

MICHAEL FUCKING BAY

The Unauthorized Biography
of Hollywood's Most Explosive Director

written by

David Olson

314.277.9448

Los Angeles, CA

"I make movies for teenage boys. Oh dear, what a crime."

- michael bay

FADE IN:

EXT. SWISS ALPS - DAY

A MOUNTAIN pierces the clouds--

A RAILROAD cuts through the patches of snowy pine trees cascading down its slope--

A TRAIN snakes along the rugged mountainside, the serenity of the moment destroyed by--

THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE

--violently pumping and grinding its way across the terrain.

INT. TRAIN - CABOOSE - DAY

A HERO - tall, dark and handsome as hell in his tattered tuxedo - plants a barrel marked 'FLAMMABLE' against the door.

HERO

That should buy us a minute.

He tugs his bowtie loose to give his chiseled neck some breathing room.

DAMSEL (O.S.)

Hope that wasn't a rental--

The Hero turns to face a drop-dead gorgeous DAMSEL in an equally tattered and tight-fitting black dress.

HERO

Due back by six.

RUSSIAN TERRORIST (O.S.)

Time to die, Americans!

DAMSEL

How will we ever escape?

The Hero marches towards the Damsel, grabs her by the waist and plants a kiss on her mouth. She doesn't resist.

HERO

Ever heard of para-skiing?

The Hero PUNCHES open a hatch in the ceiling.

The Damsel eyes the MIST streaming past the open hatch.

RUSSIAN TERRORIST (O.S.)
*You have to the count of three to
 give up the girl, or you both die!*

The Hero strips off his tuxedo coat, revealing a PARACHUTE strapped to his back. She eyes him playfully.

DAMSEL
 My, aren't you a smart dresser--

RUSSIAN TERRORIST (O.S.)
ONE!

HERO
 Never forget to accessorize.

He produces a HAND GRENADE out of nowhere.

RUSSIAN TERRORIST (O.S.)
TWO!

THROUGH THE DOOR, A BATTERY OF MACHINE GUNS ARE RACKED--

EXT. TRAIN - ROOF - DAY

The Hero pulls The Damsel through the hatch, onto the roof.
 As they crouch against the wind, the train WHISTLES.
 The Hero pulls out the pin of the grenade with his teeth.
 And shoots the Damsel a coy, self-assured wink.

RUSSAIN TERRORIST (O.S.)
THREE!

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

THE RUSSIAN TERRORIST crashes through the door, knocking over the barrel and spilling its contents. His BAND OF CRONIES aim their guns--

But the car is empty. Well, almost empty.

The grenade gently rocks in a pooling puddle of 'Flammable'.

The Russain Terrorist slumps his shoulders in defeat, pulls a FLASK OF VODKA from inside of his coat and takes a swig.

EXT. SWISS ALPS - DAY

THE CABOOSE EXPLODES IN A FIERY ORANGE CLOUD that punctuates the pastoral white and green of the mountainside.

The train buckles as a CHAIN REACTION destroys one car... then the next... and the next!

BUT UNDERNEATH AN OPEN PARACHUTE

The Hero and The Damsel float into the valley below.

HERO

Hold on tight. This ain't gonna be the bunny slopes.

The Damsel clutches his torso.

The explosions continue to engulf the mountain in flames.

IN THE VALLEY BELOW

The Hero and The Damsel make a perfect landing in the snow. They turn to face the smoldering ruins above them.

MORE EXPLOSIONS. *BOOM! BOOM! KA-FUCKIN'-BOOM!*

The Damsel looks... distressed.

DAMSEL

Is this explosion, um, *normal*?

EXPLOSIONS AND FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS AND--

DAMSEL (CONT'D)

Maybe we should get out of--

But the Hero has already taken off in a full sprint.

THE FIRE SPREADS ACROSS THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN, THE SWIRLING BLASTS OF ORANGE AND YELLOW ENVELOPING THE ALPS--

CUT TO:

INT. A BOY'S BEDROOM - DAY

A small fire burns up a VINTAGE TOY TRAIN SET built across the floor of a bedroom adorned with B-MOVIE POSTERS.

A BOY, 8, drops an 8MM CAMERA away from his face.

He steps back from the miniature disaster, his sneakers crushing cardboard packaging discarded on the carpet: 'AMERICAN PATRIOT FIRECRACKERS'.

MRS. BAY (O.S.)
MICHAEL?

The boy - MICHAEL - turns towards the sound of his mother's voice, coming from downstairs. He considers, then answers:

MICHAEL
Everything's fine, Mom!

He raises the camera to his eye, capturing the flames as they catch the curtains. He doesn't back away -- he pushes-in.

THE SMOKE ALARM BLARES.

MRS. BAY (O.S.)
MICHAEL?!

MRS. BAY, late 30s, bursts into the bedroom. It takes her a beat to observe the scene, for the fear to register.

MRS. BAY (CONT'D)
Oh my god! *Michael!*

Mrs. Bay grabs Michael and drags him out of the room.

MICHAEL
Hey--!

He never stops filming.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - BAY HOME - DAY

IN 8MM FILM FOOTAGE: *FIREFIGHTERS* remove their helmets and load their gear onto a fire engine parked in the street.

Michael pans his camera across the truck, revealing his mother shaking hands with a FIREFIGHTER CAPTAIN.

MRS. BAY
Thank you for coming so quickly--

FIREFIGHTER CAPTAIN
You're welcome, Mrs. Bay. Just make sure the litte guy knows the dangers of playing with fire.

The Captain shoots Michael a coy, self-assured wink before climbing on the truck.

Michael drops the camera from his face. The Captain looks familiar... *The Hero from the train--?*

A BEIGE BUICK screeches to a halt in between the fire engines. MR. BAY -- 40s and every bit a Certified Public Accountant -- climbs out of the car, completely stunned.

MRS. BAY

Jim--!

Mrs. Bay rushes to his side as he makes his way to Michael.

MR. BAY

Okay, Michael. Strike three. You know what that means.

Mr. Bay snatches the camera out of Michael's hands.

MICHAEL

Dad! You can't take my camera away!

MR. BAY

Oh yes I can. I had to leave work because you needed to film your little 'explosions'! Is that what you wanted, Michael? For your father to have to come back home?

Michael doesn't say 'no'.

MICHAEL

Are you gonna watch the movie?

The fire engine HONKS as it pulls away from the curb.

Mr. Bay forces a 'thank you nod' before trudging up the front lawn, briefcase in one hand, Michael's camera in the other.

MR. BAY

Gotta reschedule my meeting...

Mrs. Bay can't help but show some sympathy for her son.

MRS. BAY

Movies, Michael, are about the characters who cause the explosions. Once you learn that, you'll be a great director.

Mrs. Bay turns and heads into the house.

Michael stands alone in the lawn, squinting into the sun.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

The sun beats down on a dusty baseball diamond.

Michael -- 16, tan and taut in his BLUE Crossroads uniform -- wipes his forehead before replacing his cap in center field.

The scoreboard reads: HOME - 0 / AWAY - 3 / 9th INNING

The bases are loaded with THREE YELLOW JERSIES.

A HEFTY BATTER steps up to the plate, flexing his thick arms.

Michael finds his parents in the bleachers. Mrs. Bay waves. Mr. Bay reviews a stack of documents.

COACH (O.S.)

One swing to win it all, Bobby!

The PITCHER checks the field. The Yellow Jersies take their lead off steps. The INFIELDBERS prepare for action.

In the outfield, Michael punches his fist into his glove--
--when he notices a strange OBJECT in the sky.

Michael uses his glove to shield his eyes from the glare.

It grows larger and larger as it gets closer and closer--

AN ASTEROID the size of Texas zeroing-in on planet Earth!

The world starts to shake--

As A FLEET OF F-15 FIGHTER JETS soar overhead!

One fires a MISSILE--

The missile STRIKES the asteroid--

FRAGMENTS sear into the trees, the school, the parking lot--

The PRINCIPAL jingles his keys as he heads towards his rusted '62 Gremlin, when a hot chunk of asteroid obliterates it.

But the asteroid itself still heads straight for Michael.

Michael backs up, slowly at first, then more quickly. He trips over his own two feet and falls on his back.

He covers his face, bracing for impact--!

And the BASEBALL drops just behind him.

PITCHER

Get the god damn ball, Michael!

Michael snaps out of it. No asteroid. No jets. No explosions.

He scurries to find the ball.

The Yellow Jerseys round the bases.

By the time he throws the ball to the infield, it's too late.
The scoreboard flips: HOME 4 / AWAY 3 / FINAL

The Yellow Jerseys celebrate at home plate.

The Blue Jerseys shake their heads.

Michael slams his cap onto the field in a puff of dust.

EXT. SANTA MONICA HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Michael shuffles across the parking lot, avoiding eye contact with his teammates. Mrs. Bay trails after him.

MRS. BAY

Michael! Michael, it's alright--

Mr. Bay still has his nose buried in a TPS report.

MR. BAY

That's right, son. You win some,
you lose some--

(red-penning the report)

That should be '*compound* interest'--

Michael stops short and faces his father.

MICHAEL

What the hell would you know? You
didn't see any of it!

Mr. Bay looks over the rim of his glasses.

MRS. BAY

Michael, relax. He was right there--

MICHAEL

But you weren't even watching!

MR. BAY

Michael. You can't expect me to
watch every second of a baseball
game. It's not exactly the most
action-packed sport on the planet--

MICHAEL

Bet you'd pay more attention if I was actually your son.

That hits like a thermo-nuclear weapon to the gut.

MRS. BAY

Now hold it right there. Just because we adopted you does not mean we love you any less--

MICHAEL

That doesn't change the fact that you're not my real mother. And you're definitely not my real father.

MR. BAY

Son, look, I know it's not easy--

MICHAEL

The truth is that no matter what I do, *he's* never coming home.

Michael storms towards his BUMBLEBEE YELLOW 1972 CAMARO.

MR. BAY

Michael! Come back here--!

The Camaro burns rubber as it peels out onto Pico Boulevard.

Mrs. Bay hides her face in her husband's unchiseled neck.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - FREEWAY - DUSK

The sun sets over the palm-littered skyline of West L.A.

Headlights twinkle along the 10 freeway.

Michael's Camaro ROARS through the traffic.

INT. / EXT. '72 CAMARO - NIGHT

Michael takes in deep breaths as he navigates traffic. His rage seems to be subsiding, the speedometer relaxing, when--

The RED and BLUE LIGHTS of a siren fill his rearview mirror.

MICHAEL

Shit.

He pulls the car over to the shoulder.

EXT. FREEWAY - SHOULDER - NIGHT

TWO PAIRS OF REEBOKS climb out from either side the car. The doors are SLAMMED SHUT simultaneously.

OFFICER SMITH and OFFICER LAWRENCE, a cool couple of plain-clothed cops, strut towards the Camaro.

LAWRENCE

What'd'ya say you let me handle this one, partner. Get all up in his shit, make sure this son of a bitch goes three miles under for the rest of his damn life.

SMITH

First of all, I'm on the driver's side, so I will take point. Second of all, that's the dumbest god damn idea I've ever heard. When was the last time someone drove under the speed limit in this city and it led to anything but *more* violent crime.

INT. / EXT. '72 CAMARO - NIGHT

Michael glances out his window at the bickering officers.

LAWRENCE

Don't throw your fancy-ass statistics at me. I go by instinct, and instinct alone--

SMITH

Are you going to behave yourself?

Lawrence holds up his hands. *Have it your way.*

SMITH (CONT'D)

Thank you. Very mature of you.

(to Michael)

Sir, could I get your license and--

Michael already has his license and registration ready.

SMITH (CONT'D)

(taking them both)

--Registration.

Lawrence leans into the passenger side window.

LAWRENCE

Oh, I see how it is. You think you're all clever and shit--!

SMITH

Officer Lawrence!

Lawrence holds his hands up. *It's cool, I'm cool.*

Smith turns back to Michael.

SMITH (CONT'D)

I apologize for the behavior of my partner. My name is Officer Smith, this is soon-to-be Department Store Security Guard Lawrence.

Lawrence rolls his eyes.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Were you aware that you were breaking the speed limit, Mr.--
(checking the license)
--Bay?

Michael pushes into the headrest.

MICHAEL

Yes. I'm sorry. I was... upset.

LAWRENCE

You about to be *pissed*--

SMITH

Lawrence!

Lawrence holds his hands up. *All good. All. Good.*

SMITH (CONT'D)

Driving at excessive speeds can endanger both your life and the lives of others. We clocked you at nearly one hundred miles per hour--

LAWRENCE

WHOOooooWeee! Hot *damn!*
(suddenly serious)
But for real, son, what's on your mind?

Michael takes a hard swallow.

MICHAEL

I'm a loser. And I'll never be the best at anything. Ever.

LAWRENCE

Now that's no way for an attractive young man with a beautiful ride to talk!

SMITH

If you choose to break the law by driving wrecklessly then you're right, you --

SMITH (CONT'D)

Wait, what?

Michael turns to Lawrence. This guy might be on his side now.

LAWRENCE

You know what my daddy used to say to me? He used to say that losers were always whinin' about 'their best'. Winners went home and got freaky with the homecomin' queen--

SMITH

LAWRENCE! I think you might be sending this young, impressionable man the wrong message--

Michael ping-pongs from one window to the other.

LAWRENCE

Nah. Here's my message to you, Mr.--

He waits for Michael to respond. It takes a beat too long.

MICHAEL

Bay?

LAWRENCE

Mr. Bay. You take your ass back home to your parents -- you got parents?

Michael shrugs.

MICHAEL

I'm adopted.

LAWRENCE

Do they love you?

Another shrug.

MICHAEL

I guess so.

LAWRENCE

THEN YOU GOT PARENTS. You take your
ass home and tell them you sorry
for--

Lawrence nods to Smith. Smith rips off a speeding ticket and hands it to Michael.

SMITH

Driving at ninety-nine miles per
hour in a sixty five--

Michael takes the ticket and drops his head.

MICHAEL

Two hundred bucks?

SMITH

Fines double at a hundred. I'm only
giving you a break because you had
to endure my partner's twisted
version of fatherly advice.

MICHAEL

No, I appreciate it, I just... I
don't have that kind of money.

Lawrence BANGS on the top of the car.

LAWRENCE

Damn *right*. So you're gonna get a
job. And work it off. And then
you're gonna become the best at
something because you don't have no
other choice! You dig?

MICHAEL

Yes, sir. I dig.

LAWRENCE

That's my boy.

Smith's had about enough. He hands Michael back his license.

SMITH

Get home safe, understand?

Smith and Lawrence head back to their cruiser.

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

You need to think before you speak.

Michael looks over the \$200 ticket--

LAWRENCE (O.S.)

I think. I think all day. I let it percolate, and then I let it explode. That's how geniuses do.

SMITH (O.S.)

You got nacho cheese on your shirt.

--then beyond his windshield, scanning the distant hills for the HOLLYWOOD SIGN as a soft pink sunset fades to black.

INT. BAY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Bay sits in a club chair, staring at another report, but his mind elsewhere.

Mrs. Bay stands at the window, looking out at the street. Her head lifts as the Camaro's headlights pull into the driveway.

MRS. BAY

Jim...

Together, they meet Michael as he enters the foyer. Mrs. Bay wraps him up in a hug.

MICHAEL

Sorry, Mom.

He looks to Mr. Bay. They exchange a nod of reconciliation.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Figure now's as good a time as any to tell you about this--

Michael hands Mr. Bay the speeding ticket.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Guessing I'll need to get a job?

MRS. BAY

You guessed right.

Mrs. Bay rubs her son's cheek, just happy he's home, safe.

MR. BAY

I'll make a call in the morning. I think I know someone who might be able to help out.

Mr. Bay stares into Michael's eyes -- finding that mysterious spark that he's never been able to recognize in himself.

EXT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES LOT - DAY

An opulent fountain bubbles at the entrance as--

INT. / EXT. '72 CAMARO - DAY

Michael drives through the massive iron gates--

Underneath the iconic archway--

Winding around A PAIR OF GAFFERS hauling equipment--

As a GOLF CART barely clears the hood of the Camaro.

GOLF CART DRIVER
(fading around a corner)
Hey watch where you're go--!

But Michael is in awe of a six-story poster of THE GODFATHER covering the side of Sound Stage 4. It's as if Don Corleone is staring right back at Michael. Father to son.

EXT. LUCASFILM BUILDING - PARMAOUNT LOT - DAY

Michael climbs out of the Camaro and walks across the lot, unsure if he's headed in the right direction.

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR (O.S.)
CUT!

An exhausted FILM CREW collectively wipes their brow. A MODEL in a bikini relaxes the beer bottle she's selling.

Michael pauses to take in the action.

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Let's go again, Audriana, but this time, try to be less explosive!

The Model finds her posture. A CLAPPER steps in front of camera.

CLAPPER
(burned out)
"Beer Makes You Look Hot," take eighty-one--

He CLAPS the board, snapping Michael out of his daze.

LINCOLN (O.S.)
You must be Michael?

A pleated-khaki dork, TOM LINCOLN, 40s, extends a hand.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Tom Lincoln, production design--

Michael shakes his hand.

MICHAEL
Michael Bay.

LINCOLN
Welcome to LucasFilm.

With a hearty shoulder slap, Lincoln leads Michael inside.

INT. LUCASFILM - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Michael follows Lincoln through a tunnel adorned with various editions of STAR WARS: A NEW HOPE posters--

LINCOLN
Mr. Spielberg likes to call this
the Control Room--

--into a room humming with the energy of TWO DOZEN PRODUCTION DESIGNERS bringing 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' to life.

And as Michael strolls the corridor, it becomes just that:

A top secret control room with translucent panels displaying a longitudinal grid of the Western hemisphere--

Mounted against top secret computer technology, with screens flashing blue and buttons blinking red--

As two dozen GOVERNMENT AGENTS in short-sleeved button-up shirts glide around the floor in roller chairs, jabbering into their headsets as they process the top secret information that's going to save the world.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
This will be your desk--

Lincoln pulls out a distinctly non-rollery chair. It makes a GRATING NOISE as the stiff legs scrape against the floor.

MICHAEL
Thanks.

Michael sits at the distinctly non-computery drafting table. No translucent panels. No headseats.

LINCOLN

And this--

Lincoln plops down a massive stack of empty storyboards.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Is your first assignment.

(beat)

Your dad says you've got quite the imagination, and that you're a decent artist. Thought this would be a good fit.

MICHAEL

He thinks I'm too into explosions.

Lincoln lets out a belly laugh. For some reason.

LINCOLN

Aren't we all, kiddo.

He tosses a screenplay on the desk.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Give that script a read and then start with the opening sequence.

Michael picks up the script: *'Indiana Smith and the Raiders of the Lost Ark of the Covenant'*.

MICHAEL

I'm not so sure about the title--

LINCOLN

Let Mr. Spielberg worry about the title.

(leaning in)

At the end of the day, who really cares? It's not like we're saving the world, right?

The Supervisor gives him another wink and a final shoulder slap before he leaves Michael to it.

Michael glances around the room. It's quiet. Bland. Boring.

He turns to page one.

MONTAGE - STORYBOARDING 'RAIDERS'

-- As he reads, Michael scribbles notes in the margins.

-- He sketches a few storyboards.

- Some familiar images start to take shape.
- The mysterious adventurer cracking his whip.
- The ancient ruins of a South American temple.
- A massive boulder bearing down on the hero.
- But Michael wrinkles his nose. Something's missing.
- He picks out an ORANGE PENCIL and puts it to paper.

LATER

Michael has worn the orange pencil down to a nub when Lincoln strolls up behind him.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Michael! How's it comin--?

His brow furrows as he gets a better look at Michael's work.

MICHAEL
Think I fixed it for you, Mr.
Lincoln.

Michael reveals the storyboards--

BRIGHT ORANGE EXPLOSIONS have been animated into every scene.

The boulder is a ball of fire! Indy's whip a tail of flames!

LINCOLN
What in the heck did you do? There
were no explosions in these scenes.

MICHAEL
Exactly. I was reading the script,
doing my best to stay awake, and I
realized what was missing.

Lincoln still can't believe what he's looking at:

A tribe of natives chase Indiana over a hill that's ablaze!

LINCOLN
You need to stick to the script,
Michael. Mr. Spielberg has a very
specific vision for the film. And
your job is to help him see that
vision through.

MICHAEL

Well, with all due respect to him,
Mr. Lincoln, this movie is gonna
blow. Like, big time.

A few of the wimpy designers neighboring Michael's station
slink into their stools.

LINCOLN

Pardon me?

MICHAEL

The movie's gonna suck. A cranky
old archeologist who's afraid of
snakes? Who's wants to see that?

LINCOLN

I will have you know that the
studio is predicting not one, but
three installments, and we haven't
even started principal photography!
They're calling it a 'franchise'.
And it's gonna change the business.

Michael is unimpressed.

MICHAEL

Three of the same crappy movies?
Big deal. Why not four?

LINCOLN

You cocky little shi-- the best
director in the world couldn't make
a four movie franchise.

MICHAEL

Sure I could.

Lincoln can't deny that Michael has moxie.

LINCOLN

I wish you luck with that.
Unfortunately, you'll have to do it
somewhere else, because I don't
think this job is gonna suit you.

It's just now occurring to Michael that he's crossed the line.

MICHAEL

Is this what it means to get fired?

LINCOLN

What's the matter, kiddo? I thought you wanted a little more 'fire'. Well, you got it.

MICHAEL

Wait! Please. I need two hundred bucks to pay off a speeding ticket.

LINCOLN

Two hundred bucks? For what? These storyboards are worthless. Now scam before I call security.

The world slows down. Michael can feel the eyes of the other artists watching him as he strolls down the corridor.

A SYMPATHETIC DESIGNER gives Michael a nod of camaraderie. Michael replies with a SALUTE, before walking out the door.

Lincoln turns back to the drawings, scoffing as he takes a sip of his coffee.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Waste of paper if you ask me...

A SHADOW DESCENDS over Lincoln's shoulder--

VOICE (O.S.)

How'd he do?

Startled, Lincoln dribbles his coffee down his shirt.

STEVEN SPIELBERG, 30s, peers at the drawings. He possesses the sharp, focused demeanor of a man destined for greatness.

LINCOLN

Mr. Spielberg! Ah, er, I--
(composing himself)
I'm sorry, sir, but I had to get rid of him. His storyboards, they were ridiculous--

But Spielberg sweeps Lincoln aside and pulls a storyboard off of Michael's desk.

He can't seem to take his eyes off of it:

THE SKELETAL REMAINS OF A MELTED NAZI FACE EXPLODING!

EXT. PARAMOUT PICTURES - PARKING LOT - DAY

Michael hangs his head as he heads back to his car.

CLAPPER (O.S.)
That's it! I quit!

Michael turns his attention to the commotion around the commercial shoot.

The Clapper throws his board on the ground and storms off the set. Other members of the crew follow his lead. The Clapper charges towards his car, parked next to Michael's Camaro.

MICHAEL
Did you just quit?

CLAPPER
Yeah. You?

MICHAEL
Fired.

CLAPPER
Well, probably for the best.

The Clapper pops the door open to his Chevy.

CLAPPER (CONT'D)
That asshole thinks we need to go into overtime to shoot her at every angle. Get the slope of her thigh just right. It's a fucking beer ad!
(beat)
You ever find yourself in his position? Do your crew a favor. Shoot fast. And cut to the chase.

Michael absorbs the advice. The Clapper speeds off the lot.

LINCOLN (O.S.)
Michael!

Michael sees Tom Lincoln jogging towards him.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
(catching his breath)
You said two hundred bucks, right?

Lincoln hands Michael a stack of twenties.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Courtesy of Mr. Spielberg himself.
(beat)
Welcome to show biz, kid.

Michael lets the weight of the cash sink in.

And as we PAN around him, LENS FLARES GALORE--

Michael begins to look a few years older--

His Yellow Camaro becomes a Yellow Porsche 911--

Before our eyes, ten years have passed--

And Michael wields a BULLHORN to command a crew of his own.

MICHAEL
 (into bullhorn)
 Let's move, move, move! We don't
 have all day people! MOVE.

Michael, late-20s, runs his set with a manic energy. Lights, cameras, and plenty of adrenaline, all surrounding--

MODEL #2 holding a bottle of beer.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Quiet on the set!

The set abruptly falls silent. Michael trains his camera--

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 And! *Action!*

Model #2 flirts with the camera.

MODEL #2
 When I drink a beer--

Or is she flirting with Michael?

MODEL #2 (CONT'D)
 I only drink the best.

A ROAR OF APPLAUSE--

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT

--as a black-tie audience rises to its feet.

Michael navigates a maze of banquet tables, gladhanding his way up to the stage.

MODEL #3 hands Michael a CLIO award.

He clears his throat into the microphone. The room settles.

MICHAEL
 Wow. I, uh--

FEEDBACK echoes through the opulent ballroom.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm not great at, uh, you know.
Speaking. In front of people.

(beat)

I'm used to screaming at them as
they scatter around my set.

A muffled cough emphasizes how poorly the joke has landed.

Michael gathers his wits.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But I, um. I just want to say thank
you for this Clio Award. Um--

(beat)

The 'Got Milk' campaign is more
than just a funny ad about a guy
with too much cookie in his mouth.

(losing himself a bit)

It's about humanity. It's about
life. It's about *character*. We
sympathize with cookie-dry-mouth
guy because deep down, we're all
cookie-dry-mouth guy. Maybe it's a
commercial, but I'll be damned if
I'm not going to tell you a good
story while I sell you a fuckin'
glass of milk!

Michael SLAMS his Clio on the podium to punctuate the speech.

The room just stares at him for a beat.

Wait for it--

They ERUPT in applause. And it only grows. Until they're all
back on their feet, whistling and hollaring. *Here here!*

Michael's lip curls into a half-smirk. He salutes the crowd
and clears the stage -- Clio in one hand, Model #3 in the
other.

AT A CORNER TABLE

Only two people in the room remain seated. The name placards
in front of their dinner plates introduce them: JERRY
BRUCKHEIMER and DON SIMPSON.

They turn to each other and nod in some silent agreement.

EXT. WALDORF ASTORIA HOTEL - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The Manhattan skyline twinkles behind a DJ, who spins early 90s hip hop on a bulky turntable.

Michael plucks a flute of champagne from a tray as he cuts through the crowd. Not the best of minglers, he plants himself against the balcony, takes a sip of brut and stares towards Madison Avenue.

BRUCKHEIMER (O.S.)
You're ready for the big leagues.

Michael glances over his shoulder.

Jerry Bruckheimer grins underneath a mop of untamed hair. Don Simpson struggles to keep his hands stuffed in his pockets.

BRUCKHEIMER (CONT'D)
Jerry Bruckheimer. This is my
associate, Mr. Donald Simpson--

SIMPSON
(chomping his own jaw)
Yeah. Great to meet you.

Bruckheimer and Michael shake. Off Simpson's fidgetting--

MICHAEL
What's his problem?

SIMPSON
What problem? We don't have a
problem, unless you want one--

BRUCKHEIMER
Easy, Don--

SIMPSON
What? Guy says 'we got a problem',
I'm just tryin' to -- know what?
Fuck it. I need to find a bathroom.
(to Michael)
Hey, you know where I can find a
decent spank machine around here?

Michael has no idea what that means.

SIMPSON (CONT'D)
Eh, forget it.

Simpson disappears. Fast.

BRUCKHEIMER

You'll have to excuse my partner.
He simply likes to--

MICHAEL

Use copious amounts of drugs?

Bruckheimer appreciates Michael's blunt attitude.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

If your partner and I have anything
in common, it's that we like to cut
to the chase.

BRUCKHEIMER

Fair enough--

Jerry passes Michael a business card featuring THE DON
SIMPSON / JERRY BRUCKHEIMER LIGHTNING STRIKE LOGO.

BRUCKHEIMER (CONT'D)

You ought to be in the pictures.
And I think you know it.

MICHAEL

What kind of a picture you have in
mind that makes you think I'm the
man to direct it?

BRUCKHEIMER

One that requires somebody who
isn't afraid to pump a little
testosterone into the celluloid.

Simpson returns from the bathroom in even rarer form. His
balled fists are inexplicably bleeding at the knuckles.

SIMPSON

We better roll, Jerry.

Bruckheimer's eyes haven't left Michael.

BRUCKHEIMER

Well? What'd'you say, Mr. Bay?

Michael inhales a lungfull of crisp Manhattan evening before
tucking the business card into his breast pocket. He flashes
Bruckheimer a half-smirk. He's in.

SIMPSON (O.S.)

LET'S. GET. NAUGHTY!

EXT. MIAMI - DADE TIRE COMPANY - DAY

The set vibrates with the magnetic energy of its stars -- a young WILL SMITH and MARTIN LAWRENCE -- rehearsing their tactical skills with a PROFESSIONAL GUN WRANGLER.

SUPER: BAD BOYS - 1995

Michael swings into frame on a dolly, expertly maneuvering the camera across the parking lot of the rusted factory set.

WILL SMITH
Hey, yo, Mike! We get those
rewrites on this scene yet?

Michael adjusts a lens and pops his sunglasses back on.

MICHAEL
Fuck the script!

MARTIN LAWRENCE
Shit, I like the sound of that. You
mean just say whatever the fuck we
want?

MICHAEL
Whatever the fuck you want.

Martin and Will slap palms.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Just one thing! Martin, at the end
of the scene, I want you to tell
Will, 'I love you'.

MARTIN LAWRENCE
You want what now?

MICHAEL
Turn to Will and say, 'I love you.'
Tell your partner you fuckin' love
him. Only don't say it like that,
just say, 'I love you'.

MARTIN LAWRENCE
You don't think that's a little, I
donno, cheesy, Mike? It's cool if
you're workin' out some personal
issues in your free time, but--

Michael steps off the rig.

MICHAEL
Excuse me?

WILL SMITH

Aw, no, it's all good. What he's saying is just that, you know, our characters might not say that kinda shit back and forth.

Michael gets a tic in his cheek.

MICHAEL

And why wouldn't they say that 'kinda shit', Will?

A vein emerges in Michael's forehead.

MARTIN LAWRENCE

'Cause we both, you know, *men*.

MICHAEL

Say the fucking line. Or get the fuck off my set.

MARTIN LAWRENCE

'Get off the set--' yo, what? I'm on television, mother fuck--

MICHAEL

And that's where you'll stay! Because I will recast you with Chris-fucking-Rock before we break for lunch if you don't say the god damn line.

Michael takes his seat behind the camera. Martin stands frozen under the lights. End of fucking discussion.

WILL SMITH

Yo, just say the line, man--

Martin shoves Will. They take their places.

MICHAEL

Action.

IN THE SCENE

Martin swallows hard. Takes a beat. Doesn't want to say it. But he feels the icy stare of Michael from behind the camera.

MARTIN LAWRENCE

I love you... man.

Michael cracks a half-smirk. *Close enough*.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - STREETS - DAY

The aftermath of an action sequence litters the hill street: wrecked cable car, destroyed parking meters, pockets of fire.

SUPER: THE ROCK - 1996

Crew members dash left and right. Michael moves with them.

MICHAEL

Send the Ferrari on my count!

He hoists a camera over his shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

In three! Two! One! GO--!

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR relays the cue into a walkie--

THE GRUMBLE OF A SUPERCHARGED ENGINE BUILDS IN THE DISTANCE--

And a moment later, the clear blue horizon is broken--

By a YELLOW FERRARI leaping over the hill!

It soars through the air, hitting the asphalt with a CRASH.

But the Ferrari's tires struggle to grip the decline.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(into walkie)

Ferrari's comin' in too hot! Brake
brake brake!

Crew members scatter from their positions.

The AD leaps out of the way.

But Michael holds his ground. In fact -- he pushes in.

The Ferrari fishtails before slipping into an uncontrolled skid. The backend of the car wipes towards Michael like a sithe. It comes to a full stop an inch away from his lens.

He holds on the shot for a beat.

MICHAEL

Aaaaand. Cut.

He casually drops the camera from his shoulder.

A STUNT DRIVER crawls out of the car, legs reduced to jelly.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALT DISNEY STUDIOS - LOT - DAY

A COSTUME DESIGNER, late 60s with decades worth of nicotine and makeup caked on her face, sucks on a Twizzler.

SUPER: ARMAGEDDON - 1998

SPACESUITS hang from a rack, a dozen styles and colors. Michael examines each one while a DISNEY EXEC chews him out.

DISNEY EXEC

The budget's already at one-fifty.
I can't give you three more!

MICHAEL

I need more explosions.

DISNEY EXEC

But we've got explosions!

MICHAEL

CG-fucking-I! Eiffel Tower! Empire
State Building! I'm blowin' 'em up.

Michael turns to an ORANGE SPACESUIT and smacks it with the back of his hand.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(to the Costume Designer)
This is the one.

DISNEY EXEC

Fine. Three million. But that's--

The Disney Exec is shoved aside as the Costume Designer snaps an elastic tag on the suit.

PA (O.S.)

Mr. Bay!

Michael blocks the sun with his hand.

A PA, 21 going on 12, sprints across the lot.

MICHAEL

What is it, kid?

Hands on his knees, the PA catches his breath while he summons up the courage to look Mr. Bay in the eye.

PA

It's... it's your *father*.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - VIDEO VILLAGE - DAY

A BANK OF MONITORS rises in the cavernous soundstage.

Michael stands at its center watching silent fuzz. Then--

All twelve screens light up with the same grainy videofeed:
Jim Bay -- old, frail, dying -- in a distant hospital bed.

Michael keeps his emotions in check as best as he can.

MICHAEL

Dad?

INT. HOSPITAL - MR. BAY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The steady BEEP of an EKG emphasizes the quiet of the
colorless room. The sort of room you hope isn't your last.

MR. BAY

Hey, Michael. How are--

A COUGH cuts him short.

INTERCUT MICHAEL / MR. BAY

Michael raises a fist to his mouth.

MICHAEL

It's okay, Dad. Try not to talk--

MR. BAY

No. I need to. I-- I asked your
mother to step out for a minute so
that I could tell you--

The glow of the screens bounces off of Michael's pupils.

MICHAEL

Tell me what, Dad?

Mr. Bay finishes a sip of water. He speaks deliberately.

MR. BAY

You were always meant to become a
great director, Michael.

MICHAEL

I, I don't understand--

MR. BAY

Your *real* father, Mich--

Another COUGH incapacitates Mr. Bay.

MICHAEL
Who, Dad?

Mr. Bay finds his voice.

MR. BAY
I'm sorry I didn't watch
more'a'your games, son--

MICHAEL
Who? Who is my real father, Dad?

MR. BAY
Just promise me. One day... you'll
make movies... for... *four*--

MICHAEL
For what, Dad? *For who?*

A final COUGHING SPELL triggers a SPAZM.

The EKG spikes -- *BE-BE-BE-BE-BE-BEEEEEP!*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Dad! No, Dad--!

Michael reaches for his father...

On screen, NURSES rush into the hospital room. The videofeed abruptly cuts out.

But the long, drawn-out TONE of a flatlining heart lingers.

Michael hangs his head, his palm pressed firmly against the screen, a vibrating blue static filling the bank of monitors.

THE BLUE STATIC RIPPLES ACROSS THE CENTER CONSOLE--

DISSOLVE TO:

A PAIR OF THUMBS AND INDEX FINGERS FRAME:

--the clear blue coastal waters lapping gently against the hull of the USS Oklahoma. Gulls squawk in the distance, the wind rustles the leaves. And for a moment, all is calm.

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Action.

KA-BOOM.

The world shakes as plumes of orange fire fill the screen.

EXT. HAWAII - US NAVAL BASE - DAY

The clouds of smoke clear to reveal a bustling set.

SUPER: PEARL HARBOR - 2001

Grips assemble light stands on the beach. A barge hauls a dozen airplanes across the harbor. A helicopter zooms overhead. Michael and his AD walk past a row of palm trees.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

How was that, Mike?

Michael signs a stack of documents on a clipboard.

MICHAEL

More. We can't have enough explosions on this one.

(looking AD in the eye)

This is my shot at a four feature franchise.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Mike, we're over-budget. Studio's threatening to drop us to PG-13--

MICHAEL

Was the attack on Pearl Harbor rated PG-13?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hey, don't shoot the messenger.

MICHAEL

Me? No.

(shoves the clipboard back into the AD's chest)

I blow him up.

Real fear registers in the AD's eyes. Until Michael winks, and gives him a squeeze on the shoulder.

EXT. PARAMOUNT LOT - CECIL B DEMILLE BUILDING - NIGHT

Amid the pale darkness and ominous quiet of the empty lot, the glow from a second story window catches our eye.

PRESIDENT (PRE-LAP)

Thank you for agreeing to meet at this late hour, Mr. Spielberg--

INT. DEMILLE BUILDING - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The President, 60s, invites Steven Spielberg, now 50s, to have a seat on a rawhide couch, passing him a tumbler of priceless scotch, neat.

SPIELBERG

What can I say? I serve at the
liesure of the President.

The President slides a manilla folder stamped 'TOP SECRET' across the coffee table.

PRESIDENT

Our latest acquisition.

Spielberg opens the file. His face softens at the revelation:

Watermarked photos of HASBRO'S *TRANSFORMERS* ACTION FIGURES.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Wanted you to be the first to know.

SPIELBERG

You're making a feature--?

PRESIDENT

A franchise, Steven. We're making a
franchise.

Spielberg runs his finger over the image of OPTIMUS PRIME.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

We need our own tentpole series to
compete with the other majors, what
with *Harry Potter* over at Warners,
Spider-Man at Sony, World War II at
Disney--

Spielberg looks up, not sure he heard that right.

SPIELBERG

World War II?

PRESIDENT

I'm afraid so.

The President moves to the window, gazing across his lot.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Michael Bay has become obsessed
with the idea of helming his own
franchise.

Spielberg eyes the President carefully.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

And because Disney wants to keep him close, they're gonna give it to him. By any means necessary.

The President pivots to Spielberg.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Disney is prepared to greelight a *Pearl Harbor* sequel. Two, actually, with an option for a third. Four films in all, potentially.

SPIELBERG

I'm not sure I understand. A *Pearl Harbor* sequel? You don't mean--?

PRESIDENT

It all begins next summer with a two hundred million dollar action-packed blockbuster: '*D-Day*'.

Spielberg grips the table--

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Bay's making his *Saving Private Ryan*, Steven. And he's already got Chevy and Coca-Cola on board with lucrative product placement deals.

SPIELBERG

I can't-- I--
(squeezing his eyes shut)
Have they set a release date?

The President takes a moment to find the strength.

PRESIDENT

Of course. June 6th.

Spielberg, looking like he's going to be sick, drops his face into his hands.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

That is, unless Mr. Bay were to believe that he might be better off directing a different franchise all together.

Spielberg lifts his head.

SPIELBERG

You need someone to convince
Michael Bay to direct *Transformers*.
(beat)
Why not offer it to him yourself?

The President clutches the dossier.

PRESIDENT

I have a hunch, Steven, that you
and Mr. Bay might have a certain --
kismit connection.

With a knowing smile, he offers Spielberg the top secret
file. Reluctantly, Spielberg accepts it.

THE RHYTHM OF ROTARY BLADES CHURNING--

INT. / EXT. HELICOPTER - DUSK

--as a charter helicopter's shadow rides over the panorama of
East LA. Michael takes in the view from the open side door.

MICHAEL

(into headset)
Wanna tell me where we're headed?

Spielberg sits just behind Michael.

SPIELBERG

(into headset)
Thought you and I could play a
little catch.

Michael unleashes a half-smirk and returns to the view.

He focuses on the GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY below -- *and for a
moment, he swears he sees A GIANT ROBOT ducking behind it.*

Michael leans forward, blinking rapidly -- and it's gone.

EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE - DUSK

The helicopter is actually one of THREE soaring over LA.

PILOT

(into headset)
Initiate flight pattern alpha.

TWO DECOY CHOPPERS split from of OUR CHOPPER.

Our chopper throttles onward towards DODGER STADIUM.

EXT. DODGER STADIUM - FIELD - DUSK

A GLOVE CLASPS A BASEBALL WITH A SATISFYING *THWACK*.

Michael and Steven play catch in the outfield of an otherwise empty stadium, an orange sunset filling the sky above them. The helicopter is parked between second and third base.

MICHAEL

(off the helicopter)

Did you know that there were over thirteen-hundred supporting Allied aircraft deployed on D-Day?

Michael throws... Steven catches...

SPIELBERG

Yep. I sure did.

Steven throws... Michael catches...

MICHAEL

Hey, look who I'm talking to. Of course you knew that.

Michael throws... Steven catches...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'd love to pick your brain a bit. Maybe you can show me how you rigged those flamethrowers.

Steven holds on to the ball. He crosses over to Michael.

SPIELBERG

Michael. This D-Day film.

(beat)

It's not right. In fact, the whole *franchise* is wrong.

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL

I don't think I'm following--

SPIELBERG

The world is dealing with enough *real* war these days. What audiences want is to return to the optimism of their youth. To have some *fun* at the movies again.

Steven plants his hand on Michael's shoulder.

SPIELBERG (CONT'D)
They want to see kick-ass cars
morphing into giant alien robots.

It was too good to be true.

MICHAEL
You didn't just bring me here for a
catch, did you.

SPIELBERG
Michael. I want you to direct
Transformers.

MICHAEL
Those action figures from the 80s?
The cartoons? No, that's not me--
(beat)
That's you. That's right up your
alley. Why don't you direct it?

Steven wishes he could. But he's pretty good at hiding it.

SPIELBERG
I'm too busy, what with making a
fourth *Indiana Jones*--

MICHAEL
A fourth?

SPIELBERG
And I believe *Transformers* could be
your opportunity to make a fourth.
Hell, maybe even a *fifth*!

Michael isn't sold just yet.

SPIELBERG (CONT'D)
Go to Hasbro. Take the tour, and
hear what they have to say. If
you're still not interested, well --
I'll tell you everything you want
to know about rigging a
flamethrower.

Steven pats Michael's shoulder and heads to the chopper.

MICHAEL
Either way, maybe we can have
another catch sometime?

Steven looks back at Michael.

SPIELBERG

Come again?

MICHAEL

I said maybe we could have another catch. You and me.

(beat)

Talk about something other than movies, you know?

Steven laughs. The deflective sort of laugh.

SPIELBERG

Of course! Of course--

He signals the pilot to fire up the rotors. As the blades start to spin, the FIELD LIGHTS POP ON.

Michael spends another beat alone in the outfield, staring into the blinding lights -- *and suddenly, the entire stadium is filled with 50,000 JIM BAYS, silently watching him. In unison, all 50,000 suddenly rise to their feet--*

STEVEN SPIELBERG (O.S.)

You coming, son?

Steven awaits him on board, the surrounding stadium empty.

Michael stalks towards the helicopter.

A THUNDEROUS BOOM--

INT. HASBRO HEADQUARTERS - TRANSFORMERS EXHIBIT - DAY

--as a pair of massive STAINLESS STEEL DOORS crack open, revealing a magnificent, if sterile, showroom beyond.

A braced leg limps across the concrete floor. It belongs to DAN TRUMAN, 50s, a career Hasbro man. With a soft Southern drawl, he leads Michael across the threshold.

TRUMAN

Welcome to Cybertron.

Michael stands in awe of the exhibit: TWELVE GIANT ROBOTS loom over their automotive alter-egos.

MICHAEL

They look just like the cartoons, only--

Starscream. Megatron. Optimus Prime.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
More than meets the eye?

A steely-eyed, stiletto-heeled brunette of about 25 click-clacks towards Michael.

LAUREN
 Lauren Stoner. Paramount Public
 Relations.
 (with a clever grin)
 I'm looking forward to working with
 you, Mr. Bay.

By the look on Michael's face, he may have met his match -- in fact, he might be the underdog.

MICHAEL
 Working with me on what? I haven't
 agreed to anything just yet.

LAUREN
 Well then.
 (turning to Truman)
 I'd better let Mr. Truman finish
 the tour.

Truman swings his leg around and continues. Michael follows, with Lauren click-clacking a step behind him.

TRUMAN
Transformers wasn't just a silly
 cartoon about aliens from
 outerspace who could change from
 cars into robots and back again.

Michael cranes his neck as he passes underneath each robot. You could swear Optimus was following him around the room--

TRUMAN (CONT'D)
 It was really about big ideas, like
 a civilization trying to fight for
 what's good in the universe.

Michael gravitates towards a yellow VW BEATLE and its counterpart, BUMBLEBEE, at the far end of the hall. He runs his palm over the hood of the car.

Lauren moves in to seal the deal. She's done her research.

LAUREN
 And even bigger ideas, like the
 special relationship between, say,
 a teenage boy and his first car.

Michael stares deep into Bumblebee's eyes--

LAUREN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 We all wish we could aspire to
 something great. Change into
 something bigger than ourselves.
 Transform into the best version of
 ourselves that we can be.

BUMBLEBEE'S EYES GLOW -- BURN -- RIGHT BACK AT MICHAEL.

TRUMAN
 'Used to dream of directing a movie
 version of *Transformers* myself.
 (lost in his thoughts)
 Turned out God had different plans.

Truman flexes the creaky hinges of his metallic leg brace.
 Michael glances over his shoulder.

MICHAEL
 This one. What do you call it?

TRUMAN
 Him? That's Bumblebee.
 (smiling)
 He's my favorite.

Michael double-taps his knuckles on the hood of the Beatle.

MICHAEL
 Yeah. I think he's my favorite too.

Michael turns to Lauren with a mischevievous half-smirk.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 But I might need an upgraded model.

AN ENGINE GROWLS--

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

--as a YELLOW 1977 CAMERO -- almost identical to Michael's
 first car -- speeds up the entrance to the famed observatory.

SHIA LABEAUF and MEGAN FOX jump out of the car and stare into
 the hills, their jaws dropped. Megan touches Shia's hand--

And a fountain of sparks bubbles up from behind the trees.

It's underwhelming. More 'fizzle' than 'explosion'.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Cut.

Megan and Shia relax. The crew scrambles to reset the shot.

Michael swaggers towards the pyrotechics rig.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Not doin' it for me, Pat. I want
more color, more pop, more flare.

PAT TUBACH, a burly VX supervisor with more grey in his hair than he ought to have, saw this one coming a mile away.

PAT

Look, I'm sorry Michael, but our
equipment creates a shower effect.
That's what was in the specs. It's
just not capable of soaring missiles
and various color patterns.

MICHAEL

(off the rig)

This is a fucking *sparkler*. What I
need is--

And a big 10,000K lightbulb goes off in Michael's brain.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK OBSERVATORY - LATER THAT NIGHT

'AMERICAN PATRIOT FIRECRACKER' brands the side of a small
rocket being wheeled-in on a dolly. A GRIP props it upright.

GRIP

Biggest one they make, sir.

Michael's half-smirk stretches ear-to-ear.

MICHAEL

Gracias, Jorge.

GRIP

It's Josh, sir--

MICHAEL

Places, everybody!

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK OBSERVATORY - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A YELLOW 1977 CAMERO roars up the driveway--

Shia Labeauf and Megan Fox jump out of the car and stare into the hills, their jaws dropped. Megan touches Shia's hand--

AND A MASSIVE EXPLOSION OF SPARKS ERUPTS FROM BEHIND THE TREES! WHISTLES AND MISSLES AND COLORS AND FLARES!

The embers illuminating his face, Michael watches with pride.

EXT. ARCLIGHT THEATER - NIGHT

Hundreds of pumped-up movie-goers file into the lobby of the Cinerama Dome on Sunset Boulevard.

An INTERN, 19, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, grasps his ticket stub for the opening night showing of *Transformers*.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Michael conducts Pat and his VX TEAM as they rig explosives to the Optimus Prime PETERBILT 379 TRUCK--

MICHAEL

I need it to roll over completely!
A full somersault, people!

The crew labors under the harsh lights.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

In three, two, one--!

The charges are detonated--!

With a dull THUD, the side paneling of the Peterbilt collapses, a tire deflates and the semi shifts its weight to one side. No somersault.

Michael goes ballistic.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Go again! This time get it right!

CUT TO:

INT. ARCLIGHT THEATER - CINERAMA DOME - NIGHT

The Intern takes his seat in the packed house. The cacophany of anxious chatter fades as the lights go down and the projector fires up.

INT. EDITING BAY - NIGHT

Michael slumps in an editing bay next to his EDITOR. Footage of fighting robots plays in slow motion over a giant screen.

Michael slams his fist into the control panel.

MICHAEL

I can't fucking tell them apart.

EDITOR

Excuse me, sir?

MICHAEL

How are supposed to know who's winning if we can't distinguish the good guy from the bad guy?

The Editor, out of ideas, takes a SLURP of a soft drink -- but Michael grabs his cup and chucks it across the suite.

INT. ARCLIGHT THEATER - CINERAMA DOME - NIGHT

The Intern shoves a handful of popcorn into his mouth, but can barely keep his jaw closed long enough to chew it.

ON SCREEN

Optimus Prime is revealed for the first time.

IN THE THEATER

The audience cheers. A few actually trade high-fives.

INT. MICHAEL'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE TRANSFORMERS SOUNDTRACK plays through a pair of noise-cancelling headphones wrapped around Michael's head.

He removes them, and the MUSIC FADES.

He clicks off an MP3 player, and finishes scratching a note onto a legal pad: *Music needs to be more explosive.*

Clean lines and modern finishes define the palacial condo. The sort of apartment featured in *Architectural Digest*. Michael crosses to a glass door that leads out onto--

A PATIO

--overlooking Miami's South Beach, its neon pinks and greens proof of an energetic nightlife somewhere in the distance.

Michael grips the balcony, taking in the ocean air.

MICHAEL

I could've added another explosion.

LAUREN (O.S.)

Nonsense. You did your best--

Lauren clutches the neck of her silk robe, the breeze accenting the curves underneath.

MICHAEL

I don't want to do my best. I want to do *his* best.

She takes his chin in her hand.

LAUREN

Who? Whose best?

Michael averts her eyes, looking at the twinkling city below.

MICHAEL

You wouldn't understand. The stress -- it's enough to make someone, I don't know -- steal a motorcycle and jump it off of the roof of a hotel into the pool.

Lauren scrolls through her phone.

LAUREN

I wasn't going to show you this, but... Michael, this is an email forwarded to me from the President. An intern wrote it after a screening at the Arclight tonight.

Michael's interest is piqued. She reads from the phone.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

"Dear Mr. President--

INT. ARCLIGHT THEATER - CINERAMA DOME - NIGHT

As the end credits roll, the theater erupts in jubilation.

LAUREN (V.O.)
 "I'm an intern here at Paramount
 and I wanted to let you know that I
 attended the opening night
 screening of *Transformers* tonight."

The Intern embraces the joy, meeting a request for a high-five from a complete stranger.

LAUREN (V.O.)
 "The entire theater felt like it
 was going to explode--"

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

Michael moves away from the balcony, now listening intently.

LAUREN
 "When it was over, I had tears
 streaming down my face--"

EXT. ARCLIGHT THEATER - NIGHT

The Intern blends into a crowd that still buzzes with adrenaline, exuberance, joy.

LAUREN (V.O.)
 "It was the most fun I've had at a
 movie in a long time. I felt like I
 was fourteen years old again."

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

Lauren finishes reading the email.

LAUREN
 "Anyway, I think it's going to be
 huge. Have a great weekend."

She sets the phone down on a table as she struts towards Michael. She wraps her arms around his neck, kisses his face.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
 See? You are the best, Michael Bay.
 (beat)
 Now why don't you come inside and
 join me for a nice, hot bath.

She drops her robe and strolls behind the glass door, posing her naked body. But Michael's mind is 6,800 miles away.

MICHAEL

I wonder how it'll play in China.

Disappointed, she vanishes into the living room.

Michael returns to his ocean view.

THE PULSING BEAT OF THE DISTANT HOUSE MUSIC RISES OVER--

INSERT

VARIETY - 'TRANSFORMERS' NABS HEFTY HAUL

LA TIMES - NEW FRANCHISE COULD 'TRANSFORM' BAY'S CAREER

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER - BAY EXPECTED TO RETURN FOR 'TRANSFORMERS' SEQUEL

INT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES - PRESS ROOM - DAY

A herd of anxious reporters pack a conference room.

The Paramount Pictures logo serves as a backdrop to a podium center-stage -- not unlike the briefing room of the White House. Lauren steals the attention of the room.

LAUREN

Ladies and gentlemen. It is my pleasure to introduce--

(beat)

The President of Paramount Pictures.

The press stands in deference as the President makes his way to the podium.

PRESIDENT

Good afternoon. It is my humble honor to stand before you today and announce that we at Paramount Pictures--

Photographers snap photos, reporters hold recording devices.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

--in association with Steven Spielberg, have greenlit *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

A collective gasp is followed by excited chatter.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

And furthermore, I'm prepared to
announce that its director shall be
none other--

(suspenseful beat)

Than Mr. Michael Bay.

The media hoops and hollars as Michael crosses the stage. A few hats fly up in the air.

Michael grips the sides of the podium. The room settles.

MICHAEL

I'm not great at, uh, you know.
Speaking. In front of a lot of
people. Like this.

(beat)

I'm used to screaming at them as
they scatter around my set.

The joke earns a soft chuckle. Michael flinches when a photographer snaps a flash just underneath him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I, um. I just want to say, first of
all, thank you Mr. President--

The President bows gracefully.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

--for this great honor, and just
know that I won't let you down.

(beat)

Because I know that with great
directorial power, as well as back-
end points, liscencing fees and
global merch sales percentages,
comes great responsiblity.

The male reporters eat up every word. The female reporters struggle to figure out what the hell he's talking about.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

And that's why this time, we're
blowin' up the god damn pyramids.

The men cheer. The women mostly shrug.

But Lauren studies him from the sidelines -- as if she's fearful that Michael's success has started to go to his head.

EXT. GIZA, EGYPT - PYRAMIDS - DAY

The rich brown of the Egyptian desert spreads underneath the clear mid-day sky.

FROM A BIRD'S EYE VIEW--

We might think we were watching the original builders of the pyramids haul stones through the sand in a single-file line--

BUT DROPPING IN CLOSER--

We realize it's actually the CREW, 150 in all, marching production equipment to the base of the Great Pyramid.

Michael, decked out in sunglasses, a designer headscarf and facial stubble, carries a tripod over his shoulder.

A barefoot MEGAN FOX shoves her way through the weary parade of crew, a pair of HIGH HEELS dangling from her finger.

MEGAN FOX

Michael! We need to talk--

Michael doesn't break his stride. Megan Fox digs her way through the sand until she's right up on his back.

MEGAN FOX (CONT'D)

You have to be fucking kidding me with these shoes.

MICHAEL

They're not shoes, Megan. They're eight-hundred dollar Jimmy Choo patent leather sandals. *Sandals*. You know, for the desert.

MEGAN FOX

They're absurd. And impossible to walk in, let alone run from *giant fucking alien robots* in!

MICHAEL

Yeah, well, thanks to those giant fucking alien robots, you can afford to wear shoes like that.

Megan Fox, stunned, marches after Michael.

MEGAN FOX

I don't want to wear shoes like this. No woman in her right mind wants to wear shoes like this. Especially not in fucking sand--!

Megan Fox loses her footing and faceplants. Michael finally turns around. He offers her a hand, but she insists on pushing herself up. A steady stream of crew floats past them.

MICHAEL

(exhausted by her)

The shoes are a part of your character. They represent your desire to maintain a sexual prowess despite the impending apocalypse.

MEGAN FOX

They represent a man with too much money and not enough respect for the opposite sex.

Michael takes off his aviators, narrowing his gaze.

MICHAEL

During filming of 'The Birds', Alfred Hitchcock made Tippi Hedren live in an attic with actual crows for five days. She suffered cuts to her face, bruises on her body -- but after those five days, she'd developed a genuine fear of birds. The result? One of best films ever made.

MEGAN FOX

Yeah, well, I don't know what script you've been reading, but this ain't The god-damn Birds--

MICHAEL

(irate)

You will wear the fucking shoes until your feet blister and bleed and I'll catch every drop of it on my IMAX sixty-millimeter camera. Because that's what an actress does. She bleeds for her director. Understood?

Megan Fox tilts her head in disbelief.

MEGAN FOX

You're not a director. You're a dictator.

(beat)

You're not Hitchcock, Michael. You're *Hitler*.

Megan Fox stomps back towards her trailer. Michael absorbs the blow, throws his sunglasses back on, tosses the tripod over his shoulder and rejoins the stream of crew members.

Left in their wake is a sweaty DISAFFECTED CREW MEMBER who overheard the entire conversation.

THE 'EXTRA' THEME MUSIC--

EXT. THE GROVE - EXTRA SET - DAY

--introduces MARIO LOPEZ. He stands on a riser above an enthusiastic crowd at the outdoor mall.

MARIO LOPEZ

(into camera)

Tonight's top story. *Transformers 2* has taken the Fourth of July box office by storm. But *Extra* has landed an exclusive interview with an eye-witness crew member who claims that when it comes to the relationship between Megan Fox and Michael Bay, there's plenty more than meets the eye--

INT. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DISAFFECTED CREW MEMBER

The Disaffected Crew Member sits in shadow, as if his identity needs protecting.

DISAFFECTED CREW MEMBER

(distorted voice)

--and then Mr. Bay told her some story about bird watchin', and then he was like, you look hot naked so shut up, and Megan Fox was like, shut up I know! But you need'da stop starin' at my be-hind, or I'll smack you so hard, Hitler!

MARIO LOPEZ

Are you suggesting that in the midst of a lover's quarrel, Megan Fox compared Michael Bay to the founder of the Nazi party?

DISAFFECTED CREW MEMBER

Sure. I guess. Say, who do I see 'bout turnin' this check into cash--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE GROVE - DAY

Mario grins into the camera.

MARIO LOPEZ

You heard it here first. Michael Bay and Megan Fox had sex on the set of *Transformers 2*, after which Fox referred to Bay as 'Hitler'. Perhaps in a few months we can expect his sperm and her egg to 'transform' into a baby. Autobot. With a tiny Hitler mustache.

Mario holds his smile for as long as he can.

PRODUCTION GUY (O.S.)

And cut!

MARIO LOPEZ

Jesus, fuck. Who wrote that?

Mario lights up a cigarette as fast as humanly possible. He's instantly met with groans of disapproval from the crowd.

MARIO LOPEZ (CONT'D)

What are you looking at? Go eat another Cinnabon, you fat losers.

EXT. MICHAEL'S CONDO - PATIO - NIGHT

Lauren leans against the balcony, her hair kicked around by the breeze. A few FIREWORKS pop over the ocean. Somewhere far away, a marching band belts out a patriotic ballad.

Michael watches Lauren from the sliding glass door.

MICHAEL

Hey. You know it's not true, right?
I didn't sleep with Megan Fox.

She turns, her eyes pleading, a tear running down her face.

LAUREN

I don't care if you slept with her,
Michael. I just want to know if the
rest is true.

Michael steps onto the patio.

MICHAEL

Which part? That I slept with her
stunt double? The costume designer?
The girl from craft services? *What?*

LAUREN

The *rest* of it.
(beat)
Are you really such a monster on
set? Is that who Michael Bay is?

Michael tries to take her in his arms, but she tightens up.

MICHAEL

Yes, Lauren, I demand perfection.
But deep down, it's only because I
want his approval.

She shakes her head.

LAUREN

Who's approval, Michael?

Michael turns a cold shoulder.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Your father -- your real father --
he's dead, Michael. And whoever
this other man is that you're
searching for -- what are the odds
you're really going to find him?

Another firework CRACKLES in the distance.

MICHAEL

I gave up searching for him a long
time ago. I figured if anything, he
should have to come find me.

A SUPERNOVA OF A FIREWORK BURSTS OVERHEAD -- the chandelier
of golden sparks cascade and vanish into thin air. Lauren
cradles Michael's head, stroking his hair.

LAUREN

You need to be careful, Michael.
Stories like this -- these rumors --
they could be dangerous. They'll
take away your franchise if you
don't handle it right.

MICHAEL

Then I guess I'm glad to know the
best PR agent in the business.

THE SYMPHONY OF A FIREWORKS GRAND FINALE GIVES WAY TO--

EXT. CHINESE THEATRE - RED CARPET PREMIERE - NIGHT

--the needy cries of the paparazzi.

Michael walks the red carpet with Lauren on his arm.

GOTCHA REPORTER

Michael, is it true that you're a
genocidal facist on set? Is that
why Megan Fox has declined to
attend tonight's premiere?

Michael, clearly irked by the comment--

MICHAEL

Of course not. Megan was just being
Megan. She tends to get testy
whenever she's on her--

Lauren steps in.

LAUREN

Megan Fox is currently shooting
another feature, but rest assured,
she and Michael have a wonderful
working relationship. And I think
that's exactly what you'll see on
screen in just a few minutes.

She winks, smiles and drags Michael by the arm.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

(under her breath)
Just leave the talking to me--

MICHAEL

Alright. I trust you.

She doesn't hear that too often.

LAUREN

Yeah?

Michael doesn't say it very often.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

They turn the corner to move inside the theater--

INT. CHINESE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

--where they bump into Steven Spielberg.

SPIELBERG
Hello, Michael.

Michael looks surprised. Lauren, awestruck.

LAUREN
Mr. Spielberg, I--

SPIELBERG
Would you excuse us for a minute?

Michael nods. Spielberg waits until Lauren's out of earshot.

MICHAEL
Here to whisk me off to Fenway?

SPIELBERG
I'm here to discuss Megan Fox.
(serious beat)
I think you should fire her.

MICHAEL
Yeah, right. *Maxim* just named her
'Sexiest Woman Alive'. I don't
think that would go over well--

SPIELBERG
Let me rephrase that. You are going
to fire her.

Michael realizes he's serious.

MICHAEL
Hey, I know her comments were out
of line, but I trust that Lauren
has it covered.

SPIELBERG
I don't. And if the situation
spirals out of control, consider
this *Transformers* your last.

Spielberg spins him around to face a paparazzi, wrapping a jovial arm around Michael's shoulder.

SPIELBERG (CONT'D)
(through gritted teeth)
Smile.

Michael manages a quarter-smirk.

EXT. THE IVY - DAY

A NAVY BLUE BUGATTI purrs to a stop. The door pops open and a VALET jumps out from behind the wheel. He tosses the keys off to Michael, who jogs out of a discrete back door exit.

MICHAEL
Gracias, Jorge.

VALET
It's Tyler--

Just as Michael is about to step into the car--

Lauren intercepts him, smacking him with a rolled up copy of 'Variety'.

LAUREN
"FOX NIXED FOR TRANSFORMERS 3?"
(furious beat)
When were you gonna tell me?!

MICHAEL
Hey! Relax. I'm just moving in
another direction artistically.

LAUREN
Bullshit. You didn't trust my
ability to handle it.

MICHAEL
IT WASN'T ME!
(checking his volume)
It wasn't me, okay? It was Steven--

LAUREN
Oh, Jesus. You would do anything
that man says. Anything to earn his
approval. You sad little boy--

Michael knows she's right.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Well enjoy your cars and your
condos and your big action movie
franchise. Enjoy it all alone.

She storms off. Michael clenches his jaw, watching her go.

CUT TO:

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DUSK

As the sun sets over the picturesque coastline--

The Bugatti rips up the PCH--

Past a billboard for *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*.

JUNKET REPORTER (V.O.)
Three *Transformers* films back-to-back. That can't be easy--

INT. / EXT. BUGATTI - DUSK

Michael channels all of his emotions into the car--

MICHAEL (V.O.)
No, no it's not. In fact, I thought they were going to give me another year in between two and three, but it doesn't look like that's the case. Hopefully I don't go crazy.

The car speeds around the cliffs of Big Sur--

JUNKET REPORTER (V.O.)
The story is being kept top secret. But is there anything at all you can tell us about the next movie?

The car, going way too fast, hugs a curve--

MICHAEL (V.O.)
Like you said, I tend to keep things top secret. But--

The tires catch the gravel of the shoulder--

MICHAEL (V.O.)
I can tell you one thing.

The Bugatti spins out, doing multiple 360s along the narrow strip of ocean-sprayed road--

Michael helplessly flips the wheel back and forth--

And the car finally comes to a stop, the front fender hanging precariously over the edge.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
We're goin' to the fuckin' moon.

A VIOLENT WIND WHIPS--

EXT. CHICAGO - TRUMP TOWER - ROOFTOP - DAY

--as Michael leans into it from the ledge of the skyscraper.

100 STORIES BELOW

The traffic bustles across Michigan Avenue. But the CITY NOISE fades as Michael's HEARTBEAT thumps in his ears.

A stoic gaze fills his eyes before he slams them shut.

And steps off the ledge.

...

WHOOSH!

The wings of a BASE JUMPING SUIT expand, and Michael is flying through the concrete jungle gym of downtown Chicago.

He catches up to FOUR BASE JUMPERS mid-flight, and aims a hand-held digital camera at them.

THE BASE JUMPER CAPTAIN signals the team with his gloved hand -- *three, two, one.*

FOUR PARACHUTES POP ALONG THE CHICAGO SKYLINE

But not a fifth.

Michael pulls his cord -- no dice. He pulls harder. Frantic.

Time slows down. His heartrate climbs. The pavement encroaches.

He nearly gives up, but -- fuck it -- he rips the cord again.

POOOOF!

A *TRANSFORMERS: DARK OF THE MOON* LOGO covers the deployed parachute. Better late than never. Michael floats safely onto Rush Street. He inhales a few deep breaths. He's alive.

BUT A FIREFIGHT BREAKS OUT IN THE DECEPTICON-RUINED STREETS.

This shot isn't over yet. Soldiers fire machine gun rounds. Cars flip over left and right. Building facades collapse.

Michael strides through his own private warzone, the crumpled parachute billowing behind him--

It catches the wind, puffing up until it smothers the frame--

CUT TO:

WE'RE UNDERWATER, LOOKING UP

A hazy sky shimmers somewhere above the surface.

Michael, completely submerged, eyes wide open. A few bubbles escape his nostrils while a gentle current carries his hair.

Otherwise, he's still.

Calm.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(muffled from the surface)
Michael Bay, huh? Well well well--

EXT. PLAYBOY MANSION - THE GROTTO - DAY

Michael bursts through the surface, combing his fingers through his hair as he fills his lungs.

He's surrounded by PLAYBOY BUNNIES... and LEBRON JAMES.

LEBRON JAMES
That last Trans-morphers movie
stunk!

Michael eyes Lebron up and down. He could take him.

MICHAEL
Transformers.

A BUNNY hands LeBron a colorful Tiki drink.

LEBRON JAMES
Hey, what's that one chick like.
The freaky one--

Lebron SNAPS his fingers right in Michael's face. Snap. Snap.

MICHAEL
Could you please not do--

LEBRON JAMES
Megan Fox! Oooh, I'd love to slam
dunk on *that*, know what I mean?
(he means it)
You got her number?

Michael's still not over it.

MICHAEL
It's Transformers.

LEBRON JAMES

What?

Nothing. Michael dips his head back into the water.

LEBRON JAMES (CONT'D)

(pulling from his drink)

You look like you need to relax, man. And I should know. I just won a World Championship. In case you didn't hear, it was a journey riddled with obstacles. Both personal and professional. Shit, now that's a story--

(slapping the water)

A story! Man, I know what you should make a movie about!

Even with his head halfway underwater, Michael has no interest in hearing this pitch.

MICHAEL

I haven't been keeping up with football lately--

LEBRON JAMES

Basketball.

MICHAEL

What?

Nothing.

LEBRON JAMES

I'm not talking about me. I'm talking about the Sun Gym gang.

MICHAEL

Never heard of it.

LEBRON JAMES

They were a bunch of bodybuilders in Miami. Got caught up in this crazy money scheme. Ended up kidnapping and torturing some dude. Murdered a couple people. I heard they actually barbecued the fingers of one victim just to make sure no one ID-ed him.

Michael sits up, intrigued.

MICHAEL
Barbecued? Like on a grill? That's
 actually--

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 Pretty funny.

LEBRON JAMES
 Fucked up, right?

LeBron gives Michael a cockeye as he takes another pull from his drink.

LEBRON JAMES (CONT'D)
 Either way, *those* dudes were a
 serious bunch of characters.

MICHAEL
 Characters. Sounds like it.

LEBRON JAMES
 For real. And the craziest part is
 that they did it all for like,
almost no money.

The wheels are turning in Michael's head. Pumping. Grinding.

BUNNY (O.S.)
 Mr. Bay? Can I get you something?

Michael finally takes his eyes off of LeBron when a gorgeous BUNNY runs a finger down his cheek.

BUNNY (CONT'D)
 Anything your heart desires.

The Bunny bites her lip.

Michael sprouts a half-smirk.

CHURCH BELLS CHIME--

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH - DAY

--as the sun bounces off of the golden domes capping the mission revival church.

Michael's BLACK MASERATI pulls up to the curb, prompting a pair of NUNS shuffling down the sidewalk to rubberneck.

Michael remotely locks the car and bounds up the stairs. He enters the church. Beside the doorway stands a sign:

RECONCILIATION 12:30 - 2:45pm

INT. GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

MICHAEL'S FOOTSTEPS ECHO in between the tiled floors and dusty vaulted rafters.

STAINED GLASS WINDOWS lining either side of the ambulatory depict the 'Passion of the Christ' with a brilliance of color.

The Crown of Thorns.

The Bearing of the Cross.

The Crucifixion.

Michael approaches the only other soul in the church:

A MAN IN PRAYER, on his knees, head bowed in his fists.

The Man raises his head, makes the sign of the cross, and -- as if he were expecting Michael all along -- turns casually.

It's MARK WAHLBERG.

MARK WAHLBERG

Michael Bay. Please. Have a seat.

Mark slides down the pew to make room. Michael sits.

MICHAEL

I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me--

MARK WAHLBERG

I attend mass every day, Michael Bay. I find the church to be one of two places a man of my convictions can get some real thinking done.

(beat)

The other being Muscle Beach.

A CHOIR OF PRIESTS plainchants near the pipe organ.

MICHAEL

It's certainly, um, meditative.

MARK WAHLBERG

I know why you're here, Michael Bay. You hope to employ my services in an upcoming motion picture.

MICHAEL

That's right. I wanted to talk--

MARK WAHLBERG

I know because I prayed on it, just now, two seconds ago while you were saying that last thing. God gave me the clarity to see your intentions.

Michael clears his throat.

MICHAEL

Yes. It's a story about--

MARK WAHLBERG

You're known as a man who likes to cut to the chase. So tell me Michael Bay. What's the pitch?

The Choir abruptly ends its chant. Michael is on the spot. Mark Wahlberg bows his head in deep concentration.

MICHAEL

It's a story about these hard-ass personal trainers in Miami--

MARK WAHLBERG

God says this is a great project for me. I'm in.

MICHAEL

You might want to hear a bit more.

MARK WAHLBERG

I'm in, on one condition. Well, technically three conditions. I believe I need to be able to trust every director I work with. *And trust is a two way street.*

(beat)

That's a quote from a university-level Restaurant Management text book by Professor Eric Holdemann.

Mark Wahlberg offers Michael his hand. Michael stares at it.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

I want you to confess, Michael Bay. Three of your deepest, darkest secrets. So I know that you trust me. And I can trust you. Then, and only then, will I be the lead you need to succeed.

(beat)

That was a rhyme, Michael Bay.

Michael takes his hand. Mark Wahlberg closes his eyes, giving Michael his undivided attention. The Choir bellows a chant.

MICHAEL

I, um -- well, first of all, I guess I should say that I'm Jewish.

Mark Wahlberg nods emphatically.

MARK WAHLBERG

Good, Michael, good! That's one--

MICHAEL

No, I was just -- okay. Whatever.

Michael sees that Mark Wahlberg is actually *listening*. He adjusts his grip, closes his own eyes, and lets go.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

The truth is, I only want to make this movie to prove the critics wrong. To show them I'm not just a hack who makes two hundred million dollar pieces of shit.

Mark Wahlberg peels an eyelid open--

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I want to show them that I can make a low budget, twenty-six million dollar indie that's truly about *characters*, not just explosions.

Mark Wahlberg feels Michael's grip getting painfully tight.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I want to be able to tell my story *without* explosions.

(more emotional)

Without always having to try to impress *him*. Not worrying about whether or not he's ever coming home--

MARK WAHLBERG

There, there. It's cool, bro. It's cool. Let it out. That's what church is for. Crying in front of other dudes.

MICHAEL

Sorry, I just, um--

MARK WAHLBERG

Hey. Nothing to be sorry about.
Except for the fact that I asked
for three deep dark secrets and you
gave me closer to five.

(beat)

But we all make mistakes.

Michael pulls himself together.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

I trust you, Michael Bay. And do
you know what that means?

Michael sniffs.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

I'm going to make your movie. And
together, we're going to prove the
critics wrong about you, my friend.

MICHAEL

Thank you, Mark.

MARK WAHLBERG

So what's the title?

MICHAEL

Pain and Gain.

Mark Wahlberg smashes his eyes shut.

MARK WAHLBERG

That's the greatest title for a
motion picture that I've ever heard
in the history of hearing people
say titles of motion pictures.

MICHAEL

I agree.

Mark grabs Michael's shoulders. Like really hard.

MARK WAHLBERG

(with intensity)

We're going to do amazing things,
you and I.

THE CHOIR CRESCENDOS--

EXT. SUNRISE MOTEL - POOLSIDE - DAY

--and their voices blend seamlessly into 'Best of My Love' by The Emotions playing out of a vintage boombox.

There's a very different vibe on this set. An *indie*-vibe.

Mark Wahlberg spearheads a volleyball game underway in the shallow end of the pool. High-Lifes are popped over at craft services. A few grips pass a joint by the shuffleboard court.

Sporting rose-tinted glasses, a tweed blazer and an ascot, Michael keeps a cool, playful attitude as he circles his set.

ANTHONY MACKIE pops off a few bicep curls from a deck chair.

ANTHONY MACKIE

Michael Bay! Do you think my character would prefer mass over strength or vice-a-versa?

Michael drags on a clove cigarette. He doesn't inhale.

MICHAEL

You tell me! I want you to feel it. Go with your instincts. It's all happening, brother!

Michael pats Anthony Mackie on the shoulder and makes his way around the pool, towards the deep end, where--

THE ROCK tilts a sun reflector toward his face as several PAs apply a never-ending coat of body butter to his Adonis frame.

THE ROCK

So Michael Bay. Does my character really believe in God? Or does he merely regret the poor decisions he's made in his past?

MICHAEL

Hey, we all make mistakes, am I right my man?

Michael laughs to himself and continues on his stroll.

THE ROCK (O.S.)

That doesn't answer my ques--

A trio of familiar PLAYBOY BUNNIES sunbathe in a row of deck chairs. As if choreographed, they uncross and recross their legs before lowering their shades.

THE BUNNIES
Hi Michael Bay.

Michael flutters his fingers at the ladies. He couldn't be more relaxed.

His AD, however, looks like he's about to blow a fuse. Drenched in sweat, he waddles up to Michael, arms flailing.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Michael, we need to shoot something soon. We've wasted half the day's light waiting for the grips to finish their god damn shuffleboard tournament.
(lowering his voice)
And I'm pretty sure the Boom Operator is on mushrooms.

A few feet away, the BOOM OPERATOR trains his boom on the AD as though he's aiming a shotgun at a dangerous fugitive.

BOOM OPERATOR
(totally paranoid)
Sure am.

Michael laughs it off.

MICHAEL
Dig, my man. This is my shot at Sundance! This is a *character* study, not another, what was the quote -- "big budget experiment in cinematic masturbation."

The AD rakes a pile of sweat off of his forehead.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
No shit. This is just plain old fashioned jacking off.

The mask nearly falls:

MICHAEL
If that hipster pussy Wes Anderson can get away with it why can't--!!
(keep it together, Mike)
No. No, that's cool. Because in the end, the art's gonna speak for itself--

Something -- or someone -- catches Michael's eye.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR BALCONY

Steven Spielberg watches Michael from the railing. As soon as Michael clocks him, Spielberg fades into the motel room.

Michael looks around the pool, his cast and crew lounging. Laughing. Partying. He pulls the ascot loose.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Alright, people! Let's fire up that Weber and toss a few human fingers on the grill!

A pair of shuffleboard pucks CRACK into each other--

INT. MIAMI MOTEL - MICHAEL'S ROOM - DAY

Michael swings the door open to his dingy, moth-eaten motel room, ripping off his rose-tinted shades.

Steven Spielberg flips through the SpectraVision channels.

SPIELBERG

Dark of the Moon is already on Pay-Per-View. Were you aware of that?

Michael smacks the remote out of Spielberg's hand.

MICHAEL

What the hell are you doing here?

SPIELBERG

I came here to save you from your pointless descent into independent filmmaking.

MICHAEL

Why? Things are great. Sure, we had to cut wasabi peas from craft services. But turns out, I don't even like 'em.

SPIELBERG

I saw someone tossing lighter fluid on a barbecue pit. That the biggest explosion you can afford?

Michael squats on the end of the bed and rubs his temples.

SPIELBERG (CONT'D)

Michael, you're on thin ice. Yes, you've made the studio a fortune. But between the Megan Fox debacle and the recent reviews, well, that's two strikes. One more, and--

MICHAEL

I know the rules.

(beat)

Why do you care if I direct
Transformers 4?

SPIELBERG

I gave you this franchise. I want
to see you get your four films, as
promised. I have... personal
interests in seeing you succeed.

Michael sits upright. It's now or never. Hard swallow.

MICHAEL

Do you regret it?

Michael stands, backlit by the *Dark of the Moon* trailer being
recycled on the TV. Steven swallows harder -- here it comes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Do you regret making a fourth
Indiana Jones?

Spielberg looks deep into Michael's eyes, recognizing that
all too familiar spark that he sees in himself.

SPIELBERG

I have a lot of regrets, Michael.
Crystal Skull isn't one of them.

A PUFF OF SMOKE from the courtyard draws their attention.

MICHAEL

I'd better get back down there.

Michael crosses to the door, about to leave the room--

SPIELBERG

We should have another catch
someday. Talk about something other
than movies, you know?

MICHAEL

Yeah. But we won't.

Michael slams the door.

Steven lets out a massive sigh. Relief? *Anguish*? He picks up
the remote. On TV, the *Dark of the Moon* trailer repeats. He
clicks 'Order' and sits back as the movie begins.

NPR'S 'FILMSPOTTING' THEME MUSIC PLAYS--

INT. NPR RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

--as hosts ADAM KEMPENAAR and JOSH LARSON adjust their headphones and lean into their microphones. Stacks of coffee ring-stained notes litter the console.

ADAM

Welcome to *Filmspotting*, I'm Adam Kempenaar--

JOSH

And I'm Josh Larson.

ADAM

Today we're discussing Michael Bay's *Pain & Gain*, a film I found shallow, deplorable and borderline offensive in its glorification of violence and greed. But Josh, somehow, you saw it differently--

JOSH

You and I really split on this one, Adam. I thought *Pain & Gain* was pure satire, speaking hilariously to the graveyard of dreams that is a post-recession America--

ADAM

(irritated)

Please, Josh. This is Michael Bay giddily -- and literally -- throwing crap at the walls in the hope that someone will call it absurdist art.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER - CES 2013 - DAY

Thousands of Consumer Electronics Show attendees migrate across the floor of the convention center.

JOSH (O.S.)

Adam, are you saying that near the end of the film, when Bay makes cuts to a title card to remind us that "this story is based on actual events" you didn't see the humor--?

ADAM (O.S.)

In fact, Josh, I found it to be one of the film's ugliest moments.

The herds flow past dozens of booths and barkers vying for their attention. Telecoms, Audio Equipment, Biotech, Robotics, 3D printing. The list goes on.

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

Are we really expected to laugh at this wild distortion of the truth that comes at the expense of the real people -- the real tragedy -- on which it's based?

AT THE SAMSUNG STAGE

Hundreds fill the floor in front of a stage. An impressive CURVED FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION sits under a Samsung banner.

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

Pain & Gain was as tone-deaf and empty as anything I've seen from Bay. And worst of all, there weren't even any cool explosions.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE

An earbud stuffed in an ear broadcasts the harsh critique.

JOSH (O.S.)

Now I'll agree with you there--

Michael tears the earbuds out of his head and launches the phone at the wall.

A Bambi-like SAMSUNG SALES AGENT stands next to him with a survey clipped into her clipboard.

SAMSUNG SALES AGENT

So I take you... you didn't like the new Galaxy S4?

Michael paces like a caged tiger.

MICHAEL

Actually it had pretty good sound quality.

Michael unleashes one last burst of aggression on the remains of the phone with the heel of his Cole Haan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Can I get another one?

The Sales Agent's looks delighted.

SAMSUNG SALES AGENT
Sure! I'll put you down for two.
(off of Michael's rage)
Let's make it three.

A miced-up STAGE MANAGER nods at Michael.

STAGE MANAGER
Mr. Bay, you're on.

Michael adjusts his collar, takes in a deep breath and lets it out. Everything's cool. He can do this.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER - SAMSUNG STAGE - DAY

The conference host, JOE IRVING, 50s, speaks into a headset. The sort of guy who always looks like he's just taking a quick break from a perpetual round of golf.

JOE IRVING
Ladies and gentlemen, please
welcome to the stage, Michael Bay!

The room applauds.

FOLLOWING MICHAEL'S POV

Michael stretches his neck on either side, cracking a couple vertebrete before brushing past the curtain.

The lights burn his eyes, but he manages to find an 'X' on the floor. He hits his mark, shakes Joe's hand and looks up at the teleprompter.

The TEXT on the teleprompter rolls.

It rolls *fast*.

MICHAEL
How is everyone today!
(trying to keep up with
the teleprompter)
My job. As a director-- is I get to
dream for a living--

The letters begin to TRANSFORM into alien symbols.

JOE IRVING
Michael. You're known for such
unbelievable action. What inspires
you?

Michael can't decipher the Cybertron language filling the prompter. What's worse, beyond the prompter, hundreds wait for him to say something. *Anything.*

MICHAEL

I, um, well--

(beat)

You know I'm not that good at speaking in public--

Could it be? JIM BAY floating in the sea of blank faces?

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'm usually yelling on set.

Every eye in the room GLOWS RED.

JOE IRVING

(eh hem)

Why don't you tell us a little bit about how you create some of these amazing visuals--

Everyone in the audience TRANSFORMS into A DECEPTICON ROBOT--

Michael stumbles into the curved TV, nearly knocking it over.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry. I need to go. Sorry--

Michael rushes off stage, the panic consuming him.

JOE IRVING

Okay.

Joe turns to the crowd, unsure of what to do next.

JOE IRVING (CONT'D)

Let's, um. All thank Michael Bay.

He initiates a golf clap.

The crowd groans in confusion. No robots, just humans.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Michael collapses into a chair and takes a pull from a bottle of water. Those mulling around backstage avert their eyes. The Samsung Sales Agent isn't sure what to say.

SAMSUNG SALES AGENT

Mr. Bay, are you alright?

Michael wipes a dribble of water from his mouth.

MICHAEL
Your prompter broke.

She leans toward the stage, eyeing the teleprompter.

SAMSUNG SALES AGENT
It looks like it's working fine--

MICHAEL
No. No, the letters were all
symbols... there was a malfunction.

SAMSUNG SALES AGENT
I'm sorry sir, but if you want your
complimentary phones, you're going
to need to go back on stage and
finish the presentation.

MICHAEL
Keep your fucking phones.
(suspicious)
You're all a bunch of god damn
decepticons.

Michael slaps the clipboard out of the Sales Agent's hand and
labors his way through a pair of double doors, swallowed up
by the bright Las Vegas afternoon.

INT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

A fog of dust swirls in the sunlight that filters into the
President's office. He solemnly stares out onto the lot
below, hands clasped behind his back.

PARAMOUNT BRASS
They need a decision, Mr.
President.

The President takes three deliberate paces towards a starfish
conference phone centered on a polished oak table.

PRESIDENT
These past few hours... have been
the longest, darkest of my life.
(beat)
How does one weigh a career in
Hollywood? Ten films, two billion
dollars, an average Rotten Tomatoes
score of thirty-nine percent.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLASHBACK, 1973 - WHEAT FIELD - DAY

AN 8 YEAR OLD MICHAEL laughs his way through a sun-drenched field, the stalks of wheat rising well past his waist.

PRESIDENT (O.S.)
And in the middle, Michael Bay.

Michael scans his 8MM Camera across the field.

INT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT
To ignore, abandon or marginalize a great director like Michael Bay could cost us our honor as titans of the motion picture arts.

EXT. FLASHBACK, 1973 - WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Michael's camera catches a glimpse of HIS FATHER on the far side of the field.

PRESIDENT (O.S.)
But at the end of the day, we are a business. A multi-national corporation, to be sure. And capitalism means casualties.

But when Michael drops the camera, there's no one there.

INT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT
This is the worst call I've ever had to make.

The President picks up the receiver.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Fire Michael Bay.

THE DEAFENING ROAR OF FIGHTER JETS--

EXT. BAY HOME - DUSK

--fades into the HISSING of the air brakes on a SANTA MONICA CITY BUS as it rolls to a stop.

Michael steps off.

MICHAEL
 (to the bus driver)
Gracias, Jorge.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)
De nada, Michael.

The bus chugs on down the street. Michael stands at the end of the driveway, looking up at his childhood home. He removes his sunglasses and lets the memories wash over him.

Mrs. Bay appears on the porch.

MRS. BAY
 Michael!

She can't wait to hug her son.

MICHAEL
 Hey, Mom.

INT. BAY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Bay clears the table of spaghetti-sauced plates.

MICHAEL
 Let me do that--

MRS. BAY
 Nonsense. You relax. You work so damn hard, just sit for once.

MICHAEL
 You hear I got fired?

MRS. BAY
 I don't understand, from what?

MICHAEL
Transformers 4. They're not bringing me back.

MRS. BAY
 That's ridiculous.

MICHAEL
 I don't know. I've had a couple of, ah, missteps lately.

MRS. BAY
 What? The Las Vegas thing?

MICHAEL

You saw it.

MRS. BAY

I know how to work Youtube.

(beat)

Plus it was on the local news.

Mrs. Bay scrubs the plates in the sink.

MRS. BAY (CONT'D)

But what I meant was 'that's ridiculous' because the movie hasn't started filming yet. Did you ever officially have the job?

MICHAEL

I mean, not *officially*, but after about two billion dollars, it was more or less mine to lose.

Mrs. Bay dries her hands.

MRS. BAY

So...?

MICHAEL

So what.

MRS. BAY

So if you want the job, go get it. If you never 'officially' had it, then you never 'officially' lost it. Which means you can still 'officially' get it back.

Michael smirks.

MICHAEL

That's the most sensible thing I've ever heard anyone say about getting work in Hollywood.

Mrs. Bay pulls the aluminum foil off of a baking sheet, revealing a tray of freshly baked CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Oh. No, Mom, I can't.

She sets the baking sheet on the table and takes a seat.

MRS. BAY

Sure you can. You pick one up--
(picking up a cookie)

(MORE)

MRS. BAY (CONT'D)

Take a bite--
 (taking a bite)
 You enjoy it--
 (enjoying it)
 And you--
 (eating it)
 Eat it.

MICHAEL

My new girlfriend doesn't want me eating sugar. Or flour. Or anything not raw. So, yeah, cookies are out.

MRS. BAY

Model?

MICHAEL

Nutritionist.
 (beat)
Aspiring model.

MRS. BAY

Mmmhmm.

Mrs. Bay offers him a bite. He can't resist.

MICHAEL

God damn it, that's good.

Fuck it. Michael grabs another one.

MRS. BAY

I don't know why you got rid of that other girl. The public relations one--

MICHAEL

(mouth full of cookie)
 She kinda got rid of me.

MRS. BAY

Didn't she work for Paramount?

MICHAEL

You think she had a hand in me getting fired--?

MRS. BAY

No. You cynic. I'm saying maybe she could *help*.

Michael leans back, considering.

MICHAEL

I don't know if I have the courage
to make that phone call.

(beat)

I don't know if I have the courage
to make the fourth movie.

MRS. BAY

Well, your father would've loved to
see you complete your franchise--

Michel sets his cookie down. Mrs. Bay looks up.

MICHAEL

(his mouth a little dry)

I wanted to make that fourth movie
so badly. But for all the wrong
reasons. Fear, anger. Ego.

MRS. BAY

So go make it for the right
reasons.

Michael stares off into the middle-distance.

MICHAEL

(mouth even dryer)

That's the problem. I'm just not
sure I know what those are anymore.
Shit, I'm not sure I ever knew--

Michael eyes the GLASS OF MILK his mom sets on the table.

MRS. BAY

Character, Michael. It's all about
character. If you don't have
character, what's the point?

Michael picks up the glass of milk and takes a sip.

MRS. BAY (CONT'D)

Give the girl a call. Show her that
you have a little character. And
get your fucking job back.

Mrs. Bay sucks a smear of chocolate off of her thumb.

EXT. CROSSROADS HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The varisty team practice. A BATTER spits into his palm and
rubs his hands together. THE PITCHER checks his runners,
begins his wind-up.

FROM THE BLEACHERS

Michael watches, his eyes focused from underneath the bill of his sweat-stained Autobot-symbolized baseball cap.

LAUREN (O.S.)
You never mentioned you were a
baseball fan.

Lauren climbs up the bleachers, takes a seat next to Michael.

LAUREN (CONT'D)
Would've pegged you for more of a
football guy. Maybe wrestling team.
(beat)
Do they have UFC in high school?

Michael half-smirks.

MICHAEL
Thanks for meeting me.

LAUREN
I need be at the *Lone Ranger*
premiere in an hour, so let's cut
to the -- look who I'm talking to.

MICHAEL
I want *Age of Extinction* back. And
I need your help to do it.

She was afraid of this.

LAUREN
Now you're ready to take my advice.
Unbelievable.

MICHAEL
Look. I know what I did to you was
shitty -- but, I'll do whatever it
takes.

LAUREN
What *is* it going to take, Michael?
Box office records? Most explosions
in a single film? An Oscar?

MICHAEL
That's just it. All these years
I've been making movies to impress
somebody I'll never know. It was
impossible. Intangible. Abstract--

The batter SMASHES the ball into the air.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 --and any good character needs a
 concrete goal.

The OUTFIELDER makes the catch, throws to the cut-off man.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 For me, the goal has always been to
 make *Transformers 4*. It's just
 taken me a while to figure out why
 I really need to do it.

Lauren can't believe what she's about to say.

LAUREN
 Okay. I'll help you. But you do
 things my way. Or I'm out.

MICHAEL
 I'm putty in your hands. Where do
 we start?

Another CRACK of the ball off the bat--

LAUREN
 Damage control.

INT. TMZ STUDIOS - DAY

Mid-TMZ episode. HARVEY LEVIN stands arms crossed beside one
 of his minions, RANDY. A blinking lower-third graphic reads:
ON THE PHONE - MICHAEL BAY

HARVEY LEVIN
 We're chatting with *Transformers*
 director Michael Bay -- Michael,
 what was up with your little
 meltdown in Las Vegas?

INT. MICHAEL'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael paces around the condo, phone to his ear. Lauren
 nervously picks at her nails.

MICHAEL
 Well, Harvey, you know it was the
 weirdest thing--

INTERCUT BETWEEN HARVEY AND MICHAEL

Harvey listens from the studio.

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (through phone)
 The teleprompter just went haywire,
 and I figured, you know, these
 nerds--

Lauren shakes her head. "No no no no!"

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 --and I mean that in the best
 sense. These are true geniuses who
 know their technology.

She plants her face in her hands.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 And so I figured that, since I
 don't know enough about the specs
 of the new Samsung curved TV--

Randy looks for his moment to strike...

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 --I'd better just go ahead and
 leave the stage before I
 embarrassed myself any futher.

...aaaand he's found it.

RANDY
 Embarrass yourself? Then I'd
 suggest not making another
Transformers movie!

Randy's proud of that one.

Michael clenches his jaw. But Lauren finds his eyes. *Don't
 you dare say anything back--*

RANDY (CONT'D)
 Did you hear me? I said *don't* make
 another *Transformers* mo--

HARVEY LEVIN
 Randy, go sit in your corner--
 (to Michael)
 Okay, thanks for callin' in, Mike!

MICHAEL
 No. Thank you.

Michael half-smirks. *It actually worked.*

EXT. VENICE BEACH - MUSCLE BEACH - DAY

Against the backdrop of the Pacific Ocean, a small army of BODYGUARDS post-up around the perimeter of the outdoor gym.

LAUREN (V.O.)

But if you're going to convince the studio to bring you back, you need to attach a bankable star.

Joggers push their way through a flock of tourists trying to catch a glimpse of today's attraction: Mark Wahlberg bench pressing with his spotter, Michael Bay.

MICHAEL

Eight... nine... one more...

Mark Wahlberg spits out a deep exhale with each rep.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

...aaaand. Ten.

Michael guides the bar onto the rack. Mark claps his hands.

MARK WAHLBERG

That's *right!* That's what I'm *talkin'* about.

Mark opens his mouth and permits a body guard to squirt water into it. He swishes it around and spits it out.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

Hydration is important, Michael Bay. But you can't over-hydrate. It causes cramping and interrupts a positive reconstruction cycle.

MICHAEL

Yeah, you mentioned that a few minutes ago--

(back to the point)

Listen, Mark, I have to be honest, I'm not just here to spot you.

MARK WAHLBERG

I deduced that from the very moment you stepped into the gymnasium. I spoke to God, and he pointed out to me that you aren't dedicating all of your focus to this body session.

(beat)

That's what I call my workouts. 'Body sessions'. I'm trademarking it. Starting now.

He snaps at an alert ASSISTANT, who quickly dictates a note.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

Also, I'm trademarking the word
'trade-mark', but like splitting it
up into two words, with the 'M' in
'mark' capitalized, and maybe then
also adding like, 'Trade'-'Mark'-
'Whalberg'-ed--

(beat)

You know what? Forget that one.
It's done. It's over. Kill it.

The Assistant violently scratches out the note.

Mark Wahlberg signs a few autographs.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

So what's the next project?

MICHAEL

Transformers 4: Age of Extinction.

Wahlberg laughs, but shakes his head.

MARK WAHLBERG

Paramount canned you from that
franchise. Everyone knows that.

Mark leans in for a selfie with a group of CHINESE TOURISTS.

MICHAEL

I was never officially hired, so
the way I see it--

MARK WAHLBERG

You were never officially fired. I
understand. I understood the moment
you started to speak that sentence.

Mark Wahlberg walks over to Michael. They're touching noses.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

I know you need me to make this go.
And I'll tell you what I'm going to
do. I'm going to help you out. But
only if you help me out.

MICHAEL

Mark, I don't know if I can handle
another confession--

Mark holds his hand up as if to silence Michael. He nods to two of his bodyguards. They each carry over a 25 lbs plate, adding one to each side of the bench press bar.

MARK WAHLBERG

I want you to help me hit four reps
at three hundred pounds.

Michael stares at the daunting weight.

MICHAEL

You want me to spot you while you
bench three hundred--?

MARK WAHLBERG

I'm saying I've never done it
before. But if you--

He digs a finger into Michael's solarplex.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

--you, Michael Bay, can direct me
to lift that bar four times, I'll
know you have what it takes to
direct me on the set of this next
feature film.

MICHAEL

We've done a movie together--

Mark takes a seat on the bench.

MARK WAHLBERG

This ain't no *Pain & Gain*. This is
Transmorphers Number Four.

(laying down)

You got what it takes?

Michael takes his position behind the bar.

MICHAEL

(unnaturally deep)

Transformers.

The Chinese tourists watch with baited breath.

Michael runs his fingertips underneath the bar.

Mark sucks in a face full of oxygen, psyching himself up.

His bodyguards are clearly worried that Michael is about to kill the guy who signs their paychecks.

MARK WAHLBERG

Let's do it to it, Michael Bay.

Michael assists Mark as he lifts the bar--

Lowers it to his chest--

Mark's arms quiver as he pushes up--

And fully extends his arms.

MICHAEL

That's one. Now are you gonna man
up, or are you gonna go back to
being a low-life petty criminal?

Mark does it again. The second rep coming almost with ease.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

That's two! You didn't deserve that
Oscar nomination for *The Departed*,
did you?

Mark drops the bar to his chest--

His cheeks flush, sweat rolls off his forehead--

But his arms fully extend again!

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

That's fucking three! Now come on,
you weak piece of human garbage!

Mark lowers the bar--

Grunting, straining, he tries to push up--

Michael throws everything he's got into this one.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

If you can't lift this a fourth
fucking time, you might as well
pack up your shit and head back to
whatever Massachusetts rat's hole
you crawled out of--!

Mark's arms shake, teeth grind. But the bar doesn't budge.

The Chinese tourists trade fearful glances.

Michael's only hope at a franchise is on the verge of
crushing his own windpipe. Michael closes his eyes.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Mark. Know that whatever happens, I think you're one of the finest actors I've ever known.

Mark's arms stop shaking. And start to push upwards.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You're a great guy, a good friend.
(softly)
And your father loved you.

With a final GRUNT, Mark's arms extend for a fourth time.

Michael leads the bar back onto the rack.

Mark jumps off of the bench, hopping up and down.

MARK WAHLBERG

We did it! We fuckin' *did* it!

He hugs Michael. Michael pats him on the back.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

Count me in! Direct me, baby!

Mark hops over to his cheering fans. He leans back for a selfie, the faces of the Chinese tourists surrounding him--

And suddenly, Michael knows what his next move needs to be.

INT. PARAMOUNT PICTURES - BOARDROOM - DAY

A long Mohogany table fills the expanse of the room.

Michael is flanked by Lauren and Mark Wahlberg.

The President of Paramount and a couple of Paramount Brass stare daggers from the other side of the table.

You could cut the tension with a titanium combat knife used by Special Forces in super-secret military covert ops.

PRESIDENT

I can appreciate that you've offered a *mea culpa* for the --
unprofessional behavior --
exhibited in Las Vegas.

Michael shifts in his chair.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

And having Mr. Wahlberg attached to the fourth installment of a *Transformers* film is enticing.

Mark Wahlberg folds his hands.

MARK WAHLBERG

I'm assuming that was a compliment Mr. President and I'll reciprocate with my own gesture of gratitude.

Mark bows. Like, a full 'namaste' bow.

PRESIDENT

Right. But that said, Michael, we still haven't resolved the issue of your runaway budgets. Why shouldn't I hire a director who can make this for half the price--

MICHAEL

Because you don't need to.

The President cocks his head at the interruption.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

One word, Mr. President.
(beat)
'China'.

An intrigued silence befalls Paramount's side of the table.

MARK WAHLBERG

As in the country of China, home to the Chinese, sir.

MICHAEL

(aside)
I think he's familiar, buddy--
(to the President)
We're going to set the film in China, use Chinese actors, even shoot in China--

MARK WAHLBERG

It's part of Asia, sir.

The President squints at Mark. But Lauren takes the reigns.

LAUREN

This production is not only going to provide a boom to the Chinese economy, but it's basically going to serve as one giant beer ad for the Chinese film industry. In exchange, the cultural ministry has guaranteed me a full, nationwide release for *Age of Extinction*, adding one-point-three billion to our potential audience.

PRESIDENT

Ms. Stoner, shooting a movie in China is notoriously difficult! They play by their own rules -- hell, you have to look out for the Chinese Mafia, for Christ's sake.

MICHAEL

If the Chinese Mafia takes me out, that's one less crazy asshole's phone calls you have to worry about returning on Monday morning.

The President has a mumbled conference with his producers.

But Michael knows he's got 'em. Mark Wahlberg leans over.

MARK WAHLBERG

Did you know the average height of a Chinese man is five-foot-five?

No. Michael did not know that.

The President rises from his chair and extends his hand.

PRESIDENT

Congratulations.

Michael stands up and shakes it swiftly.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

You've just talked yourself into a four film franchise.

(phony smile)

Thrilled to have you on board, Mike!

Michael whips out a half-smirk. *Fuck you too, Mr. President.*

EXT. HONG KONG - STREETS - DAY

A bustling modernity blends with ancient charm in downtown Hong Kong. A film crew has sectioned off a street corner where sparks bleed out of a smoldering pile of robot scraps.

Mark Wahlberg does push-ups next to the carnage.

VX Supervisor Pat Tubich waddles across the street.

PAT

How were the explosions, Michael?
Big enough?

Michael jumps off the camera rig.

MICHAEL

You know what? Maybe take it down
just a notch next time.

(beat)

I wanna talk to Mark.

(shouting)

MARK!

Michael blows past Pat, who tries to process the idea of going 'smaller'.

Michael throws his arm around Mark's enormous shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Mark, baby. Let's talk character--

MOBSTER 1 (O.S.)

MICHAEL BAY!

Michael and his crew turn their attention to TWO CHINESE MOBSTERS sporting black suits and deliberate facial hair.

MOBSTER 2

YOU MUST PAY TO WORK IN OUR CITY.

A few POLICE OFFICERS rush to detain the men, but the mobsters subdue the officers in a flurry of expertly timed KICKS and PUNCHES. These guys aren't fucking around.

MICHAEL

What do you want?

MOBSTER 1

We demand you pay us one hundred
thousand dollars! Hong Kong!

MICHAEL

How much is that?

A little embarrassed, the Mobsters posture.

MOBSTER 2
Twelve thousand U.S.!

Mark Wahlberg casually pulls a wad of cash out of his pocket and starts to reel off twelve thousand--

MICHAEL
Put it away, Mark.

Mark obeys his director, shoving the cash back in his pocket.

Shoulders cocked, Michael steps towards the Mobsters.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm not payin' you shit.

MOBSTER 1
Big mistake, Michael Bay.

A tense beat.

MICHAEL
We all make mistakes.

Mobster 2 rips an AIR CONDITIONING UNIT out of the fake window of a false wall. WHOOPING at the top of his lungs, he launches the unit like he's tossing a soccer ball in-bounds.

Michael DUCKS, and the unit SMASHES into the robot scraps.

A PAIN & GAIN-STYLE TITLE CARD:

THIS IS STILL A TRUE STORY.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HONG KONG - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Michael and Mark Wahlberg go full-Matrix on these assholes. 360 gravity-defying kicks and high-speed punches.

But more and more MOBSTERS jump into the fray.

Ten mobsters... Twenty mobsters...

And soon, Michael Bay and Mark Wahlberg are surrounded.

Mobster 1 pulls a gun and holds it to Mark Wahlberg's head.

MOBSTER 1
It's all over, Mr. Bay!

Michael grits his teeth.

MICHAEL

Let him go!

Behind him, the robot scraps RUSTLE--

MOBSTER 1

You wanted to make the best movie
in the world--

A few screws POP out of the pile--

MOBSTER 1 (CONT'D)

Well movies cost money. And now
you're paying the ultimate price--

That mysterious spark has all but faded from Michael's eye--

*WHEN **BUMBLEBEE** TRANSFORMS OUT OF THE PILE OF SCRAPS. A CACOPHONY OF KICK-ASS SOUNDS AND CRAZY MOVING PARTS. HE BRANDISHES AN OTHER-WORLDLY SWORD AND AN ARM CANNON.*

--and Michael has become his 15 YEAR-OLD TEENAGE SELF.

Bumblebee strides over to Young Michael Bay, STOMPING a few Mobsters in his path before clearing out another dozen with one SWIPE of his sword.

The Mobsters don't even bother fighting back. Which isn't to say Bumblebee doesn't charge up his arm cannon and BLAST the rest of 'em to kingdom come.

Mobster 1 drops his gun and takes off running. Bumblebee aims his cannon and fires one precise shot, vaporizing the coward into a mist that diffuses into the city smog.

Young Michael Bay stands beside Bumblebee. A torn AMERICAN FLAG hangs from the brick facade behind them. Hero shot.

MARK WAHLBERG (O.S.)

Yo, Mikey, that was crazy!

Michael, 50 years old again, snaps back to reality -- Bumblebee nothing more than a sparking pile of metal.

MARK WAHLBERG (CONT'D)

You okay, bro?

MICHAEL

Never better.

(turning to the crew)

What are we waiting for, people?
Let's make a movie!

The crew cheers and claps as they get back to work.

MARIO LOPEZ (PRE-LAP)
Transformers 4: Age of Extinction
 has become the biggest box office
 phenomenon in the history of China--

EXT. THE GROVE - 'EXTRA' SET - DAY

Mario Lopez addresses his camera.

MARIO LOPEZ
 Joining me to discuss this landmark
 achievement is the man himself--
 (turning to his left)
 Mr. Michael Bay.

Michael nods to his adoring fans.

MICHAEL
 Thanks for having me, Mario.

MARIO LOPEZ
 So how does it feel to officially
 become the second-highest grossing
 director in history, behind the one-
 and-only Steven Spielberg?

MICHAEL
 Well, um, it's--

Michael gazes out across the audience--

They stare back at him, and for a moment he fears the worst--

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 It's just fine by me.
 (beat)
 An honor, as a matter of fact.

The fans smile -- not one Decepticon in the bunch.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 If there's one thing Steven and I
 have in common, it's that we're
 both interested in developing
 strong relationships between our
 central characters.
 (beat)
 And I think that contributed to the
 success of this film.

Michael's half-smirk finally grows into a full-blown smile.

INT. BEIJING, CHINA - MINISTRY OF CULTURE - DAY

A CHINESE FLAG and AN AMERICAN FLAG dress the stage at an event honoring *Age of Extinction*. A GROUP OF DIGNITARIES surround Michael on stage, posing for photo-ops.

The CULTURAL MINISTER addresses the state media.

CULTURAL MINISTER

It is our great honor to present
Mr. Michael Bay with this most
prestigious award--

He hands Michael a cheap plastic TROPHY -- a classic Hollywood film director shouting into a bullhorn.

Michael eyes the plaque and feigns a smile. But he knows someone else deserves it--

INT. HASBRO HEADQUARTERS - TRANSFORMERS EXHIBIT - DAY

The trophy is unearthed from a boxfull of styrofoam peanuts.

Dan Truman's eyes well with tears as he reads the plaque.

And we finally see what it says: World's Best Director.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GROVE - 'EXTRA' SET - DAY

Mario and Michael chat from the stage.

MARIO LOPEZ

And what about you, Michael?
There's a rumor that you'll be back
for *Transformers 5*.

The crowd cheers: "*Come on, Michael! Five! Five! Five!*"

MICHAEL

We'll see. Right now I could use a
break from giant alien robots.

(beat)

Take some time to focus on my own
relationships for a change.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

A pair of white heels click down a lush sidewalk--

Lauren types away on her phone, when a flash of yellow catches her eye. She looks up--

Michael. Leaning against the hood of a beat up YELLOW '72 CAMARO, holding a bouquet of white lillies.

LAUREN

What's this? Did all your Ferraris
head back to their home planet?

MICHAEL

You know me, I hate to make a
scene. Can I take you to lunch?

She's skeptical... but she's game.

LAUREN

Where'd you have in mind?

Michael pops open the passenger side door.

MICHAEL

How about Zurich?

He shoots her a coy, self-assured wink.

EXT. SWISS ALPS - DAY

A MOUNTAIN pierces the clouds--

A RAILROAD cuts through the patches of snowy pine trees
cascading down its slope--

A TRAIN snakes along the rugged mountainside--

Only this time, it passes across the terrain peacefully.

No explosions.

Just calm.

FADE OUT.