

DEATH RACE

Nick Claro

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NOON

Harsh fluorescent lights shine down on three men in the waiting room.

ANDY KLEIN, 40, dapper businessman, sits with a furrowed brow, glaring at his phone as he feverishly taps the screen, typing an e-mail.

JEFF ROBERTSON, 65, stereotypically old & cranky, leans forward uncomfortably into an issue of "Better Homes and Gardens", straining his eyes to read the text under the lights.

DOUG BRYANT, 32, disheveled and burnt out, is sprawled out over two chairs, looking up and pointing at the ceiling tiles, trying to count them all.

A NURSE comes to the door and calls each of them in. Their checkups are intercut as we see the three men getting their ears checked, their fingers pricked, coughing as the nurse grabs their scrotum, leaving the room and finally returning with the DOCTOR as he begins talking to Jeff.

DOCTOR

Now everything went smoothly,
but...

Andy glances at his phone.

DOCTOR

It seems that when we took your x-
ray, the scans came back a little
abnormal...

Doug gives the doctor a quizzical look.

DOCTOR

Now, we've never seen anything like
this before, but it looks quite
serious so we're going to send it
over to the local hospital and see
what they have to say...

Andy gives the doctor a look of disbelief, outraged

ANDY

So that's it? You don't know what's wrong with me so you're just going to ship me over to another doctor? Who do you think you are? Is this some kind of joke? I can't BELIEVE you're wasting my time with this, this -

Jeff is on his feet, pacing, giving the doctor a stern talking to.

JEFF

This malarkey! Jeez, back in Korea, the doctor's could tell what was wrong with a man! They didn't have any computers, or.. or robots to do the work for them! I swear, you people with your technology and gadgets, you don't do anything for yourselves anymore!

DOCTOR

I'm very sorry, but I assure you you'll be in great hands and get the best care in the state. That's a promise

Doug is reclined on the bed in the office, examining the rubber hammer used for reflex testing.

DOUG

Far out man. Let's hope I don't die before I get there, right brother?

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

In the tiny office of the Chief of Medicine, DR. WATSON, Andy and Jeff sit uncomfortably, without acknowledging each other, as they wait for the doctor. Doug stands by the window, examining the various biological models on the windowsill.

Dr. Watson enters holding their medical charts, his face contorted with perplexity.

(CONTINUED)

DR. WATSON

Well gentlemen, I have to be honest with you here. This doesn't look good, not at all.

ANDY

What is it, doc? Lupus? HIV?

DR. WATSON

Well, Mr. Klein, I'm not sure that we can put a name to it just yet. Your red blood cell counts are all alarmingly low, but your blood pressures read incredibly high, which is very unnatural...

Andy locks on to the doctor with an icy glare.

ANDY

So you don't know what it is either? Jeez, what is it with you people?! This is where my hard earned money is going? To a bunch of brainless monkeys who can't even read a god damn chart?! I promise you, if anything is to happen to me, my family will have you in court faster than you can get me to the morgue!

DR. WATSON

Mr. Klein, I promise you, we're going to do everything we can to make this as smooth and easy as possible for you.

ANDY

(under his breath)

This is a god damned shakedown, I tell ya...

JEFF

Doc, be straight with us, how long do you think we have left?

(CONTINUED)

DR. WATSON

Well, Mr. Robertson, it's hard to say. We can give you some medication to help the immediate effects that we saw, but we're going to have to check up on you three every couple of weeks to monitor your health.

DOUG

Hey, so like, how are you gonna come up with a name for this? Like, so, I can tell my friends what I have, you know?

DR. WATSON

Well, Mr... I'm sorry, what's your name again?

DOUG

Doug, bro. But you can call me "D-man".

DR. WATSON

Ok, Doug-

DOUG

"D-man".

DR. WATSON

(getting frustrated)

Ok, "D-man". Generally, in the more serious cases, such as this, the disease is named after the first victim in their honor.

DOUG

Oh, like Montezuma's revenge right?

Jeff, Andy and Dr. Watson stare at Doug, speechless.

DOUG

Very chill.

ANDY

So you're telling me that if I die first, I get this disease named

(CONTINUED)

after me?

DR. WATSON

Well possibly-

ANDY

And they can't change that type of thing, right? The name? They can't go back and rename it after?

DR. WATSON

Well, no I don't think I've ever heard of that...

Andy looks like he's just seen Santa Claus, as he jumps up and shakes Dr. Watson's hands wildly. He nearly sprints out of the office, whooping and hollering.

ANDY

See you in hell, suckers!

Dr. Watson is again at a loss for words as Jeff stands up.

JEFF

That young'n thinks he's beating me to the dirt? Well I'll believe that when I see a six-legged dog!

Jeff walks out of the office with his hands in his pockets, whistling "The Halls of Montezuma".

DOUG

Oh, man. You guys said you were gonna give us medicine, right? Does that include medical marijuana, or is that gonna cost me extra?

Dr. Watson stares at Doug with a look of utter disbelief.

DR. WATSON

Get the hell out of here!

DOUG

Alright, it's cool. I think my dealer lives around here anyway.

Doug walks out of the office with a model brain from the windowsill.

(MORE)

ANDY (cont'd)

MONTAGE - JUMP CUTS THROUGHOUT

Andy hits his alarm as his digital clock reads 5:45 A.M. In the darkness of his room he puts on sweatpants and a ragged t-shirt and leaves the house.

When he returns, he is drenched in sweat and limping.

The clock reads 8:45 A.M.

Jeff puts his plate down and checks his watch: 8:45 A.M. He looks at his plate of two eggs, an orange, and three pills. Smirking, he takes one of the eggs, the orange, and two pills and throws them away.

He eats a little, falls asleep on his plate, and then wakes up and finishes his meal.

He checks his watch again when he finishes at 1:30 P.M.

A large clock falls off of its wall mount and hits Doug in the head, waking him up. He stares at it and tries to decipher the time; 1:30 P.M.

He opens his fridge, surveying his options for a meal. Running his hands over the orange juice, a half-eaten turkey club, and a container of yogurt, Doug settles on his meal.

He puts 2 40 oz. bottles of beer and a sleeve of cookies on the couch and looks for the remote.

The first 40 oz is done. Doug is still looking for the remote.

Doug sits on the couch, and the cookies fall in-between the cushions. Doug leaves, then returns with a plate of mushroom pizza and a big bag of weed.

The second 40 oz is done. Half eaten pizza is scattered across the room. Light refracts throughout the incredibly smoky room.

Doug is passed out.

The clock above him reads 11:00 P.M.

Andy is in his bedroom doing pushups in the same dirty clothes. His digital clock reads 11:00 P.M.

He jogs in place, and falls over exhausted, but pushes himself up.

He takes his shirt off as he is doing jumping jacks.

He runs to the bathroom and throws up. When he gets back and crawls meagerly into his bed, the clock reads 12:20 A.M.

Jeff sits outside of his house, smoking a cigarette. He checks his watch: 12:20 A.M.

He puts out his cigarette and looks longingly at his bedroom window from outside, and then shakes his head, erasing the thought of sleeping.

He lights another cigarette.

END MONTAGE

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

RING RING

Doug's ringing phone jostles him out of a deep sleep on the couch. He picks it up and takes a look at the screen.

It is his FATHER.

After a few seconds of internal debate, Doug answers the phone.

DOUG
(tired)
Hey, pop. How's it going?

MR. BRYANT
How ya doin', sonny? Just wanted to
call in and check up on my boy.

DOUG
I'm doing...

Doug pauses for a second.

DOUG
(cont'd)
Alright, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

MR. BRYANT

Well hey, did you hear about your brother? donnie made his first million just last night, can you believe it? he's doing so well for himself!

DOUG

(Sarcastically)

Wow, that's really great for him.

MR. BRYANT

And also, your brother derek has told me he's thinking about proposing to his girlfriend next month!

DOUG

(Flatly)

Righteous.

MR. BRYANT

What about you, Dougie?

DOUG

Huh?

MR. BRYANT

What have you been up to lately? I'm your father, I feel like I should know these things.

DOUG

Oh, nothing man. just takin' life in now while i can.

mr. bryant

How's work? You said you were managing at the Burger King down the street, yeah? That sounds promising.

DOUG

(annoyed)

I was ASSISTANT managing, and that was only a temporary spot until the boss' kid was ready to take over.

(CONTINUED)

MR. BRYANT

Oh, well that's too bad. You'll get 'em next time, right? What about the ladies? What happened to Natasha, your mother and I always liked her.

DOUG

I've probably told you this like five times now man, she's gone! She's not coming back either!

MR. BRYANT

Oh, you're right you're right, sorry! I'm so forgetful... Well your mother and I, we miss you. It feels like its been years since we've seen you.

It has been years, and Doug's regretful face confirms this.

DOUG

Yeah, well maybe some time soon, right dad?

MR. BRYANT

That'd be great, Douglas! Just know that you're welcome here for as long as you live.

DOUG

Talk to you soon.

Doug hangs up the phone, and stares at it nostalgically. After a few seconds, he shakes his head and leaves for the doctor's.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NOON

Andy sits in Dr. Watson's office alone, his face cold and expressionless. He flicks his wrist to check his watch, but groans and grimaces as he lifts his arm in pain.

Jeff shuffles into the office, holding onto the doorframe for support. He looks even more weathered than before, now much skinnier and sporting bags under his eyes. His stomach roars as he sits down and turns to Andy.

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JEFF

Wow, son, I've gotta say you look like dog shit.

ANDY

I feel like dog shit. I feel like a flaming bag of dog shit.

JEFF

Yeah, well then I'm the shoe that stomped that flaming bag of dog shit out.

The two share a laugh.

JEFF

So how's your family taking this, son?

ANDY

Family? Oh no, they won't be hearing about this until long after I'm gone.

JEFF

Well now, why's that? Your family should be the first people you tell about some crazy shit like this.

ANDY

Well, you don't know my family.

JEFF

Now hold on, what's your name sonny?

ANDY

Andy. Andy Klein.

JEFF

Well I'll be damned. Isn't your daddy David Klein, the guy who ran that Ponzi scheme a few years back?

ANDY

The very same. And that bastard forced me to represent him in

(CONTINUED)

court. When the verdict came in, you can imagine how my mother reacted. And by then, the public knew me as "That asshole lawyer who tried to get the asshole fraud out of trouble"

JEFF

So, is that why you're doing this? Some sorta fucked up vindication?

ANDY

Yeah, I guess. I figure that I'd rather be known as "That asshole lawyer who died a horrible death".

More chuckles.

ANDY

What about you? You're in the best part of your life. You're old, you get to play golf, sleep all day and shit yourself with no consequences, why would you want to leave that behind?

JEFF

Well, I figure I'm on my way out anyway. And this part of your life's not that fun when you've got no one to share it with.

ANDY

You got a wife?

JEFF

Passed a couple years back.

ANDY

Kids?

JEFF

Never had a chance. Took a shot in the gonads in Korea. Surgery got fucked up, and they told me my swimmers weren't strong enough afterwards. I figure I gotta leave

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDY (cont'd)

a legacy one way or another, so
here I am.

ANDY

Jeez, why are we telling each other
this?

JEFF

The way I see it, we'll both be
dead soon enough, so what
difference does it make?

Dr. Watson walks into the office, with Doug following him,
mid-story. Though a little heavier than the first time he
was here, Doug looks like Adonis compared to the other two.

DOUG

So, then, I took her home and we
hooked up. After we were done, she
told me she had something called
"epilepsy" or "ellipses" or
something. But I wore a condom, so
I can't catch that right, doc?

DR. WATSON

(seething)

No, Doug.. I'm pretty sure you
can't catch epilepsy from someone
else.

DOUG

It's "D-Man", dude c'mon!

Dr. Watson turns to Andy and Jeff, and drops his papers,
shocked at how much worse they look.

DR. WATSON

My god! You guys look terrible!
Have you taken any of the medicine
you've been given?

JEFF & ANDY:

(in unison, lying)

Yes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JEFF (cont'd)

DR. WATSON

Well, it looks like we're going to have to up your dosages. I don't get it, Doug has been on the same medication as you, and he looks great!

Doug grins. His face is dotted with acne, and his yellow teeth are caked in plaque. It seems he has not done much with his days besides staying alive.

Dr. Watson's pager begins to ring

DR. WATSON

I'll be right back, I need to go handle this.

He jogs briskly out of the office.

JEFF

Wow, you don't look half bad, son. What's your secret?

DOUG

Secret? What are you talking about, old man?

ANDY

He means, how do you look so healthy while we look like crypt keepers?

DOUG

I don't know, dude. I'm just living my life.

ANDY

Are you even trying to die?

DOUG

Yeah, I am. But I just figure, if this disease is gonna kill me anyway, then I don't need to do anything to help it out, right? I'm just gonna go down when it decides I should.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

So you don't care if you're first?
Wouldn't you wanna die being known
for something?

DOUG

Nah, its really not that big of a
deal. Plus, who wants to be known
as "the guy that shitty disease is
named after"? Like, do you think
that the Cancer family is happy
with how that whole situation
played out?

An awkward silence, before Andy pulls Jeff aside.

ANDY

Hey, he's sort of got a point,
right? We shouldn't be competing
against each other, why not just
enjoy the little time we have left?
Whoever dies first, dies first,
yeah?

JEFF

You really wanna spend your last
days alive with this guy, though?

Jeff points to Doug, who is performing a terrible attempt at
ventriloquism with a skeleton in the corner of the room.

ANDY

I'm just saying we should give it a
try. Plus, look at him. Lord knows
what kind of crazy drugs he can get
us

(to Doug)

Hey man, you wanna get high in the
parking lot?

Doug immediately props up and looks seriously at Andy and
Jeff. He gets quiet and leans his head in a little.

DOUG

(hushed)

You guys cops?

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

Uh, no, son.

DOUG

Then let's do it.

He leads the two of them out of the office with authority. A few seconds after they leave, Dr. Watson returns to an empty office, dumbstruck.

MONTAGE - PROGRESSIVELY MORE DISSHEVELED

The three men walk into a seedy strip club purposefully. They sit down at a table near the front of the audience and hail a waiter, who leaves and returns with an obscenely large plate of chicken wings and beer.

Andy drives to the liquor store, with Jeff in the passenger seat and Doug in the back. They walk in empty handed, and each leave with three bags filled to the brim with different types of alcohol and sweet drinks.

Back at the hospital, Andy talks to an orderly while Jeff and Doug keep watch. The orderly reaches into his pocket with a disapproving look on his face and hands Andy a bag of pills. Doug walks over and gives him an extra \$50, and the orderly gives them an extra bag of weed.

The three men are in a supermarket parking lot after dark. They push each other in shopping carts, yell at passing cars, throw rocks and pee in the street.

By this point, they all look like disgusting, grimy slobs. They've let themselves go and it shows.

END MONTAGE

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NOON

The three men stand in the doctor's office, playing with little items on the windowsill and joking around.

Doug is back to using the skeleton as a dummy.

Andy is laughing uncontrollably as he reads a pamphlet on adult bedwetters.

Jeff is sticking his fingers inside the different orifices

(CONTINUED)

or the 3d digestive model.

Dr. Watson walks in, with a sheepish look on his face.

DR. WATSON
(quietly, embarrassed)
Uh, gentlemen...

None of them seem to have noticed him, as they are all laughing at Doug's puppet act.

DOUG
(As the skeleton)
So I saw a pretty girl the other day. I wanted to talk to her, but I didn't have the guts.

Wild laughs from the peanut gallery.

DR. WATSON
(Assertive)
Gentlemen!

They all stop and turn to him in alarm.

DR. WATSON
Please sit. I have some news.

They sit.

DR. WATSON
Now it seems, that when we ran the initial tests, something went wrong. We're not sure if it was human error or a technical thing with the new computers, but it seems we may have misdiagnosed you.

ANDY
So you had us believe we're dying when we've been fine this whole time? Is that what you're telling us?

DR. WATSON
Now, I never told you that you were dying, but yes, it seems we were wrong about our prognosis of your

(CONTINUED)

conditions. As of right now, we can confirm that the three of you are not dying of some unnamed disease, at least not to our knowledge.

The three men are ecstatic

JEFF

That's great news, doc!

DOUG

Radical, dude!

ANDY

Finally, some good news from you. Shit, I was going to threaten to sue you for malpractice, but even I'm too damn happy for that right now!

DR. WATSON

Now, lets not get ahead of ourselves here. It's not all good news. Mr. Klein-

All three men lean forward in their chairs, wondering what's about to come next.

DR. WATSON

It seems that in your lack of self-control these past few weeks, you failed to monitor your diet, and these recent tests we ran on you show that you're body is in prediabetic stages.

Andy looks utterly shocked, and Doug and Jeff put their hands on his shoulders to comfort him.

DR. WATSON

Jeffrey: Your age plays into this, but *your* diet has led to an excessive blockage of your arteries. I suggest that we schedule a bypass surgery as soon as possible.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. WATSON (cont'd)

Jeff looks like he's about to cry. He drops his head into his hands and sits motionless.

DR. WATSON

And you, (mockingly) "D-Man". It seems that you partook in the use of our medication. Possibly a little too much. Tests indicate your body is in the early stages of a physical dependence on one of the pills we prescribed you.

At this point, all three of them are dumbfounded. Jeff picks his head up and is nearly hyperventilating at this point. He clutches his chest.

JEFF

(quietly, struggling to speak)

Doc.... Doc...! I don't feel so hot...!

Jeff collapses as his chair tips over and he falls to the linoleum, unconscious.

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - EVENING

Jeff blinks his eyes a couple of times as he slowly comes to. Dr. Watson stands at the foot of his bed.

DR. WATSON

Welcome back, Mr. Robertson.

JEFF

What happened, doc?

DR. WATSON

It seems that you had a heart attack. Given how blocked up your arteries were, its a miracle that you were already in the hospital. If we had taken any longer to get you some help, you might not have made it. I'll be back later to give you the details, but you need to get some more rest for now.

Dr. Watson leaves the room, and Jeff looks around. He's

(CONTINUED)

alone. With a downtrodden look, he pulls the blanket up to his chin, and closes his eyes.

DOUG

(O.S.)

Is this his room?

ANDY

(O.S.)

I think so. The nurse said he was up so we could just walk in.

Jeff opens his eyes and turns to the doorway, where Andy and Doug are standing. Andy carries a bottle of red wine, and Doug is shaking a box of honey nut cheerios.

DOUG

It's good for your heart right?
That's what the little bee says.

Andy places the wine on a sidetable

ANDY

I also read that red wine can be good for your heart. But only in moderation! I think our binge drinking days are behind us.

The three men share a laugh.

JEFF

Hey guys, thanks for coming back for me.

DOUG

Don't worry about it, old dude. You should worry about your heart not exploding again though.

Jeff and Andy laugh as Doug opens the box of cheerios and dumps it on the hospital bed.

FADE TO BLACK

TEXT ON SCREEN: 6 MONTHS LATER

(CONTINUED)

JEFF (V.O.)

Things got much better for the three of us after that. Andy ended up suing the hospital for malpractice...

Andy is yelling in a courtroom from the witness stand to the jury, alternating between exaggerated motions and feigned death.

JEFF (V.O.)

...And ended up winning a ton of money, which we all shared. But more importantly, he got his family back.

As Andy walks out of the courthouse beaming, he sees an older man and a woman that he immediately recognizes as his MOTHER and FATHER and runs to greet them.

JEFF (V.O.)

As for Doug, he took some of that unique personality he had...

Doug is standing with the skeleton from the doctor's office before, and manipulating its limbs and talking to it.

JEFF (V.O.)

And decided that he'd share it with a couple of people.

Doug walks, pulling the skeleton behind him, onto a stage that is entertaining an audience of thousands of people, who are all there to see him as he begins his ventriloquist act between himself and the skeleton.

JEFF (V.O.)

And little old me?

Jeff is sprawled out on a beach chair, wearing a Tommy Bahama shirt, sunglasses and surrounded by beautiful women.

JEFF

I'm just trying to make the best of what little time I have left.

As Jeff throws money in the air and laughs with the women,

the screen fades to black.