

“CHECKMATE”

FIRST DRAFT

18 May 2006

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Peter is a thirty-year-old, who for the past twelve years has been working at a branch of the city library. During those twelve years he has attempted to attend college twice, having to leave both times due to outside factors. He is currently attempting to reapply for a third time.

Though thirty, he has remained at home with his parents for the majority of his life. It was only recently that Peter was able to secure enough finances to move out. He shares a duplex with Eric, a college student he meet during his last attempt to attend a university.

LIBRARY LAYOUT

The library itself looks like any other library. There's a children's section, periodicals section, music section, help desk, etc. It is a one-story building, with several windows along the walls.

The entrance of the library is through a lobby with pay phones and restrooms. The front desk is near the entrance. Behind the front desk of the the library is the book holdings room. It contains books on hold for patrons, books that need to be shelved, and damaged books, as well as employee mailboxes and coat rack.

From this room there are two additional doorways. One leads to the employee break room. The other leads to the office of the secretary for the branch manager. Her office contains the entry into the branch manager's office.

The break room is too small to contain everything that has been shoved into it. There are two tables, a refrigerator, a vending machine, a sink, and trash and recyclable receptacles. The room contains a fire exit, but the alarm has been turned off. During the warmer months, the employees prop the door open and smoke in the back of the building.

SCENE 1

INT. - LIBRARY SECRETARY'S OFFICE

A montage of paychecks being processed:

- A) Time cards are gathered and sorted.
- B) Hours are entered into a computer.
- C) Checks are printed.
- D) Time cards are shredded.
- E) Check stubs are removed.
- F) Checks are placed into envelopes.

Peter stands outside the secretary's door. He is looking through the window at the secretary as she gathers the paychecks. She is moving slowly, and attempting not to look up at Peter.

Peter anxiously looks at his watch. He paces back and forth in front of the door. He glances at his watch again.

Finally, the secretary stands and heads for the door.

SCENE 2

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

The secretary exits the office and takes the paychecks to the employee mailboxes. Peter follows closely behind.

He stands anxiously beside her as she places the checks into everyone's mailboxes. His eyes follow every envelope.

Peter says he is late for mass, and that he is in the choir. The secretary nods, saying the checks took longer to process than normal. She blames it on poor employee penmanship.

She reaches Peter's check in the stack of envelopes, but Peter grabs it before she can put it in his box. He runs out the door.

SCENE 3

EXT. - OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY (CONTINUOUS)

Peter frantically runs to his car with his check in hand. The car is parked in a loading zone outside the library. Peter places the check in a pocket of his coat and gets in the car.

He turns the key, but the car fails to start. Peter looks around, breathing heavily. He tries the key again. The car still will not turn over. The alarm on his watch goes off, startling him.

Peter quickly exits the car and begins walking toward the street. He gets about ten feet from the vehicle before he spins and runs back to the car. He grabs the choir uniform from the back seat.

Peter abandons the car a second time and begins walking briskly down the street to the church.

SCENE 4

EXT. - SIDEWALK

Peter walks down the street, sometimes running, but only in short bursts.

As he walks, he attempts to change into his choir uniform. He drops some garments in the process and runs back to retrieve them.

SCENE 5
INT. - CHURCH

Peter arrives at the church but finds it empty. He runs down the main aisle, stopping to genuflect along the way.

Peter wanders onto the altar. He looks around, but sees no one. He wanders behind the altar to the pastor's chambers.

SCENE 6

INT – PASTOR'S CHAMBERS

Peter finds the pastor in his chambers, removing his holy garments. Peter stands in the doorway, waiting for the pastor to see him. When the pastor turns, he is startled to see Peter.

Before the pastor can say anything, Peter apologizes for missing mass. The library was late in getting his check, and then his car wouldn't start. The pastor says not to worry, but admits that the choir never sounds the same without him. Peter smiles.

The pastor asks if everything else is okay in Peter's life. Peter hesitates, then says he moved out of his parents house. This is the fourth time he's moved out, but the first time he's moved into a house – well, not a house, really, it's a duplex. The pastor congratulates him and asks when the house warming party will be. Peter states he doesn't know.

There is a silence and the pastor begins to motion as though Peter should leave. Peter mentions that he has re-applied to college. The pastor congratulates him. He asks if Peter thinks he'll be okay on tuition this time. Peter nods.

There is another silence and the pastor hints again that maybe Peter should be running along. He wouldn't want to keep him from anything. Peter asks the pastor for a ride home. The pastor sighs and looks around his chambers. He says there are just too many things to do before the next service. He apologizes, but cannot give Peter a ride. He asks Peter if there is any other way he can get home. Peter says he can walk. He only lives a couple of blocks away.

Peter stands in the chambers for another moment, then says goodbye. He leaves abruptly.

SCENE 7

EXT. - PETER'S DUPLEX

Peter walks to the duplex, carrying the choir uniform. He walks into the house.

SCENE 8

INT – PETER'S DUPLEX

Peter enters the house and goes to Eric's room. He knocks. Eric answers with a book in his hand. He asks how mass was, and if he got to sing anything good. Peter explains he didn't make it on time because the library took too long to print checks, and then his car wouldn't start. Eric asks why it wouldn't start. Peter doesn't know. Eric offers to help him retrieve his car.

SCENE 9

EXT. - LIBRARY PARKING LOT

Peter and Eric arrive at the library by foot and find the car is gone. Peter looks frantic and doesn't know what's happened. Eric points to the loading zone sign and says maybe the car was towed.

Peter goes into the library, leaving Eric behind.

SCENE 10

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Peter approaches the secretary's office. Through the window in the door he can see she is on the phone with her back turned towards him. Peter knocks rapidly on the secretary's door. The secretary jumps at the noise. She motions to Peter to wait for a moment, finishes her call, and then moves towards the door.

She opens the door wide enough to stand between the door and the frame, but not leaving enough room for Peter to enter the office. She tells Peter he gave her quite a fright.

Peter asks where the car is. The secretary doesn't know what he's talking about. Peter says he left his car outside the building and now it's gone. Where is it?

The secretary tells him that if it was his car, then it was towed. Peter asks why. It was a loading zone, the secretary explains, and the library's book transportation van needed the space. She apologizes, but tells Peter he shouldn't park his car in a loading zone for over three hours.

SCENE 11

INT. - LIBRARY LOBBY, FIVE MINUTES LATER

Peter is on the phone with the towing company. He confirms the car's make and model. The towing company informs him with towing charges, impounding charges, and additional charges, he owes them \$315.

Outside, Eric can be seen through the windows throwing rocks onto the roof of the building.

SCENE 12

INT. - BOOK HOLDING'S ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Peter is walking quickly towards the secretary's door. The secretary notices him and gets to her door before he can begin knocking. She stands blocking his entrance again.

Peter tells her it will cost \$315 to get his car back. There is an awkward silence. The secretary tells Peter she's sorry, but the library will not cover the cost. Peter asks why not? They had his car towed, not him.

The secretary continues with Peter half-heartedly. She informs him that the library cannot continue to pay for his car every time he parks in the loading zone, or the handicapped space, or in the fire lane.

Peter asks why not. They paid the last time. The secretary asks Peter if he remembers that when they paid the last time, they said it was exactly that, the last time they would be willing to pay.

Peter stands and stares at the secretary, his eyes darting back and forth. He begins breathing heavily. The secretary tells Peter if there is nothing else, she needs to get back to work.

Peter turns to leave. The secretary remains in her door until Peter has left the room. It is only then that she shuts it and returns to her desk.

SCENE 13

EXT. - LIBRARY PARKING LOT (CONTINUOUS)

Peter walks out of the library defeated. Eric asks what happened. Peter explains that the library towed his car because he had parked in a loading zone. Eric says that's 'harsh' and asks if they're going to pay. Peter says no. Eric says that's 'really harsh'.

Eric then jokes that Peter should move the loading zone sign to the manager's parking spot. See if they'll tow his car. Peter laughs, and jokingly tries to rip the loading zone post from the ground.

SCENE 14

INT. - SECRETARY'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

The secretary sees Peter outside her window shaking the loading zone sign. She picks up her phone and informs the branch manager.

SCENE 15

EXT. - LIBRARY, EARLY MORNING

The next morning, Peter arrives at the library by foot. The sun is barely in the sky, the parking lot is empty, and there is still dew on the grass.

Peter tries the front door. It is locked. He looks at his watch and tries the door again.

He walks around the building, peering into the windows. The library is dark. Peter knocks on a few windows.

Peter makes his way back around the front of the library. He tries the doors again, but they are still locked. He sits down by the doors.

SCENE 16

EXT. - LIBRARY, TEN MINUTES LATER

Peter is awoken by a library patron. He is carrying an armful of books.

The patron asks if the library is open yet. Peter says no. The patron sighs, saying he was hoping to return some books and pick up a couple of new ones as well. He's a substitute teacher and he always needs a couple of books to read in class.

Peter apologizes, but tells the patron of the book drop. The patron shakes his head, saying he never feels comfortable using it. The library lost a book of his once because of the drop box.

The patron asks Peter again if he's sure the library isn't open yet. Peter says it's not. The patron tries the door, and it opens. The patron smiles, saying it's just his good luck, and he enters the library. Peter follows.

SCENE 17

INT. - LIBRARY, LATER THAT DAY

Peter is pushing books around on a cart. He stops periodically to shelve a couple of them. As he moves along the shelves, he gets closer and closer to the children's section.

In the children's section, Mary is reading to a small group of children. She is dressed as a princess, with a tall pointed hat and a pink gown.

As Peter approaches her, he begins to push the cart slower. He shelves a book and pushes the cart to the entrance of the children's section. There he stands and listens to Mary reading. His face contains the same excitement and wonder as the children's. Mary notices and smiles slightly.

The head librarian has also noticed, and quietly approaches Peter from behind. She tells him that they have some papers at the front desk that should be shredded. Someone else can finish shelving.

In the background, a locksmith can be seen kneeling by the front door, fixing the lock.

SCENE 18

INT. - LIBRARY, FIVE MINUTES LATER

As Peter shreds, the patron approaches the front desk and begins to talk with him. He says hello again and says he had to come back, he needed more books!

He notices Peter shredding and asks what he's doing. Peter informs him that he is shredding private documents. When a patron moves to another city, or dies, they have to shred all of their information, like their library card number, what books they checked out, what they paid fines on, etc. Sometimes he also shreds the check-out card insert in the books, but they are much smaller and don't take very long. He explains that in the library, he shreds all of the documents.

'Pretty prestigious job', the patron remarks: 'Library Shredder'. Peter says it's not a job title, nor is it his only job. It's just that for some reason he's always asked to do it.

Well, the patron says, it's better than someone like Peter do it. 'You don't want just anybody shredding documents. And besides', he adds, 'you probably do it at home, right?'

Peter doesn't understand. The patron explains, you should always shred personal documents. Never through anything away. You don't know who could be digging through the garbage. Why, he remembers a friend's whole identity got stolen because he simply threw away his bills. He lost everything. His credit is ruined, he lost his house, and now he's living in the street wondering where his next hot meal will come from. You should always shred everything before you through it away, no matter how trivial, the patron says.

Peter nods. The patron leaves, saying he needs to check out his books. Peter nods again, and stares intently as he shreds the next paper.

SCENE 19

INT. - LIBRARY

A montage of Peter shredding personal documents with the library shredder during the next few days.

A) Peter is alone in the books holdings room. He looks around nervously and pulls a wad of papers from his coat pocket. He takes them to the shredder.

B) Peter is shredding library documents. He pauses and adss papers fro his pocket to the pile.

C) Peter pretends to drop a pencil by the front desk. While he is picking it up, he inserts some papers into the shredder.

D) Peter grabs more papers from his coat pockets. He shreds them without any attempt to hide his actions.

SCENE 20

INT. - LIBRARY FRONT DESK

Peter takes a bundle of papers to the shredder. As he is shredding, the secretary approaches and informs him that the manager wants to speak to him.

Peter finishes shredding and heads towards the manger's office.

SCENE 21

INT. - BRANCH MANAGER'S OFFICE

The office is empty, except for Peter, who sits in front of the branch manager's desk.

The manager enters carrying a cup of coffee. He apologizes for making Peter wait. He sits at his desk and asks Peter how everything is today. Peter says he's okay.

He then tells Peter there are reports that he's been shredding a lot these past few days. More than the library has needed to shred. He asks Peter's what's up.

Peter begins to breathe heavily and his eyes dart back and forth. The manager pauses, and says it's clear by his reaction that Peter's been shredding more than he should have been. And regardless of what he's shredding, he needs to stop. If he needs to use a shredder, he should just buy one.

Peter nods. The manager asks if there's anything Peter wants to add. Peter shakes his head no, and quickly leaves the office.

SCENE 22

INT. - LIBRARY FRONT DESK, LATER THAT DAY

Peter stands at the desk with the phone book open before him. He is on the phone with an office supply store. He is speaking in somewhat quiet tones, but is still speaking far too loud for a library. A few people are lined up at the desk to check out books. Peter is ignoring them.

He asks the store for what shredders they sell. He says he is looking for a specific model, and reads the library's shredder model number. The price is quite high.

Another call comes into the library. Peter ignores it as he talks with the office store. He tells them he understands that other shredders are cheaper, but he needs that specific model.

The line to check-out books grows longer.

SCENE 23

INT. - LIBRARY FRONT DESK, TEN MINUTES LATER

The line to check out books has severely diminished. As Peter finishes with the second to last person, the patron steps up to the desk. Once again, he has several books.

The patron jokes, saying he's probably read more books as a substitute teacher than he read in all of high school and college. He asks Peter if he's bought the shredder yet. It's very important that he gets one.

Peter begins to breathe heavily, saying he can't get a shredder because they're too expensive. And because his car got towed, he can't easily price shop. And even if he could find a shredder that he could afford, he would have to take the bus to get it, and he's not sure if he could get a shredder that size into a bus very easily.

The patron looks at Peter quizzically and asks why his car got towed. Peter says the library towed it. And they wouldn't pay for him to get it back. The patron shakes his head, saying that's not right. The library shouldn't tow employee cars. They were wrong, and should definitely pay for the car.

The patron then had an idea. He asks Peter if he could use the library terminals to buy a shredder online. Peter says no, the terminals are only supposed to be used by the patrons, and besides, he doesn't have a credit card.

The patron shakes his head again. 'That's too bad', he says, 'but seriously, you should get a shredder. It will be the most important purchase you'll make this year. No one shouldn't have a shredder.'

The patron leaves with his books. Peter stares blankly for a moment, then grabs the phone book. He frantically flips through the pages.

SCENE 24

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM

Peter stands at the secretary's office door. It is locked, but he continues to rattle the knob and knocks repeatedly on the door. Inside, the office is empty, but the lights are on.

The secretary emerges with papers from the manager's office. She opens the door to talk to Peter, standing to block his entrance into her office.

Peter asks if the library will pay for his car. The secretary, frustrated, tells Peter she is busy and asks if he can come back later. Peter says the library was wrong to tow his car and wants to know why they won't pay for it. The secretary tells Peter they've been over this: the library cannot afford to pay for every parking problem he encounters. Peter says the library shouldn't tow employee cars. And he needs to go shopping. He needs to buy a shredder. The manager told him to. And he needs his car to do it.

The secretary tells Peter he understands, but there is nothing she can do. She shuts the door on Peter.

SCENE 25

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, THAT NIGHT

Eric is on the couch reading a book. Peter walks through the door carrying a very large shredder. Eric rushes to help Peter put the shredder down.

Peter begins to open the box. Eric is amazed and asked how he got on the bus with something this large. Peter nods, saying that the door was too narrow for the box, so he was forced to strap it on the bike rack. Eric laughs, but Peter is too busy pulling the shredder out of the box to notice.

The shredder now sits free of its packaging in the living room. Peter is busy reading the instruction manual. Eric examines the shredder. He asks Peter how much it cost. Peter is unresponsive. Eric asks again, louder.

Peter replies that in order to pay for the shredder, he applied for a credit card. And because the credit card is sponsored by the phone company, he got a free cell phone too. Eric asks to see the phone.

Peter rifles through the pockets of his coat and pulls out a cell phone. He hands it to Eric, who plays with it. He asks if it plays mp3, or videos, or if it can take pictures. 'You know, can it do anything cool.' Peter says he doesn't know.

Eric asks if he's used it yet. Peter says no, not yet. But he needs to call his parents. Eric asks him to do it now. He wants to witness the inaugural phone call. Peter dials his parent's number. He says, 'Hello, Mom?'

SCENE 26

INT. - PETER'S PARENTS HOUSE, THE NEXT NIGHT

Peter sits at the dinner table with his parents. Of the three, the mother does most of the talking. The father says nothing, and doesn't even look at Peter. A television is on in another room.

The mother turns to Peter and asks what was he needed from the house again. Peter explains he needs all of the boxes from his room. He has bought a shredder and -

The mother interrupts to ask how in the world he can afford a shredder? Peter mentions the credit card and cell phone. He says she was the first person he called with the phone. The mother looks at Peter skeptically, saying she's worried about this credit card. Don't use it too much, she warns.

There is a pause, and the mother resumes the conversation, asking what he needed the boxes for, Peter replies that he needs to shred all of his personal documents. He doesn't want someone to steal it. The father coughs at hearing this.

The mother asks Peter if he'll be taking all of the boxes. Peter says yes. She remarks that there are a lot of boxes. She hopes he doesn't need a ride home. Peter stares at her, silent. The mother sighs, saying she wished Peter had told her about this sooner. She can't drive him because she has cleaning she needs to do, and then says that his father can't do it because he's going to the club tonight.

Peter nods. He waits a moment, then leaves the table to go to his room.

SCENE 27

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, LATER THAT NIGHT

Peter and Eric sit on the floor of the living room next to the shredder. The couch has been pushed against the wall and several boxes are scattered throughout the room. Each box is marked with a year, from 1985 to 2003. In addition to the years, some boxes also have additional text, such as 'High School', 'Magazines', 'Pay Stubs',.. etc.

Eric looks around at the boxes and remarks that Peter has a lot of stuff. Peter agrees, saying that never threw anything away. 'If that's true,' Eric remarks, 'then it's probably a good thing were shredding all this stuff.' Peter nods.

SCENE 28

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, THAT NIGHT

A montage of Peter and Eric shredding and arranging documents.

- A) Peter shreds papers one by one.
- B) Eric pulls papers out of the box and places it in a pile marked '1994'.
- C) Eric holds up magazine clippings and asks Peter which pile. Peter points to the 'Hollywood' pile.
- D) Peter examines the shredded remains of some papers.
- E) Eric places a handful of papers on the '1999' pile. Peter grabs them hurriedly and puts them in the '1998' pile. Eric apologizes.
- F) Eric marvels at the collection of Bill Paxton articles in one box. He asks Peter why he has them and Peter says people used to tell him he looked like Bill Paxton. Eric holds up a clipping of Bill Paxton for comparison.
- G) Eric jokingly places one of Peter's grade school art drawings on the fridge.
- H) Peter sits and admires a test on which he scored a 'Good Job!'.
- I) Eric empties one box distractedly while reading a high school paper of Peter's.
- J) Eric stacks the emptied boxes along the wall.
- K) Peter gingerly steps between piles of papers and boxes to get back to the shredder. He is carrying a mess of papers in his hand.

Peter is shredding a small pile of papers when he finds an empty envelope from the library mixes with the papers. He stares at the envelope quizzically, and then realizes his mistake: he just shredded his paycheck! He rips off the top of the shredder and begins to dig through the shredded papers. Eric asks what happened, and Peter replies that he shredded his check.

Peter's breathing quickens as he digs deeper. He dumps the shreds onto the carpet and begins sifting through the thin strips of paper. Eric helps him, reconstructing what papers that he can. He remarks that if crooks really wanted to, they could probably tape everything Peter's shredded back together. 'I guess the only real way of safely getting rid of something is to burn it,' Eric mutters.

Peter begins digging through the piles of paper when his cell phone rings. Peter quickly walks to get it, stepping on some of the piles. He answers the phone. Peter says they have the wrong number and explains that he doesn't have time to talk. He hangs up and returns to the papers.

SCENE 29

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, AN HOUR LATER

Peter and Eric sit among the paper shreds, sorting through the mess. On one side of the room are several papers the two were able to reconstruct.

Eric finds the appropriate shred and finishes reconstructing a magazine article about Bill Paxton. He sighs, and says it's hopeless. They'll never find the check. It's been an hour and they haven't found anything that even looks like a check.

Peter says they's find it. They find it. It has be be in this pile. It has to.

But even they do find it, he still can't cash it, Eric remarks. Can't the library just give him a new check? Can't he just go in there and say -

'And say what?' Peter asks. 'Say that I shredded the check?'

CUT TO:

SCENE 30

INT. - BOOKS HOLDING ROOM, THE NEXT MORNING

The secretary stares blankly at Peter. 'You did what to your check?' she asks.

It is early in the morning; the library has only been open for a few minutes. Peter is standing outside the secretary's office. She has not yet had the chance to enter the office as she herself has only just arrived. She stands, wearing a coat and carrying her purse and a folder of papers.

Peter repeats that he shredded his paycheck and needs another one. The secretary stares incredulously at him as she unlocks the door. 'You shredded your check', 'Was this at work or at home?' She places her coat and purse in the office, and stands in the doorway.

Peter explains he was shredding all of his papers, all of his important documents last night when his roommate distracted him and he shredded his check. 'You should get new roommates,' the secretary quips.

The secretary asks Peter if he managed to save the pay stub, or recover any of the shredded check. It's for verification purposes, she explains, and it would help speed up the process as well. Peter begins to breath heavily, explaining he tried to find the shreds but there were too many. He just needs the check replaced.

The secretary apologizes to Peter, saying that though this matter may be of great importance to him, there are certain steps the library must take to ensure proper protocol is followed, to help protect them against fraud, overpayments, etc. Peter gets upset, saying he's not lying. He just needs his paycheck.

I'm sure you do, the secretary says, but the library cannot wave protocol just for him. She asks Peter to wait outside her office. She goes in and returns with a handful of papers. She explains that in order for another check to be printed, Peter needs to fill out the appropriate paperwork.

She hands the papers to Peter, explaining them as she does. The white sheets are standard complaint forms. Fill out the name, address, complaint, etc. No actions can be taken without a complaint form. The yellow papers are for employee information, social security number, years worked, etc. The pink papers relate directly to payroll, which need to be include dates in question. As Peter does not have any remains of the check, he also needs to fill out the green page attached to the pink papers. And finally, the first set of white papers at the bottom are for the main branch, an overview of the information contained in the other pages. And the second set of white papers are for the city government, because the library is a government run facility and all employee complains and reimbursements must be filed with them as well. Use a black pen, she adds.

The secretary enters her office and shuts the door. Peter stands in the book holdings room looking at the forms.

SCENE 31

INT. - LIBRARY, LATER THAT MORNING

Peter is moderating a weekly book club meeting. He sits in the reading section with several teenagers. They have formed a circle with the chairs. Each teenager has a book in their lap.

Peter is speaking to the group, holding up his book: 'The Eighth Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness'. He explains that the eighth habit builds upon the first seven, and the four leadership skills, to create an even better guide to living. And this edition comes with a DVD that not only fun, but very informative.

Peter then begins the group's book discussion, having the person to his left being discussing their book. As the teenagers talk about their books, Peter places the check replacement forms in his lap. Using his book for support, he begins to fill out the forms with a pencil. He quickly stops and frantically erases everything. He begins to rifle through his pockets, looking for a pen. He empties one pocket into his lap. He begins to search another.

His actions attract attention of Mary, who is pulling books to hold for patrons. She smiles and continues to watch Peter between shelves. He has found a pen and is now filling out the forms. The teenagers continue to discuss their books, but cast glances towards Peter. Some are laughing at him.

Peter's actions also attract the attention of the head librarian. She approaches Peter from behind and whispers in his ear. Peter nods, and gathers his papers, books, and other items. He explains that he needs to shelve some books.

Peter leaves the group. The head librarian sits in Peter's chair and motions for the discussion to continue.

SCENE 32

INT – LIBRARY, A LITTLE LATER

Peter is pushing a book cart through the library. He passes the book discussion group. He cuts through the paperback section. He passes the children's section. He continues walking with the cart, going to the far end of the library. He passes rows and rows of books. He finally stops in the back corner of the library.

He begins to sort through the books on the cart, when he hears a knock. He looks up and sees the patron. The patron says he saw Peter pushing the book cart and started following him. That was quite a trip, he jokes.

The patron continues, asking what all those papers are for. What papers, asks Peter. 'Those papers you were filling out before that bitch came and totally undermined your authority with those kids,' the patron replies.

Peter explains tha he shredded his paycheck and that in order to get it refunded, the library is making him fill out several forms. The patron rolls his eyes, explaining he too once lost a paycheck. And his employer was a real jerk. They gave him practically a forest's worth of papers to fill out, he had to talk to everyone in the office, they took weeks to do anything, always saying things were in the process of being filed or that they were on their way to be filed or that they were just awaiting approval, and then when he thought he was about to get a check, it turned out he filled out something wrong on his form, or they didn't give him one of the forms to fill out originally, either way, he practically had to start all over, and when it was all said and done, he still never got his check refunded.

'Here's the way I see it,' he explains, 'bosses hate to pay their employees in the first place. They'd rather keep that money for themselves and their Cadillacs. And so when one of their employees is foolist enough to lose a paycheck, the bosses rejoice, give the poor guy enough paperwork to make him want to forget about the whole thing in the first place, and then go buy some new rims. It's not fair, but it's the way it works.'

The patron tells Peter he should seriously forget about the check. He'll never get it refunded. If the library is unwilling to pay for towing his car, why would they worry about giving him back his paycheck?

SCENE 33

INT. - LIBRARY, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Peter is alone shelving books. As he rounds a corner with the book cart, he hits Mary's cart, knocking some of her books to the floor. She begins to pick them up.

Peter apologizes and stands awkwardly as Mary finishes picking up the books. She tells him not to worry about it. Until they install side view mirrors on the cart things like this are bound to happen.

Peter begins to push his cart away. Mary tries to pat his shoulder, as if to say no harm done, but Peter quickens his pace.

Peter pushes his cart past rows of books. Music fades up for a montage.

SCENE 34
MONTAGE

- A) Peter sits at a table within the library filling out the reimbursement papers. His phone rings. He answers it, but it is the wrong number.
- B) Peter sits at home. He is filling out the forms. Eric approaches with a pizza. Peter takes a slice and eats while he fills out the forms.
- C) Peter hands the various forms to the secretary. Many are wrinkled and some have a few grease spots.
- D) Peter exits the church wearing his choir outfit. Some of the churchgoers are still standing on the front steps. Peter's phone rings. He wrestles with the choir gown to get the phone. But the time Peter answers, they have hung-up.
- E) Mary is attaching patron requests to the books in the holdings room. Peter enters and sees a paper in his mailbox. He pulls it out, hoping it is his check. It is only a flyer for the monthly staff lunch. Peter checks the mailbox again. He crumples the flyer and throws it away. Mary stifles a laugh.

SCENE 35

INT. - LIBRARY

Peter is shelving books in a secluded section of the library. He cell phone rings and he answers it. In a normal speaking voice he begins to talk with the caller. They are calling to pay their water bill. Peter tells them they have the wrong number. The caller confirms the number dialed, and remarks that it's strange, because this is the number used to connect him with the water company.

Peter agrees that is strange. The caller then asks Peter what his water bills come to. Peter doesn't know as water is included as part of his rent. And when he lived with his parents, they never charged him for water or other utilities. The caller asks Peter to guess what how much the city charges for water. Peter explains again that he would have no way of making a guess as he never had to pay a water bill. Without paying at least one bill, without a single point of reference, Peter wouldn't know where to begin.

The same with gas. He's never had to pay a gas bill, so he never could accurately guess how much a gas bill would amount to. If he paid a gas bill once before, then he could maybe guess. Like if the bill has been for seventy dollars, then he would guess that his next bill would be for around seventy dollars.

Peter's voice travels throughout the library.

SCENE 36

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX

Peter is sorting through the mail at home. Amongst the standard junk mail, he comes upon an envelope addressed to him and opens it. It's a bill for credit card. A choir begins to sing as Peter's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

SCENE 37

INT. - CHURCH

Peter stands with the choir, singing. It is only practice, and the choir is dressed in street clothes. The church is empty except for them and the pastor, who is at the altar preparing for his next sermon.

As the choir sings, Peter's phone begins to ring. Peter pretends it is not his, but the ring is obviously coming from his direction. The choir leader furrows his brow. The rings continue and some members of the choir stop singing. Eventually the choir leader calls for a full stop, just as the rings cease. 'I guess now is just as good as any for a break,' he says. Some of the choir members and the choir leader head outside for a smoke.

Peter checks his phone. The number is not familiar to him. He dials the number, but the signal is busy. Peter begins to put the phone away when the pastor calls him up to the altar.

The pastor asks if that was Peter's phone was ringing. Peter hesitates, then nods. The pastor reminds Peter he shouldn't bring outside distractions into the house of God. This is a place of solitude and quiet introspection. Peter nods again.

The pastor pauses, then smiles and says Peter must be doing pretty good for himself if he can afford a cell phone. Peter begins to breath heavily and recounts his recent problems. He tells the pastor how he got the cell phone for free because he recently applied for a credit card in order to buy a shredder. But while he was using the shredder he accidentally shredded his paycheck and now he's been without money for a week. And because the library only pays him on the first and fifteenth of the month, he has to go another week and a half without any money. Plus, the library claims it will take a while to process his paperwork before they can print him a new check, so event when he does get paid, he'll still be behind on all his bills, including the credit card bill he just received in the mail.

The pastor looks sternly at Peter and says that although his problems are unfortunate, these are the problems with living in a material world. We always want more than we can afford. The pastor switches into preaching mode, and begins to tell Peter he can only imagine how much simpler life was during the days of Jesus. There were no modern 'necessities' like cell phones and iPods and computers to burden one's life. They were simpler times, when the only thing that mattered was the Lord. It was His word, not market researcher's that was obeyed. Like the drink campaign 'Obey Your Thirst'. It is another way to say 'Give In to Your Temptations', and our obedience shouldn't be for our desires, but for God.

The pastor stops, realizing he is preaching to Peter but not comforting him. He tells Peter that he shouldn't worry about his money problems. The Lord works in mysterious ways, and always has a plan for him, even in times of trouble such as these. And to comfort Peter, the pastor says he will pray for Peter's sake.

SCENE 38

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, AN HOUR LATER

'A letter?' Peter asks Eric. 'Was it my check?'

Eric says no, but it looked important. Different from the usual mail. And it's addressed from Martin Leo Enterprises.

Peter flips through the letters, flyers, catalogues and coupons on the mail table. He arrives at the letter and tears the envelope open. He quickly reads the papers inside. His breathing quickens and his eyes dart back and forth.

Eric asks what it is. 'It says I can make thousands of dollars from home,' Peter says excitedly explains. Eric cannot believe it and asks to see the letter. Peter hands it to him and goes to shred the envelope. Eric marvels at the thought of making thousands of dollars from home.

Peter explains that all he has to do is attend a weekly meeting for one month and then he can start making money. Enrollment costs \$500, but the letter claims you will make more than twice that during your first month. Wow, Eric exclaims, that's a lot of money for only a month's work of classes, but if the program works, go for it. He reads some of the testimonials aloud for Peter.

“After two months I was able to quit my job and now I work where I want, when I want.” - Alan Thadwell, Age 32

“Before Martin Leo, I was living in a two room apartment and I didn't own a car. After Martin Leo, I was able to buy a beautiful house and purchase not one, but three new cars! And if that wasn't enough, I also met my husband through Martin Leo!” - Shelly Barton, Age 29

“Martin Leo was the first right step I've made in years. This program not only works, but it's also the best out there!” - Theresa McPowell, Age 45

Pretty impressive, Eric remarks. He states that this could be the answer to all of Peter's problems, especially if it looks Peter won't be getting a reimbursement check soon. If it worked for these people, it should work for Peter. Peter agrees, but says he doesn't have \$500. He won't have close to \$500 until his next paycheck, and even then, he probably still won't have enough money.

But what about the credit card, Eric asks. He could use that. And besides, Eric continues, after the program, Peter will have enough money that he won't even need a credit card. Peter nods, but is still hesitant about the program. Eric says he's only pushing so hard for this because it sounds exactly what Peter needs. Like it was fate, or the answer to a prayer.

Peter begins to breath heavily. It was the answer to prayer, he remarks. He takes the letter from Eric and begins to dial the number with his cell phone.

SCENE 39

INT. - LIBRARY'S EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM

Peter enters the break room the next day to find it empty except for Mary. She is seated at one of the two small tables, finishing a yogurt and reading a magazine. Mary, upon seeing Peter, lights up. She closes the magazine and says hello. Peter replies, and hesitates before sitting at the other table with his Lunchables. He begins to eat.

Mary is undeterred and asks Peter how's he doing. Peter nods, and with a mouthful of cheese and ham says he's okay. There is a pause, and Mary asks if he has plans for the weekend.

Peter quickly gets up and moves to her table. He says he has no plans for the weekend. He can't really make plans because he sings in the choir on Saturdays and Sundays. Mary is surprised as she never took Peter for the choirboy type. She asks Peter what he does is he has to cough or sneeze while singing. Peter thinks, and then replies that he's never had to while singing. Mary can't believe it. Mary asks Peter what church he sings at, claiming she might come. She'll wave her lighter when they sing and act like a choir groupie.

Before Peter can reply, Mary looks at the wall clock and curses. Her break is over. She apologizes as she gets up from the table. She's always going over on her breaks, she explains as she goes to the vending machine. One time she accidentally spent an hour in here. The head librarian had to come in and find her. It was so embarrassing. She buys a Twix and gives one to Peter. She can only really eat one, and besides, she owes it to him for spending part of his break with her.

She puts the Twix on a napkin and leaves the room. Peter looks at the Twix, and then quietly says the name of his church to himself. He sings at the Saint Mary's Cross.

SCENE 40

INT. - LIBRARY'S EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM, TEN MINUTES LATER

Peter gathers his trash and throws it away. As he does, he notices a large trash can full of recyclables. Above it is a sign saying to five cans for the staff lunch. The poorly constructed sign is decorated with dollar signs and other out-dated Word graphics.

Peter looks around the break room and gently lifts the trash bag out of the can. He shakes it to test its weight and strength. He opens the fire exit door and sticks his head outside. He looks along the building for windows, but there are very few.

Peter closes the door and returns to the library.

SCENE 41

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM / BREAK ROOM, THAT AFTERNOON

Peter is putting on his coat. He pauses and looks out into the library. Everyone is working and no one appears to be heading towards the break room.

Peter quickly turns and walks into the break room. He grabs the trash bag of cans and walks out the back door.

SCENE 42

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, THAT NIGHT

Peter is breathing very heavily and is pacing in the living room. He is very upset. In his hands he holds a cell phone bill. It is for \$96.76. He continues to read the bill over and over again, walking faster and breathing heavier as he does. He finally rips his cell phone from his pocket and dials the number on the bill.

Peter immediately demands to speak with someone about his bill. He is asked for his account number. Peter replies that he doesn't have an account. His phone was free. The operator asks again for the account number, saying it should be on the bill. Peter cannot find it. The operator helps Peter find it, and then asks what she can help him with.

Peter again says he got the cell phone for free and there shouldn't be any charges. He doesn't understand why he got his bill. The operator asks how he qualified for the free phone. Peter explains he got when he applied for a credit card. He needed to buy a shredder.

The operator asks Peter to wait for a moment while pulls up that promotion. She explains that by agreeing to the free phone, Peter also agreed the service plan. Though the phone was free, there was an activation charge, and charges for incoming and outgoing calls.

Peter interrupts, saying many of the calls were wrong numbers. The operator says the phone company does not differentiate between the types of calls. There are connection fees for answering the phone, and the calls themselves are charged by the minute. In the future, she advises, if you don't know the number, don't answer the phone.

She then asks if Peter would like to pay his bill at this time. Peter says he cannot pay his bill. He explains he is waiting for a check to be reimbursed by his employer and that he already owes money to a credit card. The operator asks if he would like to pay by credit card.

Peter explains that he doesn't have any money. He shredded his last paycheck and he won't have enough money until the library refunds it. The operator pauses, and tells Peter that if cannot pay within thirty days, they will cancel the service. She then asks if there is anything else she can help him with today.

Peter, furious, attempts to feed his phone through the shredder. The antenna jams the shredder, and the shredder breaks. The phone is stuck in the teeth of the shredder, sticking upside down.

Peter is breathing very heavily with sweat on his face. The phone rings again.

SCENE 43

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM / SECRETARY'S OFFICE, THE NEXT DAY

Peter blasts into the book holdings room. He goes directly to his mailbox, but it is empty. He sticks his arm into the mailbox. It is still empty. He frantically searches through the mailboxes near his. He cannot find his check.

Peter begins knocking rapidly on the secretary's door. The secretary is slightly taken aback, and explains there is a lot of paperwork involved in replacing a check. It takes time to file everything. Peter says he doesn't have time, and he needs his check today. He owes money for his credit card and his cell phone. He needs that check.

The secretary tells Peter he needs to be more patient. This process can take up to ninety days. She reminds Peter they only received his paperwork last week.

Peter is breathing heavily. He stares silently at the secretary for a moment. He takes a step forward and says the library shouldn't have towed his car. He needs to get his car back in sixty days or the impound lot will put it up for auction. He demands to know when the library plans on paying for it. He needs his car.

The secretary becomes frustrated and irritable, telling Peter that have gone over this and the library will not under any circumstances pay for his car. She tells Peter he needs to accept responsibility for his actions, and find the money himself. As far as his check is concerned-

Before the secretary can finish, Peter turns and walks quickly out of the office.

SCENE 44

INT. - LIBRARY, CONTINUOUS

Peter is pacing throughout the library, going back and forth from the front desk to the book holdings room. Mary, sitting at a table in the children's section marked 'Book Reading Program' sees Peter and looks concerned.

As Peter walks back and forth, the head librarian approaches him. She asks him to shelve some books. Peter distractedly agrees and grabs the nearest book cart. He pushes it a little too fast in between the shelves. He stops periodically to place some books on the shelves, putting some on top of other books, and others upside down.

Mary asks a co-worker to watch her station and goes to find Peter. As she walks between the shelves, she sees Peter's work and removes the improperly placed books from the shelves.

She finds Peter at the end a row, looking out a window with his back to her. He is speaking very softly and his eyes darting back and forth. Mary reaches out to Peter with her free and grasps his shoulder. Peter spins around, startling her and Mary almost drops the books she is holding.

Peter is breathing heavily and he looks her up and down, but does not speak. Mary asks him what is wrong. Peter doesn't respond. She tells Peter that she found the books he was shelving she pulled them all back off the shelf for him. She places the books on the cart and says he really needs to be more careful. If he ever got caught doing something like that, he would probably get fired.

Peter's breathing eases, and he thanks her. Mary smiles, and says he would do the same for her. She then asks if he would like to eat lunch with her. Maybe they could talk about what's worrying him. Peter nods.

Mary walks away. Peter stands at the cart, distracted, as though he can't remember what he was doing. He hears the sound of the library shredder and his eyes grow wide. He rushes to the front desk. A co-worker stands beside the shredder, slowly feeding papers into the machine.

Peter demands to know what the co-worker is doing. He's the only person who's allowed the run the shredder. The co-worker shrugs, saying the head librarian asked him to shred some papers. Peter grabs the papers out of the co-workers hands and starts shredding. The co-worker says something derogatory and walks off. Peter continues to shred.

SCENE 45

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, LATER THAT DAY

Peter is feeding a paper into the shredder. It is making a horrible grinding noise and jerkily pulling at the paper. Eric, upon exiting the bathroom, sees Peter and asks what he's doing. 'I thought after the check incident you were done shredding stuff,' he says. He pauses and adds, 'Is that thing broken?'

Peter explains that it was another credit card bill, this one stating he needed to pay in thirty days or they would cancel his card. He figures if he can't pay it, he shouldn't keep it. Eric replies doubtfully, saying he's not sure that shredding a bill is a good idea. Peter shrugs his shoulders and starts to feed the envelope through the shredder.

SCENE 46

INT. - LIBRARY'S EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM

Peter grabs a bag of recyclables from the trashcan and walks out the back door. As the door opens,
CUT TO:

SCENE 47

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX

Eric opens his bedroom door. Peter stands outside with a letter in his hand. Eric asks what's up.

Peter excitedly says the university accepted him. He can start enrolling in classes for the fall semester. Eric smiles, remarks that's great news, and asks to see the letter of acceptance. Eric scans the letter. His smile fades and he asks if he read the whole letter. Peter shakes his head.

Eric reads the letter. It states that though Peter was accepted, he needs to make an initial payment on his tuition before he can begin enrolling in classes. The payment also ensures his eligibility to ther university functions, such as the campus library and gymnasium. The initial payment must be must be received within sixty days from receipt of this letter. Eric pauses, and tells Peter the next part is going to be rough. He states that the amount due is \$2300.

Peter yanks the letter out of Eric's hands. Eric asks if Peter even has that much money. Peter shakes his head, saying he can't even charge that much with his credit card. Peter re-reads parts of the letter aloud, but continues past where Eric stopped. Peter reads that if payment cannot be made, he can schedule a meeting with the financial aid office to discuss alternate methods of payment, loans, and scholarships.

Eric scoffs at the idea, saying that with this money making program, Peter will have more than enough to pay the tuition in sixty days. 'You could probably pay the entire year's worth and still have money left over,' Eric tells Peter not to worry. Once the money making meetings start, all of Peter's problems will be over.

Peter agrees. Eric suggests they put the acceptance letter on the bridge.

SCENE 48

INT. - BOOK HOLDING'S ROOM

The secretary is placing paychecks into everyone's mailbox. Peter stands at a shelf, pretending to sort books, keeping one eye on the secretary's actions.

The secretary finishes and walks back to her office. Peter rushes to his mailbox, but it is empty. He goes to the secretary's door and begins knocking. The secretary, having only just shut the door, opens it and blocks his entrance with her body. Peter asks where his check is.

She tells Peter that she is not going to have this conversation again with him. He will get his check when the library is done sorting through the paperwork. She asks that he please not make any further inquiries about it.

She closes the door and walks to her desk. Peter stands outside the door, looking through the window at her. The secretary, becoming nervous, goes into the manager's office. Peter walks away.

SCENE 49

INT. - LIBRARY FRONT DESK, LATER THAT DAY

Peter stands at the front desk with a tower of books beside him. He is checking books into the system, placing each book on a cart once he is done. As he works, he is speaking silently to himself.

The patron approaches the desk, and drops some books through the return slot. He sees Peter and asks how everything is going. Peter takes a moment before realizing the patron is speaking to him. The patron laughs, saying he knows what it's like. He's zoned out many times before on the job.

The patron asks if Peter ever got his check returned. Peter says no, they claim it will take ninety days to issue him another. And they didn't pay him this period's paycheck either. The patron becomes concerned and leans in towards Peter. He begins speaking in a low voice, as to not be overheard.

'You should watch out. I had a friend who stopped receiving paychecks from work. Everyone else got paid, but his check – POOF! - it was nowhere. When he asked his boss about it, the boss said it was an oversight and he'd have the check next week. But next week, still no check. As time went on, it became apparent there was a vast conspiracy to get my friend fired. Co-workers began saying he was doing a bad job. They started filing reports, and one co-worker even went so far to purposely screw-up, but making it look like my friend's fault. And throughout all this, he kept asking but never got a paycheck. In the end, he lost his job, and unable to pay his bills, lost his house and everything else. They really screwed him, you know. So like I said, you should really watch out. You never know who's out to get you.'

Peter nods, and his eyes scan the library.

SCENE 50

CHURCH – CONFESSIONAL BOOTHS, LATER THAT DAY

Peter waits outside the church's confessional booths. A handful of other sinners sit in the pews, waiting their turn for purification.

An elderly woman exits the booth and Peter quietly enters. He kneels down noisily and begins breathing heavily. He says nothing, but stares through the mesh grate separating him from the pastor.

The pastor, slightly taken aback by the silence and unaware it is Peter, asks the confessor how they are doing. Peter answers quickly, putting his hands on the grate and saying he needs help. He says his name, too.

The pastor tells Peter to calm down and asks if everything is okay. Peter repeats that he needs help. He needs help with work. The pastor frowns and tells Peter this is a confessional. If he needs to see him, he can schedule an appointment. But he shouldn't take everyone else's time in the box if he has no sins to confess.

Peter says he doesn't have time to make an appointment. He has a seminar to attend tonight, and he needs help today. Someone is trying to get him fired. The pastor says that cannot be true. Peter says it is. He explains there is a conspiracy at work to get him fired. He shredded his paycheck three weeks ago and the library won't refund it to him. And now, they won't pay him this week's check either.

Peter needs the pastor's help. He asks if the pastor could talk to his boss. Find out why they aren't paying him. Find out why they want to fire him. Find out why they took him off shredding duties. Peter's voice escalates as he speaks. He can be heard quite clearly outside of the confessional.

The pastor, in attempts to calm Peter down, agrees to speak with his manager. Peter quickly gives the pastor the library's number. He stands and leaves the confessional quickly.

SCENE 51

INT. PETER'S DUPLEX – THAT EVENING

Peter stands in the mirror, adjusting his tie. He checks his digital watch. It is later than he thought. He begins to make a b-line to the front door but Eric stops him.

Eric asks if that is how Peter is dressing for tonight. Peter nods yes. 'Very nice,' Eric remarks. 'You'll come home with a thousand dollars and a woman on each arm, looking like that.'

Peter smiles and exits the house.

SCENE 52

INT. - MARTIN LEO ENTERPRISES, THAT NIGHT

Peter rushes in the door, his tie crooked and his hair frizzled. He is late.

Peter moves quickly to the front table, on which nametags and informational packets are stacked. There is a very friendly woman behind the table. Peter tells her he is here for the Martin Leo meeting. She motions Peter to whisper, and asks what his name is. Peter scans the nametags and points to his. The woman smiles again and hands Peter his nametag and a packet.

She walks Peter down the hall and into a small conference room. She says he's quite late. The meeting started twenty minutes ago. Peter explains that he missed the bus. He ran all the way here.

The woman stops outside of the meeting room. The speaker stands at the front and several things are written on the board. Peter freezes in the doorway. The woman gently pushes Peter towards a chair.

SCENE 53

INT. - MARTIN LEO ENTERPRISES, CONTINUOUS

Peter fidgets in his chair, getting his pens and paper ready to take notes. The speaker at the front is finishing telling a story about a young man who after a year with Martin Leo has seen his life blossom. He no longer worries about his next paycheck. He has a wife. And a child is expected soon. And that man is... himself!

The speaker continues, saying that through months of hard work and training, everyone will soon be in a position to manage a meeting like this. And with even harder work, you will be able to manage the managers. 'Sounds pretty exciting, huh?' he smirks. 'That's the beauty of Martin Leo Enterprises!'

The speaker begins to pass out additional paper work to the attendees. Now that they've outlined the path to success, they need to commit to walking that path. He hands out a class schedule. 'These are the classes that will make you a better manager. Look over the schedule. You can choose to pay either by the class, or in one large sum.' Everyone begins quietly looking over the information provided.

Peter begins to panic. He looks over the schedule. To attend each class costs \$150. For the entire curriculum, \$1000. Peter stands, nearly knocking his chair over. He walks up to the moderator. The speaker offers his hand and introduces himself. Peter ignores it, and says he doesn't have that much time or money. He needs money now.

The speaker smiles, attempting to disarm Peter. He explains that this process is about developing patience. You would never learn anything about yourself if someone just handed you a pile of money. To earn it, that's where the lessons and skill are needed.

Peter becomes very angry, saying being patient started his problems. He demands his money back. The speaker explains they can't do that, but if Peter would like it, he would be happy to stay after with him and discuss everything he missed.

Peter shakes his head. He again says he wants his money back. He needs his money back. The speaker crosses his arms and tells him that is not possible. He signed a non-negotiable contract. They don't have to refund him anything.

Peter's eyes dart back and forth as his breathing quickens. The speaker, to avoid Peter's glare, looks around the room and asks if anyone has any questions. Peter leaves the meeting.

SCENE 54

EXT. - DOWNTOWN SIDEWALK, LATER THAT NIGHT

Peter is walking quickly and without any purpose. His tie is in one hand. The other holds his cell phone. He has dialed the pastor's office number, but gets the voicemail.

Peter asks why the pastor let his money get taken. He says he would have never enrolled in the program if the pastor hadn't made God send him the letter. He asks why the pastor did that to him. He demands the pastor give him back his money.

The voicemail cuts off before Peter is finished speaking.

SCENE 55

INT. - LIBRARY, THE NEXT DAY

Peter storms into the library, wearing the same clothes as the night before. They are wrinkled and disheveled. He immediately goes to the front desk and grabs the phone. He knocks over a small pile of books someone is checking into the system with his reach.

Peter dials the number of the university's financial aid office. He asks to speak to someone about getting money for classes. His breathing is very heavy, and his body seems to be a motionless ball of energy. His eyes betray his stillness. He blursts out loudly and somewhat angrily that he can't wait until next week, he needs an appointment today. A few patrons look up from their books.

He nods his head a few times and hangs up. He searches the library for Mary. She is in the children's section reading to a small group. She is holding a handful of stuffed animals in her lap, using them to illustrate the story.

Peter walks up to Mary, stepping between the children. He tells Mary he needs a ride to the university that afternoon. Mary, slightly confused by the interruption and Peter's apparent urgency, agrees. She says she'll meet him out front at 3:30.

Peter quickly walks away in the book holdings room.

SCENE 56

INT. - LIBRARY FRONT DESK, LATER THAT MORNING

Peter sits at the front desk, staring at the back wall of the library. A pile of books sit beside him, and he absent-mindedly scans them very slowly into the computer. He places the scanned books back onto the pile he took them from, creating a circular work flow.

Out of the corner of his eye, Peter sees the patron by a bookshelf. Peter abandons his job and goes to him. He leaves a book open under the scanning gun. The computer beeps every few seconds.

SCENE 57

INT. - LIBRARY, CONTINUOUS

Peter rushes to the patron, who turns and sees Peter just as he arrives. The patron smiles and asks how Peter is doing.

Peter replies, saying that he was right about the conspiracy. They are trying to fire him. They won't pay him any more checks, and they've begun limiting his duties. He's not allowed to shred anymore. They gave that job to someone else. Also, the conspiracy reaches farther than he thought. Everyone is out to take his money.

The patron nods as Peter speaks. He tells Peter that now is the time he needs to be the most careful. One false step and they'll win. They already want to fire him; he shouldn't give them a reason to. Additionally, the patron adds, if he doesn't get the check reimbursed soon, the library will legally no longer have a reason to refund it.

Peter's eyes widen. He needs that check.

SCENE 58

INT – LIBRARY SECRETARY'S OFFICE, CONTINUOUS

Peter rushes to the secretary's office. He opens the door and enters the office without knocking. The secretary, sitting at her desk, is startled by Peter's actions. She reminds him of the rules, that you must knock first, and that no one may enter the office unless asked.

Peter stands and stares at her, his eyes darting across her body. He asks for his check.

The secretary rises from her chair, agitated. She tells Peter the paperwork is still being filed. There is nothing she can do to speed up the process at this point. She says if there's nothing else (and she tells him to not start talking about his car either), she asks Peter to leave her office.

Peter stands, unsure what to do. As he turns to leave, he knocks over the secretary's in/out box, as well as a small potted plant. He does not seem to notice.

SCENE 59

EXT. - LIBRARY PARKING LOT, THAT AFTERNOON

Peter and Eric wait outside the library for Mary. Peter stands at the end of the walkway, pacing back and forth. Eric sits nearby under a tree. He has a tennis ball he is tossing back and forth between his hands.

Eric asks again what happened at the Martin Leo meeting. Peter's steps quicken as he recounts the evening. The meeting was a waste of time and they won't give him his money back. Peter says he wishes he had never gone. He wishes his pastor had never made him receive that letter.

Eric asks how the pastor had anything to do with it. Peter turns towards Eric, getting angry. He explains the pastor prayed for him, and his prayers made the letter arrive. Eric shrugs, saying maybe the prayers were what got Peter into the university. Maybe the Martin Leo letter was just junk mail.

Peter starts yelling at Eric. He shouts he would never had paid the Martin Leo letter any attention if Eric didn't make it sound so good. He was the one who was promoting. He was the one who pushed him into sending the money. Eric tosses the ball to Peter saying he can't be responsible for everything in Peter's life. What's next? Blaming him for shredding the check?

Peter throws the ball at the library. He bounces off a window. He explains that there is a conspiracy against him. As he talks, he whips his hands and around around violently. He resembles a madman, or crazed homeless man.

SCENE 60

INT. - SECRETARY'S OFFICE, CONTINUOUS

The secretary sits at her desk. Something suddenly whacks against her window, causing her to jump. She spills her coffee a little.

She looks outside and sees Peter standing and shouting and waving his arms. She becomes alarmed and closes the blinds. She goes into the manager's office.

SCENE 61

EXT. - LIBRARY PARKING LOT, FIVE MINUTES LATER

Peter is telling Eric about his car now. He explains that if the impound lot keeps it much longer, they'll own it. Eric says that's a tough one. Maybe he could call and see if anything could be done about it. Peter hands Eric his phone, saying that the company is in his address book.

Eric tries to dial, but gets nowhere. He says it's connecting him with an automated message. Eric informs Peter that due to unpaid bills, he can no longer use his phone to make outgoing calls. But he can continue to receive incoming calls. Eric asks Peter if he's paying all of his bills on time.

With what money, Peter asks? Eric stands up, handing the phone to Peter. He apologizes for everything, he never thought anything like this would happen, but says he has to go. Peter asks where he's going. Eric shrugs, but says he's late.

As Eric walks away, Peter stares at his phone. He considers chucking it against the ground. As he stands cradling the phone, Mary approaches. She greets him enthusiastically. Peter is somewhat lost, and doesn't respond fully.

Mary points to her car. She jokes about it being a rust bucket, but it'll take you wherever you need to go. She pats Peter's shoulder to get him moving.

SCENE 62

INT. - MARY'S CAR, TEN MINUTES LATER

Mary drives with the radio on. Her window is down.. Peter sits in the passenger seat, still holding the cell phone. He stares out the passenger window, saying nothing.

Mary looks at Peter quizzically, but doesn't say anything.

SCENE 63

INT. - FINANCIAL AID OFFICE, THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Peter sits by a desk in a small cubicle, wearing the wrinkled clothes from earlier. He anxiously looks around, waiting for the financial aid person to return.

A young man returns to the desk with a file folder. He explains quietly and with sympathy that the financial aid office cannot at this time offer any assistance to Peter. After reviewing his files, they found he has too many unpaid bills to ensure timely payments on a loan.

Peter's breathing quickens as he explains his paycheck problem. He mentions the shredder, then the paycheck. His car got towed, too. After they give him a cell phone, but they lied about it. And Martin Leo stole his money, now there's a conspiracy to get him fired.

The man listens attentively to Peter, but explains there really is nothing he can do. The school will not approve the loan. Peter tries to explain his problems again, saying if he doesn't get the loan, he won't be able to attend classes. The man apologizes. He then asks Peter to leave.

SCENE 64

EXT. - CAMPUS PARKING LOT

Peter approaches Mary's car. She is sitting on the hood reading a book. She asks Peter how it went. Will he be on campus soon?

Peter shakes his head. He says they told him they needed more time to review his file. The need time to think about it. He gets into Mary's car before Mary even gets off the hood.

SCENE 65

INT. - PETER'S BEDROOM, THAT NIGHT

Peter is restless and cannot sleep. He begins to absent-mindedly hit his fist against the wall.

SCENE 66

INT. - BOOK HOLDINGS ROOM

Peter enters the book holdings room to remove his coat. He begins checking his mailbox when the secretary opens her door and says the manager would like to speak to him.

SCENE 67

INT. - MANAGER'S OFFICE, CONTINUOUS

Peter enters the manager's office. The manager sits behind his desk, with his hands folded on the desk. There are two chairs in front of the desk. One is occupied by the pastor, who is looking very sternly at Peter. The secretary closes the door behind Peter.

The manager asks Peter to sit. Peter perches on the edge of the chair, his breathing becoming heavy. The manager produces this week's paycheck. He apologizes for the delay, but says it was nothing more than human error. After what happened with his last check, they wanted to ensure he received this one, so they simply were holding onto it for a personal delivery.

Peter takes the check, and mutters a quiet thank you. He opens the envelope to examine it. He asks about his reimbursement check. The pastor interrupts Peter, asking why he persists in this lie about that check. Peter is dumbfounded.

The pastor explains that the paycheck was never lost. In fact, it was cashed several weeks ago. Peter says he doesn't understand. The pastor sighs and looks at the manager. The manager produces the check and points to Peter's signature on the back.

Peter says it's a forgery. He shredded that check. He turns to the pastor and explains that he shredded that check. The only reason for this fake check is because there's a conspiracy against him to get him fired. The pastor assures Peter there is no conspiracy against him. Peter shakes his head. He can't believe the pastor doesn't believe him. He demands his check.

The pastor asks Peter if it's true he's been stealing the recyclables. Peter denies it. The manager becomes very angry, demanding to know if Peter thought he wasn't going to get caught. There are cameras monitoring the perimeter of the library. They have him on tape stealing the recyclables. He's lucky they haven't shown it to the police yet.

The pastor tells Peter if he needed money, he should have just asked. He could have lent Peter a little bit. Peter curses at the pastor, asking why he doesn't believe him, and saying they are no longer friends. And he quits the choir.

The manager calmly tells Peter that he is being fired. Peter protests, asking why. The manager sternly explains that not only has Peter lied about his check, he has harassed his secretary, shelved books improperly, and been a general nuisance to the patrons with his phone calls and loud conversations. If he wants to know why he's being fired, just pick one of those reasons.

Peter says it's all lies. Everyone is trying to get him fired. He demands his paycheck again and he demands that the library pay for his car. Peter is getting very angry. He has begun to ball up his fists on his bouncing knees.

The pastor puts an arm out onto Peter's shoulder. Peter stands up violently, knocking over his chair. He threatens the pastor, saying for him to never touch him again. They aren't friends. He then turns and flees the office.

SCENE 68

INT. - LIBRARY, CONTINUOUS

Peter rushes out of the book holdings room. He is headed for the door. On his way out, he brushes past a book cart, knocking it and all of the books onto the floor.

Mary, hearing the commotion, sees Peter and follows him out.

SCENE 69

EXT. - LIBRARY PARKING LOT, CONTINUOUS

Peter is hurriedly walking down the pathway towards the parking lot. Mary shouts his name and he whirls around.. Mary runs to Peter, and asks if everything is okay.

Peter yells at her, saying he doesn't need her help. He just needs his paycheck. Mary looks at him confused. Peter then says he was fired. He steps toward Mary, asking if she told on him for shelving books in the wrong place. Did she lie about his work to get him fired? Was she the one who told them he had parked in a loading zone?

Mary says she has no idea what Peter is talking about. Peter calls her a liar. He says he should have never trusted her.

Mary reaches out to Peter, but his phone rings. Peter panics, twisting and turning his body to grab the phone from his pocket. In the process, he knocks Mary's arms away.

It is the money-making moderator calling. He asks Peter if he's thought it over and would like to attend the future meetings. Peter agains demands the money, and it hung up on. Peter looks around the parking lot, beathing heavily. He takes off running, toward the money-making program's offices.

He leaves Mary in the parking lot alone, holding her hurt arm.

SCENE 70

EXT. - CITY BLOCK, TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Peter is still running towards Martin Leo Enterprises. He is beginning to show signs of fatigue.

His phone rings. It is a call from a collector about the store credit card. Peter tells the caller he is taking care of it right now, and hangs up. He never stops running.

SCENE 71

INT. - MARTIN LEO ENTERPRISES ENTRANCE, TEN MINUTES LATER

Peter arrives at the door to Martin Leo. He is panting heavily and sweat covers his body. His heavy winter coat isn't helping him cool down.

He tries the door, but it is locked. He knocks and shakes the door, but no one answers. He continues to knock, getting angrier and angrier. He knocks so hard he cracks the frosted window on the door.

SCENE 72

EXT. - MARTIN LEO ENTERPRISES, FIVE MINUTES LATER

On the street, Peter has an emotional breakdown. He begins crying and laughing and shouting and screaming. He tries to call his mother with his phone, but cannot make outgoing calls. He throws the phone against the building, breaking it.

Peter walks to the nearest payphone. He checks his pockets, and doesn't have enough change to make call. He asks a person on another phone for a dime. They reluctantly give it to him, assuming he is crazy will take it if not offered.

Peter enters the money and calls his mother. He asks her to pick him up, telling her about the money-making program and how they stole his money. She tells him not to worry. She's received a call from the pastor (who Peter calls a liar) and the library manager (who Peter calls a jerk), and says that she and his father will be over shortly to fix this problem.

SCENE 73

EXT. - STREET CORNER, TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Peter is sitting on the ground, leaning against a building. His lips are moving slightly and he appears to be talking to himself. He occasionally laughs.

Peter's parents arrive and tell Peter to get into the car. Peter protests, saying that they need to go to Martin Leo. Again, they tell Peter to get into the car.

Peter climbs into the backseat. As they begin to drive, Peter's mother tells him in light of everything, they think it will be in his best interest to live at home again.

Peter stares out the window at the passing traffic.

SCENE 74

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX

Peter and his parents arrive at the duplex. They tell Peter to start packing his room, they'll take care of the kitchen and living room.

Peter goes to Eric's door and knocks. There is no answer. Peter opens the door and finds Eric's room empty. As he walks around in the room, he remembers flashes of what has transpired throughout the past month, and it is revealed that Eric and the patron never existed.

- A) Peter is speaking to himself at the front desk.
- B) Peter breaking open the library front door.
- C) Peter is shouting at an absent Eric outside the library.
- D) Peter is arranging his papers alone before shredding them.
- E) Peter is shelving book improperly while talking loudly to himself.

Peter's mother calls his name. She is standing in the doorway of Eric's room. She tells Peter to get moving, things don't pack themselves. Peter goes to his room.

SCENE 75

INT. - PETER'S DUPLEX, AN HOUR LATER

Peter helps carrying the boxes and other items to the car. The boxes Peter took from his parent's house are among the cargo. As Peter and his father carry stuff out, they brush past the boxes, knocking them over. Their contents spill onto the floor. It is the shredded remains of their original contents.

SCENE 76

EXT. - PETER'S DUPLEX

Peter's father finishes putting the last item in the car. Peter stands and watches.

He gets into the car a broken man. They drive off.