phone, takes a breath.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Paul?

INT. "HEALTHY CHOICE" FACTORY FLOOR - DAY

"FIESTA CHICKEN" BOXES
emerge from a PACKAGING MACHINE.

WIDE --

Paul approaches employee SANDY. She follows him away.

SUPERTITLE: **NINE YEARS LATER**

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY

Paul manipulates Sandy's hand and forearm.

PAUL

How does that feel? Still hurt?

SANDY
More like tingling.

PAUL
Okay, Sandy, now make a fist for me.
I'm going to pull your arm down, and you
try to stop me, okay? Good.

Paul pulls hard, lets go, makes a note.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You been doing the exercises and using
the ice packs?

SANDY
(lying)
Yes.

PAUL
Uh-huh. I see you're not wearing your
brace.

SANDY
Could I get another one? I think I lost
it when I went to Kansas City last week.

Paul extracts two FORMS from a FILE BOX.

PAUL
Yeah, but first I'm going to need a couple
John Hancocks confirming you haven't been
following the protocol I prescribed.

LATER --

At his DESK, the file box in front of him, a tired and
frustrated Paul sorts stacks of PAPERWORK. Supervisor
FRANK pops his head in.

FRANK
Hey, Paul.

PAUL
Frank.

FRANK
Got three more disability claims I need
you to get into.

PAUL
Three?

FRANK

Nothing with any merit, I think.
Shouldn't take you too long.

Frank hands Paul some FILES, and he adds them to the top of an already sizable in-box.

INT. WALGREEN'S PHARMACY COUNTER - DAY

PHARMACIST

Can I help you?

PAUL

Yeah, I'd like to pick up a prescription.
Heafy. Should be ready.

PHARMACIST

(checking)

Give me ten minutes.

Paul sighs -- things never change.

EXT. DUPLEX - DAY

As Paul gets out of his car and walks toward his back door, graduate student RICH WANG emerges from what used to be his mother's side.

PAUL

Hey, Rich, how's it going?

RICH WANG

Real good, Mr. Heafy. How're you?

PAUL

Good, good. Say, did the plumber come?

RICH WANG

Uh-uh. It's still leaking.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Entering --

PAUL

Hey, honey!

From the other room --

AUDREY (O.S.)

Did you pick up my medicine?

PAUL

Yep.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Paul enters and finds AUDREY lying on the sofa.

PAUL

You okay?

AUDREY

I've got a splitting headache.

PAUL

I'm sorry.

AUDREY

I had a really busy day at the store, and Carla was being a total bitch.

PAUL

Did you call the plumber?

AUDREY

Of course I did.

PAUL

And?

AUDREY

I left a message, and they never got back to me, and then I had to go to work.

PAUL

Did you check the messages?

AUDREY

Yeah, but the machine's full.

PAUL

So you don't know if they called back. I've been asking you to go through and delete those old messages.

AUDREY

They've got important numbers in them.

PAUL

Then go through and write them down! Audrey, that thing's been dripping over there for weeks, and it's costing us a lot of money.

AUDREY

Leave me alone, will you? My head's killing me. I don't even know if I can go tonight.

PAUL

You have to go.

(pulling up a chair)

Here, let me see what I can do.

He slips his hands underneath Audrey's head, lifts it slightly, rolls it from side to side.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Relax your neck. Just relax. Let me take all the weight.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Along with OTHER COUPLES emerging from their cars, Paul and Audrey walk toward the school. All are attired for a dressy occasion.

AUDREY

You sure I look okay?

PAUL

I've told you ten times already you look fantastic. Besides, I'm the one in the hot seat -- "Oh, look how fat Paul got. Look how bald Paul got..."

A BANNER reads, "Welcome Prep Alums."

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LUNCH ROOM - NIGHT

A large space frequently used for events such as this. Cocktails in hand, Paul and Audrey chat with a COUPLE.

PAUL

Wow, anesthesiology, huh?

ANESTHESIOLOGIST

My wife says I put people to sleep wherever I go.

Paul and Audrey respond with courteous chuckles.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S WIFE

What's your field, Paul?

PAUL
Occupational therapy.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S WIFE
Oh, like career counseling?

PAUL
More like physical therapy. I'm in-house over at Con-Agra, and my focus is preventing and treating work-related injuries -- carpal tunnel, limb rehab, lower-back issues, stuff like that.

AUDREY
Mostly he does paperwork.

PAUL
Yeah, I get a little carpal tunnel of my own with that. You know, I actually started out pre-med down in Lincoln. Wanted to be a surgeon. I have small hands, which they say is a big plus.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Sure is. Hey, we could have been working together.

PAUL
But the Organic Chemistry got me.

ANESTHESIOLOGIST
Yeah, that weeds out a lot of people.

LATER -- AT DINNER --

All are SEATED, but there's a fair amount of table-hopping too.

At a table surrounded by FRIENDS, Paul takes a moment to look around the room, his eyes falling upon INSPIRATIONAL FELT BANNERS.

One reads, "The Door to Happiness Opens Outward." Another says, "Find Yourself by Losing Yourself in Service to Others."

CLOSE ON PAUL pondering these thoughts. Then --

A FLURRY OF EXCITEMENT at the entrance suggests someone special has arrived. Heads turn.

But it's just SOME GUY too young to be an alum. Judging from reactions -- gasps, pointing -- it's the custom-made BOX he carries that's of interest.

The guy walks cautiously to keep the box perfectly level. Through its CLEAR ACRYLIC sides we see --

A TINY COUPLE --

DAVE AND CAROL JOHNSON, holding onto handrails as though on an airport shuttle, waving and smiling at old friends.

DAVE
(spotting)
Hey, Brian, looking good!

This scene draws the attention of the entire room. The box passes PAUL AND AUDREY, who like everyone else gawk at the tiny arrivals.

PAUL
That's Dave! Dave Johnson. And Carol. I heard he was coming but... Jesus, I never would have pegged him for someone who'd do something like that. Man, did you see that?

AT A TABLE --

The carrier of the box, Dave's brother ANDY, sets it down.

DAVE
(to the table)
Hope we're not intruding.

He is met with gracious nods and gestures -- "Please!" "Join us!" He opens a tiny built-in CLOSET and pulls out two FOLDING CHAIRS and a BULLHORN. Then he opens a EXIT DOOR, an action that triggers POP-OUT STEPS.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Careful, honey.

NOW ATOP THE TABLE --

Dave fishes two TINY TUMBLERS from his jacket and sets them down near the edge of the table. Speaking through his bullhorn --

DAVE (CONT'D)
Andy, could you get Carol a...
(turning to Carol)
...what're you having?

CAROL

Gin tonic.

DAVE

Yeah, get her a gin-tonic and me a --
You know, that sounds good. I'll have a
gin-tonic too.

As Andy heads toward the bar --

DAVE (CONT'D)

With lime!

WIDE --

The entire room migrates toward the new arrivals.

LATER --

Paul and Audrey join the crowd around Dave and Carol, who sit comfortably on their tiny chairs, answering questions through their bullhorns.

SOME ALUM

So what's traveling like? How'd you get
up here from New Mexico?

DAVE

We flew. Most airlines are fitted out now.

CAROL

This was our first trip, and it was just
so easy. And all the seats are first
class.

DAVE

Yeah, we weren't going to come at first,
but then I started getting e-mails from
everybody... Plus Carol's sister got
sick...

CAROL

She's out of the woods now.

DAVE

...and my little brother Andy here said
he'd be our slave for a couple days.

AT THE PODIUM --

JESUIT

Don't mean to break up the party, but if you can tear yourselves away from the chit-chat, the silent auction will be closing in fifteen minutes, and there're still some very attractive items with no takers.

EXT. FRIENDS' HOUSE - NIGHT

A lovely middle-class home. Establishing.

INT. FRIENDS' HOUSE - NIGHT

This is the informal AFTER-PARTY for a small group of old friends. The camera makes its way from --

THE LIVING ROOM --

-- where some sit on a couch reminiscing over a YEARBOOK, Audrey among them. Little Carol Johnson stands on the coffee table. We continue on to --

THE KITCHEN --

-- where Paul is having a heart-to-heart with Dave Johnson, seated atop a box of AK-MAK CRACKERS.

- DAVE

Then I spent a couple years in Mexico trying to get an import/export thing going, but I couldn't even get my family to invest, so I moved to Vegas and went to dealer school and --

PAUL

That's around the last time we talked.

DAVE

Right. Anyway, Vegas wasn't good for me -
- got into some bad habits, pretty much hit rock bottom.

PAUL

Sorry to hear that.

DAVE

Yeah, rehab three times and still couldn't...

(pointing)

...but Carol, man. Carol saved my life. She hung in there with me through it all.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Any other woman would have cut her losses and run for the hills, but Carol, man, she's a saint.

PAUL

And the decision to, you know --

Paul makes a "shrinking" motion with his palms.

DAVE

Well, that's the thing. We both saw we needed a change, a big change. I know downsizing might seem pretty extreme, but it was a godsend for us. Takes the pressure right off, especially money pressure. I'm just not, you know, super-ambitious like the rest of my family, like I was programmed to be. Carol and I -- we don't need the moon, just need a certain level of comfort, that's all. And now we have that and more. A lot more. We live like fucking kings, better than anybody else in my family, I'll tell you that much. Imagine living in a place where money's not an issue anymore. Just not an issue.

PAUL

Come on. Money's always an issue.

DAVE

I'm talking about a place where one normal-size Big Mac can feed five thousand people. That's what I'm talking about. My biggest problem now is waking up and deciding if I want to go golfing or skiing or just stay home and kick back, listen to music, watch TV, play my drums. Plus we feel really good about what we're doing for the environment. Am I boring you yet?

PAUL

No, go on. I'm interested.

DAVE

How interested?

Paul looks over his shoulder, lowers his voice.

PAUL

I don't know. You just got me thinking... I mean, no offense, I don't think getting small would be for us, but the thing is... I'm in a pretty tight spot.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

My mom had all these huge hospital bills right before she died that I'm still paying off -- we got nailed on a pre-existing condition.

DAVE

Ouch.

PAUL

So I had to take a loan out on the house that Audrey doesn't exactly know about. And then there was this business thing I tried -- never mind, but I got in a little over my head. And Audrey wants a bigger house, and she's right, you know, she deserves that. I want that too. We're still living in the house I grew up in. And my job -- I'm at least four years away from the next pay level. And here we are at the reunion, and I run into Decker and Pazderka and Kowal, and they're all doing so well...

DAVE

I know what you mean. Say, do you think you could --

PAUL

I'm just not where I thought I'd be at 43, you know? Far from it. I mean, twenty-five years. What have I done?

DAVE

Say, could I get you to back up a little? I think there's a little too much garlic in that salsa.

PAUL

Oh, yeah, sorry.

DAVE

Or floss or something. I don't know.

Suddenly -- a CHILD'S SCREAM. Alarmed, Paul heads into --

THE LIVING ROOM --

-- where he finds the HOSTS comforting their little DAUGHTER, who has wandered downstairs and is frightened by the sight of little Carol.

HOSTS

It's okay, Katie. It's okay. She's a friend. She's just little.

CAROL
Hi, Katie! Hi, Katie! I won't bite.

INT. PAUL AND AUDREY'S CAR -- NIGHT

On the drive home --

AUDREY
Well, that turned out to be a lot more interesting than I thought it'd be.

PAUL
I'll say.

AUDREY
We've been hearing about small people all these years, but you don't really have a sense of it till you meet one face-to-face. The only person I know who did it was Judy Sunderman. Used to come into the store all the time.

PAUL
That fat lady?

AUDREY
Not fat. Huge. Took her four kids out of school and moved to New Mexico to get small. We all thought she was out of her mind, but she was such a pain in the ass, we were like, good riddance.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Audrey sleeps while Paul lies awake in anguish. He arises and tiptoes away. At the door he turns to look at his wife -- all she does to complete him, all she does to diminish him.

INT. PAUL'S BASEMENT -- NIGHT

A FILM CANNISTER --
The lid is pulled off. Leaves are dumped out.

A WINDOW LATCH --
is flipped open and the bottom of the window pushed out.

THE BOWL OF A GLASS PIPE --
A flame is sucked down, igniting the contents.

FROM OUTSIDE --

The upper half of Paul's face looking out a cellar window. He exhales a big cloud of SMOKE.

EXT. GRAND CANYON - DAY

A magnificent stretch of the canyon. Paul and Audrey admire the view amid a group of JAPANESE SCHOOLCHILDREN.

SUPERTITLE: **FOUR MONTHS LATER**

Paul gazes down at his feet where a ANTS dismantle a piece of bread.

EXT. STATE LINE - DAY

The Heafys' rental car zooms by a sign -- "NEW MEXICO, LAND OF ENCHANTMENT."

EXT. SANTA FE - DAY

Paul and Audrey stroll through the PLAZA lined with spendy galleries and rug stores.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - SUNSET

Our couple enjoy a ROMANTIC MEAL. They've secured a window seat with a dramatic view of the desert cliffs, colors shifting as the sun descends.

We can't make out the words, but it seems as though they're actually having a real conversation, finally able to say things which have long needed to be said.

EXT. HIGHWAY 64 - NEW MEXICO - DAY

Paul and Audrey's car travels through the DESERT. Near an exit, a BILLBOARD with a big arrow --

**This way to Tony Dale's
LEISURELAND ESTATES
GET READY FOR MORE!**

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

As Paul takes the exit, he exchanges a look with Audrey -- this is going to be interesting.

AUDREY

I don't know. Seems like a tourist trap.

PAUL

Look, if it's a bust, we'll just get right back on the road.

AUDREY

Because I really want to make it to Taos Pueblo today.

PAUL

Yeah, I know.

EXT. NEW MEXICO COUNTY ROAD - DAY

AN INDIAN-OWNED ROADSIDE STAND selling jewelry and refreshments profits from the long PARADE OF CARS.

EXT. LEISURELAND ESTATES - DAY

The Heafys' rental car enters an enormous PARKING LOT. Like at a theme park, they are guided to a spot by yellow-vested ATTENDANTS.

THE VISITORS CENTER

is an impressively large building abutting a 20-FOOT-HIGH WALL stretching in both directions. The wall encircles and safeguards the city of Leisureland.

Extending skyward from the wall are long POLES leaning out at a 20-degree angle which hold in place the overhead NETTING that protects the community.

INT. LEISURELAND VISITOR CENTER LOBBY - DAY

The Heafys enter this vast place with huge BANNERS hanging from the ceiling, one depicting an ECSTATIC COUPLE -- "It's like winning the lottery every day!"

In the center of the room sits --

A CLEAR ACRYLIC BOX --

atop a wooden base. Inside is a miniature version of a THREE-STORY MANSION surrounded by beautiful grounds with SWIMMING POOL and TENNIS COURT.

Paul and Audrey make their way over to join an already sizable CROWD. THEME MUSIC begins. LIGHTS come on inside the house, and out of the front door steps a tanned and energetic tiny SALES PROFESSIONAL wearing a

HEADSET MICROPHONE.

JEFF LONOWSKI

Welcome and hello, everybody! I'm Jeff Lonowski, Senior Product Specialist here at Leisureland Estates. Are you having a good time?

(off weak responses)

Come on, guys, make some noise. You're a lot bigger than I am. I said, are you having a good time?

THE CROWD

Yes!

JEFF

That's more like it! So what do you think of my house -- pretty snazzy, huh? It's the house of my dreams -- heck, I'd say it's the house of anybody's dreams. Why, an average guy like me might have to work twenty, thirty even forty years to be able to afford a spread like this. And wait until you see what's inside.

The house SPLITS OPEN to reveal the massive family room, enormous bedrooms, big airy kitchen.

In the MASTER SUITE upstairs, Jeff's "wife" LAURA takes a bubble bath in a big TUB. She also wears a HEADSET MIC.

LAURA

Jeff, you've got to stop inviting guests over without telling me!

JEFF

Sorry, Laura. I was only --

LAURA

I mean, I finally got in the tub to relax after such a busy day.

JEFF

Busy doing what, sweetheart?

LAURA

Oh, no end of things. First I played nine holes of golf and took a tennis lesson. Then after a gourmet lunch with the girls, we just couldn't help ourselves and popped into that new Tiffany's store downtown.

JEFF
 Uh-oh, Tiffany's. What's that going to cost me?

LAURA
 Now, Jeff, you hush. I was really good. I only got a diamond bracelet.

JEFF
 Just a diamond bracelet? That doesn't sound like you.

LAURA
 And... matching diamond earrings.
 (holding for laughter)
 And the matching diamond necklace. With the ruby accents.
 (as Jeff crosses his arms)
 Oh, Jeff, they look so good on me. Wait till you --

JEFF
 How much, Laura?

LAURA
 Now, Jeff...

JEFF
 I said how much?

LAURA
 (sheepish)
 Forty dollars.

OOHS AND AHS from the crowd.

JEFF
 Forty dollars? Are you crazy?
 (to the audience)
 Why, that's our family's food budget for three whole months!

INT. LEISURELAND MOVIE THEATER - DAY

A MOVIE WITHIN A MOVIE --

EXT. BEACH - DAY

IN A TIDE POOL --

A HORSESHOE CRAB scuttles along, silent and primordial. The crab passes a pair of rubber boots. Then we see the rugged, charismatic man inside those boots --

TONY DALE

Hi, I'm Tony Dale. The horseshoe crab you just saw has remained unchanged for 250 million years. Same size, same shell, same ugly mug. But we humans are different. We're constantly evolving and adapting to new challenges. Today we find ourselves at the dawn of an exciting new chapter in human history. Each and every one of you can be among the lucky ones to take this great leap forward, enjoy the prosperity you deserve, and help protect our precious planet. Join me, won't you, as we take a look at the world's first community designed exclusively to make your dreams come true -- Leisureland Estates.

INT. SMALL PLANE - DAY

In the copilot's seat, Tony surveys desert landscape.

TONY DALE (V.O.)

The first order of business was to find the perfect location -- not too cold in the winter, not too hot in the summer. No earthquakes, no tornados, no hurricanes. And no pesky mosquitoes. Yep, everything had to be just right.

INSERT - A MAP OF THE UNITED STATES

ZOOM in on NEW MEXICO --

TONY DALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My search led me to an ideal spot where you are right now -- twenty-three square miles of high desert on the Vasquez Plateau in New Mexico.

EXT. VASQUEZ PLATEAU - DAY

TWINE on surveyor's stakes winds through cacti and scrub.

Wearing "work clothes" and big hat, Tony Dale paces out a distance, then stops and points broadly at the ground, giving confident directions to off-screen crew.

IN THE AUDIENCE --

Paul and Audrey watch with great interest.

THE MOVIE --**INT. LEISURELAND DESIGN "BULLPEN" - DAY**

A large open area abuzz with creativity. CLOSER ANGLES
ON --

SPECIALISTS seated at computers and drafting tables while others build MAQUETTES.

ACADEMICS around a conference table amid a presentation with charts and graphs. Tony Dale sits up front, nodding.

TONY DALE (V.O.)

Then I gathered a team of top urban planners, engineers, social scientists, and architects from around the world to answer a simple question, "How can we design the most efficient and innovative city the world has ever known?"

AN ENORMOUS TABLETOP MODEL OF LEISURELAND ESTATES --

A smiling Tony Dale holds a long POINTER while reviewing the MODEL with members of his team.

TONY DALE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Each dwelling would be a dream house, a genuine estate within anyone's reach. The streets would be neat and orderly, offering easy access to shops, schools, parks and medical services. Mass transit would be free and efficient.

INT. TONY DALE'S "OFFICE" -- DAY

Tony Dale sits in a plush office set and looks at camera in a reassuring, avuncular way.

TONY DALE

For a closer look at how these dreams became a reality, let me introduce you to someone very special - Leisureland's Director of Public Relations, Janet Tyson.

(looking off-camera)

Janet?

The camera reframes to include JANET, an upbeat *DOWNSIZED WOMAN* in her early thirties, standing atop a credenza.

JANET

Hi, Tony.
 (turning to camera)
 Hi, everybody!

TONY DALE

What do you have in store for these folks?

JANET

Well, I thought I'd show them around town a bit, sort of give them...
 (winking)
 ...the big picture.

TONY DALE

Sounds great, Janet.

JANET

 (into camera)
 Follow me.

Janet walks out of frame.

INT. LEISURELAND GONDOLA STATION - DAY

Janet walks into frame, now in perfect proportion to her surroundings. An empty air GONDOLA arrives, and we follow her as she climbs aboard.

JANET

Let's start off with a gondola ride, just one of the unique ways we get around here in Leisureland.

INT./EXT. GONDOLA - DAY

Janet steps to the front of the gondola.

JANET

Everyone settled in? Okay! Here we go. I think you're going to like the view.

The Gondola moves off the station platform.

IN PERFECT SYNCH --

CURTAINS on the sides of the theater withdraw to reveal
SCREENS that surround the audience -- a 360-DEGREE FILM
EXPERIENCE!

IN THE AUDIENCE --

Paul and Audrey swivel their heads to take it all in.
The audience OOHs and AAHS.

THE MOVIE --

The gondola moves higher and higher --

JANET (CONT'D)

Just to get you oriented a bit...

(pointing)

*See that long low building over there
with the flag poles? That's the visitors
center where you are right now. And over
on your right, that big white oval
building you see is one of our seven
Sports Centers. That's the one that
boasts, relative to human size, the
largest indoor skiing facility in the
world. Down below is Lake Leisureland
with all the sailing and water sports you
can imagine.*

(pointing at an immense

Ferris Wheel)

*And over there's Funland Park with all
the latest rides and roller coasters.
And you see that big round building with
the blue roof? That's Leisureland Arena.*

INSIDE THE ARENA --

*A normal-size, aging GARTH BROOKS sings to an
enthusiastic DOWNSIZED AUDIENCE watching from steeply-
raked seats wrapped tightly around the stage.*

JANET (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*We've got concerts nearly every night,
with all your favorite performers, and
there isn't a bad seat in the house!*

INT. VISITOR CENTER VIEWING CORRIDOR - DAY

WHUMP! The EXIT DOORS from the theater snap open, and Paul
and Audrey emerge into a WIDE HALLWAY with high ceilings
much like a corridor connecting two airport terminals.

Paul and Audrey step onto an elevated VIEWING PLATFORM and through enormous PLATE GLASS WINDOWS catch their first glimpse of the city of LEISURELAND ESTATES.

The first impression is at once impressive and anti-climactic -- it's hard to make out many details. But a few things stand out. One is the CENTRAL TOWER rising skyward, the "tent pole" for the high netting. Another is the network of GONDOLAS traveling along CABLES suspended above the city -- an innovative and fanciful mass transit system.

The Heafys look through OBSERVATION-DECK BINOCULARS. Paul sees --

SMALL PEOPLE standing on an OBSERVATION DECK atop Leisureland's central tower, looking through BINOCULARS of their own. They wave, and Paul waves back -- an odd feeling.

MOMENTS LATER --

Paul and Audrey follow the flow of the crowd down the corridor, passing TABLES displaying MODEL HOMES ranging from rambling ranches up through three-storey McMansions - - "The Regency," "The Barrington," "The Equestrian," "The Aristocrat," "The Mediterranean," "The Sportsman." At the top end is "The Versailles," which lives up to its name with a base price of \$89,999.

INT. VISITOR CENTER SALES FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A massive, high-ceilinged room with some 60 CUBICLES manned by chipper SALES ASSOCIATES. There is a vibrant sense of possibility in the air, like at a casino.

DIGITAL COUNT-DOWN devices keep track of homes still available in specific neighborhoods. PROSPECTIVE BUYERS weave through a maze of stanchions.

A LONG TRACKING SHOT hovers over the sea of desks, catching bits of interactions with sales reps, ending on --

PAUL AND AUDREY sitting with a friendly female SALESPERSON walking them through a PRINT-OUT of their financial analysis.

SALESPERSON

Okay, so if you were to sell your current home, liquidate your vehicles and other assets, move to Leisureland and purchase a Regency Level estate -- that's the one-acre equivalent, three-story mansion, at the current base price of \$43,000, plus \$3,500 for the Health and Fitness package -- that's the pool, jacuzzi, and tennis court. Then the medical procedure for two adults --

PAUL

Would insurance cover any of that?

SALESPERSON

No, but you do get a small federal tax credit over the first three years. That's \$15,000 per adult. So figuring in your current debt load, your retirement accounts and your savings, you'd be looking at approximately \$112,000 to live on for life if you retire today. That's a very comfortable number.

AUDREY

"Comfortable?" That doesn't sound nearly --

SALESPERSON

You have to look at this column, equivalent value. Once you've downsized, your 112 thousand translates into nearly 17.5 million dollars.

Audrey and Paul take a moment to absorb this number.

AUDREY

Hold on. If this is such a great thing, how come you haven't done it?

SALESPERSON

I would in a heartbeat, but my husband had a hip replacement some years back that disqualifies him. But look around you. If you come back in a month, you won't see most of my co-workers still here. A lot of folks take jobs here just for the discount. Did you see Jeff's little show out front? Jeff Lonowski? The house that opens up?

(off their nod)

He used to sit right there, right next to me.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Paul dozes while Audrey leafs through --

THE LEISURELAND CATALOGUE
with page after page of sumptuous homes. "STARTING AT
\$36,500!" reads one eye-catching inset.

Paul opens his eyes but remains silent, studying Audrey's
unguarded reactions.

EXT. DUPLEX DRIVEWAY - DAY

Paul and Audrey return to their home that strikes such a
grim contrast to all they've seen. Suddenly --

AUDREY

I don't care where we move to, but I am
NOT raising children in this shithole, do
you hear me?

PAUL

(low)
I grew up here.

EXT. PAUL'S DUPLEX FRONT YARD - DAY

Close on some OLD GUY.

OLD GUY

How much for the hot-dog cooker?

SUPERTITLE: **FIVE MONTHS LATER**

WIDE --

Paul and Audrey's belongings are on display in their
driveway. ESTATE SALE -- EVERYTHING MUST GO!

PAUL

Four dollars.

OLD MAN

I'll give you one.

AUDREY

Sold.

EXT. JAM'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. JAM'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A perennially "hip" restaurant for middle-aged people.

PAUL AND AUDREY'S FAREWELL PARTY occupies the back, with FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS and FAMILY members gathered around four or five reserved tables. Paul and Audrey mingle with FRIENDS.

LATER --

In walks Audrey's father LARRY LUSTIG. Audrey greets him with a big hug.

AUDREY

Hi, Dad.

LARRY LUSTIG

Just putting in an appearance. Your mother couldn't bring herself to come, but she sends her love. She's expecting you tomorrow.

AUDREY

She's taking it pretty hard, huh?

LARRY LUSTIG

Well, you know your mother. We were both pretty skeptical, but I told you about Jerry Gross -- he and his wife retired down there, did the whole... shrinking thing you kids are doing. Well, I called him up the other day, and he says they're getting along just fine. Never better. Says he feels younger every day, says one dollar buys five hundred dollars worth of stuff. Of course they need that with all the medication Bev takes, but, yeah, they play nine holes every morning. Taking a two-week cruise up to Alaska next month -- first class stateroom, gourmet food, whole nine yards. The whole thing's costing around \$150. No, I see the appeal.

He gives Audrey a misty-eyed look that says how much he's going to miss her.

LARRY LUSTIG (CONT'D)

(clearing his throat)

And apparently there's practically zero crime down there. That's what I keep telling your mother.

PAUL
(approaching)
Hey, Larry.

LARRY LUSTIG
Paul.

AUDREY
Dad, can I get you a drink?

LARRY LUSTIG
Just a beer. Any beer.
(as she heads off)
So, Paul, how'd you finally resolve
things with your pension?

PAUL
I talked them into letting me buy a few
years so I can get early retirement.

LARRY LUSTIG
How much are you out-of-pocket?

PAUL
Not too bad. About \$27,000.

LARRY LUSTIG
And for that you get, what, thirty
percent of full?

PAUL
Closer to twenty five.

LARRY LUSTIG
And you took it?

PAUL
Yeah, well, we won't need much once we
get there. That's sort of the whole
point.

LARRY LUSTIG
You're no businessman, Paul.

PAUL
Guess I'm more of a people person, Larry.

LATER --

The party has wound down, and Paul and Audrey are
enjoying a few last drinks with their closest friends,
one of whom, GINA, is in tears.

GINA

I'm just going to miss you so much. Do you really have to?

As Paul squeezes Gina's shoulder --

AUDREY

Oh, Gina, we're going to miss you too. But, God, it's not like we're going to another planet. We're just relocating. We'll be back at least once a year, you'll see.

PAUL

And you can come down and stay with us anytime you want. We'll have a huge guest room.

Gina gets the joke, laughs through tears. Just then, SOME DRUNK GUY in his 50s wanders over from the bar.

DRUNK GUY

Hey, I hear some of you folks are moving down to New Mexico to get small.

PAUL

That's right. My wife and I.

DRUNK GUY

Okay. I have a question for you. No offense, but do you think that if you're that small, you still have the same right to vote as the rest of us?

PAUL

(blinking, then --)
Um... why wouldn't we?

DRUNK GUY

Because you're not consuming as much, not spending as much, not buying as many products, not paying as much income tax, not really participating in our economy, so why should you have full rights? A quarter-vote sounds about right to me.

A MALE FRIEND of the Heafys stands up.

FRIEND

Hey, hey, hey. Let's just take it easy. We're all having a good time here.

DRUNK GUY

I'm just asking a simple question is all.
Here, let me buy you all a drink.

(turning to the bar)

Hey, Smitty, I'm buying the next round
over here.

FRIEND

We've got our drinks. We're cool.

SOME GUY

Okay, but let me tell a quick joke before
I go. A little guy walks into a bar and
asks for somebody to help him get up onto
the stool...

FRIEND

(pushing him away)

All right, buddy. Let's take a hike.

INT. PAUL AND AUDREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

All that remains is a MATTRESS ON THE FLOOR. Paul is
still up reading by the dreary light of a sconce, while
Audrey sleeps. Without warning, she begins to cry.

PAUL

Oh, honey.

Audrey's shoulders begin to convulse. Paul pulls off his
reading glasses, rolls over to comfort her.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Honey, honey... I know... I know this is
a big step. It's the biggest thing we'll
do in our lives... I know, I know...

AUDREY

You don't know anything! You did this!
Why did you have to choose such a stupid
career? Why did you have to be so...
so... unambitious? Helping others? What
about helping yourself? What about
helping me? You're so goddamned
stubborn! You did this!

PAUL

Hey, hey, hey! That's completely unfair.
You're the one who's never satisfied with
anything, ever! You're the one who says
I spend too much time at work. You're
the one who wants to live in a palace.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

You're the one who says we can't have kids until we're better off. You're the one who hates her job and hates the cold weather.

AUDREY

I know! Don't you think I know? Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

INT. CON-AGRA PLANT - DAY

Paul finishes working with a ONE-ARMED MEXICAN MAN with his right sleeve sewn to his smock.

PAUL

Now, you keep doing those exercises. Don't get lazy. I laminated the Xeroxes for you, so there's no excuse.

MEXICAN MAN

Thank you for everything. Thank you so much. My wife and me, maybe someday we get small too and we visit you.

PAUL

That'd be great, but in the meantime...

Paul squeezes and unsqueezes his hand, reminding the man of an exercise.

MEXICAN MAN

Thank you, Mr. Paul.

EXT. CON-AGRA PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul is walking to his car carrying a BOX of belongings and nodding final goodbyes to CO-WORKERS. As he loads the box into his trunk, he spots CHILDREN feeding DUCKS on the shore of a nearby POND.

APPROACHING THE POND --

Paul takes a seat and watches the children and the ducks. He glances over at the downtown Omaha skyline, taking in this world he may never see again.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Paul double-checks DOCUMENTS against a list. Audrey removes her NECKLACE and places it inside their official Leisureland KEEPSAKE BOX, a shoebox-sized container for those few small irreplaceable items -- family photographs, jewelry, baby spoons, etc.

AUDREY

Paul?

Audrey points at her ring finger. Paul nods and comes over. Together they remove their wedding RINGS and place them on a special velvet-covered STEM inside the box.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Audrey leans her head against Paul's shoulder while he watches the CLOUDS pass by.

AUDREY

I keep thinking I forgot something.

He kisses the top of her head.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Paul and Audrey exit Baggage Claim carrying only their Keepsake Box.

INT. LEISURELAND SHUTTLE - DAY

The Heafys find seats, nodding politely to other FUTURE CITIZENS of Leisureland.

The DRIVER boards carrying a RECTANGULAR CONTAINER which he slides onto a padded shelf and locks into place. Through the acrylic sides, we see DOWNSIZED TRAVELERS seated in rows of first-class airline seats.

Paul and Audrey exchange a look as they glimpse the "special needs" of their future.

LATER -- THE SHUTTLE IN MOTION --

Paul can't help looking at the passengers across the aisle.

In "window seats" are a sunburned OLDER WOMAN and her LUNKHEAD SON, both in sandals and Hawaiian shirts. The woman looks at Paul with a knowing smile.

OLDER WOMAN
Moving to town, huh?

 PAUL
How's that?

 OLDER WOMAN
 (straining to be heard)
I say I see you're moving to Leisureland.
 (off Paul's nod)
You look like a nice young couple.

 PAUL
Thanks.

 OLDER WOMAN
Where you from?

 PAUL
Omaha.

 OLDER WOMAN
Wild Kingdom.

 PAUL
Yeah.

 OLDER WOMAN
We're from Spokane originally. Nervous?

 PAUL AND AUDREY
A little. You know...

 OLDER WOMAN
Don't be. It's the best thing you'll ever
do. And the medical part is no great
shakes. Completely painless. Except if
you have a lot of dental re-dos like my
Dougie here. He had to keep going back
and going back because he'd waited too
long to get a root canal while he was
still big. We just got back from Bermuda.
You ever been to Bermuda? It's so pretty.

 PAUL AND AUDREY
No.

 OLDER WOMAN
Back in Spokane, we never went anywhere.
They make it so easy here -- they carry
you right through security. You get in
your seat at the travel center, and you
don't have to budge until you arrive at
the hotel.

(MORE)

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

The best part is you don't have to take off your shoes. I don't like taking off my shoes once I have them on.

EXT. LEISURELAND ENTRANCE - DAY

Waved through a SPECIAL ENTRANCE, the shuttle heads toward a BUILDING we may have glimpsed earlier. The Visitors' Center looms in the distance. Paul and Audrey are surprised to look out the window and see --

A THRONG OF PROTESTERS parading in a circle and holding ANTI-DOWNSIZING SIGNS -- "Downsizing Shrinks a Beating Heart" "Don't Buy Their Lies!" "Small People = Big Trouble"

OLDER WOMAN

Roll down the window and tell those people to get a life.

Paul continues to look out the window, his gaze drawn particularly to --

A SNAGGLETEOTHED KOOK taunting his PIT BULL with a DOLL the size of a downsized person, laughing as the dog tries to bite it.

INT. COUNSELING ROOM - DAY

The Heafys sit across from a Leisureland COUNSELOR who adjusts a SMALL VIDEO CAMERA atop her computer monitor.

COUNSELOR

Please state your full legal names.

PAUL

Paul Evan Heafy.

AUDREY

Audrey Kelsey Lustig Heafy.

COUNSELOR

Do you, Paul Evan Heafy and you, Audrey Kelsey Lustig Heafy, understand that of your own free will you are about to undergo the permanent and irreversible medical procedure commonly known as "resizing," and that following this procedure your bodies will be approximately 1/6000th of their current mass and volume?

They look at each other, then back at the COUNSELOR.

PAUL

Yes.

AUDREY

Yes.

COUNSELOR

And do you, Paul Evan Heafy and Audrey Kelsey Lustig Heafy, give full and complete consent to Gateway Medical Services...

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

WHITE room. WHITE hallway nearby. Surrounded by other "patients," Paul and Audrey hold hands as they wait.

NURSE

Audrey Heafy?

Paul and Audrey stand.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Come with me, please.

PAUL

We're together.

NURSE

Someone will escort you to the Men's Facility shortly. You will be separated for approximately five hours, and following the procedure you will be reunited in the recovery room.

PAUL

Wow.

(a deep breath)

Okay. Well... I guess this is it. I'll see you in a little while. Good luck.

Audrey is so emotional she can barely speak. Paul takes her in his arms.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I love you so much.

AUDREY

I love you too.

Soothed, she gives him one last squeeze. The nurse leads her away down the hall.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM -- DAY

Paul is SHAVED:

-- His SCALP and EYEBROWS.

-- His LEGS.

-- His BACK AND SHOULDERS.

-- His GENITALS and BUTT CRACK.

The ORDERLY now swabs his scalp and eyebrow area with an AMBER DISINFECTANT.

LATER --

COMPLETELY HAIRLESS, Paul wears a hospital gown and sits in a high-backed RECLINING WHEELCHAIR. A NURSE inserts a needle into his arm and connects an IV DRIP.

CLOSE ON PAUL --
as the anaesthetic takes effect.

INT. COLONIC THEATER - DAY

Paul is wheeled into a large brightly-lit room with COLON-CLEANSING STATIONS. A TECHNICIAN rolls Paul onto his side, lifts his gown, and lubricates a tapering NOZZLE.

INT. DENTAL THEATER - DAY

An ORDERLY wheels Paul into a very large room with row upon row of DENTISTS' CHAIRS.

PAUL'S MOUTH -
is held open with a DENTAL BRACE as a DRILL approaches.

A STAINLESS STEEL PAN
gleams as METAL FILLINGS are dropped inside.

INT. DOWNSIZING CHAMBER HOLDING AREA - DAY

Now Paul is parked near some eighteen OTHER SEDATED MEN.

INT. DOWNSIZING CHAMBER - DAY

A LARGE DOOR is opened, and we are inside what feels like a large sterile freight elevator.

One by one, men are wheeled inside. NURSES quickly walk through, pulling IVs out of arms and removing gowns.

WIDE --

A room full of anaesthetized NAKED MEN. The SUPERVISOR makes a final inspection -- opening a mouth here, adjusting a head there -- before exiting the chamber.

INT. DOWNSIZING CHAMBER HOLDING AREA - DAY

A spinning RED LIGHT, an alarm BELL.

SUPERVISOR

All clear!

A SWITCH is flipped. A LOW HUM begins, interrupted at random intervals by a loud THUNK like that of an MRI. Nurses and orderlies wait for the process to complete. One offers another CHEWING GUM.

A GAUGE registers progress by displaying smaller and smaller SILHOUETTES of a man. The Supervisor observes the process through a TINTED WINDOW in the chamber door.

THUNK-THUNK-THUNK-BING! Everyone moves into action.

INT. DOWNSIZING CHAMBER - DAY

The door opens, revealing in the center of each gurney a TINY NAKED MAN. NURSES enter, each pushing a cart bearing six TINY GURNEYS locked in place. They carefully "SPATULA" each tiny man onto their carts. As they work, the camera ZOOMS IN on PAUL -- a bald, naked peanut -- just as he is scooped up.

INT. DOWNSIZING CHAMBER HOLDING AREA - DAY

The nurses insert their carts into a WALL containing DOCKING/TRANSFER STATIONS.

SMALL DOORS open inside, and TINY ORDERLIES walk out onto the larger carts, unlock the gurneys, and roll the newly-downsized away. We catch a routine conversation between a BIG NURSE and SMALL ORDERLIES.

BIG NURSE

How's everybody doing today?

TINY ORDERLIES

Fine... fine...

TINY ORDERLY REGGIE

Man, we got some real fatties this time.
Look at this one.

BIG NURSE

Hey, Reggie, haven't seen you for a
couple of weeks. Where you been? You
been on vacation?

TINY ORDERLY REGGIE

No, I hurt my ankle. Got an X-ray.
Wasn't broken, but man, it hurt bad.

INT. LEISURELAND DENTAL AREA - DAY

Preparing to work, a TINY DENTIST compares Paul's wedged-
open mouth against X-rays and charts on a computer screen.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Paul regains consciousness, his eyelashless eyes
fluttering open. He lifts his head to examine his hands
and arms. Everything seems familiar yet somehow strange.
He gives his sore jaw a massage, then peeks under the
sheet, relieved to find his "equipment" intact.

VOICES waft in as NURSES attend to other recovering
patients.

PAUL

Hello? Hello? Could somebody help me?

A cheery FILIPINO NURSE swishes open the curtain.

NURSE

I see you've decided to join us.

PAUL

I'm... I... Is this... Is it over?

NURSE

Welcome to Leisureland.

PAUL

Do you know where my wife is? She was
supposed to be here with me.

NURSE

Her name?

PAUL

Audrey Heafy. H-e-a-f-y.

NURSE
 (glancing at a chart)
 Just like yours. Let me check.

She leaves the curtain slightly open, and Paul glimpses other recovering PATIENTS sitting up to greet their children and spouses..

NURSE (CONT'D)
 (returning)
 We do have an Audrey Heafey scheduled for today, but I don't show her transferred over yet.

PAUL
 Is she okay? Do you think something happened?

NURSE
 She's probably just held up in dental.

INT. PRIVATE DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Now fully dressed in "starter" CLOTHES and CLOGS, Paul sits nervously jiggling his leg. A polite KNOCK, then --

NURSE
 Mr. Heafy, we've located your wife.

PAUL
 Great. Where is she? Is she okay?

NURSE
 Come with me, please.

Paul follows the nurse into the --

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- where she points at a WALL PHONE with a blinking light.

PAUL
 (picking up)
 Hello?... Hello?

AUDREY (ON PHONE)
 Paul.

PAUL
 Audrey, thank God! Where are you, honey?

AUDREY (ON PHONE)

Don't be mad at me! Please don't be mad!
It's hard enough as it is.

PAUL

What's hard? What are you talking about?
Where are you?

AUDREY (ON PHONE)

Oh, Paul, they shaved my head, then they
started shaving off my eyebrows, and I
just thought what am I doing? I can't do
this. I can't do it. I'm sorry, Paul.
I just can't. I'm sorry.

Hearing a BOARDING ANNOUNCEMENT --

PAUL

Are you at the airport?

AUDREY

Yeah.

PAUL

What?

She sobs as Paul tries to comprehend what's happening.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. Take it easy. Just get in
a taxi and come back here so we can talk
about it. Okay? Just come back.

AUDREY (ON PHONE)

And see you all small? That would be too
upsetting. I'm upset enough already.

PAUL

You're upset? I'm the one who's four
fucking inches tall!

INT. ALBUQUERQUE AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS/INTERCUT

Audrey is at a PAYPHONE, her bald head hidden under a hat,
her missing eyebrow desperately drawn in with mascara.

AUDREY

I said I was sorry. Can't you understand
how terrible I feel? I don't want to
feel like this.

PAUL

Wait, why is this just about you and your feelings?

AUDREY

I'll hang up if you're going to yell at me.

PAUL

I'm not yelling. I'm not yelling. Just come get me. We'll go back to Omaha and think this thing through together.

A deadly silence.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You're not going to leave me here.

AUDREY

It's what you wanted.

PAUL

What I wanted? I wanted us to do this together! You wanted it too!

AUDREY

Oh, Paul. I'm realizing we don't know each other at all. We're so... different. I see it so clearly now.

PAUL

Honey, what are you saying? Just take a deep breath. It's all going to work out. We're going to be fine, okay? We're going to be fine.

(realizing)

You know, you haven't even asked me how I am! Don't you realize what I've just been through? Audrey, if you don't come back here right now and get small like we planned, then... then... that's it! Do you hear me? That's it!

CLICK.

INT. TRANSITIONS CENTER LOBBY - DAY

A combination of a hospital lobby and the arrivals area of an international airport. FAMILY MEMBERS and FRIENDS with balloons and flowers squeal when reunited with hairless loved ones.

THROUGH BIG SLIDING DOORS --

Paul emerges accompanied by sunny VOLUNTEER MATT, who carries a clipboard and orientation materials.

MATT

What about Mrs. Heafy? Shouldn't we wait for her?

PAUL

She's not coming today.

MATT

Well, not a half-bad idea to come on ahead and get things ready for her.

EXT. TRANSITIONS CENTER - DAY

Paul and Matt walk down the steps and into the SUNLIGHT.

MATT

You might want to put your hat on.

Paul obeys and follows Matt to a cluster of ELECTRIC CARS that look like a cross between a golf cart and a Smart.

INT. ELECTRIC CAR - DAY

As helpful Matt points out the sights, Paul looks blankly out the window, absorbed in his private agony.

EXT. PAUL'S BLOCK - DAY

The car stops in front of a LUXURIOUSLY LARGE HOUSE.

MATT

Look familiar?

PAUL

That's the one.

MATT

The Barrington. Good call. A lot more bells and whistles than the Regency. My sister's got one. She loves it.

(reaching into his pocket)
Well sir, here're the keys to your kingdom. Welcome to the good life.

As Paul gets out of the car --

MATT (CONT'D)

They stock the kitchen with some standard items, but one thing I should warn you about is the dairy -- it takes a while for your stomach to adjust, so go easy on the milk and cheese -- something about the bacteria in your stomach. And careful with the hot water. It's all on one central system, and they keep it cranked up pretty high. I'm surprised they haven't had a lawsuit yet.

PAUL

Thanks, Matt. You're a nice guy.

Paul trudges toward his new house.

INT. PAUL'S LEISURELAND HOUSE - DAY

Walking across the marble foyer and into the magnificent LIVING ROOM, he spots a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS. The faux "handwritten" CARD reads --

Welcome home!
Yours truly, Tony Dale

Paul heads toward the WINDOWS that look out onto --

THE BACKYARD --
with "Olympic-size" swimming pool and tennis court.

INT. PAUL'S MEDIA ROOM - DAY

Paul flips on the light of this immense room.

INT. PAUL'S UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - DAY

He plods the marble floor past a huge MIRROR.

INT. HUGE MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

The lights go on. Paul robotically removes his clothes, steps into the shower and turns on the water.

PAUL

(screaming)

OWWWW!

EXT. PAUL'S BACKYARD - DAY

Paul dangles his feet in the SWIMMING POOL. At the distant ring of his DOORBELL, he heads inside.

INT. PAUL'S LEISURELAND HOUSE - DAY

He opens the front door to find a MOVER holding a clipboard. A TRUCK is parked at the curb.

MOVER

Heafy?

Nodding, Paul notices the truck is actually his KEEPSAKE BOX mounted to the back of a CAB. The mover gives the signal to his PARTNER, who heads toward the house carrying Audrey's WEDDING RING.

MOVER #2

Where do you want it?

A CARD --

Meanwhile, in Oregon...

INT. COSTCO - NIGHT

Nightly RESTOCKING is in progress.

A FORKLIFT heads down an aisle loaded with a PALETTE OF TV BOXES. Noting a FOUL ODOR drifting back from his load, the DRIVER stops and dismounts his rig. Searching for the source of the smell, he notices ODD BROWN STAINS on one box.

Getting closer, he finds LITTLE HOLES punched through the side of the box. Poking out of one of the holes is a limp TINY HAND.

INT. TV BOX - NIGHT

FROM INSIDE THE BOX LOOKING UP --

BLINDING LIGHT floods in. Other WORKERS have joined the driver, and all recoil at the smell. Covering their faces with rags, they see --

SEVENTEEN TINY EMACIATED CHINESE PEOPLE wedged in around the TV, most of them dead. The few survivors, dehydrated and desperate, shield their eyes from the violent light.

INSERT - THE NEWS FROM CNN

A graphic depicts an OPEN BOX with a CHINESE FLAG on the side and QUESTION MARK emerging out of it.

CNN ANCHOR

A startling discovery at a big-box store in Oregon confirms what the Department of Homeland Security and immigration authorities have been warning for years --

The audio from the news report continues over --

EXT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE - MORNING

EMTs hustle a GURNEY out of an AMBULANCE, the surviving Chinese held in place with strips of gauze.

CNN ANCHOR (V.O.)

-- the ease with which downsized persons from around the globe can cross U.S. borders illegally. Today tragic new evidence of that reality, as CNN'S Brian Kessler reports.

INSERT - CNN NEWS CONTINUES

BRIAN KESSLER

(standing outside a Costco)

This Costco in Eugene, Oregon is just one of thousands of super-stores that together import over 1 million tons of goods weekly from around the world, mostly China.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - MORNING

As THREE EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS tend to this sudden influx, we catch glimpses of how unprepared they are -- a stethoscope over an entire torso, a ridiculously large syringe for an IV.

A DOCTOR shoots a sad glance at a NURSE, a look that says they've lost another one.

A DEAD CHINESE MAN is slid into a ZIPLOC BAG and placed alongside other tiny bagged CORPSES.

BRIAN KESSLER (V.O.)

Today employees here opened a suspicious TV box, finding inside seventeen downsized Chinese nationals, eleven of them already dead, and all but three dying later at a local hospital.

EXT. LEISURELAND PARKING LOT - DAY

A MEDICAL HELICOPTER is met by an AMBULANCE.

BRIAN KESSLER (V.O.)

The survivors were transferred to Leisureland Estates, New Mexico, home to the best U.S. medical facility equipped to treat the small, where they remain in critical condition.

INT. LEISURELAND SHIPPING AND RECEIVING BUILDING - DAY

The ambulance is directed inside and makes its way toward large DOORS, where it passes into a SLOPING TUNNEL.

INT. LEISURELAND UNDERGROUND - DAY

Like an endless PARKING GARAGE, this is the city beneath the city, which provides easy access for maintenance, deliveries and waste disposal.

The ambulance arrives at a COLUMN marked with a RED CROSS housing --

A SMALL ELEVATOR --

where TINY NURSES and DOCTORS await with gurneys.

A normal-size EMT exits the ambulance with a STAINLESS STEEL TRAY bearing the three survivors.

He carefully sets the tray down in front of the small medical team, who waste no time lifting the patients onto their gurneys, attaching IVs and monitors, and wheeling them into --

INT. SMALL ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

We get a closer look at ONE of the three Chinese -- HU GONG JIANG -- a woman who, even near death, projects deep inner strength and fierce intelligence.

INT. LEISURELAND GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

The gurneys are whisked down a corridor.

INT. LEISURELAND HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A HEART MONITOR FLATLINES. PAN to the Chinese man just died, then to DOCTORS and NURSES rushing in.

REPORTER #2 (V.O.)

Sad news today from Leisureland Presbyterian Hospital, where two more survivors found Thursday in a TV box from China died in intensive care, one man this morning, another just hours later.

INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Gong Jiang asleep in her bed.

REPORTER #2 (V.O.)

That leaves just one remaining survivor from this desperate attempt to enter the U.S. illegally -- a woman who hospital spokesmen say arrived with a leg so badly infected that it had to be amputated below the knee. She remains in stable but critical condition.

LATER --

Now sitting up, Gong Jiang is interviewed via VIDEOCONFERENCE by Mandarin-speaking IMMIGRATION AGENTS.

REPORTER #3 (V.O.)

Questioned for the first time today by authorities, the woman, Hu Gong Jiang, claims she was jailed for her Christian beliefs and environmental activism, and together with hundreds of other dissidents was downsized against her will at a prison hospital in Northern China. If true, this would bolster accusations by human rights groups that the Chinese government has been testing a program to forcibly shrink large portions of that nation's ever-growing population.

INT. HOSPITAL PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

A PHYSICAL THERAPIST helps Gong Jiang take a few unsteady steps with her new PROSTHETIC FOOT. The foot resembles a doll's foot more than a human's -- unarticulated toes, pinkish color.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Gong Jiang eats apple sauce, occasionally glancing at the TAIWANESE SOAP OPERA playing on a wall-mounted TV.

DOCTOR (O.S.)

Right in here. She's just finishing her lunch.

(poking his head in)

Miss Hu, you've got visitors.

In walks Leisureland Public Relations Director JANET TYSON -- we recognize her from the orientation film -- along with assistant MONICA and translator NANCY CHEN.

The women nod and smile. Janet takes the lead, speaking in halting, over-enunciated MANDARIN accompanied by expressive hand gestures.

JANET

Ni-hao ma, esteemed Gong Jiang. My name Tyson Janet. I American born Taiwan. My parents missionaries, spread Jesus. I live Taiwan until my eleven-age. I have so many happy memory for China. Now my occupation Leisureland City public face. I bring official welcome for you from all people in wonderful place here.

(big smile)

Double happiness. Very friendship.

GONG JIANG

(guarded)

Xie-xie ni.

JANET

With me colleague Monica Blankenship. Helping translation time Nancy Chen.

NANCY CHEN

Ni hao.

MONICA

Hi.

GONG JIANG

Ni hao.

JANET

I happiness tell asylum status assured nearly. Soon you delight with official permission dwell always in United States with worship freedom. I am certain you contentment, no yes?

(off Gong's nod)

Also doctors say in two days or three days you sufficient healthy for abandon hospital. You in hospital too long time. I have gift for you.

Janet hands Gong Jiang a small BOX.

GONG JIANG

Xie-xie. Thank you.

JANET

Oh, you speak a little English. You're welcome. Open it!

Gong Jiang opens the box and is moved to find a GOLD CROSS on a chain.

JANET (CONT'D)

Here, let me help you.

Janet clasps the chain around Gong Jiang's neck.

GONG JIANG

(tearing up)

I... very thank you.

JANET

(beckoning)

Nancy, I think I've reached my limit.

Nancy sits next to Gong Jiang and provides expert SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION.

JANET (CONT'D)

Okay. So. First off, let me just say there's no way on Earth anybody can understand what you've been through -- being shrunk down in a Chinese prison, traveling halfway around the world in a TV box. Why, you must have been at your wits' end if you had to resort to a thing like that. Pitch black darkness. Sole survivor. Losing your foot. But that's all behind you. Your future is bright.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

But you'll need to adjust to a whole new way of life, and the transition might be a little bumpy. Even some Americans who move to Leisureland go through a difficult period of adjustment. Many seek counseling. Do you know anything about Leisureland Estates, about what this place is?

Gong Jiang shakes her head.

JANET (CONT'D)

Monica, could you hand me the --?

(showing Gong Jiang)

We brought you this orientation material to get you started. It's in English, but there are lots of pictures. Let me just show you one quick thing.

She locates a page in a book -- Tony Dale's "Welcome to Leisureland" statement, signature and smiling PHOTOGRAPH.

JANET (CONT'D)

This is Tony Dale. I work for him. He's the man in charge of this whole place. It was his idea that people could basically retire if they get small. And help save the planet. Anyway, he knows all about you -- everybody does -- and he asked me to make sure you're comfortable and cared for. Then, considering I speak a little Mandarin, my husband and I thought, heck, why doesn't Gong Jiang come live with us until she gets back on her feet?

(realizing her faux pas)

Nancy, don't translate that last part.

(to Gong Jiang)

So, Gong Jiang, I'd like to officially invite you to accept us as your host family.

It takes a moment for Gong Jiang to absorb the translation. Then --

GONG JIANG

I will live with you?

JANET

Like part of the family.

EXT. LEISURELAND PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - DAY

The front doors open, and Janet wheels out Gong Jiang, now wearing a Leisureland polo shirt and baseball cap. They are accompanied by Janet's husband RON and translator Nancy. Ron's an athletic guy with erect posture and thinning hair.

HOSPITAL PERSONNEL have gathered to say goodbye and offer applause. Gong Jiang smiles, expresses thanks to the staff, and takes in her first taste of fresh air and sunshine.

WELL-WISHERS offer APPLAUSE and CHEERS from the street. Homemade BANNERS offer encouraging words in English and Chinese. REPORTERS shoot footage and take pictures.

JANET

That's what I was telling you, Gong Jiang.

(Mandarin)

Leisureland very friendship place!

As she is wheeled to the curb, Gong Jiang gives a little wave to the crowd. Suddenly a STOCKY GUY in a suit and a weirdly perfect haircut sidles up. This is --

BARRY DUNBAR

Barry Dunbar. How are you, Janet? Good to see you folks. Barry Dunbar. How you doing? Welcome to America, Gong Jiang. Barry Dunbar.

Barry positions himself so the press photographers -- as well as a PHOTOGRAPHER of his own -- can get a good shot, even nudging Nancy Chen out of the way as he kneels next to Gong Jiang to grab her hand.

BARRY DUNBAR (CONT'D)

You're a very brave woman, a real inspiration. What you went through -- I mean, wow. You really know what sacrifice is. I'm proud of you. Standing up against communism and all.

Gong Jiang is confused and looks to Nancy for an explanation, thus ruining a shot.

BARRY DUNBAR (CONT'D)

(pointing at the camera)

Come on. Right there. Over there. Big smile.

(to an aide)

Make sure she gets a copy.

JANET

That's enough, Barry.

Barry begins shaking hands with people along the sidewalk. Ron, Janet and a NURSE help Gong Jiang out of her wheelchair and into the car.

JANET (CONT'D)

Man, that guy doesn't stop.

RON

Well, a fellow running for Congress has to get himself out there. Especially when he's small.

EXT. JANET AND RON'S HOUSE - DAY

Ron pulls their vehicle into the circular driveway of their MANSION.

JANET

Look, Gong Jiang, our house. Your house.

Bewildered, Gong Jiang looks back and forth between Janet and the house -- this can't be right. All get out of the car, and Ron offers Gong Jiang an arm as she walks unsteadily on her prosthetic foot.

JANET (CONT'D)

This is one of the very first neighborhoods in Leisureland. You can tell from how big the trees are. *Big trees!*

RON

(pointing at the driveway)

And, uh, Nancy, tell her about the stones, will you?

(to Gong Jiang)

See, these are special stones. You can't get these stones anymore for your driveway. They're discontinued. They're one of the ways you can tell who's a pioneer, you know, the first residents. We're pioneers.

JANET

We love those stones.

INT. JANET AND RON'S HOME - DAY

As she enters, Gong Jiang takes in the palatial surroundings and asks Janet something in Chinese.

JANET

(to Nancy)

She wants to know if we're what?

NANCY CHEN

She wants to know how many families live here with you.

JANET

Oh, just us. Now you too!

NANCY CHEN

(off a new question)

She asks if you are wealthy merchants or industrialists.

JANET

Who, us? No, we're just a couple of high school sweethearts from Yankton, South Dakota. Here's where we used to live.

She picks up a FRAMED PHOTO showing a much younger Ron and Janet outside a very modest small-town house.

JANET (CONT'D)

Ron was a Phys-Ed teacher in the public schools and -- promise not to laugh -- I was doing the weather on local TV. Long story short, I got my Masters in Media Studies at Augustana and got recruited by Dial Soap down in Scottsdale. Public Relations.

RON

I'm what they call "the trailing spouse."

JANET

Then when I heard about all the amazing things Mr. Dale was doing here -- helping people lead a better life and cleaning up the planet in the process -- well, I just knew I had to work for him. I didn't let up until he hired me.

RON

That's my Janet. Nobody says no to her.

Not fully understanding all this, even in translation, Gong Jiang limps further into the house, across the living room and through large windows looks out at --

THE BACK YARD

complete with SWIMMING POOL, TENNIS COURT and a unique FOUNTAIN made of three INTERTWINING SILVER CIRCLES.

JANET

See that fountain? Those are our wedding and engagement rings.

(pointing to her finger)

Wedding rings.

NANCY CHEN

(translating)

Why do you require all of this space just for you?

RON

Well, don't forget it might seem like a lot of space to you and me, but the whole lot's just five square feet.

(thinking)

Maybe she needs meters.

GONG JIANG

Where poor people live?

JANET

Poor people? Nancy, tell her. There aren't any poor people here. There's plenty for everybody. More than plenty. That's one of the hardest things for new people to grasp. See, when you get small in America, you don't have to worry about all those problems they have in the rest of the world. The Lord has blessed us.

RON

We're all rich here, Gong Jiang. No beggars. No crime. No bad influences on your kids. Hey, we're as concerned about poverty as you are, but what can we do about it? We're only four inches tall.

Just then Mexican maid JUANA walks in from the kitchen with a TRAY.

JUANA

Excuse me, Mr. Ron, Mrs. Janet. I bring ice tea.

JANET
Thank you, Juana. Gong Jiang thirsty?

INT. GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Ron and Janet show Gong Jiang her Laura Ashley-like bedroom.

RON
You've got your own bathroom, so no waiting in line for a shower.

Far from being pleased by the luxury of the room, Gong Jiang seems troubled.

JANET
(opening a closet)
And I picked out a few clothes for you. I had to guess your sizes, but I think I've got a pretty good eye. So just feel free to relax before dinner, take a swim, anything you want.

RON
There's sauna and steam too. Later on I'll show you some of the gym equipment.

Gong Jiang notices something on the bedside table and brightens -- a BIBLE. She sits on the bed and opens it.

RON (CONT'D)
That's right -- it's in your language. Pretty tricky thing to locate. But we found one. Yep.

GONG JIANG
Thank you for this. Thank you.

Ron and Janet exit, leaving Gong Jiang alone. She rubs her sore leg, looks out the window. We hear --

MAN ON TV (PRE-LAP)
Trillions of dollars in consumer spending and millions of jobs vanishing -- construction and housing, the automobile industry, the airline industry, pharmaceuticals, on and on.

INT. RON AND JANET'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ron is tying his TIE while keeping an eye on a SU. MORNING TALK SHOW. This week a SPOKESMAN FOR THE debates a SPOKESMAN FOR THE SMALL.

ON TV --

BIG GUEST

We're talking about an irreversible, crippling world-wide depression. The U.S. and the rest of the world should follow the lead of Singapore and declare an immediate moratorium on downsizing. Underneath all the holier-than-thou talk about saving the Earth, we're ignoring the economic devastation that's producing more poverty and more suffering that's leading to more people downsizing, and the world economy goes right down the toilet.

SMALL GUEST

There's not going to be an economy if we can't breathe the air or drink the water and we're dodging hurricanes and droughts. What about the millions being displaced by rising sea levels? What about the food riots? Look, the total number of downsized worldwide is only about two percent --

BIG GUEST

And growing fast.

SMALL GUEST

But big population continues to grow at an much higher rate, so let's be honest here. The point is human beings are evolving, adapting to survive. And in any major transformation, are there growing pains? Sure. Will our world economy have to cope with 150 years of recession as we re-adjust? You bet.

INT. JANET AND RON'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Whistling, Ron trots down the stairs and heads into --

INT. JANET AND RON'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

-- where Janet is amid a heated discussion with Gong Jiang. On the countertop are empty YOGURT CUPS, SPAGHETTI SAUCE JARS, SODA CANS.

GONG JIANG

These things still good. You give back to factory.

JANET

Ron, she's been washing our garbage.

GONG JIANG

Why you no give back to factory like in China?

JANET

We don't do that here. The rest of America does -- they return things like this, melt them down or whatever and reshape them back into the same things. But we don't have to do that.

RON

Not cost effective.

JANET

(picking up a jar)

This is too dinky. For the big people it's like the size of a bb or something. Not even. Tiny. *Hen Xiao*. Very, very small. They wouldn't know what to do with it. See, that's another great thing about being small -- we get to go back to the good old days when you could just throw everything away.

(opening the garbage can)

So that means this goes in the trash with everything else.

Gong Jiang looks at the garbage like a Border collie staring at a drawer containing its favorite ball.

EXT. ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH - DAY

Amid other PARISHIONERS, Ron and Janet lead Gong Jiang into this LARGE HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

PASTOR (PRE-LAP)

Let's look at that verse again.
"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops;

(MORE)

PASTOR (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
 then your barns will be filled to
 overflowing, and your vats will brim over
 with new wine."

INT. ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH - DAY

As PASTOR OKUN pieces together his homily, Gong Jiang
 sits in the pews with Janet and Ron and translator Nancy.

PASTOR OKUN
 God's promise to the faithful isn't that
 they just have enough to get by. He
 speaks of overflowing and brimming over.
 (finding his theme)
 "Getting by." Why is it that we always
 say that? You ask someone how they're
 doing and they say, "I'm getting by." Is
 that why we moved to Leisureland? To
 "get by?" Why is it so important for us
 to just be "getting by?"

(mimicking)
 "I'm getting by." "I'm fine." "I'm
 doing okay." "How's your grandmother?"
 "Oh, she's getting by." "How's
 business?" "Oh, getting by." Why do we
 think it's virtuous to just be "getting
 by?" We even lie about it. Even when
 our business is booming, we say we're
 getting by. Even when we're happy,
 healthy, free of disease and poverty and
 want and blessed to live in a place like
 Leisureland -- "Oh, I'm getting by. How
 about you?"

(holding for laughter)
 God tells Isaiah, "Dig deep the plow with
 joy and your baskets shall overflow at
 harvest." God wants us to live in
 abundance. We honor Him by living to our
 fullest potential. After all, God
 doesn't want us to be *small*.

BIG LAUGH.

LATER --

A DONATION TRAY
 makes its way down an aisle. Parishioners drop in an
 envelope or slide a DEBIT CARD through a reader.

REVEREND OKUN
 wraps up, referring to NOTE CARDS.

PASTOR OKUN (CONT'D)

Doris and Maynard Trott are here from a small community in Montana. Welcome. And Mike McJimsey has joined us all the way from Ottawa, Canada. That's the capital, I believe. Welcome, Mike.

The tray reaches Gong Jiang. She unclasps her CROSS and adds it to the collection. Janet exchanges a look of dismay with Ron.

PASTOR OKUN (CONT'D)

There's one more guest worshipping with us today who deserves a very special welcome. She was in the headlines some weeks back, particularly here in Leisureland, and we're honored to have her with us today. Miss Gong Jiang Hu, could you stand and let us greet you? Along with your host family, our good friends Ron and Janet Tyson.

Gong Jiang knows she's being discussed but didn't catch why. Beaming, Ron and Janet stand and motion for Gong Jiang to do the same.

PASTOR OKUN (CONT'D)

There you are. In your home country you endured persecution and imprisonment for your Christian beliefs before a harrowing escape to America. The whole world has given you its attention, and God has brought you among your Christian brethren. Welcome.

(off applause)

I understand you're still learning our language, but I was hoping you might grace us with a few brief words of greeting. Can we get a microphone over there?

An USHER trots over to hand her a microphone. Janet and Ron sit. Gong Jiang considers what to say for a suspended moment. Then --

GONG JIANG

My name Hu Gong Jiang. I come from People Republic of China. Six years before and seven months, I worship and pray our Lord Jesus Christ with only seven people, and for this I arrest and go hospital for crazy. But no was hospital. Was prison.

(MORE)

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

In prison they make us small and put us in cage like for animal. Many die. Later we escape with help from Christian friend work TV factory. We go TV box with too little food and water. We know we die. But die better than prison. In TV box also Falun Gong and criminal peoples. TV box very bad. I rape many, many time.

A hush falls over the audience.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

In TV box I pray Jesus every moment. I think I die but I live. I live. Now my life very different in America. I live Janet Ron very big house. Where I live now, other people think Heaven like. But I am sad. Leisureland people live rich house big land and so many food they throw away. They say me Christian people okay rich. But I know many poor people in America. Many poor people all over world. Many, many hungry people. Christian must help. Help animals, plant too. Bible no say Christian rich. No! Bible say Christian poor!

(very agitated)

Rich in spirit! Rich in Heaven! No here! So many hungry people die no food! But here too much food! You throw away food!

(surveying congregation)

Many people fat! Jesus not fat!
Christian not fat! Now I sing with joy
Chinese Christian song.

Gong Jiang launches into an artless Chinese hymn accompanied by emphatic clapping. It sounds like a Red Guard anthem except the lyrics are about Jesus instead of Mao.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

Jesus's robes are white and shining...

JANET

(low, to Ron)

I'm beginning to see why they put her in jail.

INT. RON AND JANET'S CAR - DAY

Gong Jiang sits alone in the back seat.

JANET

You know, Gong Jiang, a lot of fat people can't help being fat. They have glandular problems. Right, Ron?

RON

Thyroid mostly and, uh --

JANET

And it's not very Christian to hurt people's feelings. And maybe you shouldn't talk about things you don't know anything about. You just got here. If you'd bothered to ask, you'd find out we give a lot of money to a lot of causes. I'm on the giving committee. I can show you the annual report. And giving isn't just about money and food, you know. Our congregation devotes a lot of time and energy doing outreach to the local Native Americans -- battered women, fetal alcohol syndrome. You can't just throw money at them. It's bad for them. They just drink it.

(off Gong Jiang's silence)

You know, if you're not happy in our house, maybe you'd like to go live with them, with the Indians.

(pointing)

They're three miles that way. I'll draw you a map.

RON

Janet.

JANET

(to Gong Jiang)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that last part. You're always welcome in our home.

Gong Jiang looks out the window just as the car passes a CINNABON with a line of overweight PATRONS outside.

INT. LEISURELAND CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY

FROM A HIGH ANGLE --

Lost and forlorn, PEN in hand, Paul stands on a wooden surface. His hair has grown back, and he's put on a few pounds.

SUPERTITLE: TWO YEARS LATER

LAWYER (O.S.)

Did you get a chance to review the documents? Do we need to go over any of the terms of the settlement?

PAUL

No, it's all pretty clear.

LAWYER (O.S.)

All right. Could you step back a little?

Paul stands clear as a stack of NORMAL-SIZE LEGAL DOCUMENTS bristling with yellow "Sign Here" flags lands on the table next to him. The pile is so thick it's level with his shin. Paul is about to step up onto the papers --

LAWYER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, would you mind removing your shoes?

Once in stocking feet, Paul steps onto the documents. He kneels and begins to sign.

LAWYER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

As large as you can, please.

WIDE --

The NORMAL-SIZE LAWYER watches as Paul laboriously produces a large, deformed signature.

LAWYER (CONT'D)

Nice weather down here. Turned real cold back in Omaha.

PAUL

Uh-huh.

LAWYER

Wind chill.

EXT. WALGREEN'S - DAY

The outside of this pharmacy closely resembles its normal-sized counterpart.

INT. WALGREEN'S - DAY

PHARMACIST

Can I help you?

PAUL

Yeah, I'd like to pick up a prescription.
Paul Heafy. Should be ready.

PHARMACIST

(checking)
Zoloft?

PAUL

That's the one.

PHARMACIST

Be about ten minutes.

EXT. MARINA CONDOS - DAY

A depressed Paul heads toward this CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX overlooking the LAKE.

INT. PAUL'S CONDO LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Paul sits on a recliner in facing an FLAT-PANEL TV. We hold on him an extended moment until -- WHOOOOO -- he exhales a lungful of SMOKE.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - DAY

A COFFEE-FOR-ONE brewer fills a travel mug. Dressed for work, Paul approaches to await the last dribblings.

INT. TOLL-FREE CALL CENTER - DAY

Seated at one among a massive number of CUBICLES, Paul squints at his monitor, headset in place.

PAUL

Let's see... Extra large is still available in glacier, pebble, tulip, cayenne, moss, and aubergine.

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

Cayenne -- is that like red?

PAUL

More of a brownish red. Like brick.

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

I don't like brick. Do you think moss is pretty?

PAUL

I'm not the one buying the sweater.
Could you just pick a color?

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

Don't be short with me.

PAUL

What did you just say?

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

I said I didn't like your tone.

PAUL

That's not what you said. What did you say?

WOMAN (ON PHONE)

Oooh, I see. You're small. You're one of those little small people.

PAUL

And you're an extra large.

Paul disconnects her. A CO-WORKER walks by.

CO-WORKER

Hey, Paul, thanks, you were right.
Raising my monitor a few inches really did the trick. My neck feels better and no more tingling in my arm. I never would have made the connection.

PAUL

You got it.

(taking the next call)

Hello, and thank you for calling Land's End.
My name is Paul. How may I help you?
Do you have the catalog in front of you?

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Paul stands at the checkout counter, CASH CARD in hand as a BAG-BOY fills the last of MANY SACKS of groceries.

CASHIER

58 cents, please.

PAUL

And a bag of ice.

CASHIER

58.4 cents.

Paul swipes his card and keys in a code.

INT. PAUL'S CONDO KITCHEN - DAY

Paul COOKS, consulting a recipe.

ON TV IN THE BACKGROUND --

A brainy, lip-glossed South Asian ANCHORWOMAN with an Oxford accent --

CNN ANCHOR

Thousands of protestors have converged on Brussels, where representatives from twelve nations begin talks tomorrow to finalize and ratify what has come to be known as "the 40/60 plan," an ambitious proposal to downsize forty percent of the population of participating nations within the next sixty years. Advocates contend this aggressive action is needed to combat devastating environmental crises, while critics, including the United States, China and Russia...

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The DOORBELL RINGS. Paul trots across the room and invites in KRISTEN SWANSON, the pleasant but stiff woman he has recently begun seeing. A polite kiss --

PAUL

Hi.

Kristen holds out a PIE.

KRISTEN

I brought dessert. Apple-blueberry.

PAUL

You didn't have to do that.

Admiring a HUGE YELLOW ROSE in a vase --

KRISTEN

Wow, is that a real flower? Where'd you get that?

PAUL

Full-Sized Flower Mart. Just opened. It's like you've never seen a flower before -- they're like sculptures.

(MORE)

74

PAUL (CONT'D)
I was tempted to get a lily, but, you know, it'd smell up the whole room. Plus the pollen.

LATER - AT THE DINING TABLE --

KRISTEN
This is delicious.

PAUL
The recipe called for chervil, but you can't get chervil here yet. I used dill.

KRISTEN
Huh.

PAUL
It's the little things. I mean, you think you're still in the normal world, but then something happens and you realize you're not. Not that substituting dill for chervil's such a big thing, but you know.

KRISTEN
Like last month when my parents came to visit Jonah and me, and it's the whole production with the carrying boxes, and then Jonah gets freaked out by Grandma and Grandpa being so huge and scary. It's all a big mess. One night we went to Red Lobster, and of course Jonah and I are sitting on the table in those special seats, and everybody's staring at us. They make a big show out of how everyone is super-welcome, but then they charge a huge minimum and won't let you share.

PAUL
Did you hear about that protest in Georgia where they were burning little effigies and stomping on them? What the hell was that? What'd we ever do to anybody? We're just down here being small.

KRISTEN
I stopped watching the news. I don't want Jonah exposed to all that negativity.

A sudden blast of EURO-DISCO thumps through the ceiling. Paul wipes his mouth, grabs a broom and is about to pound on the ceiling when a MAN'S VOICE comes from outside the open terrace doors.

75

EXT. PAUL'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Paul steps outside and from the balcony above hears rapid-fire SPANISH. Leaning over the railing, he calls up.

PAUL
Hey. Hey, up there! Hellooo!

A shirtless MAN in a robe and gold chain leans over the railing cupping a cordless phone. This is JAVIER.

JAVIER
Yes?

PAUL
Could you please turn the music down?

Javier puts his cigarette in his mouth and gives Paul a little wave of "no problem." Javier's girlfriend-du-jour CAMINO looks over the railing too.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Thank you!

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul takes his seat. Within seconds the volume is lowered, but not very much.

PAUL
The guy's never there. I've lived here eight months, never heard a peep. Suddenly two nights ago a huge party. Kept me up all night.

KRISTEN
Who is he?

PAUL
I don't know. Some guy from Europe.

The DOORBELL. Paul opens it to find Javier, still in his robe, holding two plastic-wrapped PACKAGES.

JAVIER
Hello, my friend.

As they shake hands --

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Javier González González. From Spain.

76
Paul Heafy. PAUL
Omaha. Kristen Swanson.

KRISTEN
Cannons Mill, Ohio, originally.

JAVIER
Hello.
(offering a package)
I would like you to have this. Cheese
from my country. Like Manchego, but
better. Very good cheese.

PAUL
Thank you. That's very thoughtful.

JAVIER
And this. This is very special. Jámón
ibérico de bellota. Ham. Extremely good
ham. The best ham. The pigs, they are
special pigs, and all they eat is...
bellotas. The little things that fall
from the trees.

KRISTEN
Pine cones?

JAVIER
Smaller. Bellotas. The little animals
of the forest, they gather these and eat
them in the winter. When it is cold.
They guard them and they eat them.

PAUL
You talking about acorns?

JAVIER
Acorns. Acorns. This ham -- I assure you
no one else in this city has this ham.
Just you and me. For neighbors only!

He laughs and slaps Paul hard on the back.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Anyway, I'm sorry for my music. But
listen, tonight I will have again a
party. Just a few friends. A small
party. Not big like last time. Small.
Maybe you would like to come.

PAUL
Thanks, but we're just trying to have a
nice quiet dinner here.

KRISTEN

And I have to get back to my son.

Javier takes stock of these boring Americans.

JAVIER

You can come when you like and leave when you like.

PAUL

Does that mean the music is going to go on tonight? Because if you just step inside, I'll close the door and you can see how much --

JAVIER

(noticing)

Una rosa! Una rosa de verdad! Hostias!

He makes a bee-line toward the big rose -- smelling it, feeling its petals.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Where do you get this?

PAUL

New place called Full-Sized Flower Mart.

JAVIER

Here in Leisureland?

(off Paul's nod)

Joder, what a brilliant idea. Why did I not have such an idea? The store -- is local or chain?

PAUL

No idea.

JAVIER

I must call my brother. This is an idea for all the cities of the small.

He pulls out his cellphone, speed-dials a number, and heads toward the door.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

So maybe I see you. But if you don't come, and you think there is too much noise, you find me and you tell me. No need to call the police like last time, okay? We are neighbors. And neighbors are friends.

(as someone answers --)

Ernesto.

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Perdona que te despierte, hombre, pero no
te imaginas lo que acabo de ver -- una
rosa, tamaño normal, aquí en Leisureland.
Sí...

Closing the door behind Javier --

PAUL
Well. That was interesting.

EXT. PAUL'S CONDO HALLWAY - NIGHT

Paul walks Kristen down the hallway. BASS NOTES from
upstairs penetrate the floor.

PAUL
Yeah, small party.
(imitating Javier)
Just a few friends.

AT THE ELEVATOR --

Paul pushes the "down" button.

KRISTEN
Well, thanks for a really nice time
tonight. Plus cooking and all.

PAUL
If you find yourself throwing up all
night, you'll know who's responsible.
So... Sunday then.

KRISTEN
(half-hearted)
Yeah.

Paul leans in for a kiss. Kristen ends it prematurely.

PAUL
Is something wrong?

KRISTEN
No.

PAUL
Really?

The elevator opens, and a group of tall SERBS spills out.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(steering them to Javier's)
One floor up.

79
They disappear into a stairway door. Kristen steps into the elevator.

KRISTEN
It's just that you're a really good guy, and I know you've been through a lot with your divorce and all, and I enjoy hanging out with you.

PAUL
(his face darkening)
Uh-huh.

KRISTEN
But if I'm really honest about how I'm feeling...

PAUL
(a sudden prick)
Fine. I get it. Fine.

KRISTEN
Paul, no, it's just that I --
Paul releases the elevator door and walks away.

INT. PAUL'S CONDO - NIGHT

Paul enters his apartment and surveys the remnants of dinner. He picks up the leftover PIE and throws it away, plate and all. MUSIC AND LAUGHTER from upstairs reach a crescendo. Paul glares at the ceiling.

INT. PAUL'S CONDO HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door opens, and Paul walks toward the STAIRWAY, a BAG OF ICE in one hand, the big ROSE in the other.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Paul approaches Javier's front door and pushes it open.

INT. JAVIER'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Javier's much larger apartment could not be more different from Paul's -- double-high ceilings, wide doorways, fireplaces, hip furnishings.
Paul steps inside to find some TWO DOZEN EUROS partying. Fashionable eyewear. Distinctive shoes.

80

Javier is nowhere to be seen, and Paul immediately regrets coming. He's about to slip out when --

JAVIER
Oh, neighbor! You came! And you brought the rose -- you are a true gentleman! And ice. You saved us! Everybody, this is my very good friend from downstairs, ehmmmm...

PAUL

Paul.

JAVIER
Paul. Yes, of course, Paul. And your lady friend?

Paul just shakes his head.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Many women here. Come with me.
(as they walk)
I invite a few friends, a few clients, and look what happens. Everyone comes, and no one thinks to bring anything, no one but my neighbor. I like you.

They enter --

THE KITCHEN

-- where Javier sneaks past a CLUSTER OF GUESTS to dump the ice into a bucket and set the rose down.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
But of course there is nothing to do in Leisureland after ten o'clock. This I do not understand. It's not as if so many people work in the morning. This is the worst trait of the small -- they are lazy. Not all, but most.

(offering)
Here is a glass. Have a drink. You might want to try this wine -- a fantastic Ribera del Duero. Just fantastic. You like wine, don't you?

PAUL

Don't know that much about it, but --

JAVIER
You will not find this wine anywhere in the world of the small.
(MORE)

81.
JAVIER (CONT'D)
Except maybe soon there will be one
restaurant here to serve it. I will know
later this week --
(pointing out a CLIENT)
-- from that man over there. Excuse me.

LATER --

Drink in hand, Paul wanders through the party hearing
different languages, finally pausing to listen in on a
heated discussion.

MAN
Now you've got Democrats and Republicans
falling all over themselves to get into
the downsizing business. Every day you
read about some new program to downsize
welfare moms and methadone addicts and
prisoners. Hell, they're even turning
the old New Orleans Superdome into low-
cost housing for the small.

ISRAELI WOMAN
And what is wrong with that? Do those
people not deserve to be small if they
wish and to have a place to live? Not
everyone can afford to live in
Leisureland, you know.

MAN
I'm just saying I paid to be small. You
paid to be small in your country, right?
And weren't we led to believe that we'd
be guaranteed a certain quality of life?

ISRAELI WOMAN
And I think we are living very well.

MAN
So far. But if downsizing's going to
turn into a dumping ground for the poor,
things'll go to hell pretty fast. Don't
think those people aren't going to start
coming up here and wanting what we have.
(turning to Paul)
Am I right?

PAUL
I don't know. I think... Actually, I
sort of came in in the middle.

EXT. JAVIER'S ROOF DECK- NIGHT

Paul climbs the stairs and wanders out onto the deck crowded with REVELERS around a beautifully lit POOL. The roof offers a lovely view of Leisureland by night, but more impressive is the sight of --

JAVIER DANCING

with complete abandon, relishing his role as king of the party, sandwiched between Camino and another stunning woman. The three of them KISS with very open mouths.

As Paul stares at this utterly foreign scene, a WOMAN approaches him, an enigmatic smile on her face. She looks at him. He looks at her. She places a PILL on her tongue and offers it to him.

PAUL

(above the music)

What is it? Can you tell me what it is?

The woman mischievously shakes her head and continues to gaze at him, tongue extended.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I need to know what it is. I've got allergies.

She shrugs, retracts her tongue and turns away.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wait. Wait.

She turns back, and PAUL KISSES HER, sucking her tongue and the pill into his mouth. When they separate, Paul swallows, eyes widening as he contemplates the consequences of such an impulsive decision.

WOMAN

(stroking his cheek)

You're sweet.

Paul tries to think of what to say to prolong the encounter, but he hesitates too long. She dances away.

INT. JAVIER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Javier's arm is around Paul as they descend to the lower floor. By now the party is VERY CROWDED.

PAUL

So where do you live most of the time?

JAVIER
In my business I am traveling constantly,
so I have many apartments around the
world. But my real home, and our office,
is Zaragoza.
(kissing a woman goodbye)
Do you know Spain?

PAUL
Never been.

JAVIER
That must change.

PAUL
And who are all these people?

JAVIER
Friends. Friends of friends. Friends of
friends of friends. I don't know.
People who travel, who like to have fun.
Don't you like to have fun?

PAUL
Sure. I mean --

JAVIER
Most of them are small so they can have
fun all the time, so they do not have to
work.

They pass an OLDER DUTCHMAN in nautical attire -- double-
breasted navy blazer, turtleneck, captain's hat.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Like my dear friend Joris.

JORIS
What's that you say about me? What lies
are you telling?

JAVIER
Simply that in the small world no one
wants to work.

JORIS
Yes. That is the wonderful thing about
becoming small. You are immediately
rich. Unless you are very poor. Then
you are only small.

JAVIER
Joris is a sea captain. Never more than
ten meters from his boat.

JORIS
One of my boats, anyway.
(to Paul)
Let me show you.

As Javier moves on, Joris guides Paul to the window and points to a LARGE YACHT with lights along its mast.

JORIS (CONT'D)
I am from many generations of Dutch seamen, a direct descendant of Piers Joost Mertens, captain of Henry Hudson's first expedition in America. My father and his father were captains for Cunard. So there you are. Typically this time of year I sail in the Caribbean and then drop anchor here for a few days to ski. Next week I will be in the Seychelles, and two weeks later I'm meeting some friends for a group sail on Lake Titicaca.

PAUL
So wait -- how do you sail from...? I mean, Leisureland's only got this tiny man-made lake.

Joris is starting to seem a little BLURRY to Paul, his dialogue growing ECHOED and DISTANT.

JORIS
Fed-Ex, my boy. My boat travels faster than I do.

Joris laughs at the joke he probably uses five times a day. Paul gives a courtesy laugh, then feels a wave of LIGHTHEADEDNESS. Whoa!

EXT. JAVIER'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Paul wanders out and joins a circle of people conversing in GREEK. He nods and smiles, just enjoying the sounds.

PAUL
(interrupting)
I'm going to take off my shoes.

EXT. JAVIER'S ROOF GARDEN - NIGHT

Barefoot, eyes shut, arms overhead, Paul DANCES by himself to a rhythm only vaguely related to the music. Javier wanders by and Paul pulls him into an EMBRACE.

JAVIER
Are you having a good time? Yes, I think
you are.

PAUL
Everything is perfect. Audrey's doing
exactly what she's supposed to be doing,
and I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed
to be doing. What we had was real, and
it will always exist, just like tonight,
which isn't just tonight. It's always.
Everything's just the way it's supposed
to be. It's all... perfect.

JAVIER
(extracting himself)
Yes, yes, and there is nothing better
than perfect.

INT. JAVIER'S CONDO LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A post-peak Paul sits on a BEAN BAG CHAIR guzzling a
bottle of water and attempting to unclench his jaw by
opening his mouth wide and massaging his jowls.

PAUL
Shit, I have to be at work in like five
hours.

Nearby guests break out LAUGHING at this absurd thought.

THE NEXT MORNING --

Passed out in the bean bag chair, Paul awakens, rolls
onto all fours. A clean-shaven and rested Javier comes
down the stairs.

JAVIER
Good morning, neighbor! Last night was
too much for you, I see. Let me help
you.

PAUL
I'm okay. I'm fine. I think I'm late
for work.

JAVIER
No, you are not fine. And today you will
not work.

INT. JAVIER'S TERRACE - DAY

Overlooking Leisureland and the MARINA below, the new friends eat a light LUNCH amid the glasses, bottles and ashtrays of the previous night. Javier smokes a CIGAR. Camino SUNBATHES topless nearby.

PAUL
This is delicious. Just delicious.

JAVIER
You did not know you were so lucky to have a neighbor such as me. How you live -- I'm sorry, but is sad. Very sad. Do you know this? Do you realize that you live in a sad way? Last night... I see you. You laugh and you dance, but inside you cry. Your wife leaves you, takes all your money. Now you live in a small apartment with ugly furniture, like a monkey you answer the telephone for some company of shit, and you say you have no purpose in your life. You feel you do not belong here, but what you do not realize -- you said it last night -- is that you are exactly where you are supposed to be.

PAUL
I said that?

JAVIER
Absolutely. You are part of an entirely new world. That world where you came from -- that is past, that is old, that is boring. Your old attitudes, your old job, your wife -- all that is finished. You must let go. Your destiny has changed -- look, you have met me. You do not know it yet, but you are closer now to your essence. You can smell it. Can you smell it? I can smell it.

Paul smiles for the first time in a long while.

PAUL
Who the hell are you?

JAVIER
Me? Just an anybody. But an anybody with ideas. And ambition. In other words, I am a businessman.

87.

EXT. FAR SIDE OF LEISURELAND NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Paul and Javier travel in an electric car down a treeless RESIDENTIAL STREET. In the distance looms DOWNTOWN.

JAVIER
So I ask to myself, why the people become small, most of them? To "save our precious environment?" No. They do it because they want more -- especially more of the things that in the big world are only for the rich. So I say to my brother -- I work with my brother -- I say to him why we not bring very special items, luxury items, to the small consumer with taste? After all, with money everyone thinks he has taste. Hmm?

PAUL
Like the ham.

JAVIER
Like the ham. Now we have factories in seven countries. I organize all of them, and I supervise all the sales -- wholesale, retail, everything.

PAUL
Sounds like a lot of work.

JAVIER
A lot. My brother, he takes care for everything else -- raw materials, transportation. Also is an accountant, very serious. By the way, that woman you were with the other night...

PAUL
What about her?..

Javier frowns and shakes his head in disapproval.

LATER --

Passing through a kind of NO-MAN'S LAND of empty lots, their car nears an area of MODEST DWELLINGS -- low-quality homes and apartment buildings.

Noticing an increasing number of HISPANIC PEDESTRIANS, including WOMEN in maids' uniforms --

PAUL (CONT'D)
Oh, this is where all the workers live.

JAVIER
Some of them.

PAUL
Yeah, I've never been over here. Seems pretty nice.

Javier steers past that area and heads directly toward the huge WALL surrounding the city.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Wait, where are we --?

Javier points out the opening of a TUNNEL IN THE WALL.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Driving into the tunnel, our friends pass more PEDESTRIANS and begin to hear distant RANCHERA MUSIC. Finally they emerge on the other side into --

EXT. CIUDAD DEL COMERCIO - DAY

Javier brings the car into what is essentially a BORDER TOWN -- a makeshift assembly of RESIDENCES AND FACTORIES, push-cart VENDORS, loitering CHILDREN. The protective NETTING overhead hangs much lower than in Leisuriland and is poorly maintained.

Paul is amazed to discover this world he never knew even existed.

Javier notices TWO GUYS with outstretched thumbs and wearing white smocks. He nods, slows the car, and the men HOP ONTO THE BACK.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - DAY

With the two guys hanging on, the car reaches a broad street lined with INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS bearing familiar names -- KRAFT FOODS, HORMEL MEATS, DEXTER SHOES.

In a mind-bending juxtaposition, just beyond the buildings is a delivery zone for NORMAL-SIZED VEHICLES and WORKERS.

One of the hitchhikers RAPS on the roof of the car, and Javier stops to let them off.

89

EXT. SMALL BUSINESS ZONE - DAY

SMALLER BUILDINGS offer raw space to independent manufacturers. The car parks in front of a door marked --

GONZALEZ & GONZALEZ LUXURY IMPORTS

INT. GONZALEZ & GONZALEZ LUXURY IMPORTS - DAY

Leading Paul inside, Javier is welcomed by the TWENTY-FIVE WORKERS like a beneficent king.

JAVIER
Perezosos, a trabajar!

Portly manager RAFAEL SANCHEZ rises from his desk to greet his boss with a manly embrace.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Paul Heafy, I present you Rafael Sánchez, manager and gran caballero.

They shake hands.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
¿Qué tal hoy? ¿Todo bien?

JAVIER
SÍ, sí, don Javier. Todo bien.
(to Paul)
Come.

Javier leads Paul inside, greeting WORKERS along the way.

A TOUR of the facility --

TWO WOMEN hoist a NORMAL-SIZED CUBAN CIGAR out of a large CIGAR BOX and carry it to a bench where OTHER WOMEN slice it open. They skillfully crush the tobacco in their hands and re-roll it into tiny cigars.

JAVIER
(picking one up)
Cohiba Espléndido from Cuba. The best cigar in the world. In your old life, how much would you pay for such a cigar?
(off Paul's shrug)
Forty-five, fifty dollars is the normal. But when you are small, you can buy this cigar from me for only one dollar.

90.
PAUL
Still seems like a lot. A pack of
cigarettes here is what, fifteen cents,
most of it tax?

JAVIER
Not if you remember paying fifty dollars
for the same cigar. If now you pay only
one dollar, you say, I am so happy to be
small! And from one Cohiba, we make 900
small cigars. This is my business.

PAUL
That's a good business.

JAVIER
A very good business. And this is just
the one thing. Perfume, wines, cologne,
ham and cheese, caviar, truffles -- black
and white. We license some designers --
Façonnable, Bottega Veneta...

PAUL
Do you mark everything up as much as
those cigars?

JAVIER
Yes and no. Mostly yes.

PAUL
Is all this legal?

JAVIER
Yes and no. Mostly yes. And no.

ELSEWHERE --

MEN ON SCAFFOLDING carve slices of an enormous CURED PIG
LEG with long razor-sharp KNIVES. The slices are lowered
to a WORK-STATION to be weighed and shrink-wrapped.

ELSEWHERE --

WOMEN wrap small chunks of CHEESE in cellophane.
Paul notices that one woman, GLADYS, sits nursing a sore
wrist. Recalling some of his medical Spanish --

PAUL

¿Le duele?

Happy to find a sympathetic ear, Gladys unleashes a
torrent of Spanish.

91.
Can I see? PAUL (CONT'D)
¿Dónde le duele exactamente?

GLADYS

Aquí, doctor.

Paul gently flexes the hand in several directions. The woman WINCES, confirming something. Paul places his palm on top of her wrist.

PAUL

Push up. Push up.

A NEARBY WORKER translates for Gladys.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Harder... Harder.
(releasing)

Okay, good.

Drawn by the possibility of medical attention, OTHER EMPLOYEES drop their work to approach this healer.

JAVIER

Doctor Heafy?

PAUL

Huh?

JAVIER

It seems you have more patients.

Paul is somewhat overwhelmed by this development.

PAUL

Um... Is this... is this okay?

JAVIER

Please.

INT. MEXICAN BAR - DAY

NORTEÑA MUSIC vies with the din of boisterous conversation. Two or three COUPLES DANCE. Javier brings over two BEERS to a table.

JAVIER

Thank you for what you did today.

PAUL

It's what I used to do for a living. All pretty simple stuff.

JAVIER
Not for these people. Of all the cities
where I do business, can you guess where
conditions for illegal workers are the
worst? Here, in Leisureland. No
hospitals, no clinics, nothing.

PAUL
So why do they come? It doesn't seem
they get more from downsizing than they
would from staying big.

JAVIER
Same as always -- people do anything when
they think they can have a better life.

PAUL
But downsizing?

JAVIER
We did it -- and for the same reasons,
no? There are downsizing machines
everywhere, and when you are small it is
one thousand times easier to cross the
border -- they come in egg cartons, shoe
boxes, whatever. And once they are here,
it's harder to find them and toss them
out. And who cares, anyway? They're too
small. Tony Dale and the politicians and
police look the other way. Like always.
He is a clever man, this Tony Dale. Very
clever. One of the richest men in
America. I would like to meet Mr. Dale
one day and offer my congratulations.

(leaning in)
One more thing I know about him, and this
from a very good source. He likes the
small girls.

PAUL
He what?

JAVIER
He takes small women, beautiful young
women, and they dress for him in leather,
walk on him with high heels, force him to
make dog noises. And he likes their
shit. On his chest. Tiny shit from
beautiful women, he loves this. Makes
him crazy. Little shits, like from a
mouse.

93.

As the two of them collapse in LAUGHTER, a COMMOTION erupts in the bar -- whistling and cheering followed by two EXIT DOORS flung open. Curious, Javier and Paul follow the crowd out to --

EXT. BAR BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

A normal-sized CAN OF TECATE BEER has been rolled onto an unpaved area by jubilant MEN. Egged on by whoops and hollers, they position themselves on either end of the can and on the count of three pick it up and SHAKE it.

Then they drop it on the ground, and with practiced ease the BARTENDER punctures the can with a SCREWDRIVER, sending a GEYSER OF BEER high into the air. The can is rolled this way and that to hose down open-mouthed FRIENDS.

Paul feels a tap on his shoulder and turns to discover GLADYS, the woman whose wrist he examined at the factory. Standing with her is none other than --

HU GONG JIANG -- two years older, her hair now sprinkled with wisps of gray.

GLADYS
Hello, Mr. Javier. Hello, Doctor. This lady --

GONG JIANG
I need you help, doctor. You must help me. You come with me now please. Must help.

PAUL
What's wrong? Are you hurt?

GONG JIANG
Friend very sick, need help bad. You come quick.

(tugging his sleeve)
You come. Please.

(to Javier)
You too.

Paul hopes Javier will rescue him, but instead --

JAVIER
(shrugging)
The woman needs help.

94.

EXT. GAVILAN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Javier drives Paul and Gong Jiang to the foot of one of FOUR NORMAL-SIZED TRAILERS of the type used for construction-site offices or temporary classrooms. Here they've been converted into enormous APARTMENT BUILDINGS. A SCHOOL BUS has also been converted into housing, its axles on cinder blocks.

As Javier and Paul follow Gong Jiang up the ENTRANCE RAMP, Paul observes Gong's lopsided gait and PROSTHETIC FOOT, now grotesquely damaged and discolored after two years of use.

INT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS - DAY

The three enter the immense structure through a small DOOR cut into the old normal-sized door.

As Gong Jiang hobbles ahead, Javier and Paul pause to absorb the interior. Like at an Embassy Suites or a prison, WALKWAYS on each of twelve apartment floors look onto a floor-to-ceiling ATRIUM.

A SOCIAL AREA near the entrance is populated with YOUNG MOTHERS, CHILDREN and OLD PEOPLE watching an old 16" TV tuned to a Spanish station. The sound of a garish afternoon program reverberates throughout the building.

As Gong Jiang begins to climb an imposing STAIRWAY, Paul gives Javier a look of "What are we getting into?" Javier motions for Paul to precede him up the stairs.

INT. GAVILAN SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The three walk along this elevated corridor, stepping over children and peeking into open apartment doors. GRAFFITI and MURALS adorn the plywood walls, and a rickety railing has been reinforced with dental floss.

Gong Jiang leads them with a focus unimpeded by her handicap. Stopping in front of a crudely-cut DOOR --

GONG JIANG
Okay, doctor. In here.

PAUL
I'm not really a --

Javier pushes him inside.

INT. GONG JIANG'S APARTMENT - DAY

Paul and Javier take in the improvised décor -- a TABLE made from a spray can lid, CURTAINS fashioned from an old handkerchief, a makeshift cardboard KNEELER at a CROSS on the wall. Amassed along one wall are thousands of empty JARS AND PLASTIC BOTTLES ready for recycling.

Gong Jiang pulls back a CURTAIN to reveal --

A MIDDLE-AGED MEXICAN WOMAN lying on a piece of foam, barely conscious.

GONG JIANG

This lady very sick. Her name Hermelinda. Hermelinda, how you feel now? ¿Cómo está? ¿Cómo está? I bring food for you. I bring doctor. This man doctor. Hombre médico. Médico.

While Gong Jiang fills a pail from a crude faucet in the corner, Paul kneels next to Hermelinda.

HERMELINDA

Ay, doctor, me duele todo, todo. Ya me queda poco tiempo en este mundo.

JAVIER

She says she will die soon.

Gong Jiang returns and squeezes cold water from a rag into Hermelinda's mouth.

GONG JIANG

This lady live alone, have nobody. Husband die in Mexico when they make him small. They no take out gold from teeth. Head explode. Head explode.

Paul and Javier grimace.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

She come here no money, work in cow kill place, then she get sick. Too sick.

PAUL

Cow kill place?

GONG JIANG

Cow kill for food. Cow kill place.

PAUL

Oh... a slaughterhouse.

GONG JIANG
 No more work for her too sick. She live
 alone dirty place on street. Too bad
 place. Nobody take care for her. I take
 her clinic, wait too long line three day,
 then stupid nurse say go home rest. I
 say she already rest get more bad. Later
 we see doctor say she die cancer. Too
 late for her.

(rubbing her abdomen)
 Cancer all over stomach. I say live with
 me, give you place to die, help you die.
 Most bad thing die alone.

PAUL
 We need to get her to a hospital.

GONG JIANG
 Hospital? What hospital? Anyway too
 late for hospital. She need morphine no
 hurt. Morphine.

PAUL
 Morphine?

Gong Jiang nods. Paul looks to Javier for help. Javier
 looks gravely at Hermelinda, then heads for the door,
 opening his cellphone as he goes.

JAVIER
 Give me two hours.

Left alone, Paul nervously attempts the role of doctor.

PAUL
 Okay. So. I guess the first thing...
 When is the last time you moved her?
 Have you been moving her legs and body
 around?

GONG JIANG
 Not so much.

PAUL
 Okay, give me a hand.

LATER --

Hermilinda's fitful sleep is punctuated by occasional
 groans and coughs. Gong Jiang and Paul finish a SOUP.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 That was very good. Thank you.

GONG JIANG

Welcome.

Looking around, Paul notices many images of BUTTERFLIES cut from a normal-size magazine and affixed to the wall.

PAUL

So... I see you like butterflies.

Gong Jiang doesn't understand, so Paul points.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Butterflies.

GONG JIANG

Yes. I like butterfly too much. My father he take my sister me when we little see butterfly many years they come stay in trees. You know, fly from cold place to hot place. Stay trees near my village.

PAUL

Oh, huh, migrating butterflies. Wow. That's cool.

GONG JIANG

So many butterfly in the tree so beautiful. I never forget for my life. So many color.

PAUL

How do you say butterfly in Chinese?

GONG JIANG

Hú dié.

PAUL

Hoo deeyay.

Paul's pronunciation makes her SMILE.

GONG JIANG

Hú dié.

PAUL

Hoo dee -- How about if I just say "butterfly?"

GONG JIANG

When they make me small in prison, I think maybe I never see hú dié again. I cry for this many time.

98.
PAUL
Prison? You were downsized in a prison?
Wait, you're that -- Oh, my god, you're
that Chinese woman from a couple years ago,
the dissident. What's your name?

GONG JIANG
Hu Gong Jiang.

PAUL
Right, right! I thought you looked
familiar, but I would have never thought -
- I mean, you're famous. Didn't they
give you a place in Leisureland? They
made such a big deal about you. That's
you? Jesus, what are you doing here?

GONG JIANG
Leisureland people too selfish.

PAUL
(recalling)
Yeah, right, I remember you lost your leg
below the knee. Wcw. That's a hard
thing to get used to.

Gong Jiang looks at him without a shred of self-pity.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Okay, so, I think I should tell you
something just so we're clear. I'm not a
doctor.

GONG JIANG
You no doctor?

PAUL
I'm an occupational therapist. Well,
technically my Nebraska license is
expired, but I'm working on getting
certified here in New Mexico, which isn't
easy, because we're small, and all the
examiners... Anyway, I'm happy to help
you, and I'll do all I can, but I'm not a
doctor.

GONG JIANG
You fix Gladys hand.

PAUL
Yeah, if she does her exercises. See,
that's the type of thing I am qualified to
do. Or I could help you with your leg.

GONG JIANG
How you help me?

PAUL
With the way you walk. For some reason
you were given a ridiculous prosthesis,
and you clearly haven't had any follow-up
physical therapy.

GONG JIANG
I walk okay. I go everywhere good.

PAUL
No, you don't walk okay. Not at all.
Here, stand up. Let me show you.

Gong Jiang stands, and Paul points her toward a mirror,
positioning himself behind her, with his hands on her
hips and index fingers extended to mark their position.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Walk forward a bit.
(as she walks)

See? You see that? How your hip is
rocking? Maybe you've gotten used to it,
and it seems normal to you, but I know
you're in a lot more pain than you admit.

Gong's look implies that she knows Paul's right and that
he's the first person in a long time to offer her help.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(demonstrating)
See, this is your hip joint. Between here
is some padding, which, with the way you're
walking now, is going to wear down, and you
won't be able to walk at all. You'll need
an operation for a new hip, maybe a new
knee too. You understand? No more
walking. Really what you need is a whole
new foot, but meanwhile I could try to make
some adjustments to this one.

Gong Jiang sits, UNSTRAPS HER FOOT and hands it to him.

GONG JIANG
Okay. You fix leg.

LATER --

Paul makes adjustments to the prosthesis -- sanding down
the heel, then TWISTING the toes. Suddenly -- SNAP! --
the foot SHATTERS in his hands.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)
What happen? What that noise?

PAUL
(concealing the damage)
Nothing. Hold on. Give me a second.

GONG JIANG
You break my foot?

PAUL
No, I just need to --

GONG JIANG
You say you help me! This no help! I
need foot! How I walk now?

PAUL
Look, I'll get you another foot, okay? A
much better foot. That one was no good.

GONG JIANG
You no good! You bad doctor!

PAUL
There was a major stress fracture.
You're lucky it didn't break while you
were walking down those stairs! Would
have broken your neck!

A KNOCK, and in comes a sweaty Javier lugging a heavy
DUFFEL BAG.

JAVIER
Hola.

GONG JIANG
He break my foot!

JAVIER
(to Paul)
Why did you do that?

PAUL
I didn't. I was just trying to --

GONG JIANG
You bring morphine?

Javier opens the bag and produces a some SYRINGES and a
nearly empty normal-sized AMPULE OF MORPHINE.

PAUL
How the hell --?

JAVIER
What is garbage to one man is gold to another.

LATER --

Now kneeling at her side, Gong Jiang gives Hermelinda water and strokes her hair. Hermelinda's eyes flutter open.

HERMELINDA
(barely there)
Gong Jiang... mi única amiga...

As Paul unwraps a syringe --

PAUL
How much am I supposed to give? I have no idea.

JAVIER
Don't look at me. You're the doctor. Besides, doesn't matter.

GONG JIANG
Give lot. She hurt bad. Even too much okay, make her die no pain.

The pressure is on. Javier tips the ampule, and after Paul draws some serum, he kneels at the dying woman's side.

CLOSE ON PAUL --
as he administers an injection for the first time since his mother died.

Hermelinda breathes easier.

PAUL
(to Javier)
Have you ever seen someone die before?

JAVIER
My mother.

PAUL
I watched my mother die too.

INT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS - DAYBREAK

Javier carries Hermelinda's SHROUDED BODY down the stairs, while behind him Paul carries Gong Jiang PIGGY-BACK. A YOUNG BOY on a bike watches with curious eyes.

EXT. CIUDAD DEL COMERCIO GRAVEYARD - DAWN

Javier's car stops near a makeshift CEMETERY on the very edge of town -- so near the edge that it abuts one of the flimsy large POLES that support the cheap netting.

Crude MARKERS and CROSSES made of Q-TIPS and POPSICLE STICKS bear names, dates and poignant messages scrawled by barely literate hands.

LATER --

In the middle of the cemetery, Gong Jiang watches Paul and Javier DIG.

THE MARKER --

reading "Hermelinda Vasquez" is inserted into a PAPER CLIP bent such that one prong sticks into the ground.

OUR FRIENDS

observe a moment of silence. Gong Jiang prays. The wind blows slightly.

GONG JIANG

He nice lady have bad life. She heaven now.

Then, in a sudden shift of gears she turns to Paul.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

Now you get me new foot.

INT. PAUL AND JAVIER'S CONDO HALLWAY - DAY

Paul emerges from the elevator with Gong Jiang on his back, followed by Javier. Handing Javier his keys --

PAUL

Here, do you mind --?

JAVIER

Yes, of course.

Javier holds open the door for Paul and Gong Jiang.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

I see you later, okay?

GONG JIANG

This big place just for you? You selfish Leisureland man!

PAUL

Wish me luck.

An amused Javier closes the door and heads away.

INT. LEISURELAND ORTHOPEDICS DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A folksy older ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON seated across from Paul and Gong Jiang holds the pieces of her shattered foot.

GONG JIANG

This man break my foot. I need new foot.

PAUL

Look, it was really giving her problems -- no flexion, no torque adjustment, no --

ORTHOPEDIC DOCTOR

Don't I know it? Those early prosthetics were junk. At the time Miss Ku came through here -- an honor to meet you, by the way -- those were the only feet we had. Manufacturers couldn't justify the expense of sophisticated miniatures. Jeez, I remember one patient, nine-year-old kid. He was playing hide-and-seek with his normal-sized grandma, crawled up inside a coffee grinder. Bad news.

(off Paul's wince)

Yeah, both legs above the knee sheared clean off. Had to rig something up for him with some hardware my brother-in-law sent down from his hobby shop in Utah. What really helped turn things around was the big demand from all the downsizing Iraq vets. The VA lit a fire under the manufacturers -- subsidies and what not. Anyway, let me call in a tech, and we'll get you measured for one of these babies.

The doctor opens a CATALOG and points out a HIGH-TECH PROSTHETIC.

PAUL

Now we're talking.

ORTHOPEDIC DOCTOR

She's a beaut. Only problem's the waiting list -- everyone's upgrading.

PAUL

How long?

ORTHOPEDIC DOCTOR
Considering Miss Hu's celebrity status, I
could try to put a rush on it. I'd
guess, oh, twelve, fourteen weeks.

GONG JIANG
That too long time! I need now.
(to Paul)
You say I get new foot today!

EXT. LEISURELAND MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Paul and Gong Jiang exit the building -- Gong Jiang now
walking with CRUTCHES and a temporary PEGLEG.

PAUL
I know it seems like a setback, but
you've got to think long-term.

Gong Jiang HITS Paul hard on the chest.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ow! Jesus!

GONG JIANG
You no say Jesus bad way! Jesus die for
you!

PAUL
Now I'm supposed to watch my language?
What am I, a child? You're worse than my
mother.

GONG JIANG
I feel sorry for your mother! I sure she
suffer a lot for your fault. Many people
depend for me. What I do now? I okay
before, I walk around good! Even I
forget I have no foot. Now you come,
make my life more harder!

PAUL
I know. That's why I'm going to help you
out. What do you need?

GONG JIANG
You take me T.G.I. Friday. You know
T.G.I. Friday? International Food Court.

EXT. T.G.I. FRIDAYS BACK ALLEY - DAY

Gong Jiang watches manager ROGER hand Paul four LARGE ALUMINUM TRAYS of take-out food.

GONG JIANG
Thank you, Roger.

ROGER
Finally got yourself a helper, huh, Gong?

GONG JIANG
This Paul. He help me next twelve to fourteen weeks. Maybe more. Say hello, Paul.

PAUL
Hi, Roger.

EXT. HOOTERS BACK ALLEY - DAY

The same routine unfolds, this time with a BUXOM WOMAN handing over STYROFOAM CONTAINERS.

EXT. LEISURELAND ALLEY - DAY

Paul emerges from DUMPSTER DIVING, brandishing a couple of glass jars and plastic cups.

GONG JIANG
No metal can?

PAUL
Didn't see any.

GONG JIANG
You look more. This usually metal can place.

PAUL
You actually do all this every day?

GONG JIANG
This dumpster only twice a week. You look more now. Look more!

EXT. FAR SIDE OF LEISURELAND NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Paul drives Gong Jiang toward the TUNNEL in a car laden with take-out food containers and recyclables.

EXT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS - EVENING

Gong Jiang and Paul have met up with Gong's regular HELPERS -- Gladys and ANOTHER WOMAN. As Gong Jiang gives the women instructions, Paul transfers take-out containers and canned food into their PUSHCARTS.

INT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS - EVENING

Paul pushes a cart as Gong Jiang leads him toward a feeble OLD MAN parked in front of the TV.

GONG JIANG
Hola, Señor Cárdenas. ¿Hambre?

SEÑOR CÁRDENAS
Ay, sí, chinita. Gracias.

She pulls food from the cart and places it on his lap.

SEÑOR CÁRDENAS (CONT'D)
Dios se lo pague.

INT. GAVILAN LEVEL THREE - NIGHT

Trailing Gong Jiang and lugging the heavy cart, Paul reaches the top of the stairs.

GONG JIANG
This way.

PAUL
Yeah, okay.

Gong Jiang's KNOCK on an APARTMENT door is opened by a MOTHER with THREE CHILDREN. Paul winces at the squalor.

SINGLE MOTHER
Hola, Gong Jiang.

GONG JIANG
(handing over a container)
Hola. A little food for you.

SINGLE MOTHER
Thank you, Gong Jiang. I don't know how we would do without you. When Enrique gets better, I won't have to trouble you any more.

107.
GONG JIANG
Paul, you take care for her son Enrique.
(to the mother)
Hombre médico.

Paul gives Gong Jiang a look, then steps inside --

INT. SINGLE MOTHER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The mother leads Paul to her NINE-YEAR-OLD SON and lifts the boy's shirt to show HUGE RED CIRCLES on his torso.

PAUL
(examining)
Huh. I could be wrong, but I think that's ringworm. Painful. Dolor, ¿verdad?

SINGLE MOTHER
(nodding)
I give him baths and scrub him and put herbs, but nothing helps.

PAUL
(remembering)
Ringworm's a fungus, so... No baño. No baño. No agua. Seco. Seco.
(turning to Gong Jiang)
Maybe I can get him something at the drugstore tomorrow.

GONG JIANG
(to the woman)
Mañana medicina. Mañana medicina.

SINGLE MOTHER
Ay, gracias, doctor.

EXT. CIUDAD DEL COMERCIO - NIGHT

Paul pushes Gong's cart as they head toward the entrance ramp of a SCHOOL BUS which has also been converted into an apartment building.

GONG JIANG
(consulting a paper)
We have six apartment here give food. And one man here very sick, hurt arm bad working cow kill place. You fix, okay?

PAUL
I'll see what I can do

EXT. SCHOOL BUS REAR - NIGHT

Their rounds complete, Gong Jiang now leads Paul around back. There are no people here. Gong Jiang pulls the LAST CONTAINER of food out of her cart and directs Paul to place it on the ground, where a colony of FERAL CATS rushes out to eat.

EXT. MEXICAN FOOD STAND - NIGHT

Paul converses with his bizarre new friend over TACOS and HORCHATA.

PAUL
Do you miss China?

GONG JIANG
Not so much.

PAUL
Too many bad experiences, I guess.

GONG JIANG
Miss my village where I little girl.
Very beautiful village Yunnan Province.
Miss family too.

PAUL
Maybe you'll see your village again one day.

GONG JIANG
No more village.

PAUL
No more village?

GONG JIANG
Government make people go away from village put water all over village, all over everywhere. Too much water. You know, stop water make electricity...

PAUL
A dam?

GONG JIANG
Yeah, dam. They make dam. Many villages no more. Every place I know when little girl no more. Hu dié no more. No more.

PAUL
Butterflies.

GONG JIANG
Me my sister organize Christian protest
dam. They make people go away villages.
This why I arrest, go prison. Too many
poor people move from villages and all
beatiful place destroy.
(sudden outburst)
People not furniture!

PAUL
What happened to your sister?

GONG JIANG
She die prison. Too much cold. She die
cough.

PAUL
Say, Gong Jiang, I'm really sorry about
all you've been through. You must be so
tired. Should I take you home?

GONG JIANG
Now we go church pray Jesus.

INT. PENTECOSTALIST CHURCH - NIGHT

Paul stands with Gong Jiang as PARISHIONERS sing a
rudimentary hymn of this highly accessible religion.
Some shake TAMBOURINES.

HYMN (V.O.)
Jesucristo es el Señor. Jesucristo es el
Señor...

LATER --

The Spanish-speaking MINISTER shouts into a microphone,
his words distorted by the cheap amp. The FAITHFUL sway
back and forth, eyes closed, one hand raised, Gong Jiang
among them. Paul has never been more out of his element.

INT. JAVIER'S APARTMENT - DAY

IN THE LIVING ROOM --

Gong Jiang sits eating while watching a NATURE SHOW on TV
Camino watches too.

IN THE KITCHEN --

Javier is dying of laughter.

JAVIER
And you will be doing this for how long?

PAUL
Three months. Maybe longer.

JAVIER
(another fit of laughter)
No, you are killing me!

PAUL
It's a disaster. Smell my hands. I've washed them five times, and they still smell like garbage and day-old Buffalo wings.

JAVIER
Did you try bribing the doctor?

PAUL
No, that wouldn't work.

JAVIER
What kind of doctors do you think they convince to work here? Doctors who like special appreciation for their efforts. Give me his number.

PAUL
No, no, no. Anyway, I am the one who broke her foot, and I'm happy to help out, I guess, up to a point, but I didn't exactly downsize so I could spend my life delivering food to shut-ins. I mean, you've seen her -- she's a pain in the ass, but a lot of people rely on her. She's kind of amazing, really.

JAVIER
Yes, yes, yes, a little Chinese saint. And it is only because you are friends with Javier González that you are in this mess. I will help you. Let me think. (snapping his fingers)
I have it. Gong Jiang! Could we speak with you?

MOMENTS LATER --

Gong Jiang arrives in the kitchen.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Did you enjoy your dinner?

111.

GONG JIANG
Yes very delicious thank you Mr. Javier.

JAVIER
Very good. Now, our friend Paul has informed me of your unfortunate situation, and I have the solution. I will go to Spain in a few days, and you will go with me. There I will take you to a wonderful clinic for small people, and immediately they will give you a new foot. These people know me well, and they will take excellent care of you. Do you understand? Spain. New foot. Happiness.

GONG JIANG
Spain? No I no can leave. Too much works here Leisureland.

JAVIER
You will be gone a few days, a week at most, a beautiful little vacation, and you will return able to do more than ever. In your absence we will assign someone to take care of your obligations.

GONG JIANG
Paul. He know what to do. Paul do for me while I go with you get foot.
Javier and Gong Jiang turn to Paul, who begins to panic.

JAVIER
Yes. Well, you see, that is impossible. Doctor Paul is going with us.

PAUL
I am?

JAVIER
Don't you remember? I have hired you to... to treat my workers there. And now you will assist Gong Jiang too.

PAUL
Uh, right. Okay.

GONG JIANG
My friend Gladys she work your factory. Gladys know me good. I want Gladys take care for people if I go. Gladys, you know Gladys?

JAVIER
Gladys, yes, a wonderful woman. She introduced us.

GONG JIANG
You pay Gladys same like always even she take care for people I gone, no work factory?

JAVIER
Yes, I will pay Gladys the same as always.

GONG JIANG
You give Gladys cellphone so she call me she need help. You pay for cellphone too. Cellphone for me too, talk Gladys.

JAVIER
A cellphone for Gladys and a cellphone for you.
(turning to Paul)
Now I understand how she is the only one to survive in that box.

CAMINO (O.S.)
Javi! Javi! Come quick. Something terrible!

IN THE LIVING ROOM --

Javier, Paul and Gong Jiang hurry in to find Camino now watching a LIVE NEWS REPORT.

CAMINO (CONT'D)
A bomb at the small city in Brussels. A bomb!

ON TV --

Chaotic LIVE FOOTAGE of the aftermath of the BOMBING. A CORRESPONDENT reports the story with limited information.

CORRESPONDENT (V.O.)
... still no word as to who is responsible, but there's little doubt that the timing of the bomb with the ratification process at the 40/60 talks is no coincidence.

PAUL
Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

ANCHOR (V.O.)
I'm sure it's premature, but is there any estimate as to the number of casualties?

CORRESPONDENT (V.O.)
It will be some time before we have any reliable information, but we must doubtless be looking at casualties in the hundreds, if not thousands, if not tens of thousands. Let's remember that what in the large world would be a modest explosive device like a hand grenade, would have a devastating effect on life and property in the small world. We've just learned that teams of downsized emergency crews from France and Israel are flying in to conduct search and rescue...

JAVIER
I could have predicted something bad would happen, but not this bad.

PAUL
Do you have a factory in Brussels?

JAVIER
No factory, but friends.

PAUL
I don't know about you guys, but right now I'm wishing I weren't small. I'm a little scared.

GONG JIANG
Big people more scared.

Javier and Paul look at her with quizzical expressions before turning their attention again to the news.

INT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS LOBBY - DAY

Gong Jiang stands at the bottom of the stairs watching Paul carry down an unwieldy PLASTIC BAG of recyclables. Winded and sweaty, Paul places the bag next to SEVEN OTHERS and trudges back up the stairs.

EXT. GONZALEZ & GONZALEZ LOADING DOCK - DAY

Paul, Javier and Gong Jiang await pick-up, surrounded by SUITCASES and Gong's huge RECYCLING PILE.

114.
Manager Rafael and Gladys receive final instructions from
Javier and Gong Jiang.

Spotting a NORMAL-SIZED CAR in the distance --

JAVIER
Here he is. Here is my brother.

OPERA MUSIC BEGINS, taking us into --

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

THE DRIVER looks remarkably like Javier except with
glasses, shorter hair and a vulnerable look in his eyes.
This is Javier's NORMAL-SIZED TWIN ERNESTO, currently
enraptured by the OPERA on the stereo.

Paul, Javier and Gong Jiang sit in captain's chairs atop
the "roof deck" of a three-tiered TRAVELING CARRIER
strapped to the passenger seat.

ERNESTO
This is how the Mad Scene should be done.
Just like this. Maria Callas. La Scala,
1957. Look, the only reason to produce
Lucia di Lammermoor is that you have an
exceptional soprano. That is the only
reason, because, otherwise, dramatically,
the libretto, let's face it, is absurd,
and the music is mediocre, except for the
sextet in Act Two.

As Ernesto continues, Javier rolls his eyes -- clearly
his brother's pontificating embarrasses him.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)
But last night at Santa Fe, the soprano --
I mean, I thought there was no way she
would even attempt the cadenza at the end
of the Mad Scene, much less sustain the E-
flat --

JAVIER
Ernesto, please! Enough about the opera!
Please turn it off!

ERNESTO
There's no need to shout. I just thought
you might enjoy some music to take your
mind off all the bad news.

JAVIER
On the contrary. Let's hear the news.

Ernesto switches on the radio and on comes an AM TALK-RADIO program with a CALLER mid-rant. 115.

CALLER (ON RADIO)
God didn't intend for us to be small. It's not natural. Now look what's happening -- all this terrible violence and hatred. I'm sorry for the all the little dead people, but they're the ones who are responsible.

HOST (ON RADIO)
I seriously doubt anybody small was behind this. Everyone seems to agree that it was big people trying to disrupt the 40/60 talks.

CALLER (ON RADIO)
The point is that all those little people would still be alive if they'd remained big -- I mean, normal. They made a choice. Nobody forced it on them, like these 40/60 people want. All this talk about saving the world by making people small. The Bible doesn't say anything about small people and neither does the constitution.

HOST (ON RADIO)
Thanks for your call. We've got Evan from Boise on the line. Evan?

EVAN (ON RADIO)
Hi, Roger. Love the show.

HOST (ON RADIO)
Thanks, Evan. You big or small?

EVAN (ON RADIO)
I'm big.

HOST (ON RADIO)
What's on your mind today, Evan?

EVAN
Look, I'm as outraged as the next person by what happened in Belgium. Whoever did it should be apprehended and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

HOST (ON RADIO)
I agree.

EVAN (ON RADIO)
But I'd like to make a general comment about downsizing. Now I personally don't have anything against little people, but they should realize that all the hostility isn't coming out of nowhere. If you look at the statistics, it's pretty obvious that downsizing attracts a certain kind of person -- basically people looking for a handout. Sure, they all say they're doing it for the environment, but the truth is most of them are just greedy is what I think.

JAVIER
Ernesto?

ERNESTO
Yes.

JAVIER
Put your opera back on.

EXT. GAS STATION PUMP - DAY

Ernesto stands idly next to the car as he FILLS UP. Then he hears, ever so faintly --

JAVIER (O.S.)
Ernesto!... Ernesto!!

Ernesto ducks his head inside --

INT. RENTAL CAR - CONTINUOUS

-- to see what could be so urgent.

ERNESTO
You don't have to yell.

Javier points at Gong's BAGS OF RECYCLING in a heap atop the carrier, just as Paul hauls the last one up from "downstairs." Gong Jiang looks at Ernesto gratefully.

JAVIER
These are for recycling.

ERNESTO
Yes, okay.

Ernesto reaches in and takes the bags. Together they are about the size of a GRAPEFRUIT.

117

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Ernesto walks toward the mini-mart with Gong's bags, his distaste with the task evident.

INT. MINI-MART - DAY

Questioning the ATTENDANT --

ERNESTO
Excuse me, where do you put your recycling?

ATTENDANT
Don't have it.

After a moment's hesitation, Ernesto drops Gong's bags into a GARBAGE CAN and heads back outside.

The distinctive strum of a SPANISH GUITAR brings us to --

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

An IBERIA plane lands.

Supertitle:

ZARAGOZA, SPAIN

EXT. JAVIER AND ERNESTO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ernesto takes his suitcase and carrier from the TAXI and heads toward the entrance.

INT. GONZALEZ BROTHERS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ernesto places the carrier on a specially-constructed PLATFORM furnished as a DOWNSIZED LIVING ROOM. Paul, Gong Jiang and Javier emerge.

JAVIER
Welcome to our home.

Paul and Gong Jiang look at the ingenious way the apartment has been retro-fitted for cchabitation between the two brothers -- WALKWAYS line the walls, RAMPS lead to areas where big and small can interact.

PAUL
This is amazing.

118.
Closer inspection shows the difference in taste between the brothers -- Ernesto's collection of overstuffed antique furniture contrasts with Javier's sleek, modern minimalism.

INT. ERNESTO AND JAVIER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

AN ANCHOVY --
is plucked from a sizzling pan, cut into thirds and placed with tweezers atop three small plates.

ERNESTO --
wearing an APRON, takes a small TRAY into --

INT. ERNESTO AND JAVIER'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

-- which he carefully slides onto a SPECIAL TABLE atop the normal-sized dining table.

ERNESTO
(headed back to the kitchen)
Wait for me.

JAVIER
Of course, Ernesto.
(to his friends)
Boquerones, our mother's recipe. It's
our tradition always to make this dish
when we return from a long trip.
(pointing)
There she is.

Paul and Gong Jiang look at a PHOTO of the González brothers, both still big, with their MOTHER.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
Our father died when we were nine.
Mother died seven years ago.

Ernesto returns with his own plate and removes his apron.
Just as he sits and pours himself wine, the DOORBELL RINGS
Tossing his napkin onto the table, Ernesto heads away,
returning moments later with TERESA, a lovely normal-
sized woman.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Teresa!

TERESA

Javier!

She bends down to offer her LIPS to him. They KISS.

JAVIER
Are you hungry, my darling?

TERESA
Oh, yes. Starving. Especially if it's
your mother's boquerones.

JAVIER
Ernesto, bring her a plate. Teresa,
these are the friends I told you about,
Paul and Gong Jiang.

INT. ERNESTO AND JAVIER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

At the wheel of an ELECTRIC CART, Javier drives Paul and
Gong Jiang onto another PLATFORM, this one serving as his
HOME OFFICE adjacent to Ernesto's normal-sized desk.

Teresa is in the room, as well as Ernesto, who pours
water into the reservoirs of two SMALL GUEST COTTAGES and
plugs in the power cords.

JAVIER
All right, my friends. I think you will
be very comfortable. I leave you the
golf cart just in case.
(motioning)

Teresa!

She bends down so Javier can take hold and sit inside her
dangling gold-chain NECKLACE, like in a swing.

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Ready.

She stands slowly, allowing him to find a comfortable
position in her bosom. All bid GOODNIGHT as Ernesto and
Teresa exit.

ERNESTO

I put off the big light now.

Paul and Gong Jiang find themselves lit only by PORCH
LIGHTS above the cottage doors.

PAUL
Well. If you need anything during the
night, I'm right here, okay?

GONG JIANG
Goodnight, Paul. Thank you.

PAUL . .
Goodnight, Gong Jiang.

Gong Jiang enters her cottage. Before entering his own,
Paul looks longingly at her door.

INT. PAUL'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Paul's sleep is disturbed by distant muffled MOANING.

INT. ERNESTO AND JAVIER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Paul emerges from his cottage, identifying the sounds as
SEX NOISES from Javier and Teresa in the adjacent room.

Gong Jiang opens her own door, balanced on her good leg,
and looks at Paul. It could be an uncomfortable moment,
but she LAUGHS, covering her mouth. Paul laughs too.

INT. ERNESTO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ernesto has also been awakened by Javier and Teresa's
noisy lovemaking. Exhausted, resentful and jealous, he
inserts a pair of EARPLUGS.

EXT. "ZARAGOCITA" - DAY

This MID-SIZED TOWN for the small, near downtown
Zaragoza, is about the size of a SOCCER FIELD. The
surrounding WALL has Moorish flourishes, and its high-
tech NET above has none of the circus-like feeling of
Leisureland's.

SUPERTITLE:

ZARAGOCITA, SPAIN

INT. ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC WAITING ROOM - DAY

FRAMED GLOSSY PHOTOS --

-- A woman CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS, her prosthetic foot bolted

-- A man with an artificial arm ROCK-CLIMBS.

-- A woman with a bow-shaped foot-spring SPRINTS.

Gong Jiang, JAVIER AND PAUL take in these inspiring
images . Gong Jiang looks down at her peg.

121.

GONG JIANG

Thank you for bring me here.

JAVIER

All right, then. You will get your foot,
and I will see you back at the factory.

Javier leaves. Gong Jiang and Paul takes seats.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Supported by PARALLEL BARS and observed by a small TEAM of ORTHOPEDIC TECHNICIANS, Gong Jiang takes her first triumphant steps on her sophisticated NEW FOOT. Paul watches with amazement and pride.

EXT. ZARAGOCITA COMMERCIAL AREA - DAY

Gong Jiang and Paul walk along a STREET busy with SHOPPERS. Thrilled by her improved mobility, she playfully hurries ahead, practically skipping.

PAUL

Careful, don't get too cocky too soon.

Ignoring him, she continues to prance around.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

Gong Jiang races up to Paul and offers her awkward version of a HUG.

GONG JIANG

This much better foot. I'm sorry I mad at you. Maybe you good doctor.

PAUL

Believe it or not, sometimes I do know what I'm talking about.

Just then WARNING SIRENS begin to echo throughout the city. CITIZENS emerge from stores and residences, on the verge of panic.

PAUL (CONT'D)

What the hell?

Paul and Gong Jiang exchange a look, quicken their stride.

122

INT. GONZALEZ BROTHERS FACTORY - DAY

This is a larger, more modern and more mechanized FACTORY than the one we visited outside Leisureland.

An upside-down bottle of Spanish WINE sits atop a rebottling machine, as does a bottle of CHANEL #5 nearby.

Paul and Gong Jiang hasten across the factory floor, passing WORKERS shutting down machines and taking off smocks. They enter --

INT. JAVIER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- and find a somber Javier on the telephone.

JAVIER
Yes, yes, I understand. Don't worry.
We will take care of everything -- all
the arrangements, everything. Yes, yes,
yes. Javier González always keeps his
word. Yes, see you then. Ha det bra.

He hangs up and thinks, barely noticing his friends.

PAUL
What's going on?

JAVIER
Very bad things for people our size.
Bomb threats against six major small
cities, including Leisureland. They are
evacuating everywhere.

PAUL
What?

JAVIER
Probably nothing, but evacuation here
just in case. Big, big mess.

(rising)
Gong Jiang, I'm glad you got your foot,
but I'm afraid you won't be able to go
home tomorrow. And now my brother and I
must go immediately to Norway.

PAUL
What's in Norway?

JAVIER
There's a place there we do business -- a
very interesting place, interesting
clients.

GONG JIANG
When we go back Leisureland?

JAVIER
A week. Two weeks. A month. How should I know? Everything's changing.

GONG JIANG
What we do when you go Norway?

JAVIER
You could stay at our apartment, but why not come with us? It should be very... interesting.

INT. ERNESTO AND JAVIER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ernesto paces, agitated, while Javier updates him. Gong Jiang and Paul watch this rather tense scene in silence.

ERNESTO
This is a disaster. A disaster! If this continues, we are finished. Everything we've worked for, everything we've built.

JAVIER
Be patient, Ernesto. One step at a time. Let's just go to Norway, and then we'll see where we stand.

ERNESTO
How can we go to Norway now? We have our entire business to attend to. Call them back and tell them to wait.

JAVIER
They won't wait. Somehow with the bombing and the threats, they need immediate delivery, and I negotiated ten times the normal price -- ten times! How is that bad for business? And right now, with four of our factories closed, we would be foolish to refuse.

A creature of routine, Ernesto grows even more flustered at being backed into this sudden change in plans.

ERNESTO
I told you it was a bad idea to bet everything on the future of the small. All those people are right, the Pope is right -- downsizing is not natural.

(MORE)

ERNESTO (CONT'D)
This whole downsizing idea was a mistake,
a big mistake.

JAVIER
A mistake? My sacrifice for you and our
business has been a mistake? All the
money you put in your pocket -- the cpera
you see all over the world, the
ridiculous furniture you collect -- is a
mistake? I'm a mistake?

ERNESTO
No, I didn't mean that you are a mistake.
You are impossible -- everything I say,
you twist around so I appear stupid or
insensitive or wrong. I'm sick of it!

JAVIER
Oh, really? Because that's exactly the
word you used. Mistake.
(to Gong Jiang and Paul)
You heard him.

ERNESTO
If I take every word you say and twist it
around, then I ask why you said
"sacrifice?"

Before the argument gets too heated, Paul and Gong Jiang
quietly climb into the golf cart and drive away.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)
Why did you use that word? If getting
small weren't a sacrifice -- implying
that you've relinquished something, that
you suspect it might have been a mistake -
- you would not have used that word!

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Ernesto plays a GAME OF SOLITAIRE on a display mounted in a
seatback. We can sense from his furrowed brow and pursed
lips that he's still harboring hurt feelings. He loses a
round and decides it's time for a stretch. Heading down
the aisle, he reaches --

THE DOWNSIZED AREA

that replaces a row of seats. It's a multilevel
structure with LOUNGES and roomy seats.
Ernesto bends over and looks through the acrylic wall.
There he sees --

125.

JAVIER
amid an animated conversation with Paul and Gong Jiang.
Noticing his brother, Javier turns to look, his grin
fading. Is there something urgent?
Ernesto sees he's intruding, further confirming his sense
of being an outsider. He waves and continues on his way.

EXT. NORWEGIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

AN AERIAL VIEW --
of a vast expanse of untouched forest and rugged
coastline. The camera finds a RENTAL CAR as it makes its
way along a winding road.

NORWAY

SUPERTITLE:

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Ernesto drives, OPERA on the stereo. Our friends sit
atop the carrier.

ERNESTO
Paul? Gong Jiang? Has Javier ever told
you the real reason he became small?

Javier rolls his eyes -- here we go again.

PAUL
Yeah, so you could start your business,
right?

ERNESTO
No. He did it to get away from me. He
is ashamed of me.

JAVIER
Ernesto, please.

ERNESTO
It was so obvious -- he did it immediately
after our Mother died, as though he could
not wait one minute longer. I embarrass
him. And you know something -- I am his
older brother. Yes. I am seven minutes
older. Seven minutes. Yet all our lives
it's Javier who acts like the older. When
I wanted to play football, Javier suddenly
took an interest and became captain of the
team. Any girl I liked, he seduced her.
Any room we entered, he took all the
attention for himself.
(MORE)

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

All I had for myself was my bassoon and my opera. Perhaps I hurt his feelings the other night, but you have to consider how many years he has been hurting mine. Always so ashamed to be my brother -- Ernesto, el bobo.

JAVIER

Always the victim. "Javier does this. Javier makes me feel like that." Of course, he forgets to mention how he tried to kill me in the bathtub when we were babies. Pues, hombre, look in the mirror. You're fat, unhappy, and lazy, and you think it's because of me? No. When I became small, I hoped you could not use me as your excuse any longer, yet still you try. Lock at me, Ernesto -- I'm ten centimeters tall. What shadow do I cast over you now?

Ernesto stares stoically at the road.

EXT. ABANDONED DOCK - DAY

The car stops near an ABANDONED FISHING DOCK. Ernesto removes the carrier from the car and walks out onto the dock. Kneeling at the edge, he peers over to see --

A SMALL CARGO SHIP.

Among the SEAMEN at work on deck is our old friend JORIS. Removing a pipe from his mouth --

JORIS

Ahoy, there!

ERNESTO

Hola, Joris.

JORIS

Nice to see you again!

Ernesto carefully lowers the carrier down onto --

EXT. CARGO SHIP DECK - CONTINUOUS

Javier, Gong Jiang and Paul step out of the carrier with their luggage. As Joris greets them, Ernesto lifts the carrier away.

JORIS
(embracing --)
Javier, my dear friend!

JAVIER
I'm sorry for the short notice.
Unavoidable. But look -- I can't believe
this. You make miracles happen.

JORIS
Anything for you. Tricky getting a cargo
ship and crew on two days notice, but
here we are.

JAVIER
You remember Paul.

JORIS
Of course -- the barefoot dancer.
Javier is about to introduce Gong Jiang to Joris when --

ERNESTO (O.S.)
Joris, Javier, should I begin?

JAVIER
Do you need to be told to do everything?

LATER --

Kneeling at the edge of the dock, and under the watchful
eye of CREW MEMBERS, Ernesto loads small versions of
CARGO CONTAINERS into the ship's hold.

A VAN parks near Ernesto's car, and out comes the driver,
a formidable man with the appearance of a BODYGUARD.

BODYGUARD
(pointing at Ernesto)
Name?

ERNESTO
Ernesto González González...

BODYGUARD
Please move to the far end of the dock.

ERNESTO
I would like to know why.

BODYGUARD
Just a precaution. Please.
He's not happy about it, but Ernesto complies.

128.
The bodyguard gives a signal, and TWO MEN in lab coats step out of the back of the van, one toting a large windowless CARRIER, the other lugging a squat PRESSURIZED TANK with BIOHAZARD LABELS.

EXT. CAPTAIN'S DECK - CONTINUOUS

From this elevated vantage point, our small friends watch as the carrier is set down upon the deck. An ELDERLY COUPLE emerge, escorted to their cabin by TWO SMALL BODYGUARDS.

Then the carrier is removed, and the MYSTERIOUS TANK is lowered into the cargo hold.

PAUL
What the hell is going on?

JAVIER
I'm not sure. Joris, do you know?

Joris just shrugs.

LATER --

AN ANCHOR CHAIN
is ratcheted through a hole.

A SAILOR
in the crow's nest whistles an all-clear.

THE SHIP
pulls away from the dock.

AT THE RAILING OF THE BACK DECK --

Paul, Gong Jiang and Javier wave goodbye to Ernesto, who stands on the dock, teary eyed.

JAVIER
Don't worry! We'll only be gone a few days! Don't cry, Ernesto!
(to Paul and Gong Jiang)
He always cries.

Ernesto shrugs and points to his ears -- he can't hear.

JAVIER (CONT'D)
(grabbing a bullhorn)
No llores! No llores!

Gong Jiang and Paul notice Javier brush away a tear too.

129.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - DAY

Joris helms the ship into open water. Javier uncorks a bottle of CHAMPAGNE and offers a glass to Gong Jiang.

GONG JIANG
No. I feel bad make party time when people suffer.

JAVIER
Oh, don't be so predictable, so boring. It's irresponsible not to enjoy life -- especially in tragic times.
(forcing it into her hand)
Champagne is a gift from God.

JORIS
Not all champagne. That champagne.

PAUL
So where are we going? You haven't told us anything.

JAVIER
To a village up north. A village on an island.

JORIS
Consider yourselves lucky -- very few have the pleasure.

JAVIER
No big people are allowed there, not even to know its location, or that it exists at all. Even with other small they are careful.

PAUL
So what's the village called?

JAVIER
Em... It's a long name, a name I cannot pronounce. Joris, can you?

JORIS
You have to be Norwegian.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - NEARLY DUSK

Though the sky is darkening, radiant colors reflect off the cliffs on both sides. One would think we are cruising up a river in a deep valley, but this is a FJORD.

130.

Lighting a cigar, Javier leads Gong Jiang and Paul along
the side of the ship toward --

THE REAR DECK --

-- where they spot a MAN AND WOMAN seated, enjoying the
stunning scenery. As our friends approach, the couple
turn around, revealing that they are --

DR. JORGEN ASBJØRNSEN AND WIFE ANNE-HELENE.

ANNE-HELENE

Good evening.

JAVIER

Good evening.

Gong Jiang and Paul exchange a look with Javier -- could
this really be who they think it is?

ANNE-HELENE

Please, join us. We're watching the
world go by.

Paul and Gong Jiang take a seat nearby. Javier remains
standing. Everyone enjoys the view. The mood is
melancholy.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Is this your first time in a fjord?

Paul and Gong Jiang nod.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

It's humbling, no? Nature is a very
patient sculptor -- slowly, slowly
grinding a tiny bit each day for
thousands and thousands of years to make
such a supremely beautiful thing.

GONG JIANG

I know you. You Jorgen Asbjørnsen. You
great man. You invent make people small.
You first small person.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Well, my wife and I, among others, yes.

GONG JIANG

I most happy to meet you. My name Hu
Gong Jiang. When I in hospital you send
me letter, tell me you sorry for me,
invite me Norway some day. Thank you.
Now I in Norway. Hello.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
 My goodness, that's you? That dissident
 Chinese who lost her leg?
 (noticing)
 Anne-Helene, can you imagine?

GONG JIANG
 (showing it off)
 Now I have new foot.

ANNE-HELENE
 What an honor to meet you.

The conversation is interrupted by a STRANGE HOLLOW
 THUMPING as a discarded normal-size bottle of --

ALL TEMP-A-CHEER
 floats by, bouncing off the hull of the tiny vessel.

INT. GALLEY - NIGHT

DINNER at a large table -- our friends, Joris, and the
 Asbjørnsens. Inevitably, the conversation has turned to
 the bombings, and inevitably, all are interested in Dr.
 Asbjørnsen's perspective.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
 Of course big people are going to lash
 out. They're frightened. They're facing
 extinction.

JAVIER
 Why do you say "extinction?"

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
 Well. Humans are doomed. We've known
 this since... Anne-Helene, when was
 Helsinki?

ANNE-HELENE
 Two years ago. He cried for days after
 Helsinki.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
 I didn't want to believe it. None of us
 did. But there it was. And there we
 were, big and small -- physicists,
 mathematicians, biologists,
 climatologists.

(MORE)

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)
 We built all the models, shared all our data, did all the math, and no matter how we looked at it, the conclusion was the same -- population growth and consumption habits will lead to such ecological devastation, disease, famine, and war that even our most conservative estimates show Homo Sapiens will survive somewhere only between 380 and 420 years. And life during the last fifty years will be quite disagreeable indeed.

This sobering reality hangs for a moment.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)
 Not a very successful species, Homo Sapiens, even with such great intelligence. Barely 200,000 years. Stegosaurus lasted 30 million years with a brain the size of a walnut. Our challenge now is to ensure the survival of our sub-species, Homo Sapien Minorus. We mustn't let Majorus destroy us with them.

PAUL
 But... what about downsizing? I thought that was supposed to --

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
 Yeah, yeah -- too little, too late. Maybe if we'd discovered it 100 years ago.
 (pouring himself a glass)
 Very good wine, by the way.

INT. CABIN STAIRWAY/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Paul and Gong Jiang descend to the bedroom area.

GONG JIANG
 (stopping at a door)
 This my room.

She enters. Paul lingers outside.

PAUL
 Okay. Goodnight. Unless... I think it would be a good idea if I had a look at your foot.

GONG JIANG
 Okay.

INT. GONG'S CABIN - NIGHT

Gong Jiang sits on the bed and hikes up her pant leg to allow Paul access to her new prosthetic.

Kneeling, Paul rotates the foot, detaching it from the socket. Working his fingers around the top of the socket, he gently breaks the seal between silicon and skin before sliding off the socket.

Rolling the sock liner off Gong's stump, he uncovers the tender skin beneath.

PAUL

Yep. That new socket's chafing a little.

Pumping LOTION into his palm, he spreads it over the stump, massaging it into her skin.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Life is so weird. I mean, if somebody had told me five years ago that some day I'd be four inches tall, divorced, helping a famous Chinese dissident get a prosthetic foot, and cruising up a fjord discussing the end of the world with Jorgen fucking Asbjørnsen, I would have said they were out of their mind.

Comforted by Paul's reassuring hands, Gong Jiang decides to share something of herself.

GONG JIANG

When they make me small in prison, I think very bad punishment. I think God punish me, too much sinner. Then I think no, is good thing. Jesus reborn. Maybe now I reborn too, as small. Maybe all people must reborn small. Then I think about Adam and Eve. God give them beautiful world like heaven but they too selfish, too violent, want to keep, want to destroy. All people like Adam and Eve. For survive, man must reborn small. But big people no want accept truth -- all peoples must be small -- so they make big violence. Big people afraid. I afraid too sometimes.

Paul stops his massage and looks up at Gong Jiang. They stare at each other a moment before she grabs Paul's head and PULLS HIS LIPS TO HERS.

EXT. REAR DECK - EARLY MORNING

Emerging onto the deck, Gong Jiang and Paul discover a DIFFERENT LANDSCAPE -- the walls of the fjord have narrowed, and the terrain is less rocky.

OOEEEEEEEOOOO! A strange sound drifts across the water.

INT. WHEELHOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Paul and Gong Jiang enter and find the others there. Javier hands them MUGS of coffee. Again -- OOEEEEEEEOOOO!

PAUL
What's that sound?

JORIS
A greeting.

Joris blasts the FOGHORN in response.

EXT. ISLAND IN THE FJORD - EARLY MORNING

A SENTRY in rustic clothing blows into a lacquered SNAIL SHELL -- OOEEEEEEEOOOO!

EXT. SHIP DECK - DAY

The ship enters a BAY, gradually approaching a LOADING DOCK floating on pontoons. A half-dozen downsized FISHING BOATS are moored in the harbor, their prows carved into DRAGONHEADS as an homage to Viking heritage.

AT THE SHIP'S RAILING --

Javier stands with Paul and Gong Jiang.

There are no dwellings in sight -- just the dock, some primitive loading CRANES, a few SHACKS, and a ROAD leading away from the port. Downsized OXCARTS with drivers and teams of yoked OXEN await the arrival of the ship.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

The boat has put into port. Ropes are tossed to DOCK WORKERS.

The Asbjørnsens and their companions lag behind as Paul, Gong Jiang, Javier carry their luggage down the GANGPLANK and toward --

AN OXCART --
waiting at the end of the dock. Next to it stands
enormous, burly, bearded BALDUR.

JAVIER
Hey, Baldur. Baldur!

BALDUR
Spanish! Spanish! Heeeeeyyy!

Javier embraces this bear of a man. Baldur smiles with
dirty teeth as he releases Javier from his enormous arms
and is introduced to Paul and Gong Jiang.

BALDUR (CONT'D)
What are you two nice people doing with
Spanish? He's big trouble. Big, big
trouble!

JAVIER
Trouble, eh? Then I suppose you don't
want this.

Javier produces a bottle of JOHNNY WALKER BLUE.

BALDUR
(lighting up)
Ah, the blue! Spanish doesn't forget his
old friend Baldur!
(noticing)
Oh, Dr. Asbjørnsen. Mrs. Asbjørnsen. It
is such an honor to welcome you again.

EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY

Yoked OXEN pull the CART up a steep series of switchbacks.
Javier rides up front with Baldur. Paul, Gong Jiang and the
Asbjørnsens ride on the back of the cart.

Gong Jiang relishes the IMMEDIACY AND IMMENSITY OF NATURE
-- trees tall as mountains, leaves broad as sails. It's
as though they are in Eden, a primordial, pristine
paradise. For his part, Paul delights in watching her.

A MOSQUITO the size of a hawk swoops into their midst,
causing the new arrivals to duck in fright. Unimpressed,
Baldur flicks it away with his whip.

ANNE-HELENE
(handing Paul a pail)
Spread this on your bodies. Cedar oil.
Repels the insects.

PAUL
(putting it on)
Smells like my mother's closet.

BALDUR
Well, we won't have to worry about
insects much longer, eh, doctor?

Paul is puzzled by this enigmatic comment.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

The oxen crest the hilltop, revealing --

A LUSH, VERDANT VALLEY
cradling a RUSTIC VILLAGE at the center of tiered FIELDS,
all encompassed by a high FENCE. One can't imagine a
lovelier bucolic setting.

JAVIER
Welcome to... how do you call this place?

DR. ASBJØRNSEN
Litenfjødramenven-bergenlaften.

GONG JIANG
I think I never again see in my life such
a beautiful place.

Paul squeezes her hand and the look between them is
charged with their budding romance. The cart begins its
descent into the village.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The oxcart passes through a GATE and into the settlement,
its structures a marriage between a traditional
Scandinavian village and a state-of-the-art eco-commune.

VILLAGERS pause to offer APPLAUSE and WELCOMING WORDS to
the legendary Asbjørnsens. Paul and Gong Jiang are taken
aback by the cheering that seems to include them too.

The RESIDENTS exude the glow of inner happiness and a sense
of purpose. Their dress and grooming suggest a life of
harmony with nature and communal values -- long hair,
rustic hand-made garments, sandals, beards, ruddy cheeks.

ANNE-HELENE
Look over there -- that's the site of our
original colony.

She points out a weathered GEODESIC DOME covering a few simple structures.

PAUL

Wow. So that's it, huh? That's really it. I always imagined it bigger.

The Asbjørnsens gaze at it, filled with nostalgia.

ANNE-HELENE

We lived there nearly four years. We were so much younger then, so full of hope. We really thought we would change the world. It was a very special time. Do you remember, Jorgen?

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Yes, I remember.

Eventually the cart stops at --

A FORLORN SHED built into the side of a hill, where a formal WELCOMING PARTY awaits.

As all climb off the cart, an OLDER WOMAN steps forward dressed in flowing fabrics and exuding a beneficent, slightly spacey, authority. This is SOLVEIG MICHELSEN.

SOLVEIG

Jorgen, Anne-Helene. I'm so happy to see you.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Solveig.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Let me introduce you. You know Mr. González.

(as she kisses Javier)

And this is Hu Gong Jiang, and... uh... I'm sorry...

PAUL

Paul Heafy.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

Paul, yes, thank you. Solveig Michelsen. Her grandmother Nellie founded the institute, and Solveig was kind enough to secure for us this island.

SOLVEIG
Welcome to Litenfjordlamenven-
bergenlaften. Miss Hu, it's a privilege
to meet you. How extraordinary that
you're here. What in the world brings
you to Norway? Did you come with Jorgen
and Anne-Helene for the Departure?

GONG JIANG
I don't know. We come with Javier.

PAUL
Javier and I are neighbors back in the
States.

SOLVEIG
Of course, of course -- Javier knows
everyone.

PAUL
Excuse me, but what departure are you
talking about?

SOLVEIG
Oh, didn't Jorgen tell you? We're
leaving.

JAVIER
Who's leaving?

SOLVEIG
All of us. I thought you knew.
Oh. Here, come with me.

Solveig leads them toward the shed.

INT. THE SHED - DAY

Solveig leads the group inside, where the Asbjørnsens and
everyone else have preceded them.

SOLVEIG
We've been working on this for quite some
time, but we didn't think we'd be leaving
quite so soon. We made our decision just
the other day after the attack on
Brussels. Javier, that's why I needed
you so soon. Oh, you did remember my
face cream, didn't you?

JAVIER
Of course.

SOLVEIG

Yes, the world is too unsafe. We can't take any more chances. Anything can happen anywhere at anytime -- even a meteor! And all the anger! Plus the extinction, you know. So, time for the departure.

As everyone's eyes adjust to the change in light, they discover that rather than sheltering animals or farm equipment, the shed conceals the ENTRANCE to --

A LONG, LONG TUNNEL
with a gently downward-sloping floor.

SOLVEIG (CONT'D)

You see, only fungus and tiny lizards survived the last extinction. Grandmother Nellie would be very cross indeed if we didn't make sure some humans survive this one too.

Solveig escorts Paul, Javier and Gong Jiang to the mouth of the tunnel just as the first OXCART from the harbor arrives bearing a normal-sized bottle of FINLANDIA VODKA.

SOLVEIG (CONT'D)

Oh, my.

GONG JIANG

Where it go?

SOLVEIG

Torvald can show you.

Solveig escorts them to A CONTROL STATION where TORVALD, an engineer, sits at a panel of SCREENS and SWITCHES.

SOLVEIG (CONT'D)

Torvald, give our friends a little tour.

Torvald points at a DIAGRAM on the wall illustrating how the tunnel leads to a series of CHAMBERS.

TORVALD

The vault is located 1.2 kilometers beneath the earth's crust and encased in a double layer of Inconel 625. It is a fully self-contained and 100% sustainable living environment powered by an inexhaustible supply of geothermal energy.

(MORE)

TORVALD (CONT'D)

Interoperable organic systems, each with multiple back-ups, manage the production of artificial sunlight, oxygen, CO2 elimination, water purification, and so forth.

Torvald turns to the monitor and brings up a HIGH ANGLE VIEW of A WHEAT farm stretching into the distance, then a FRUIT ORCHARD.

TORVALD (CONT'D)

In addition to maintaining a broad if not comprehensive spectrum of biodiversity, the vault is equipped with agricultural fields for growing foods, forests to farm lumber, livestock for animal husbandry...

PAUL

(pointing at the monitor)
Wait, that's not underground.

SOLVEIG

But it is.

Torvald now displays a GROUP OF HOMES artfully arranged around a SWIMMING POND.

TORVALD

The living quarters are spacious -- quite nice, actually -- and adequate to provide for future generations.

JAVIER

Future generations -- how long are you planning to stay down there?

SOLVEIG

Oh... 7,000, 8,000 years, if necessary, something like that. Just long enough for the surface environment to recover.

Paul takes a moment alone and walks a few paces away. It's too much to absorb -- all this talk of extinction and underground worlds.

Just then, an oxcart hauling that MYSTERIOUS TANK enters the shed and heads toward the tunnel.

JAVIER

And what is that you had us bring?

SOLVEIG

Why, semen, of course! Lots and lots of semen! From all over the world!

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

All the VILLAGERS dine together, the room abuzz with the excitement of their imminent departure.

Javier, Paul, Gong Jiang and Joris share a LARGE TABLE with the Asbjørnsens, Solveig and other leaders.

DR. ASBJØRNSSEN

Don't forget all of humanity, billions of people, evolved from just 1,000 hominids who left Africa 1.9 million years ago. Now we must repeat the process. From our small village will come all future human life.

WITTY SCIENTIST

A bit like rebooting the planet.

JORIS

No offense, but aren't you worried about... well, inbreeding?

DR. ASBJØRNSSEN

We'll be monitoring things closely and if necessary, we can draw on our sizable collection of ova and semen samples.

(waving his fork at Javier and Joris)

You should contribute.

(including Paul)

You too.

ANNE-HELENE

Better yet, why don't you all come with us? Joris, don't you think they should?

DR. ASBJØRNSSEN

Of course. Why not?

Paul blinks at this surprising invitation when Solveig CLINKS a knife to her glass and rises.

SOLVEIG

My friends, this is our final dinner in the place we've called home for so many years. I know we're sad to leave, and sad for the reasons why, but we have a great responsibility. As my grandmother used to say, man is too improbable and too beautiful a life form to be allowed to disappear forever from the cosmos.

(MORE)

SOLVEIG (CONT'D)

Before I ask Jorgen to speak, the kitchen staff has asked me to remind everyone that after you scrape and rinse your plates, you are to place them in the stacking containers, not the dishwashing belts. This is very important. Jorgen?

Never a comfortable public speaker -- particularly now, in such an emotional moment -- Dr. Asbjørnsen stands and scans the faces turned his way.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN

As the old proverb says --
(in Norwegian)
It's no shame to look into the warm spring sun and regret a lost limb.

Murmurs of agreement from the Norwegians in the room.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Would the surviving members of the original colony please join me?

TWENTY people rise and walk solemnly to join the doctor. Most are in their fifties or older, but a YOUNG MAN is among them. Placing his hand on the lad's shoulder --

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

Little Ronni Nestrüd, the first small baby ever born. Look at him now -- how he's grown into a man. As dear Solveig has reminded us, our mission is a responsibility to ourselves, to mankind, and even, may I say, to scientists from other planets who may one day study and compare life from different corners of the universe. Everyone who makes this journey will be a very great hero to the world, perhaps to all of creation. One of the consequences of human consciousness is that, considering how tiny we are amid the vastness of the universe, we struggle to convince ourselves that our lives have meaning. All of us here are fortunate, for we will live the rest of our days knowing for certain that our existence has a very great purpose indeed.

Dr. Asbjørnsen's words speak profoundly to Paul.

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

(to the original colonists)
Now I shall ask you again, as I asked you so many years ago.

(MORE)

DR. ASBJØRNSEN (CONT'D)

(Norwegian)

Are you truly ready to enter a new world?
For there will be no turning back. Are
you ready?

RONNI NESTRUD

I am ready!

ORIGINAL COLONY MEMBERS

Yes! We are ready! Yes!

A chorus of "We are ready" spreads throughout the room.

Swept up in the exhilaration and the cheers, Paul feels a
growing sense of CLARITY AND EXPANSIVENESS -- he's in the
throes of an EPIPHANY.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT

A BONFIRE illuminates a grand party. In one area, MEN
drink and sing VIKING SONGS. In another, a hypnotic DRUM
BEAT inspires uninhibited DANCING. CHILDREN play.

Joris and Javier watch the proceedings from a distance,
tipsy from the MEAD they share from one of the many JUGS
being passed around.

Paul sits alone, reeling from the enormity of it all.

JAVIER

Joris, what do you think? Is the end of
civilization really coming so soon?

JORIS

People have been predicting the end of
the world for thousands of years. They
are bound to be right someday. Look
here. My uncle used to say he was born
during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then
outlived both the Third Reich and
Communism, all three of which were
supposed to last forever. In the 1930s
they discovered a pyramid in Egypt -- a
pyramid! -- when a camel stubbed its toe.
How does one lose a pyramid? Think of
the Colosseum in Rome -- only two
thousand years old -- if you'd seen it
back then in all its magnificence, could
you ever imagine it would fall into
ruins? Or look up at the sky. So many
of those bright, bright stars went dark
before humans even existed -- we just
don't know it yet.

(MORE)

JORIS (CONT'D)

All things come to an end. Why shouldn't we? But look at the positive side -- if our world really is coming to an end, it's fascinating to be watching.

Gong Jiang approaches. Paul gets to his feet.

PAUL

Where have you been? I was looking for you.

GONG JIANG

I try call Gladys. Go everywhere but cellphone no work.

JAVIER

There's no signal here.

GONG JIANG

How I call Gladys? Maybe she need help.

(to Javier)

How they call you come here?

JAVIER

Satellite phone, I suppose.

GONG JIANG

You ask them call Gladys for me, okay?

PAUL

Gong Jiang, I don't think you should be bothering them at a time like this over a few hungry people thousands of miles away.

GONG JIANG

(hurt, confused)

Why you say like this?

PAUL

I need to talk to you about something.

MOMENTS LATER --

Paul leads Gong Jiang to a more private location.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Maybe it's a language thing, but I don't think you realize what's going on here. What these people are doing is big. Really big. This is a defining moment in human history, maybe the history of the universe. Right here. Right now.

145

Gong Jiang listens -- where is he going with this?

PAUL (CONT'D)
Ever since we got here, I've been... a whole new feeling has swept over me. Hearing about what they're doing... I'm realizing that... my whole life has been leading me here, that my being here right now, exactly at this time, is no coincidence. And I can't let this moment, this opportunity, pass me by.
(taking the plunge)
I'm going with them. Into the vault.

She searches his face.

PAUL (CONT'D)
And I want you to come with me.

GONG JIANG
You crazy man!

PAUL
No. I just want to help.

GONG JIANG
Who you help down there? Those peoples has everything they need for thousand years. People here need help, not down stupid hole!

PAUL
Look, Gong Jiang, I know how important what you do is for those folks back in Leisureland, but the truth is that Mr. Cárdenas, Mrs. López and her kids, those cats behind the bus, all of them -- they're just a drop in the bucket. You heard Dr. Asbjørnsen -- there's no saving any of us, no saving the planet, nothing. The future of humanity is down that hole!

Gong Jiang grabs Paul's hand and yanks him toward --

GONG JIANG
Javier! Talk to crazy Paul. He say me he want go down hole and I go with him.

JAVIER
Why would you want to do such a stupid thing?

PAUL
Why not?

JAVIER

Because you will live the rest of your life in a hole in the ground. Like a worm.

PAUL

These people are going to save humanity, and I'm going to help.

JAVIER

Okay, fine, you want to help. Give them a semen sample and leave it at that.

JORIS

I did.

JAVIER

I did too.

JORIS

That's a much more pleasant way to help.

PAUL

If I'm not supposed to go down there and be a part of this thing, then what the fuck am I doing here? I mean, look at my life -- nothing has ever, ever turned out the way I wanted it to. But maybe, just maybe that was all for a reason. Why didn't I become a doctor? Why did I downsize? Why did my wife leave me?

(pointing at Javier)

How did you just happen to be my neighbor? Gong Jiang, why were you the only one to survive the TV box? And it's only because you lost your leg that I tried to help you -- which, as usual, I fucked up. And why did I fuck up? So we could all wind up here! If you can't see that this is our destiny, at least my destiny, then you're blind.

JAVIER

Paul, come on. You really are talking crazy. Listen, these people -- they're wonderful, but --

JORIS

It's like a cult.

JAVIER

And the extinction's not happening, you know, for a few hundred years. Has nothing to do with you. Forget about it.

(MORE)

JAVIER (CONT'D)

Besides, they're all going to go crazy in that hole. You think they won't behave as people always behave? They're going to kill each other. They will go extinct long before we do. Enjoy yourself. Have a drink.

Paul looks from Javier to Joris to Gong Jiang, seeing them as both friends and enemies. Finally --

PAUL

Uh-huh. No way. I'm finished letting anybody else tell me what to do -- my mother, my ex-wife, my boss -- all of you. I'm through letting other people stand in my way. This is one decision I'm going to make. And I am not letting this moment pass me by.

As Paul marches off, Javier notices Gong Jiang watching him go, her heart breaking.

EXT. LAWN OVERLOOKING THE SEA - DAY

A PIG rotates on a SPIT, one of many being roasted on --

AN IMMENSE GRASSY FIELD

just below the village, ending at a steep CLIFF. In the center of this lawn, a POND is used for a dip after sweating in one of the nearby SAUNAS.

It's a beautiful day. The villagers SUNBATHE, PICNIC, SWIM, DASH from sauna to pond. Many are NAKED. Some DANCE near the DRUM CIRCLE. Others, including Javier and Joris, siphon drinks from a normal-sized bottle of VODKA tipped on its side.

Paul, now dressed like a "native" in loose-fitting clothes and clogs, arrives to join the festivities. The Asbjørnsens and others greet him with slaps on the back, congratulating him on his decision.

Paul notices Gong Jiang leaning against the protective RAILING at the edge of the cliff. He goes to her.

AT THE RAILING --

PAUL

Hey.

GONG JIANG

Hello, Paul.

PAUL
Beautiful day, huh?

GONG JIANG
You no change your mind?

PAUL
Did you change yours?
(off her head shake)
Yeah. Why would you? Your life already means something. You're that "famous Chinese dissident." Wherever you go, everyone knows your story, everybody knows how brave you are. Who am I? I mean, really, Gong Jiang -- who am I?

GONG JIANG
You Paul Heafy. You good person.

This hits Paul hard -- his eyes well up slightly, but he manages to force a smile.

LATER --

PAUL is drunk, DANCING amid a group. Like them, he is SHIRTLESS and has PAINTED HIS FACE.

DELIGHTED VILLAGERS (O.S.)
Look! Look!

All turn to see a FLOCK OF BUTTERFLIES, big as kites, fluttering through the air. Villagers rise to their feet to get a better look at this miraculous sight. Searching for Gong Jiang --

PAUL
Gong Jiang! Hey, Gong Jiang! Look -- butterflies! Hu dié! Hu dié!

Gong Jiang looks toward Paul a moment and smiles faintly with only melancholy in her eyes.

ON PAUL --
as his own smile fades.

AT SUNSET --

THE VILLAGERS have amassed to watch the SUN disappear into the sea. No one moves. No one speaks.

A MONTAGE OF FACES --
most streaked by tears, lit by the beautiful golden light of the setting sun.

149.

Despite her wounded feelings, Gong Jiang allows herself to share this moment with Paul, recognizing it's the last time she will ever see him. She slips an arm around his waist, and he places an arm over her shoulder.

Javier walks over, wraps his arm around Paul's shoulder. Their limbs woven together, this unlikely trio makes a single perfect creature.

THE SUN vanishes, its golden light now streaked by pinks, greens and blues.

SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE is followed by the VOICE of --

A WOMAN ATOP A ROCK -- SINGING an ancient, haunting Viking SONG OF FAREWELL as the residents begin slowly walking up the hill.

THE SONG CONTINUES OVER --

EXT. VILLAGE - DUSK

The DEPARTURE begins. The shed has been torn down, exposing the TUNNEL ENTRANCE.

The first villagers to leave -- FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN -- climb onto some twenty lined-up ox carts and begin parading into the tunnel.

Gong Jiang, Javier, and Joris stand nearby, bearing witness to this momentous event. Paul is there as well with his wheelie bag ready, gathering courage for the big moment.

JORIS

Throughout the ages, man has told himself two basic stories -- one a story of total destruction, the other a story of survival against all odds. Here we have both stories at once. It's delightful, really.

LATER -- NIGHT

The last ox cart has disappeared inside, and a LONG PROCESSION of residents now follows ON FOOT. In charge of sealing up the tunnel, Baldur stands by the heavy door, awaiting the final departees.

The Asbjørnsens, Solveig, and the other original colonists are at the end of the line.

As they approach the tunnel entrance, they beckon for Paul to join them and wave farewell to Javier, Joris and Gong Jiang.

PAUL
I guess this is it.

JAVIER
It seems so.

PAUL
Joris? Very nice to have met you.

JORIS
Pleasure was mine. Good luck, Paul.

Paul turns to Javier and pulls him into a firm embrace.

JAVIER
Take care of yourself.

PAUL
I will. You too.

JAVIER
I won't forget you.

PAUL
Thanks for everything. You really changed my life. I can't thank you enough. You're a great man.

JAVIER
Not great enough to talk you out of this.

PAUL
No, not that great.

Paul gives Javier a meaningful final smile before turning to face Gong Jiang. Not knowing what else to do, he hugs her, but she remains limp in his arms, crying a little in spite of willing herself not to.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Gong Jiang.

GONG JIANG
(after a long look)
I will miss you.

PAUL
I will miss you too.

151.

GONG JIANG

You take this.

She places something into his hands.

PAUL

Your bible.

(off her nod)

But... it's in Chinese.

GONG JIANG

Words not matter. Remember me.

Moved, Paul leans in to kiss her, but she pushes him away.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)

You go now. Go!

Paul looks toward the tunnel entrance, then back at Gong Jiang, her eyes downcast.

PAUL

Goodbye, Gong Jiang.

He turns resolutely and heads toward the tunnel, clutching the bible and dragging his suitcase. As Paul slips inside the tunnel, Baldur calls out to Javier.

BALDUR

Hey, Spanish! Don't forget your job!

JAVIER

Javier González González always keeps his word.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

Paul walks down the tunnel. Nothing he has ever done comes close to the importance of this moment. He feels many things at once -- fear, excitement, regret, anticipation.

PAUL

(to himself)

I'm the last one. I'm the last one.

Paul looks back at --

THE TUNNEL DOOR

as Baldur unlocks a GIANT SWITCH and flips it, causing a RED LIGHT to flash on and off, then begins the arduous task of pulling the door closed.

152.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

THE TUNNEL DOOR
is nearly closed when from behind it comes a muffled
panicked cry --

PAUL (O.S.)

WAIT!

The door stops moving, and we hear RAPID FOOTSTEPS and
HEAVY BREATHING. Then the door REOPENS slightly,
enabling Paul to squeeze out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thanks, Baldur. Thanks.

Paul's bag won't quite fit out.

PAUL (CONT'D)

My bag. Do you think you could just -- ?

BALDUR (O.S.)

Leave it.

PAUL

But --

BALDUR (O.S.)

You need to get away from here!

PAUL

Okay, sure, yeah. Good luck down there.

BALDUR (O.S.)

Run!

Baldur's warning finally sinks in and Paul SPRINTS away,
which isn't easy in clogs.

MEANWHILE --

Javier, Joris and Gong Jiang settle in behind a WOODEN
FENCE far from the tunnel entrance.

Javier peeks through a HOLE in a fence plank and is
startled to see PAUL racing toward him and dashing around
the end of the fence.

GONG JIANG

Paul.

Paul scrambles to join his friends. Gong Jiang is, of
course, overjoyed to see him.

PAUL
(gasping for air)
I changed my mind. I changed my --

KA-BOOM! AN EXPLOSION on the hill above the tunnel creates a LANDSLIDE which tumbles down to CONCEAL THE ENTRANCE.

Paul, Gong Jiang, Javier and Joris step out from behind the fence to watch the dust settle, contemplating the weighty significance of the event. Then --

GONG JIANG
Okay now go back Leisureland.

The three men look-at her, reminded once more of what a monomaniac she really is.

GONG JIANG (CONT'D)
Okay, Javier? You promise. Gladys alone too long time. We go now, okay? Nothing more for us here.

JAVIER
Yes, Gong Jiang. Just one thing we must do.

LATER --

Our friends pull TORCHES out of a CAMPFIRE and scatter throughout the village, SETTING FIRE to the BALES OF HAY placed in and around the structures.

EXT. HILLTOP - PRE-DAWN

Joris, Javier, Gong Jiang and Paul reach the top of the hill ON FOOT and turn back to watch the village IN FLAMES. They take a moment to catch their breath and move on.

EXT. CARGO SHIP - DAYBREAK

ON THE REAR DECK --

As the ship EXITS the harbor, our heroes watch the FISHING BOATS and DOCK as they too are aflame. Exhausted, Gong Jiang is already asleep in a deck chair.

Javier notices Paul is still attired in rustic clothing.

JAVIER
Can I lend you some clothes?

PAUL
That'd be great.

As Javier heads away, we stay with Paul as he considers what he's just been through, the decisions he's made, the world he's returning to.

INT. OSLO AIRPORT - SAS BUSINESS CLASS LOUNGE - DAY

Paul, Gong Jiang and Javier sit silently together in an area for SMALL TRAVELERS. On the other side of an acrylic barrier, Ernesto reads a newspaper in the normal-sized lounge.

JAVIER
(checking his watch)
You should probably go to the gate.

PAUL
Yeah.

Paul and Gong Jiang stand and gather their things.

PAUL (CONT'D)
See you in a few months, right?

JAVIER
A few months. Goodbye, Paul. Again.

PAUL
(smiling)
Goodbye, Javier.

They embrace. Then --

JAVIER
Goodbye, Gong Jiang. Happy with your foot?

GONG JIANG
Yes, Javier. Very happy.

Javier kisses Gong Jiang on both cheeks, then turns to KNOCK on the barrier to get Ernesto's attention. Ernesto waves FAREWELL.

Just before boarding a SHUTTLE loading up with other small travelers, Paul turns for one last look back at --

THE GONZALEZ BROTHERS --
Javier and Ernesto, so much the same, yet so different, separated from each other by an invisible wall.

155.

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Paul looks out the window at a SUNRISE. We can tell from his face that something very basic, something essential, has shifted deep inside of him. He seems clear-headed, aware, awake. Turning to Gong Jiang --

PAUL

To think one day, all of this --

GONG JIANG

When you know death come soon, you look things more close.

Paul looks at her with even greater admiration.

CUT TO:

A CARD --

SIX MONTHS LATER**EXT. LEISURELAND -- DAY**

VARIOUS WIDE SHOTS of the city. It's RAINING hard.

EXT. CIUDAD DEL COMERCIO -- GAVILAN APARTMENTS - DAY

Paul and Gong Jiang drive up. Both wear rain SLICKERS.

PAUL

I'll be right back. You wait here.

Paul hurries around to the back seat, where he lifts a plastic sheet off stacks of TAKE-OUT FOOD CONTAINERS and begins loading up a pushcart.

GONG JIANG

I want go too. I want see Rosa new baby.

PAUL

You can see the baby tomorrow. It's raining. I'll take care of it.

GONG JIANG

Don't forget we still must go Filipino man house take care for his arm!

PAUL

I know, I know. We'll go there next. Stop obsessing about it.

INT. GAVILAN APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Only ONE container remaining -- from Hooters -- Paul trots down the steps and heads toward old Mr. Cárdenas, forever parked in front of the TV.

PAUL
Buenas tardes, señor Cárdenas.

SEÑOR CÁRDENAS
Hola, Paul.

PAUL
Are you hungry?

SEÑOR CÁRDENAS
So hungry. What do you bring me today?

PAUL
I think it's chicken.

Paul places the container on his lap and opens it, revealing that it is, in fact, chicken.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Sí, pollo.

SEÑOR CÁRDENAS
Gracias, Paul.

PAUL
(as he goes)
Hasta mañana, señor Cárdenas.

CLOSE ON PAUL at the door, turning to look back at the figure in a wheelchair hunched over perhaps his only meal of the day.

Paul hears Gong Jiang HONKING the horn. Pulling the slicker over his head, dashes back out into the rain.

INT. WALGREEN'S - DAY

Approaching the PHARMACIST --

PAUL
Yeah, hi, I'm here to pick up some prescriptions.

PHARMACIST
Name?

PAUL

Here's a list.

PHARMACIST

Let's see. Salazar, Pérez, Soto,
Morales, Aguilar (Pedro), Aguilar
(Josefina), Reyes, Muñoz.

PAUL

My wife called and was told they were
ready.

PHARMACIST

It'll be about ten minutes.

PAUL

Okay. I've got time.

Paul takes a seat on a nearby chair.

CLOSE ON PAUL --

listening idly to the cheesy old pop song on the Muzak,
at peace with his destiny.

THE END