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dir. Pranava Kumar



A row of suburban houses with two-story gables and brick accents, set against a clear blue sky at dusk. The houses are illuminated by warm, golden light, likely from the setting sun. A street lamp stands in the foreground, and a few cars are parked in the distance. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat somber.

LOGLINE

In an eerily mundane neighborhood, a middle-aged divorcée is driven to madness when his neighbor brings home a dog that won't stop barking.

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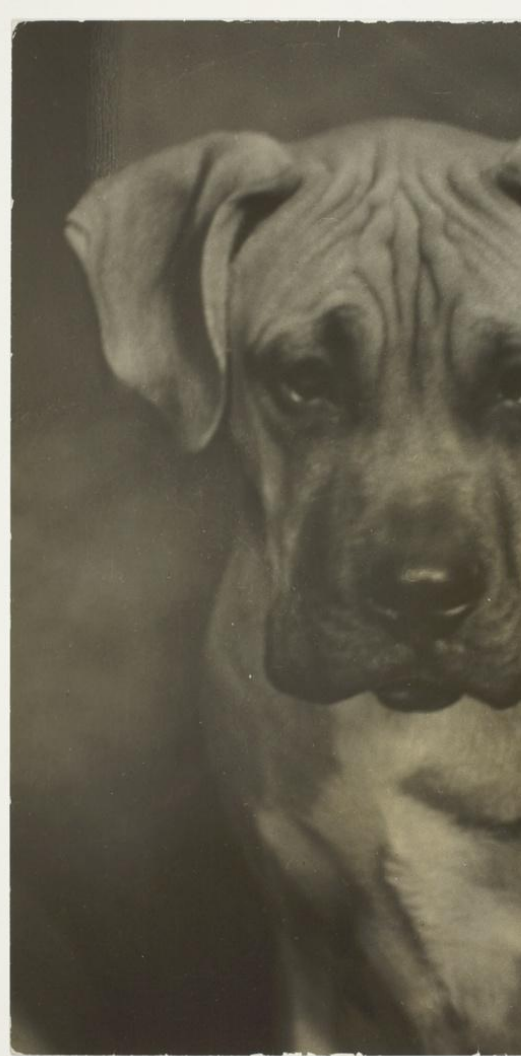
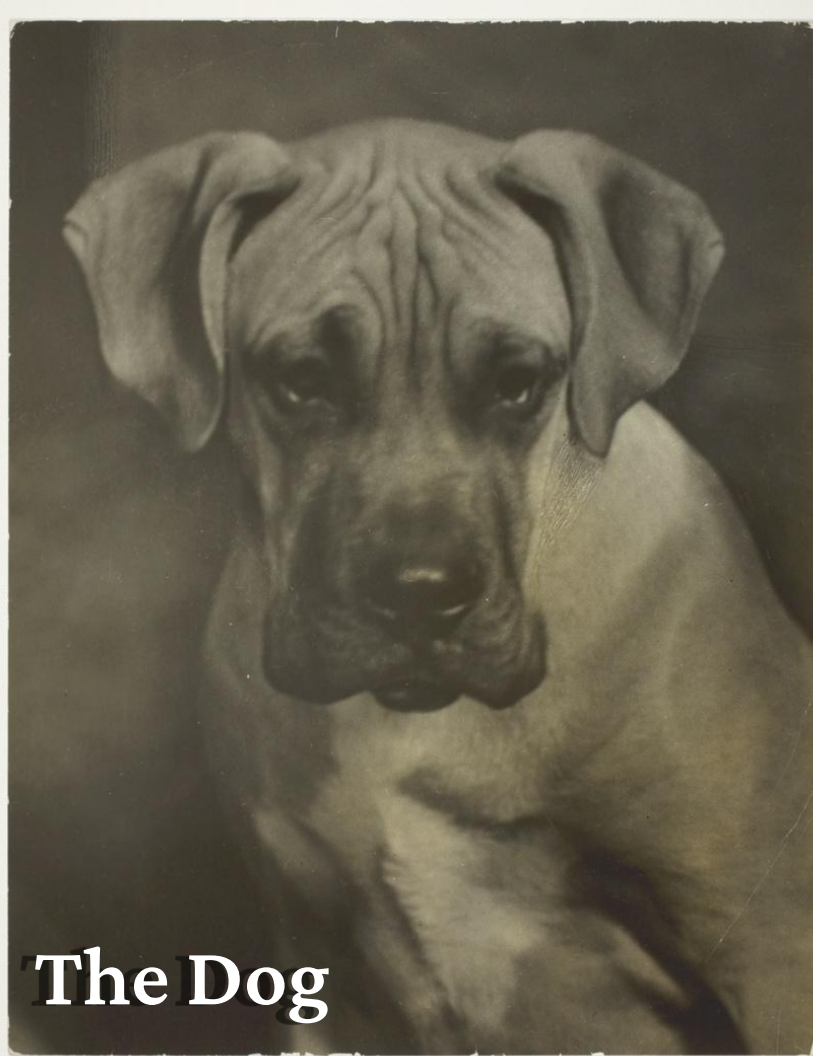
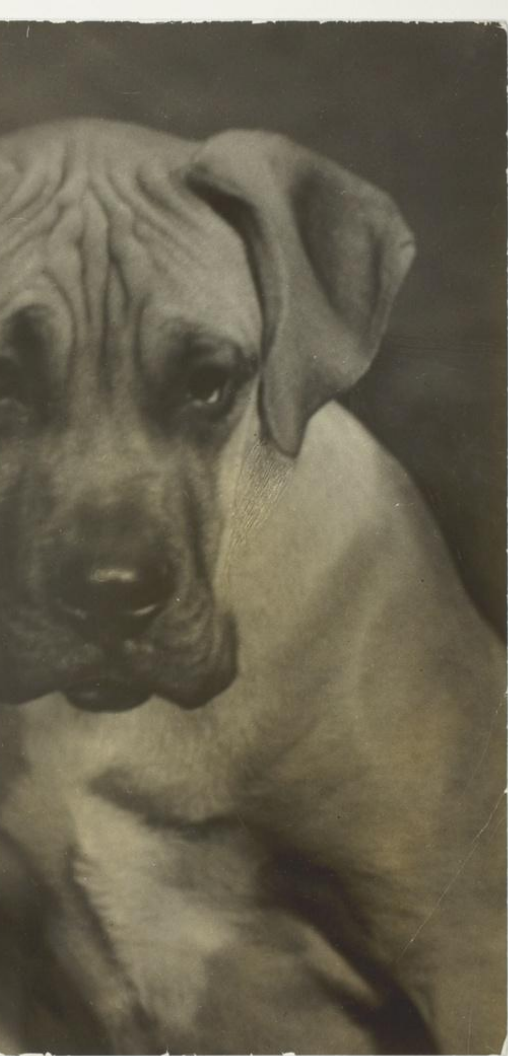


A man with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a brown pinstriped suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie, is sitting in a chair. He has a somber or thoughtful expression, looking downwards. To his left is a lamp with a beige shade and a dark base. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Perry



Perry Russell, 53, is newly separated from his wife, Elise. A man of routine, he is adamant about control. Still, he longs for some semblance of fulfillment, often spending his free time stalking his ex-wife and her new companion online.. Rather obviously, what would fill that void is companionship.





The Dog has just arrived in the neighborhood. It belongs to *The Neighbor*, who lives next door to Perry. The Dog is almost supernatural in essence. Its barks are almost surreally and intentionally pointed towards Perry's actions. The Dog, in connotative terms, represents the unruly, wild, carnal, and inevitably erratic nature of life. Thus, to Perry, The Dog functions as a villain.



The Neighbor



The Neighbor lives next door to Perry. He resembles Perry in almost a mirror-like image. Like Perry, The Neighbor presumably has a simultaneous penchant for control and desire for companionship. Unlike, Perry, however, he has resigned himself to his desire for companionship by adopting The Dog, in turn, ostensibly sacrificing his need for control.

Paul





Paul is Elise's new companion. He is, perhaps, the antithesis of Perry; he is suave, easy-going, warm. He is fashionably brave, donning a new look every day. He is undeniably charming. As Perry stalks Elise and Paul online, he is faced with digital castration; Perry feels emasculated by Paul. The latter, however, has little awareness as to what effect he could possibly have on Perry.

THE STORY



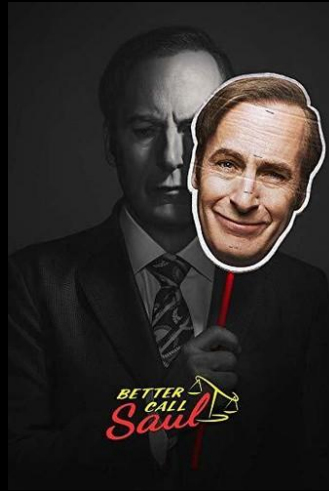
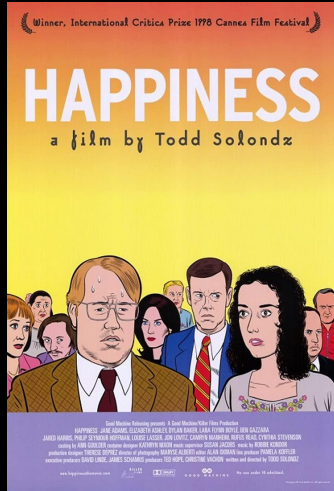
We open with a scene that sort of illustrates the darkly comic tone of the story; Perry is crying himself to sleep, staring at a picture of his wife, when all of a sudden, his own cries are drowned out by the sound of a dog barking. He's angry he can't wallow in his own self-pity in peace, and he begins to get into a match of sorts with this loud barking sound in the distance. As the story continues, we get to know Perry through a day in the life of his routines and his idiosyncrasies, as they are practically sacred to him. However, on this particular day this gratingly barking dog is what throws a wrench into his entire operative nature. As this dog barks throughout the day, it is abrupt, sharp, uncomfortable, and almost surreally and intentionally pointed towards Perry's activities...

...When Perry is at his most vulnerable, being when he's listening to one particular CD track every day and pretending as if he's dancing with a partner, the dog begins to bark loudly. Then, a knock lands at the door. It's Paul, his ex-wife's new lover; she's come to serve him divorce papers. A passive Perry says nothing, but once alone, in a fit of rage, decides to confront his neighbor. Here it is visually revealed that Perry lives in a row of these Levittown-esque suburban houses; they're all essentially the same, both interiors and exteriors. In confronting his neighbor, he is startled to find that the neighbor almost exactly resembles him from his attire to his demeanor. Their interaction is awkward and when Perry confronts the Neighbor about the Dog, the Neighbor is but passively and vaguely dismissive...

...Perry has been driven crazy over the course of just one day. In a drunken stupor at night, while attempting to masturbate to the picture of his wife, Perry is interrupted by a bout of barking once more, and in a fit of inebriated rage, he takes some of his own medication, inserts these pills into a monstrous, raw, meatball, and throws them over the dividing fence. In the morning Perry wakes up to the sounds of not barks, but whimpers. He suffers a panic attack, sobered by the absurd violence of his selfish actions. We end this story on a new day; Perry walks inside his home with a dog, the same kind of dog he had just killed in the previous scene. Perhaps Perry has finally found his companion, a void filled, some entity to assuage his idiosyncrasies. And just when he's about to creep out a smile, the dog begins barking at him...cut to black.



TONAL AND VISUAL REFERENCES



This story requires a deft tonal balance, carefully traversing the darkly comic and absurd with elements of melodrama, surrealism, and thriller. From a visual standpoint, this story will require a thoughtful approach towards how process is presented, especially in terms of Perry's routines; through process, we can examine the fundamental nature of people at an intimate, implicit level. Lastly, this project will require a heavy emphasis on sound design. The above works are exemplary in combining all of these elements tastefully and profoundly.

Lighting & Color

Artists such as Joel Sternfeld, Bertolucci, and Bo Welch serve as some of our visual inspirations as well.

Striving to achieving high-dynamic range through dark shadows and highlights while also maintaining rich midtones; especially in the skin tone.

This harsh lighting ratio will be done through primarily single sources, bounces and practicals.

The shadows will be lively and contribute to the depth of the image and depth of the story.



Movement & Framing

Movement will emphasize Perry's thought process, while framing will reveal more information.

Utilizing suburban architecture and production design, a visual pattern of symmetry and asymmetry will emerge.

The obstruction of the frame through set design will be complemented by the dark shadows and contrasted by the specular highlights.

We are also interested in employing surreal and absurd compositions to highlight the tragicomic elements of the narrative.





MORE STILLS
BY
CLAIR PECK





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BUDGET & PLAN

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
PRODUCTION	\$100.00
CAMERA	\$300.00
GRIP & ELECTRIC	\$200.00
SOUND	\$80.00
PRODUCTION DESIGN, WARDROBE, HAIR & MAKEUP	\$575.00
STUNTS & SPECIAL EFFECTS	\$500.00
LOCATIONS	\$1,800.00
TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL	\$660.00
FOOD & LODGING	\$2,500.00
TOTAL PRODUCTION	\$6,715.00
EDITORIAL	\$0.00
MUSIC	\$250.00
SOUND POST	\$200.00
GRAPHICS, ANIMATION, EFFECTS	\$0.00
COLOR CORRECTIONS	\$200.00
TOTAL POST PRODUCTION	\$650.00
TOTAL LEGAL AND DISTRIBUTION COSTS	\$800.00
TOTAL OTHER COSTS	\$155.00
TOTAL BELOW THE LINE	\$8,320.00
CONTINGENCY 10.00%	\$832.00
GRAND TOTAL (excl. paid cast & crew)	\$9,152.00

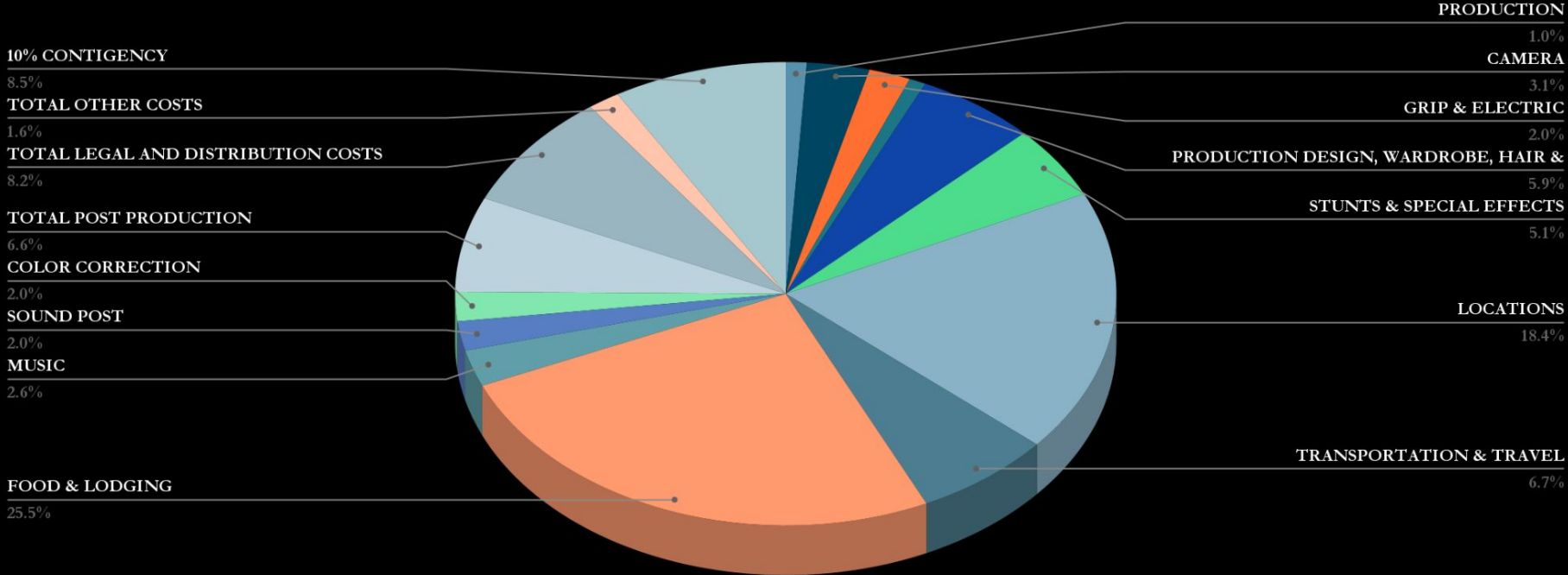
Personal savings → \$2,500

Family outreach → \$2,500

Allotment → \$1,325

Crowdfunding (Seed&Spark) → \$3,000

BREAKDOWN



PRODUCTION TIMELINE

November - December 2022

- Finish Assembling Crew
- Polish Script

January 2023

- Start casting process
- Location scout the potential neighborhoods
- Launch Seed&Spark

February 2023

- Have all roles casted, including the dog.
- Have an animal wrangler locked.
- Begin rehearsal process

Early March 2023

- Confirm location, transportation plans, and lodging plans if necessary.
- Finalize post-production crew and timeline

Mid-March 2023

- Lock down crew.
- Finalize shooting schedule.
- Finalize shot list.

April 2023

- Shoot!

TARGET AUDIENCE

Catering towards the Gen-Z/Millennial, suburbanite demographic

(ie, 18-34 age group)

Festival crowd

(Still determining which festivals suit us best)

Indie/online platforms catered towards young filmmakers

(Online platforms, such as Retrospective of Jupiter, Beyond the Short, etc.)

LOCATIONS

In order to capture the visceral essence of suburban mundanity, as well as actualize the wonky thematic ideas within the story — such as the endless row of identical houses — ideal locations, would include neighborhoods such as: Levittown, PA; Levittown, NY; Willingboro, NJ, etc.

We've been in contact with the town of Hempstead, NY — a Levittown — and they provided us with a estimate of \$600 per diem. Sample photos of some neighborhoods in Hempstead are shown below.



DOG HANDLING

Current Ideas:

New York 411

Reaching out to Production Office

Possible personal connection

Tentative scheduling ideally has us using our entire last day for shooting with our dog.

We would have a dog wrangler on-set at all times.

A priority will be designating a safe holding area for the dog as well as provide proper food, water, and care.





Director's Statement

I'm hoping this story sounds as though there is some potential for absurdity; while I think this particular story falls within that ilk, the real life inspiration is not far from the absurd. I grew up in suburban Massachusetts in a predominantly white, wealthy town that consistently earned spots on "Top 100 towns to live in the US" realtor lists. The town, community, and stories within it, however, were not bereft of their own strange dramatics.

Thematically, I'm interested in the ideas of suburban mundanity, isolation, and emasculation, as these are the kinds of characters and stories and people that have surrounded me all my life. More specifically, through these thematic tropes, I want to explore a fundamental thesis of how a penchant for control and a desire for companionship fundamentally cannot co-exist.

I'm sure you're all familiar with the inspirational context surrounding this story, so I'll refrain from repeating into banality. At a personal level, Perry represents a figure that I deeply fear I am prone to becoming as a result of my own suburban upbringing. I've witnessed countless ostensible father figures in my life confined to the worst of their sensibilities and neuroticisms, failing to confront themselves in the process, and eventually acting upon their impulses in one way or another. I guess through working on this film, I'm looking to alleviate myself from the fear of falling into that, I don't know; who's to say?

Sorry if that last part sounded unbearable.

Kisses,
Pranava