

SYNCHRONICITY

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. WREATH PREPARATORY SCHOOL INDOOR POOL - MORNING

UNDERWATER. LOW ANGLE. FROM BLACK, A CIRCLE OF LIGHT OPENS UP IN FRAME - REVEALING THE FACE OF THE HANDYMAN AT WREATH PREPARATORY SCHOOL, A SET OF WHITE HEADPHONE 'BUDS' IN HIS EARS. DESPITE THE RIPPLES DISTORTING HIS FACE, IT IS PRETTY CLEAR THE GUY IS WORN OUT, AS HE LEANS FORWARD TO GET A BETTER VIEW INTO THE HATCH.

EXT. OCEAN - MORNING

TOP SHOT. A PENROSE TRIANGLE - THE SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE OBJECT INSPIRED BY MC ESCHER - FLOATING ON THE SURFACE OF SPARKLING WATER. AN UNUSUAL SIGHT BY ALL ACCOUNTS, RENDERED MORE REMARKABLE BY THE FACT THAT IT IS COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF METAL.

INT. WREATH PREP. INDOOR POOL - MOMENTS LATER

Kneeling over the maintenance hatch of an Olympic-sized pool, ZACH PARSONS is a man who carries his past visibly. Not only in his body language, but the prosthetic leg he wears from the right knee down: a memento from Vietnam that has earned him the unfortunate monicker "Pogo" at the exclusive, high school where he has worked for the past four years. And now, plugged into his iPod, crouched in this position, he is once again the target of a group of Seniors, led by TRENT SURREY of the Bel-Air Surreys.

TRENT

What do you suppose Pogo's looking for down there, gents?

XAVIER

(distinct French accent)
Maybe the other half of his leg.

SCOTT

Oh man. This is too perfect. Come on, Xavi. Show us your illusionist skills. Show us dem skillz.

With an exaggerated, comical tiptoe, Xavier walks up behind Zach and turns on his heels to address his compatriots.

XAVIER

My friends. You are about to witness slight of hand and lightness of touch that could steal the C Cups of Hillary Clinton...in the UN General Assembly.

Turning on his toes once again, with the same cartoonish glee, Xavier crouches behind Zach and deftly undoes the laces of each sneaker, before tying them together in a knot, effortlessly.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Voila. And now, may I suggest we move to a suitable vantage point where we can enjoy the show?

The three walk casually over to the bleachers a few feet away and slump down, with extra cool, in front of a mixed group of guys and girls who seem to be a grade or two below them.

TRENT

(without turning around)

Now pay attention, kids. You're about to see a dive with a degree of difficulty of 0.1 - a face dunk with a half twist.

Straight ahead of them, Zach has the filter basket in hand, from which he removes a sock that he examines with an exasperated shake of his head. Then replacing the basket and clicking the circular hatch cover back into position, he starts to stand...

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACHFRONT - MORNING

An attractive "earthy" woman in her thirties - SAM CAULDER - is walking barefoot along the waterline, talking into a micro recorder, as she allows the receding waves to lap gently at her toes. Then suddenly she stops, spotting something right in front of her that has been revealed by the tide: a rusted Penrose Triangle. And bending down, with a quizzical expression, she tries to lift it, but is literally pulled forward by the sheer weight of the object.

INT. WREATH PREP. INDOOR POOL - MOMENTS LATER

As Zach gets up, his arms flail wildly to keep him from falling into the pool. But, amazingly enough, he seems to be pulled upright, to his own surprise. Then, with a sombre expression, he applauds slowly and loudly - eyeballing Surrey and Co.

ZACH

Fine work, boys. Your folks should be real proud of you.

Then he bends over to untie his laces.

TRENT

What are you listening to, Pogo?
Wait...let me guess...Hip HOP?

The Seniors crack up, throwing Trent a high five, and then stand up to leave, but not before Xavier takes the hand of a girl behind them - ZOË SACHS - and kisses the back of it.

XAVIER

Au revoir, mademoiselle.

Totally unimpressed, Zoë flicks Xavier hard on the nose, causing him to recoil angrily.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

What are you doing, you stupid f...

ZOE

(cutting him off)

Go on, jerk. Get out of here. Go!

Xavier points his index finger menacingly. The charming joker has vanished. However he is pulled away, just in time, by Scott.

SCOTT

Come on, bro. Leave the kids to play.

As the three Seniors stalk off, Zach finishes untying his knotted laces and looks over at the group of spectators still seated on the bleachers - making eye contact with the guy next to Zoë. A frozen moment...then Zach turns and limps away, followed, a beat later, by the young guy.

INT. CAULDER HOME - AFTERNOON

THE RUSTED PENROSE TRIANGLE PROPPED UP AGAINST A WALL, AT A SLIGHT ANGLE, ON THE SURFACE OF A WHITE, LIME-WASHED DESK. AT THE MOMENT, IT SEEMS TO BE SERVING THE ROLE OF A PAPERWEIGHT - HOLDING A BUNCH OF GEOMETRIC PEN SKETCHES IN POSITION, AS THE CORNERS OF THEIR PAGES RISE AND FALL IN THE GENTLE BREEZE. SLOW PULL BACK, REVEALING MORE OF THE WORK SURFACE AND HOME.

SAM (O.S.)

Choc...Baby...I want you to know how much I love you. And how much I LOVE these surprise visits during your lunch break. Come here.

CHUCK (O.S.)

I can't, Sam. I seriously have to get back to the office. The Valenti brothers are coming in this afternoon to sign that title deed. And I still need to get the boardroom set up. That projector has more buttons than the Space Shuttle. Man, I hate that thing!

SAM (O.S.)

Have I ever told you how cute you look
in your socks?

CHUCK (O.S.)

Many times, hon. Have you seen my tie?

Throughout their conversation, a steel pen on the desk has been rolling slowly and inexorably towards the Triangle. And now that it is less than a foot away, the attraction seems to be far more intense. As it bumps against the base of a wine glass filled with a yellow Chardonnay, instead of coming to rest, it rolls up the small slope of the glass base until it makes contact with the stem. And unable to roll further, being perfectly centered against the upright of the stem, the pen taps against it insistently before it is suddenly yanked straight towards the Triangle. CLANG - metal meets metal, and the wineglass topples forwards, splashing Chardonnay onto the sketches, before it runs down the incline of the desk surface and drips into a lawyer's briefcase that has been left open below the table.

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

Saddamhussein! I've got thirty four
minutes to get back to the office.

Chuck's hands snap the case shut, grab the handle and he's gone.

SAM (O.S.)

(calling after him)

Did you see what I found on the beach?

CHUCK (O.S.)

Later, babe. I love you.

The front door closes with a BANG.

INT. WREATH PREP. MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP - MORNING

The metal door of a tool locker is BANGED shut, revealing Zach Parsons wearing a look of despondent resignation - directed at the young guy who followed him from the pool.

ZACH

What do you want, Jay?

JAY

Why didn't you do anything, dad?

JAY PARSONS is a good looking, but sad-eyed young man who still has to grow into his frame. And like his father, he too carries his past visibly. Only in Jay's case, every movement seems to have adapted to remaining unnoticed, invisible. Even now, when it's just the two of them, he seems present in voice only.

ZACH

Let's not have this discussion now.
Please. You have class in five
minutes. Geography, I think...

JAY

It's never going to end, Zach.

ZACH

I told you never to call me that. You
call me dad, okay? Even here.

JAY

I'm just wondering if you're ever
going to stand up, or if I have to
watch you take it for another eighteen
months...if I have to hang my head in
shame until the end of my Senior year
at Wreath.

ZACH

I asked you Jay. Now is not the time.

JAY

I forgot. It's never time. With you,
there's only Miller Time. Right dad?

ZACH

You watch your mouth.

JAY

Or what?

ZACH

(grabbing him and pushing him
against the locker)
Or I'll shut it for you, so help me...

Then he stops dead and releases his grip completely.

ZACH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Jay. About everything. I...

JAY

I have to go to class. Maybe we can
finish this when you get home.

ZACH

Okay. Let's do that. Let's do that. I
love you, Jay.

JAY

(without turning back)
Yeah, I know. See ya.

INT. PALOWSKI, WEINTRAUB & SYMONS BOARDROOM - AFTERNOON

Seated on one end of a long, glass table, in a gleaming, Zaha Hadid-inspired boardroom, are two stocky, bald gentlemen in expensive suits that appear to be at least two sizes too small. The founders and proprietors of Valenti Construction, NINO and ANGELO VALENTI successfully transformed their small family business into a large family business in just over two years. So perhaps that remarkable expansion is meant to be reflected in their outfits. Whatever the case, CHUCK CAULDER is waiting for their beverages to arrive before they can get down to business.

CHUCK

...And Nino Junior? Is he still such a Lakers fan?

NINO

Dodgers fan. Nino's into baseball.

CHUCK

That's right. It's Angelo Junior that follows basketball.

ANGELO

(making a buzzer sound)
Wrong again, Chuck. You're 0 for 2.
You should quit while you're ahead.

Angelo nudges his brother as they share a private crack.

NINO

Relax Chuck. Take a seat. Your secretary will be here with our cappuccino's in a minute.

CHUCK

I guess while we're waiting, gentlemen, we might as well take a final look at the title deed. I got the changes you requested, so I think it's right on the money.

And with that, he reaches enthusiastically into his lawyer's briefcase and removes a streaky, warped, wine-damaged document, as utter dread spreads slowly across his face.

NINO

What's that supposed to be?

ANGELO

You gotta be kidding.

CHUCK

I have no idea how this...

NINO

I think we just broke a record for the world's shortest meeting.

ANGELO

Watch my afterburners.

INT. WREATH PREP. GEOGRAPHY CLASS - MORNING

Pacing energetically at the front of the class is MR. EVERS - the guy everyone wishes was their teacher. Not only is he passionate and animated, he loves his subject. Whether it's topographical cartography or speculating on the movement of tectonic plates, the guy is a mine of information, with major entertainment value thrown in for good measure.

MR. EVERS

We know nothing. Wait. Let me repeat that. We know nothing. Zip. Nix. Nada. In Icelandic...

(enunciating it with suitably breathy intonation)

...Ekkert! Today's high-tech is tomorrow's cave painting. Does anyone here realize that? Huh? Right now, so-called scientists are laughing at what they believed to be true ten years ago. And ten years from now...guess what... they'll be laughing at what they are totally convinced is true today. Are you with me?

CLASS (IN UNISON)

Yeah.

MR. EVERS

So how come none of you is asking me the most important question? Jay! What is that question?!

He directs his piercing gaze at Jay Parsons, who apparently isn't up to his usual enthusiasm.

JAY

(tentatively)

How can anyone teach, if they don't know anything...?

MR. EVERS

That's the right question, Mr. Parsons, but the wrong attitude! I want you to sound outraged! Everybody... Repeat after Jay!

CLASS (IN UNISON)
How can anyone teach if they don't
know anything?

MR. EVERS
I want to hear outrage, people!

CLASS (IN UNISON)
How can anyone teach if they don't
know anything?!!

MR. EVERS
Because...

A hushed silence falls, as they wait for his answer...

MR. EVERS (CONT'D)
We're explorers...adventurers...
sifting grains of sand on a beach that
has no end. Aren't the infinite
heavens constantly broadcasting our
ignorance? And yet we shake these
defiant fists at the sky, declaring
how right we are...for now. Well I'm
here to tell you, there are untold
mysteries out there. But that doesn't
mean we stop looking or teaching. We
just need to keep our perspective,
people. Because one day, something you
always assumed would be there, may
suddenly vanish without a trace.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

As Nino and Angelo Valenti walk to their vehicles, they are
unmistakably unimpressed with what they were subjected to.

ANGELO
What do you think would happen to our
business if we did that with one of
our clients?

NINO
Here are your plans, Mr. Trump. Try to
ignore the ketchup fingerprints. I had
a hot dog for lunch.

ANGELO
Now what are we supposed to do? If
Chuck had his act together we would
never be down in the basement right
now. And I wouldn't be looking at an
idiot trying to hotwire my car! HEY!!

Stunned that he's actually caught someone in the act, Angelo stares in wonder at the guy seated in his black Mercedes 550SL.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Hey YOU...

Then the brothers start sprinting towards the Merc as fast as their short legs and tight suits can carry them. But it's too late. The engine roars to life and the vehicle takes off in a cloud of rubber. The brothers, however, aren't giving up that easy. And so, standing side-by-side with their arms out, they try to form a human wall to deter the driver of the oncoming vehicle - evidently not the wisest of tactics. WHAM! The front bumper makes contact with Nino, who bounces onto the hood and breaks the windshield, before he hits the ground.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Nino!

NINO

(writhing in agony)

My leg! He busted my freakin' leg!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET (RESEDA) - AFTERNOON

Zach Parsons closes the door of his 1972 Chev Pickup and limps over to the mailbox outside a modest home. Opening it, he takes out a stack of bills, a mailer for a retirement development in Florida and an envelope with the names Palowski, Weintraub & Symons on the corner. Then, looking further up the street, he spots a bunch of movers carrying furniture out to a large truck.

ZACH

(mimicking Talking Heads)

And you may find yourself in another part of the world. And you may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile. And you may find yourself in a beautiful house, with a beautiful wife. And you may ask yourself "How did I get here?"

Turning to the house, Zach follows the path of dry grass, opens the door, grabs a cold Miller and collapses heavily on the sofa, before opening the lawyer's letter. Then taking a deep breath, he reads it to himself in a hasty half-whisper.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Dear Mr. Parsons...blah blah...at the behest of our clients...what kind of word is behest? Given your financial blah blah blah...the interests of your son would be best served...

He stops reading abruptly. Putting his hands on his head, Zach crumples the letter in one fist, with a pained expression, as he pounds it against his temple in a syncopated rhythm.

ZACH (CONT'D)

No no no NO!

EXT. SEMI-INDUSTRIAL AREA (WINDSOR HILLS) - AFTERNOON

LAMARR JENKINS, the current driver of a black Mercedes 550SL with a shattered front windshield, drifts around a corner at high speed, while attempting to dial a number on his mobile.

LAMARR

(trying to sound calm and cheerful despite his frenetic getaway pace)

Hey Raymond, it's Lamarr. Yeah, cool man. You know...same old same old. Nah, my momma's doing good too, man. I will, I will. Listen bro... Are you in right now? I thought I'd drop by.

INT. RAY'S CUSTOM RIDEZ (LADERA HEIGHTS) - CONTINUOUS

RAYMOND VALDEZ, an immaculately groomed Puerto Rican gent with a tattoo of an engine block encircling his upper arm, is pacing the work bay of his business - a custom detailing and car mod operation - while he talks on his mobile phone.

RAYMOND

(upbeat and hospitable)

No problem, homes. I'll get the beans roasting. What kind of little problem? How little, Lamarr?

(getting less neighborly)

Forget about it, ese. No way man. I don't paint hot merchandise. I'm totally legit now. I got A Grade clientele and a solid business. Listen! Don't come here, man. I'm warning you! I'll set my pitbulls on you Lamarr. HEY! Are you listening?!

EXT. RAY'S CUSTOM RIDEZ - CONTINUOUS

Still in a flat panic, Lamarr looks over his shoulder and executes a neat handbrake turn into the back lot of Ray's Custom Ridez at the precise moment that a freshly-sprayed, yellow Chev Impala is being carefully reversed out of the drying booth. So at the precise instant when impact should occur...

INT. THE PARSONS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Zach lashes out, with a kick, at the coffee table in front of him, flipping it over - which causes Jay to come bolting out of his room to see what all the commotion is about.

JAY

Dad? What's going on? Are you okay?

Zach uncrumples the letter and holds it out, with an outstretched arm, for his son to read - devastated.

ZACH

Your mother and her new husband Miles Turner don't think I'm good enough to raise you. It doesn't matter that she ran off and left us five and a half years ago... It doesn't matter that I've spent the last four years swallowing mud at Wreath so you can afford to go there.

Jay just stands there, speechless.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Did it ever dawn on you how I could pay for one of the top schools in LA, as a handyman? There's only two of you in the whole school, James! You and Josie from the cafeteria's daughter. Every other kid who goes there has folks who are loaded up the kazoo.

JAY

Calm down, dad. The neighbors...

ZACH

The neighbors are getting out of Dodge in the next moving van. Are you seriously telling me the only explanation you could come up with for why I don't stand up to a seventeen year old punk like Trent Surrey is that I'm afraid?! HELLO?!

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET (RESEDA) - CONTINUOUS

Further down the street, one of the movers, WESLEY STAPLES, answers his phone as he closes the back doors of the truck.

WESLEY

Hello? What?! What do you mean by a little accident, Raymond?

So incensed by the news he's just received, Wesley strides away from the back of the vehicle and heads for the driver's side - forgetting that he hasn't latched the doors properly.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

I'm not interested, Ray. You told me Tuesday and I want my yellow Chev on Tuesday. I got a date, nigga! Do you know how long this girl has been dangling a carrot on a stick? Too bad, Ray. Too bad. Then you're gonna lend me your Mustang. In fact, cancel that. I want the Viper. Clean and shiny, like it rolled out of a Jay-Z video.

He gets behind the wheel, still talking, and is so agitated, the truck lurches forward. So when it pulls away, the back doors swing open and the contents start to tumble out of the storage area: chairs, tables, a piano... Then, twenty seconds later, the brake lights glow bright red, and the vehicle skids to a halt.

WIDE. CRANE JIB UP, REVEALING THE SCENE IN ITS ENTIRETY. WITH A TEN-FOOT-WIDE WAKE OF HOUSEHOLD DEBRIS RUNNING THE FULL LENGTH OF THE STREET, PEOPLE STEP OUT OF HOMES AND GATHER ON LAWNS TO GAPE AT THE DEVASTATION. INCLUDING ZACH AND JAY PARSONS.

As a hundred items bounce and spin their way to a standstill, one final object rolls and rolls, before coming to a halt in front of the kerb where the father and son are standing: a large photograph in an oval, metal frame. And leaning forward with a tilt of his head, Zach is paralysed with disbelief.

JAY

What is it dad?

ZACH

This photograph...the couple at the table with him. Those are my folks.

JAY

I don't understand.

ZACH

Remember how I told you they disappeared twenty four years ago on a cruise ship that never returned?

JAY

But these guys look like they're in their seventies.

ZACH

I know Jay. I know. But it's them!

INT. THE HAYES LIVING ROOM - EVENING

In a room that is completely devoid of furniture, apart from a set of car seats in the centre of the floor, FLOYD HAYES - of Verbena Alabama - is sharing his woes with the two strangers who have been his neighbors for the past five years.

FLOYD

I ask you, Zach, what kinda mucus-headed zombie forgets to close the doors on a movin' truck? I mean don't that just take the whole darn bakery? So I'm stayin' right here till the insurance company or Magic Movers pay up. Good thing I had these kinda seats in my Jeep. Otherwise all we'd have to sit on right now is butt flesh.

ZACH

True.

FLOYD

Mind you...butt flesh was good enough for the men who built this fine country. Yes sir. Before the La-Z-Boy, there was the workin' man. Now all we got is kids whose minds are eaten away from too much Pac Man.

ZACH

I need to ask you something, Floyd. Do you mind if I call you Floyd?

FLOYD

That's not my real name, you know. They gave it to me when I was a kid because I was a pretty boy. But you can call me Floyd if you like. Beats the heck out of Marvin.

ZACH

(removing the photograph from folded, velvet cloth)
Floyd. I found this outside our house after the accident...and I wanted to know how you got it.

FLOYD

Now THAT'S a crazy story if ever there was one. You see that fella at the table there? That's my cousin Horace.

ZACH

Is he still alive? Where do I find...

FLOYD

You ever see a mad scientist in the pictures? Someone who's hoping for lightning to strike, so it can electrify his dream? That was Horace. Crazy as a werewolf in a barber shop. The thing is, he had a degree and all. Some big institute called MTI. Didn't do him no good though. For all the fancy paper up on his wall, he spent every dime he had flyin' or sailin' between Miami, Puerto Rico and the Bahamas. Until he never came back.

ZACH

So did he give you the photograph?

FLOYD

Actually no. This is where the story gets like the Twilight Ozone show they used to have on TV. Listen to this...

JAY

(unable to bare it)
We're listening!

FLOYD

Ease up now, young fella and take my advice. Lay off the Pac Man for a while. It'll do you good. As I was sayin'...one afternoon about a year back, I'm mowin' the grass out there, when a gentleman arrives with that photograph in the frame and says it washed up on the beach while he was practisin' yoghurt.

ZACH

How did he know to bring it here?

FLOYD

Well...that gentleman must have been a pretty enterprisin' young man, because he somehow figured that if he opened the frame right up, he'd find a clue of some kind. And sure enough...when he unscrewed the back, there it was.

ZACH

What?

FLOYD

Some co-ordinates he punched into a GSP doodad that brought him to me.

Turning the frame over in his hands, Zach gets a chance to see the fold-out picture stand attached to the back, for the first time: a Penrose Triangle, hinged on one side.

JAY

Hey...that's a Penrose Triangle. Look how it seems to be heading up, but when you look harder, you see that it goes down. It's a real head-bender.

FLOYD

Sure is. Wanna see somethin' else real interestin' about that frame?

ZACH

Uh huh.

JAY

Oh yeah.

EXT. THE HAYES BACK GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Floyd, Zach and Jay step into the garden, under the light of a full moon, and head for a large, plastic DIY swimming pool.

FLOYD

Just imagine...if we was livin' in Canada, I'd have my own private skatin' rink in the winter time. Anyway...you've felt how heavy this metal picture frame is, right?

ZACH

Right.

JAY

Right.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

So what do you suppose would happen if I dropped it in there and pushed it all the way to the bottom? Watch this.

Dropping the frame sideways into the water, Floyd uses a leaf net on a pole to push it right to the bottom of the pool.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

You ready?

As quick as he can, Floyd pulls the pole out, and a split second later, the frame is propelled upwards so fast, it breaks the surface and becomes airborne, before falling back into a float.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

How do you like them apples? If Horace sent that off, it coulda sailed here all the way from Bermuda.