

ID THEFT

a treatment for a revised screenplay

by

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CHARACTERS

Sandy Patterson (Jason Bateman): SANDY is a low-level accounts manager working at a large investment firm in Boston. The most notable thing about him is that nothing is particularly notable. Not that it's for lack of trying. Sandy knows he's the kind of vanilla guy that blends into Swiss Coffee-colored walls, but after years of self-help books and aborted attempts at hobbies, he's resigned himself to being a bland guy.

It's not that he's a loser. He's not. He cares deeply about his job. He excels at it. Sandy Patterson may be "mediocre" in the eyes of his jerk boss, but he's industrious, thoughtful and competent. He's winning in his own small scale way.

Unfortunately, that hasn't translated into the American Dream the way he would have hoped.

Sandy lives in a small apartment with his wife, his two daughters, and third little girl on the way. He doesn't just love his family. He lives for them. They're the only thing he's ever done that's beautiful and amazing... and yet, he can't give them the life he knows they deserve.

Actually, deep down, it's more personal than that. He feels like he's not the husband and father they deserve. Not because he doesn't love them. Because he can't provide for them the way he wish he could. No house. No yard. No big gifts at Christmas. No vacations. And college? Oh God... the thought of three tuitions alone makes him sick to his stomach. And weddings! Three of them!

The future is scary.

With the economy the way it is, Sandy Patterson does the best he can. He pays his bills, he keeps his debt low, he tries to save... but he's basically living month to month, check to check. And every month he fails to move the ball forward toward the dream of the life he wants to give his wife and daughters, that's another month he feels worse and worse about who he is.

Like most bland guys, he backs away from confrontation. He follows the rules, and quietly fumes in private when others don't. He works hard, and is never thanked.

But also... like most bland guys... Sandy Patterson is not *really* bland. There's a time bomb waiting to go off inside there. And sooner or later, someone's going to push him too far and light the fuse.

In the end, Sandy will come to realize that his problem isn't who he is, but the fact that he doesn't see the *good* in who he is. His value as a husband and father has nothing to do with the quality of the life he *provides*. It has everything to do with the quality of his heart, the attention he pays, and the depth of his love for his wife and kids.

Not always an easy lesson for the American man.

Some characters have to go on journeys to become someone new. Others need to go on a journey to realize they always were a hero... they were just blind to their own truth.

Diana (Melissa McCarthy): That's the only name she's willing to give us. Diana is an identity thief. She lives alone, seemingly without a care in the world. She's K-Mart coordinates from the neck down, and weirdly overly-made up from the neck up. Her awkwardly large and cheaply dyed black hair, her ruby red lips, the lashes, the big nails... this is a woman who spends a ton of time on her appearance, and it's still a fucking mess.

But it's her "look," cemented somewhere years ago, and never to be changed. Diana is absurdly optimistic and zen for someone who makes a living as a criminal. But behind what appears to be a shambles of a person, there's an amazingly smart, competent woman who knows exactly how to work the system and play people to get what she wants.

Despite the story she tells Sandy when they initially meet, Diana literally has no idea who she is. She doesn't even know her real name. Given up as a baby and bounced through the foster care system, she's lived a lonely existence, looking in at the rest of the world around her... trying on other people's identities because her own never had a chance to materialize.

But the same social alienation that makes us pity her has also allowed Diana to mess around with other people's lives in a destructive way. Desperate to fill the ache inside with *something*, Diana uses the world as a limitless credit card, and uses the people around her as a never-ending game of "let's pretend." But for all the crap she buys, and for all the lives she tries on and discards like so many bad prom dresses... she wakes up alone each day. And the pain just keeps getting worse.

Before Diana can become the person she's supposed to be, she's going to have to confront the reality of what she's done to others. And it's Sandy who is going to be her first real friend, and in a way, her first real parent. Through him, she'll finally realize who she should be.

Trish Patterson (Amanda Peet): TRISH is a woman on the edge. She loves her husband, she loves her children, but the kids and the pregnancy and the bills and the apartment have frayed her nerves.

She's emotional, but she's real and funny, and she clings to her husband like a drowning woman on a life preserver. No wonder Sandy is so desperate to give her a better life.

But what Sandy doesn't get is that his presumed failures aren't the cause of her emotionality. He's the *cure*. This is just who she is. She'd be so much worse without him. She's never going to be the calm, centered, Yoga breather.

Does she want a nice house and a yard and new clothes and more stuff for the kids?

Hell yes.

But all she *needs* is her husband. She didn't marry him in spite of his big heart and not-alpha-dog-ness.

She married him *because* of it.

Jim Cornish (Ricky Gervais): Partner in the financial firm, and Sandy's boss. Jim Cornish is a fucking asshole. A snotty, alpha dog jerk who enjoys bullying the weak, Cornish is the kind of guy who works Sandy to the bone, then laughs with his buddies about how lame the guy's job is. Everything's easy for Jim. He's great at telling jokes, charms clients with ease, knows how to fake his way through any conversation, somehow seems cool to everyone... you know... the opposite of Sandy.

Jim Cornish may be a jerk, and Sandy might deeply resent him... but deep down, Sandy can't help but wish that Jim would like him. And that maybe he could be more like Jim. That's the curse of the beta dog.

The Young Guns: Four fund managers at the firm, all in their late 30's. They're like the guys who left William Morris to start CAA. They've got clients willing to follow them, and they're done playing second fiddle to Cornish and the other partners. They're splitting off to form their own firm... but they're going to need an accounts manager to handle all the paperwork and processing.

They're slick and they're arrogant, but they recognize that Sandy is a diamond in the rough. They're going to make him a life-changing offer. Junior partner in the new firm. A chance to give his family the life he so desperately wants to provide, and a chance to become the man he so desperately wants to be.

The Skiptracer (Sam Jackson): An underworld scumball who uses illegal means to help legitimate debt collection agencies get their hands on debtors who have “skipped town.” Basically a professional tracker and kidnaper.

Even though debt collection agencies are infamous for their tenacity and the way they harass people, they are still bound by laws. For instance, they can’t actually physically detain you if you try and “skip out” on your debts.

In the real world, if people do “skip out,” the collection agencies hire skiptracers to track them down.

In this story, we suggest that there is a shadowy netherworld of less-than-scrupulous skiptracers who will violate laws and physically capture and return debtors for cash. The Skiptracer is one such man, operating outside the bounds of law.

Avi and Ilan: Enforcers who work for an Israeli drug-smuggling ring: specifically, the illegal oxycontin trade. Diana sold them Sandy’s ID so that they could use it to purchase and move oxycontin, but the ID got “burned” within a day, and now they want their money back.

Which, of course, she’s spent.

These two idiots have a very simple goal. Get the money out of her, or kill her.

As tenacious as Israelis can be, this is much easier said than done.

ACT ONE

1. SOMEWHERE NEAR EUGENE, OREGON – we're looking through a cop car windshield as it drives down a highway in the middle of the day. Up ahead, a car is swerving back and forth. Beyond swerving. They need a new word for what this car is doing.

The cops pull the driver over. A woman tumbles out. Absolutely blotto. Flopping around like a wounded deer. They give her a quick drunk test, then ask her to blow in the breathalyzer.

She puts it in her mouth to blow, and promptly pukes in it. "What's my score?"

SMASH TO: jail. Booking area. They take her thumbprint. Check her driver's license. "Sandy Patterson." One of the cops notices her birthday.

"Jesus Christ, you're turning 40 in one month. Get your shit together, Sandy Patterson." FLASH as they take her mugshot...

2. APARTMENT – BOSTON, MA – ONE MONTH LATER

Happy birthday, dear Daddy.... Happy birthday to you...

Another FLASH, as a little girl takes a picture with a disposable camera. This Sandy Patterson, a man, gets a kiss on the cheek from his pregnant wife Trish. "Happy birthday, Sandy Patterson."

Sandy lives in this small apartment with his wife, two daughters and third on the way. This 40th birthday cake is a fun moment, a moment with his family... the kind he loves the most.

But when the kids are in bed, he sits with Trish and goes through the bills. Times are tough. And with the third on the way and no good news in sight, Sandy desperately wishes he could give more to his family than he does. A house. A yard. Clothes, toys, vacations, then college tuition, weddings... everything man wants to be able to provide.

But his company froze salaries and eliminated bonuses back in 2008, and even if Trish is right when she says they don't appreciate him, this isn't the time to try and find another job. He's lucky he has the one he does.

It's on him. He knows that. He has to take the reins at work. Be more aggressive. Get noticed. Stand out. No matter what Trish says about the man he is, he knows he's not good enough. Not for her, not for the kids... not for himself.

Just as he's about to go to bed, the phone rings. Oddly, it's a beauty salon in Eugene, Oregon, confirming an appointment for two days from now. They didn't have a number, googled him by his full name... he tells them they've obviously got the wrong person. He's in Boston.

Strange.

3. NEXT MORNING – Sandy wakes up, makes it through the chaos of the morning routine. Trish tells him something good is going to happen today. She can feel it.

In the lobby of the skyscraper where he works, he grabs a morning coffee.

Doesn't have cash. The cashier swipes his credit card. He says to the cashier, "Aren't you supposed to check my ID?" She looks at him like he's the biggest moron in the world. Who cares about that crap?

The credit keypad processes... then... APPROVED.

4. SANDY AT WORK – We establish that he's a low-level account manager. When clients open accounts, Sandy processes all of the paperwork. Opens the accounts. Executes the transaction orders from the investment managers. Process the endless forms required by the SEC. If the traders are the hotshot surgeons of the financial business, he's the unglorified scrub nurse... but he cares about his work.

This hasn't gone unnoticed by THE YOUNG GUNS, four of the younger traders, who insist that he handle all of their accounts.

Guys like Sandy... guys who actually give a shit about rules... are few and far between.

Sandy is called into JIM CORNISH'S office to do a new account form. Sandy frowns. Cornish is the worst of the partners. The one who delights in humiliating him. The man is a bully. Loves to make fun of Sandy's name. Sandy's job. Sandy's by-the-rules anality. It's all good sport for Jim Cornish.

Sandy takes the abuse with a forced smile, because he simply can't afford to lose this job.

He walks into Jim's office and sees that the new client is LARRY BIRD, probably the most famous man in Boston. Sandy is stammering, nervous... in the presence of his hero. Cornish casually demeans Sandy, then asks him to fill out the paperwork and open a new account for Larry.

Sandy asks Larry Bird for his ID. It's the rules... the SEC and federal regulations require the authorizing account officer to verify ID before opening an account.

Bird's left his wallet in the car downstairs. But he's Larry Fucking Bird. Just open the fucking account. Sandy is forced, awkwardly, to insist on seeing some ID *because he follows the rules*, even though Larry Bird is definitely Larry Bird.

Cornish and Larry Bird both berate the shit out of Sandy until he relents and opens the account.

Afterward, Cornish confronts Sandy. Disgusted by him. "Who do you think you are?"

Sandy wants to be an alpha dog like Jim Cornish, but his innate decency and adherence to the rules gets him punished and humiliated.

5. AS THE DAY ENDS – the YOUNG GUNS pull Sandy into a stairwell. They tell him that they've been planning something big for months. They're breaking away. Starting their own firm. They already have three huge clients willing to go along with them. It's a guaranteed success story. But they need Sandy to handle the accounts processing. If he wants to buy in to the new company, they'll make him a junior partner. Triple his salary, plus 5% of the profits. A life-changing deal. The opportunity he's been waiting for.

Sandy tells them he doesn't have the cash right now to buy in, but they assure him they can co-sign for a loan. The credit's lined up through Bank of Boston. He doesn't have to do a thing, and his first year bonus alone will be enough to pay it back.

It's perfect. He asks when they're making the move?

Now. Right now.

6. THE BREAKAWAY – the Young Guns walk out into the middle of the office floor, stand on desks, and proclaim that they're leaving. The partners, led by Jim Cornish, glare at them. Traitors! Cornish warns everyone on the floor that if they leave with these four, they're never coming back. Not only that, he will personally make sure they are blackballed out of the business.

Everyone sits on their hands. The secretaries the guys asked to come. Some of the other lower-level guys. Everyone's scared of Cornish.

The leader of the Guns turns to Sandy. "Are you coming?"

Sandy freezes... a huge risk... and he doesn't take risks... but for his family, and for himself... he STANDS UP... and WALKS OUT with his new partners.

At long last, Sandy Patterson is getting the life he deserves.

7. EUGENE, OR – MALL – THE SAME TIME - THE FEMALE SANDY PATTERSON, out of jail, sits in a Brookstone MASSAGE CHAIR, revved to max, drinking a coffee. She's on her phone, thanking someone named "Avi" for bailing her out, and telling him that "that thing'll be good for at least a month. Just transfer the money over."

A store employee asks if she's interested in the chair... mostly to get her ass out of it.

She asks what it costs. "\$1999".

She pulls out a credit card. "I'll take it." Then she sees the portable hand-held massagers. Interesting. "And one of those sweet babies."

The cashier swipes her card. APPROVED. The cashier hands the card back to her. Sandy waves her off. "Keep it. It's burnt."

8. THE GAS STATION/IN HIS CAR – driving home, Sandy calls Trish to tell her the amazing news, but she can't hear... the kids are going crazy... bad connection... he'll call her back.

He stops for gas. His credit card is DECLINED. What the fuck? He just used it that very morning...

The gas station attendant takes the card, berates Sandy, and then cuts it up per instructions from the credit card terminal.

Back in his car, Sandy is on the phone with the credit card company. Someone's been making unauthorized purchases. But the company is treating him like a potential criminal... as if he's making it all up.

He's PULLED OVER by a cop for not using a hands-free. The cop checks his license, then ARRESTS him on an outstanding felony warrant. What the hell?

9. POLICE STATION – After spending time in lockup, Sandy is brought into the interrogation room. When the arresting officer ran his license, the NCIC brought up a felony DUI warrant from Oregon. He apparently skipped a court date. Sandy insists it's not him, even though the name, birthday and even his SSN match. They pull the mugshot from Eugene PD, and lo and behold... he's telling the truth.

The person who was arrested is named Sandy Bigelow Patterson, and they have his SSN, but it's clearly not him.

It's THE WOMAN.

The cops explain that he's a victim of identity theft, but they also explain how difficult it will be for him to unravel what ID theft can do to a person. This is going to take weeks, months, maybe up to a year to clear up... IF they can clear it all up.

They let him go, and they give him a copy of the mugshot and a case #, in the hopes that it helps him clear his name with the credit card company.

We have a villain, and we have a problem. But that's okay. Sandy Patterson has an opportunity to figure out how to solve this.

10. AT HOME – Sandy arrives home, explains what happened to Trish. Everything. The new job, the fact that he quit... and then the arrest and the ID theft. He immediately gets on the computer to check his credit report.

What comes up is a NIGHTMARE.

All of his credit cards are in trouble... including a bunch under his name he's never heard of. There are business accounts in default under his name. There's a car he doesn't own that he's failed to make payments on. There are numerous mobile phone accounts. Cash advances. And his bank accounts have been frozen because he's overdrawn on all of them.

It's a stomach-churning "oh my God" moment for anyone, but especially for Sandy Patterson, a man who pays his bills meticulously. Whose credit was spotless. Who follows the rules to a T so that this would never happen.

The phone rings... it's a local DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY. Stridently asking him to pay the Bank of Boston the money he owes from overdrafts. He explains that his ID has been stolen, but they don't care. They harass him until he finally hangs up on them.

The phone immediately rings again. He answers angrily, but this time, it's one of the Young Guns. They need to see them first thing in the morning.

11. AT THE NEW OFFICE – the guys bring Sandy in. It's not good. The bank that was going to put up his loan has pulled it. His credit is in ruins. What the hell happened?

Sandy explains the situation. The guys are relieved that they didn't hire a

complete deadbeat, but business is business. They have two problems.

First, Sandy needs to buy into the business. They can't take him on if he's not going to be able to pay the capital now that's required to get the business going.

Second, they can't have an employee who is a financial disaster. They're a financial firm! Their clients would scream bloody murder.

Unless Sandy can clear his name in one week, they're pulling their offer and finding someone else.

And suddenly, Sandy is caught in the middle. He quit the job he had. The job he was going to is in jeopardy. Not only is his dream at stake, but his ability to put food on the table.

The stakes and the clock are now clear.

12. BACK AT HOME – NIGHT - Trish floats the notion that maybe this isn't going to work out for them. Maybe he should beg for his job. Sandy explains... there is no job. It's gone. There's only one way out of it, and it's through it. He goes into crisis-management mode. He spreads out all of the bills, and starts making calls. He's going to solve this tonight through sheer will.

It doesn't go well. This isn't something you *can* solve in a night. The credit card companies all presume he is lying. The DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY won't stop calling.

And then the POLICE show up with a warrant to search Sandy's house for drugs. Apparently someone used one of his accounts to purchase a large quantity of oxycontin. The police already know his ID has been stolen, but they have to go through the motions... it's the misery of ID theft.

A bad situation is getting worse.

Sandy gets into bed. Trish has been crying. Freaking out. He's in a quiet panic. Following the rules hasn't worked. Then he remembers the appointment phone call... the person that stole his ID is due at a salon in Oregon *tomorrow*.

13. NEW OFFICE – MORNING – Sandy is waiting for the Young Guns at the new office. Asks them: if he brings the ID thief to them and she confesses to everything, would that be enough?

They agree that it would be enough IF she also gets arrested for each of the crimes. That would satisfy the bank and their clients that Sandy is on the up

and up.

14. SANDY'S APARTMENT - He explains THE PLAN to Trish. He will fly out to Oregon, stake the salon out, lie in wait for the THIEF, then confront her and bring her back on the next flight. She will confess to everything, he'll have the cops lying in wait... and he will finally be able to give his family the life they deserve.
15. THE TRIP – At home, Sandy prepares to leave. He calls the salon and CONFIRMS the appointment. Explains that his wife made it... she's traveling... he didn't realize that when they called him initially.

His task is simple. Using the mugshot photo, he will identify the thief when she shows up for her appointment. Then he'll grab her, cuff her, and make her see that she needs to come with him.

He assures Trish that this is safe. It's a WOMAN. And per her mugshot, she's 5'3". Not exactly a threat.

This will be easy. Unfortunately, all of their credit cards are frozen, and their checking accounts have been emptied. He takes their rainy-day cash out... it's enough to buy him a round-trip ticket, plus a one-way ticket for the thief.

Once again, Sandy believes that the world will work as rationally and predictably as his own mind. His wife loves him for this. It's clear he's doing it for her and the kids. He loves her, and he's not going to be defeated.

16. OUTSKIRTS OF EUGENE, OR – Sandy parks by the salon, and waits until THE THIEF shows up. She goes in, gets her hair done, and comes out looking exactly the same.

She gets in her car, and he TAILS HER, hoping to follow her back to her house.

ON A HILLSIDE ROAD – he follows behind as she goes faster... then she SLAMS on the brakes, and he REAR ENDS her. It's clear that she's pulling a scam on him... the old stop short/ whipcash maneuver. She shows him her ID. He shows her his... the same name.

She realizes who he is, and punches him in the throat. He blocks her from getting back in her car, so she gets in his car. He gets in her car... she took the keys out.

She RAMS her own car and starts pushing it toward the edge of the cliff. He jumps out just before she pushes her own car over the edge into a ravine, then she ZOOMS AWAY.

Thief 1, Sandy 0.

This woman is a lot craftier and formidable than Sandy had expected. He showed up believing that he was in control. He's not. She turned the tables on him with ease, and now he has no car, no clue where she lives, and no idea what to do next.

ACT TWO

1. BACK WITH TRISH – she speaks briefly with Sandy to get the update, then gets a call from the DEBT COLLECTION AGENCY, once again looking for her husband. She tells them that he’s out of town, somewhere in Oregon, not exactly sure where, not sure when he’ll be back. The debt collector says “Oregon? Oh *really?*” and hangs up. Hmmm. That’s not good.
2. OREGON – THE RAVINE - Sandy climbs down into the ravine, gets inside the THIEF’S car, and finds something with an address.
3. THE THIEF’S HOME – Sandy shows up just as the THIEF has finished loading up the trunk of HIS rental car, clearly getting ready to escape. He confronts her, and she punches him in the throat again.

The two have a knockdown PHYSICAL FIGHT, in which Sandy has to try and get handcuffs on her.

(note: Her home is a hoarder’s paradise of crap she’s bought with stolen ID’s... but obviously has never used. He’s disgusted by her existence.)

She’s surprisingly strong. And he’s losing.

Until...

ARI and ILON, two Israeli thugs, show up for THE THIEF. She’s way more scared of them than she is of Sandy. Suddenly, this woman who was fighting like hell to get away from him is now begging him to get her out of there.

She grabs a knapsack full of cosmetics, then takes a poster we can’t see from her bedroom wall, folds it quickly, and puts it gently in her knapsack. Whatever it is, it’s curiously the only thing she seems to care about in a house full of valuable stolen goods.

Sandy and the THIEF barely escape from the ISRAELIS.

What the hell has he gotten himself into?

She reveals that her name is Diana. Just Diana... no last name needed.

Without realizing it, Sandy Patterson is fighting harder for this than he’s ever fought for anything. But it’s all in service of being something more than who he naturally is.

Diana fights as well, but gives up just as quickly when she calculates that there might be a better strategy. Even though she’s with him now, she seems like she’s

in control. And yet, there's that poster. A chink in the armor...

4. HEADING TO THE AIRPORT – as they approach the airport, Diana asks Sandy what his plan is.

He tells her he has two tickets for them. They're going to fly back to Boston, and she's going to clear his name.

She likes the idea of getting out of Oregon. The heat's on. But how does he plan to get her on the plane.?They have the same ID... same name, even the middle name. Same birthdate too. No way they're getting past TSA like that.

Sandy stops the car. She's right. This is a huge problem. He can't afford a long road trip. They don't have much cash, and he needs to get back before the week is up, or his family will suffer.

When Diana learns that this is about his wife and daughters... and a daughter on the way, she feigns disinterest. Still, she's worried. Because these Israelis are a real problem. She sold them Sandy's ID so that they could buy oxycontin, which they did, but only for a few days. Then the ID got "burnt" because he froze everything. It was supposed to be good for a month... they paid her for a month... those guys will kill her if they get a hold of her.

That's not good for her, and it's not good for Sandy either.

So her proposal is this: she will go with him, but not to the police. With her prior record and what she's done, she's looking at a ten year jail sentence, and she won't survive that. No way. So she'll vouch directly to his partners. In return, he will set her free and not turn her in. Simple deal. But it's gonna have to be a road trip. No other way to get it done.

If she smells police at any moment, she runs. That's a promise.

Sandy walks to a payphone and calls his partners. He tells her that he's going to bring the ID thief directly to them, and they should have Boston PD waiting in an adjacent room, out of sight. Once she confesses, they will arrest her.

Sandy hangs up, walks back to the car, and tells Diana she has a deal. They shake on it.

The partnership begins, built on A LIE. He tells her he'll set her free.

But he has zero intention of doing that.

Bound by circumstance, they each have something the other wants. Diana is the only person that can get Sandy the American Dream, and Sandy is the only

person who can keep Diana out of jail.

But as the road trip begins, one thing is also certain. Sandy is lying to Diana. He absolutely intends to turn her in once she's vouched for him.

5. A FAST FOOD PARKING LOT – SOMEWHERE – The SKIPTRACER is dragging a CRYING MAN by the leg across parking lot toward a windowless van. He explains that the guy owes money on his fancy house and his fancy car, and it was cute how he skipped town to avoid paying it.

The crying man insists that debt collection agencies can't physically abduct people. True, says the Skiptracer. That's why they pay people like him, under the table, to do the dirty work *for* them. He's going to tie this guy up, drive him to Boston, and dump him on the Debt Collection Agency's doorstep.

And there's nothing this guy can do about it.

While he's dragging the guy, The Skiptracer gets a call. He writes the name down. "Sandy Bigelow Patterson" and "Oregon". Got it. That's all he needs.

The Skiptracer has his next assignment. Once he's done with the guy he's dragging, he's heading out to Oregon.

There are things out there worse than cops. This is a cruel, effective hunter who is coming for our hero...

6. ON THE ROAD – Sandy and Diana have begun their road trip from Oregon to Boston. As they drive, Diana describes her idyllic upbringing. Sandy refuses to tell her anything about himself, but she already knows so much about him: the self-help books, the guitar lessons, the workout tapes... she's had access to his entire credit history.

They arrive at a MOTEL. It's late. Time for dinner and sleep.

As they get out of the car, Sandy receives **A STRANGE TEXT MESSAGE**. Just random characters. Like programming code or something. Odd.

Diana says, "Why do I do the things I do? I don't know. This is just me, I guess. We are who we are."

Sandy says, "Don't give me that bullshit. You're the person you choose to be. You chose to be this way."

Diana says, "No. We already are who we are. We choose to be who we're not. That's why it's a choice."

That defines the difference between Diana and Sandy. Authenticity. She may be a criminal, but that's an honest expression of who she is... or at least, that's what she's saying. Sandy, however, is a man who continually chooses to try and be someone else.

7. MOTEL RESTAURANT – As soon as they enter the motel, Diana immediately slips into the character of Sandy's wife, which makes him uncomfortable. When they sit down for dinner, he explains that they must order very little in order to ration out their money.

Before the waitress arrives, Sandy takes out a piece of paper and tries to write the "Arrival Announcement." Stumped. Diana gives him some ideas, which are terrible. He puts the paper away. Still blocked.

When the waitress walks over, Diana orders the ribs. Definitely way above their budget. Sandy protests... "That's a lot of food," and Diana spins that to play on the waitress's sympathy... two put-upon wives whose husbands are critical of their eating habits. Through a comedic but very impressive bit of con artistry, Diana gets her entire meal comped.

Diana is extraordinarily competent. She gets what she wants, and she's way more savvy than Sandy is. He's supposed to be in charge, but he's reduced to eating off of her plate. And even though they're on this road trip because she stole from him, he's starting to realize that it will be easier to actually make it back with her help. Is she an adversary or an ally?

8. MOTEL BAR / BEDROOM – after dinner, Diana insists on getting a drink in the sleazy motel bar. And since Sandy can't leave her side for fear she'll run, he has to join her. Once inside the bar, she picks up some guy. It's a road trip, and she's feeling frisky. Again, she plays a character... the wife with the husband who likes to "watch." Sandy protests, but he's not walking away either. How can he? If he leaves her... how does she know she'll stick around?

Cut to the bedroom. Sandy is in bed, trying to sleep, but he can't, because Diana is loudly banging the hell out of this guy in the bathroom.

What began as a trip where he was entirely in charge is quickly becoming a nightmare when he has zero power. This has always been his problem. Because he follows rules, behaves decently... he ends up getting the shit end of the stick. In the space of just a few scenes, Diana has completely wrested control from him.

9. NEXT MORNING – As they leave the motel, Sandy berates Diana for the stunt she pulled the night before... again trying to assert his control.

Until she shows all the money she just ripped off from the guy. This was a con

from the start. The fact that he was cute was icing on the cake.

He gets another **STRANGE TEXT MESSAGE**. Texts this person back. Who the hell is this?

He heads to the lobby coffee shop to grab a drink for the road.

Diana walks toward the car. Sees a MAID pushing a cart toward a room. And sitting by herself in front of the motel is a NINE-YEAR OLD CHUBBY GIRL, the maids daughter. Quietly drawing on a pad. Alone. Ignored.

Diana meets eyes with the girl. Then gives her the cash she stole from the mark the night before.

And walks to the car.

Back with SANDY... in the reflection on the glass of the lobby coffee shop, we see THE SKIPTRACER'S VAN pull up. The Skiptracer has words with Diana, then drags her out of the car, and pushes her in the van.

Sandy walks outside, and sees the tail end of this. He doesn't know who that is or why he has Diana. All he knows is that this man is driving away with the one woman he cannot afford to lose.

He runs to his car and gives chase.

Up until this point, Diana has seemed practically a superhero. She acts without hesitation or fear, she's competent, street-smart and completely self-possessed.

But now we understand there's something going on here. Something we don't quite understand, but underneath that thick armor, there's a weakness.

Sandy may not be in control of the world around him, but he's in control of himself, and he never gives up. This is something he doesn't realize about himself. At least... not yet.

10. THE CHASE – Sandy drives up alongside the van in a sort of “anti-chase” car chase. Much of it is taken up by him attempting to talk to the Skiptracer, learn who he is, how he found them, why he's taken Diana (the Skiptracer found Sandy's name through the rental car service in Oregon, then hacked into the rental car's Lojack and used a black-market tracker to find it... he assumed a girl name like Sandy had to match the woman sitting in the car)... but Diana puts a quick end to the discussion by knocking the Skiptracer out.

He's slumped over the wheel, and the van is accelerating toward a busy country highway intersection. Diana yells at Sandy to RAM THE VAN, and

after much hesitation and fear, he does. A perfect PIT maneuver that brings the van to a stop.

He gets out of his car to make sure Diana is okay. He's ecstatic. Alive. Actually DID something amazing... and look! The rental car barely has a scratch!

And then a random MACK TRUCK plows into it at high speed, completely totaling it.

In a microcosm scene of his character's growth, Sandy begins the chase as a meek, rule-abiding man trading on common decency and fair play... but ends up crossing the line into "man of action" to win the day.

But just as every journey must be two steps forward, one step back, his victory comes at a price. The rental car... his last connection to the original plan... is gone.

11. A QUIET COUNTRY ROAD – They've duct-taped the still unconscious Skiptracer to a seat, and they're on their way to a bus terminal when the van conks out.

They leave the Skiptracer in his van, and begin the 15 mile walk down the road.

As they walk, Sandy asks Diana how she did this to him in the first place. She explains how she scammed him, posing as a service designed to protect against ID theft. The level of duplicity is unbelievable.

Sandy is continually confronted by how amoral Diana is, and how his own decency is a liability. A weakness.

He's not the alpha dog at his job, and he's not the alpha dog here either. She is, and even if it's unsaid, they both know it.

12. THE EAGLE SCOUTS – The walk is long and miserable. Sandy gets another **STRANGE TEXT**, and seconds later, a station wagon drives by, then stops.

The car is full of three Eagle Scouts and their sweetheart dog. They offer Sandy and Diana a ride.

Finally... the good people of the world. Paragons of virtue and service!

In the car, the Eagle Scouts slowly reveal that they know exactly who they picked up. Those **STRANGE TEXTS** were from them... hacking Sandy's phone and tracking him through his own GPS!

They explain that their bank account was defrauded, and it all traces back to someone using the name "Sandy Patterson." The thief stole their money for a trip to the International Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold convention. This was their getting-laid money, and now they're going to make Sandy Patterson pay.

Diana tries to convince Sandy that they should kick these kids' asses, but a quick command turns the dog lethal.

They're not going anywhere. Diana is telling them it was really her, but they don't believe her. They've made their decision. Sandy Patterson is their man.

*Diana is finally beginning to realize **there are human beings on the other end of her crimes**. She's being confronted with the consequences of her actions, and poor Sandy is going to serve as her scapegoat.*

13. DEEP WOODS (EVENING) – the Eagle Scouts drive off the main road into a forest. There, they bungee cord Diana and Sandy to trees. They grab Diana's knapsack and rummage through it, and for the first time, we see her actually get emotional. They pull out her folded poster, and reveal it's:

Wonder Woman. An old Linda Carter as Wonder Woman poster from the late 70's. And in that moment, we realize... that's the hair and the makeup. Diana has been copying Wonder Woman. It's pathetic and touching all at once as they mock her for being so oddly juvenile and delusional.

Then they take out their HOMEMADE CANNON, and begin firing objects at Sandy. Skittles, pennies, and last but not least, a SNAKE, which impacts fangs-first into Sandy's neck.

They toss Diana's stuff into an ALGAE POND, including her poster, and drive off, leaving our heroes bungied. They also take Sandy's money, wallet, phone and pants... even his Arrival Announcement, which has NOTHING ON IT. They make fun of that as well... a final "fuck you."

Diana wriggles out of her bungee cords and immediately goes to rescue... her poster. Lovingly wiping it off. Serious business. This is the only thing we've actually seen her care about.

Sandy is beginning to sense that the snake that bit him was venomous. In a delusional fog, he begins screaming at Diana, accusing her of being a tornado that destroys lives. He was just attacked by children, and he sympathizes with them, because they're victims of the worst person in the world... a woman who is NOTHING LIKE WONDER WOMAN!!! He points out how smart she is, how competent, how totally capable... and yet she wastes it all on petty crimes that do nothing but hurt others... hurt her. Because what kind of

life does she live? A lonely hoarder buying crap she doesn't even want!

Diana takes the shots, because she knows they're true. She releases Sandy, who can barely stand, holding him like a new bride, begins carrying him out of the forest like a champion.

Or Wonder Woman.

Diana may steal other people's identities, but there's one identity that's special to her: the perfect woman, beautiful, thin, strong and heroic. Exposed, Diana is ashamed by the fact that she's nothing like the person wants to be, and she begins to change by freeing a helpless Sandy and carrying him to safety.

For Sandy, the journey has taken him into the belly of the beast. The money is gone. The car is gone. Even his phone is gone. He has finally been separated from every real and symbolic connection to his old life. He is lost, and home is far, far away...

14. BUS DEPOT / PUBLIC LIBRARY – when Sandy wakes up, it's morning, and he's at the bus depot. Without pants.

Diana explains that she carried him out of the forest, got them a ride with a trucker, and here they are.

He's impressed. She could have run. She could have left him for dead. For the first time, he feels like she's an ally.

But now what? They have nothing except the \$20 that Diana panhandled.

She holds that \$20 up. That's all they need. \$20 is all they need to open every lock, every door, every account, every identity. He's with a thief, remember?

Is he ready to cross the line... leave his old life behind?

Sandy thinks of his wife... and the baby she wants... he agrees.

But whose identity? They don't have time to hunt around; this has to be a targeted operation. She needs him to give her a name. Someone, ideally, who deserves a good fucking over.

Sandy has one.

Diana buys a disposable cell phone for \$20, and they walk a mile to the nearest public library to use the internet for free.

And then... they STEAL Sandy's boss' identity. Jim Cornish. That fucking jerk.

The con is simple and elegant in its detail, and it's not like they're ruining his life. They just need access to a little bit of that credit he's got on his corporate AMEX. But in order to run the scam, Diana needs Sandy to get on the phone with Cornish and pose as the head of IT for the entire firm.

Sandy has a moment where he teeters on the phone, then he locks in. He does it. He plays the role of the alpha dog, and in doing so... he gets Diana full access to Jim's computer.

From there, she quickly runs the rest of the play. Within minutes, they have his bank info, his credit card info, his social security, his ATM pin, his birthday... they have HIM.

Sandy burns the last few minutes on the phone to call Trish. He tells her they are on the way. They're gonna make it.

The audience gets to see an identity theft go down in real time, like a bank heist without ever stepping foot in a vault.

Sandy and Diana are now working like a real team. There's actual trust now.

Diana is actually showing a conscience by suggesting that they target someone who deserves this punishment. And she's finally using her powers for good.

Sandy has completely shed his old skin... and those fucking khaki pants... and by pretending to be a man in charge of his destiny, has actually started becoming one.

15. ON THE ROAD TO CHICAGO – phase one of the ID theft is complete. Using a portable magstrip coder and blank card in her knapsack... the only tool Diana keeps with her at all times... she dupes Jim Cornish's ATM card, and pulls the max withdraw of \$500. With that cash, they buy a used car from a guy on Craig's list, and hit the road.

The plan is simple. They will drive for 20 hours straight, hit Chicago, eat and sleep, and then back in the car for another 15 until they hit Boston.

On the way, Diana completes phase two. She calls the Four Seasons in Chicago, posing as the assistant to the head of marketing for the company, and informs them that Jim Cornish will be arriving, and should be treated as a VIP. She provides them with Cornish's information and credit card, and asks that he be met with his keys on arrival.

With their goal in sight, Sandy and Diana have managed to wrest control back. Everything's falling into place now.

16. IN PURSUIT – The SKIPTRACER woke up. Followed their footprints on the roadside, made his way to the Greyhound bus station. Got a tip they were at the public library...

The SKIPTRACER knocks on the door of the man whose car Sandy and Diana bought. Found his name on the search history of the computer they were using. The Skiptracer holds up a hundred dollar bill... he needs some info...

17. ALSO IN PURSUIT – minutes after The Skiptracer leaves the car seller's, AVI and ILON show up. Same questions for the same man. They've been tracking them too.

Sandy and Diana don't know it, but two dangerous forces are bearing down on them at the same time...

18. FOUR SEASONS – CHICAGO – Just as they planned, they are met at the Four Seasons like VIPs. Sandy is a little nervous... acting on the phone is one thing, but actually occupying the persona of someone else in real time is another.

He's shaky, but they get by. And now they've gone from pantless, cashless bus station despair to the lap of luxury.

And everything at all the in-hotel stores and boutiques can be charged to the room.

They agree to meet for dinner at the 5 star restaurant in one hour. Enough time to clean up and buy some new clothes.

We follow Diana as she walks through the salon/cosmetics boutique. The saleswomen snicker at her ridiculous hair, makeup and clothes. Diana hears them, and in a surprising moment for someone so quick to fight back, she acknowledges that she's stuck in a rut. But maybe instead of laughing... could they help her?

They take pity on her, and busily get to work.

Diana's time with Sandy has changed her. She's been confronted with the pettiness of her life, the hurt she's caused others... and she's ready to take her old mask off and try to be a better her.

19. FOUR SEASONS – THE DINNER – Sandy is seated at the table, waiting for her. Trying to write a new Arrival Announcement on some hotel stationery. Struggling as always. He checks his watch. She's late. Or is she gone? Did he make a mistake in trusting her?

And then she walks in. He's stunned, and so are we. This dowdy, bad-haired, bad-makeup and bad-clothes mess of a woman has been TRANSFORMED.

Her clothes are simple and elegant, her makeup minimal, her hair simple and natural... and she's a totally different woman. No... she's herself. This is the real Diana, and she's beautiful.

As they sit down, the maître d' comes over. There's a slight problem. There have been quite a few charges to the room, and they are requesting an actual imprint of a credit card.

Diana tries to do her normal con thing... her jedi mind tricks... but they're not working. This is going south. In fact, the guy is getting suspicious now that something's not right.

Sandy stands up, and delivers the speech of his lifetime. A speech about what this guy is actually questioning. A "how dare you" speech. A speech about who he, "Jim Cornish" (but actually Sandy Patterson) really is. A response to the question asked at the beginning of the movie. "Who do you think you are?" And the answer is, in a nutshell, "I'm the alpha dog here."

Diana punctuates his speech by kissing him full on the mouth, playing the role of the love-struck concubine.

The waiter backs away, tail between his legs. Sandy has come full circle. He used to be the guy who followed the rules, and now he's the guy who pushes that guy around.

As they eat, Diana congratulates him on an awesome job. That was a terrific put-on he did. But Sandy says that it's no put-on. All this time, he was chasing self-help books, when what he really needed was a little Diana in his life. He's finally becoming the guy he's supposed to be. *This* is the new Sandy. When his girls grow up, they'll see that he's a real man. No one pushes him around. He's in charge.

Diana puts her fork down. She says she's tired. They should probably go back to the room and get ready. Long day ahead.

Sandy doesn't understand. What did he say?

Sandy thinks his journey is complete. He's never liked who he was: a meek, humble, rule-following vanilla nobody. Now that he's stolen Jim Cornish's identity, he's happy. He's the MAN. This is who he's chosen to be.

But Diana doesn't seem to be happy about that.

20. FOUR SEASONS – SUITE – In their two-bedroom suite, Sandy asks Diana what the problem is. Everything's going great! She responds with a revelation.

Diana isn't her real name. That's a name she gave herself. She doesn't know her real name. She was abandoned by her mother, never knew her parents, grew up in foster homes. She was a lonely little girl who raised herself, who learned what she was supposed to look like from her childhood idol, who has experienced life from the outside in... living vicariously through other people... but never being herself.

Until now. The funny thing is that they've both changed. She finally stopped pretending and is ready to be the person she actually is... but Sandy has stopped being the person he actually is because he can't accept it.

She tells him that's he's an idiot. That she would have killed to have a father like him. Someone decent, dependable, moral. Someone who doesn't cheat on his wife or bully people. Someone who puts themselves through hell for the sake of the woman and children he loves. Someone who takes shit at work to provide for a family.

That's a real man to her. That's a real father. Doesn't he understand that? Does he think that he's boring? Maybe Sandy Patterson is boring to Sandy Patterson. But he's already everything to his family.

In a sense, Diana has all the money in the world. She buys what she wants. She can be anyone, have anything. She always gets her way. She can manipulate people, fool people...

...and she's terribly alone.

This is the crux of the movie. The boring, average, work-a-day common guy is anything but. He's a hero to his family. The problem with Sandy isn't that he's not special. It's that he doesn't appreciate what he has to offer.

She's happy for him, happy for his new job, happy for all the things he can provide his family. But if he thinks that's going to fill the aching hole he has, he's wrong.

She said it before, and she'll say it again. We don't choose to be who we are. We're already that person. She spends every day choosing to be someone other than herself.

She doesn't want him to be like her.

And underneath her words, Sandy feels the shame of the lie he's been telling her. Here she is, testifying to his goodness, and he's deceiving her.

He's going to continue to deceive her. Because he can't yet imagine the alternative.

Sandy has finally heard the truth. Everything that he thought was strength (Diana) was weakness. Everything that he thought was weakness (him) was strength. But is he ready to accept it?

ACT THREE SUMMARY

FOUR SEASONS – NEXT MORNING – Sandy and Diana prepare to leave. The final leg of the journey. They'll be in Boston by night.

Before they leave, Diana heads to the cosmetic shop. One last buying binge. Sandy says he'll meet her by the car, which the valet is bringing around to the front.

In the cosmetic shop, Diana strikes up a conversation with another customer. Obviously a very wealthy woman. And this lady is the PERFECT MARK. Trusting, naïve, sloppy with her wallet...

...she's practically begging Diana to steal her ID. There's her license with her full name and DOB. And sticking out of the wallet... her actual Social Security Card. It's right there. Ripe for the picking.

Diana sees Sandy outside through the window.

She can steal this woman's info, run away, ditch this guy and go back to her routine... back to the only life she knows.

BUT...

THE SKIPTRACER'S VAN pulls up. He GRABS SANDY. He tracked them through the satellite radio receiver in the car... last location listed was the parking structure at the Four Seasons Chicago... amazing what an ID number and a few hundred bucks for a friend at Sirius/XM can do for you...

He's going to take Sandy to a local branch of the debt collection agency... just ten minutes away...

Diana freezes... what should she do?

Reel this big fish in... or... ?

In an action setpiece, Diana decides to abandon this big score and RESCUE SANDY. But while she's attempting to do that, SHE IS GRABBED by Avi and Ilan, who are in their OWN van.

Our two heroes are in an impossible predicament. Separated from each other by two villains. If Diana doesn't rescue Sandy, he loses his job and his dream and maybe even his family.

If Sandy doesn't rescue Diana... it's the same result... and she dies.

After a wild chase through the streets of Chicago, the Israelis and the Skiptracer

manage to screw each other up. The police arrive and take the bad guys into custody. They're about to arrest Sandy and Diana too, but Diana uses the ID of the woman she was about to rip off... and the name rings a bell with the police. The wife of a local congressman.

Not exactly who they pictured, but it's enough for them. They let our heroes go.

At last, they're home free. Nothing between them and victory now. A straight shot to Boston. Diana is giddy from the success. She tells Sandy how she had a moment of weakness... a moment where she was going to go back to her old ways... a moment where she was going to abandon him... but she chose not to!

She chose to just be HER. And that's the gift he gave her! He taught her that she could be more than just a piece of shit criminal, and she lived up to it! She tells him that she's going straight. Learning a trade, getting a job... the second she's done setting Sandy's life straight, she's going to become a productive member of society.

And Sandy is really thrilled to hear that... if only that was what was going to happen.

Because he knows that it's not. He's set her up. She's going to jail. She has to go to jail. And he can't tell her. Not now.

They arrive in Boston at night. Too late to bring her in to the partners. They'll be there in the morning, just in the nick of time. Sandy brings Diana back to his apartment, where she meets his wife and children.

An awkward introduction, except a remarkable thing happens.

Diana apologizes to Trish for what she's done, in the most heartfelt, honest way. And Trish responds with tears and forgiveness.

Sandy's guilt rises.

Diana entertains the girls through dinner... like a sister to them. She's never had this, and she loves it, and they love her. After all, she's basically an overgrown kid.

And somehow, this small apartment seems bigger and richer than it ever did before.

Sandy's guilt rises even more.

Trish makes the couch up for Diana to sleep, but the girls insist that she sleep with them. Sandy tucks his daughters in. They ask if Diana can stay with them for a while. He tells them maybe she can stay with them in the big new house they're going to get.

Diana smiles, touched by the warmth of that offer. She takes Sandy by the hand, and

thanks him for what he's done for her. He's saved her.

Sandy's guilt explodes inside him.

He doesn't sleep that night. And just before the sun rises, he walks into his daughter's room, over to where Diana is sleeping.

He tells her she needs to go. She needs to run away, right now, because he can't do it. He can't put her away for ten years. He thought he needed to be a better man for his family, but she was right. They love him because he already is a good man... the kind of man who can't trade another person's life for money and a house and a yard.

He'll find another job. He'll make ends meet. But he's happy being the humble good guy. If that never pays him one more dime than what he earns now, so be it.

"Daddy?"

His youngest daughter is awake. "Who are you talking to?"

Sandy peers in the dark at Diana's sleeping form. Pulls the blanket away.

The DOG is under there, sleeping.

Sandy sees the window is open. Curtains fluttering.

"Diana left, daddy. She said to tell you goodbye."

She betrayed him. He was ready to set her free, and she betrayed him.

Nine AM. Sandy walks into the offices of the partners, and tells them that unfortunately, he is unable to clear his name. He hopes that they will be willing to look past that and still provide him and his family with a better life.

If not, he understands.

They tell him... they are NOT willing to do that.

Sandy slumps.

They tell him they don't have to do that, because it's already been done. He's in the clear.

Sandy doesn't understand.

They open the door to the conference room, and there's DIANA... giving her full confession to the Boston PD.

Some things change, but others never do. Diana was one step ahead of Sandy from the start. She knew from the jump he was going to turn her in. It was always her intention to use him to get out of Dodge, have a little fun, then disappear back into her criminal ways.

But along the way, he changed her.

She also knew that he couldn't do it. Because at long last, he had become who he always was, instead of who he thought he should be. And because she knew he couldn't do it, she knew she had to do it for him.

This is the price she knows she needs to pay. There's no redemption without sacrifice. She's going away for a while, but she's going to use the time wisely. Take classes. Earn her degree. Prepare. And when she gets out, she's going to be herself, at long last.

CODA

It's one year later.

Sandy is visiting Diana in jail with the girls and his baby. It's clear this is a monthly ritual for them. The new business is going great; he and Trish put a down payment on a house... it's an exciting time.

As for Diana, she's following through on her promise. Earning her degree. Studying finance, in fact. She's cooped up in this prison with a bunch of white-collar criminals... she's learning from the best. Word is that with good behavior, she might get out in two more years.

Sandy tells her he could probably use a good assistant in two years. The promise that they still have a future.

Finally, before he leaves, Sandy gives Diana a present. He and Trish did some research, went through an adoption database...

They found Diana's real name. Her birth name. It's Caroline Budgie.

"Budgie?"

Sandy shrugs. "We are who we are."

And Caroline Budgie smiles.

THE END