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by

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Remembering the Ritual:
Exploring The Other Side of Shadow

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**Remembering the Ritual:
Exploring The Other Side of Shadow**

by

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Report

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**Remembering the Ritual:
Exploring The Other Side of Shadow**

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The following report documents the evolution of the script *The Other Side of Shadow* and the effects that extensive rewriting, character work, and story restructuring have had on the author.

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INTRODUCTION

I came to the University of Texas with the sole purpose of honing my storytelling skills. Before entering UT I had written a few short stories, several short films, and a half dozen features. They were all types of stories, from loud, bloody horror stories to softer character driven pieces about budding romances. I knew screenplay format and the building blocks of structure, but in each piece there was a lack of a certain pitch, a certain rhythm. My horror stories had the teenage heroine, the insane but intriguing monster, the spooky setting, but it was indistinguishable from a hundred other horror stories. The coming of age character pieces have those small moments which every audience member can relate to, but the moments were too broad, too simple. What I needed to find was that rhythm that would be uniquely my own. I needed to find a style in which not only the voice of the author would be present, but a particular beat to each story which would brand it in some way without making it directly relate to another story or script. I could write another character piece or another horror story, but I would have to write it in such a way that only I could. With the completion of

The Other Side of Shadow, I have finally struck a tone and style that is uniquely my own.

The Other Side of Shadow, as with everything I have written, contains some form of the fantastic, and I have come to the conclusion that it is important to include otherworldly or supernatural elements in my work. Writing by its very nature is lying, and there is no reason not to push that lie to the extreme. It is not that in the depths of a lie one can discover some form of truth, though I will concede the possibility, but rather that as a species we must deal with reality on a daily basis and perhaps once in a while we should be allowed release from that reality with the freedom to believe, if only momentarily, in whatever we can imagine. In some fiction these other realities are accessed through genre, which I embrace whole heartedly.

While at the University of Texas I explored several different genres. In *The Curse of William Legg* I worked in both the Western and Horror genre. In *The Omnibus Device* I worked in science fiction and fantasy, all hung on the structural bones of a coming of age story. *The Other Side of Shadow* is a film noir with a strong supernatural element, but infused with horror tropes and comical elements. One of the most important skills I learned in writing these screenplays was how to control and

manipulate a genre, as opposed to being manipulated by and becoming a slave to that genre. Genre is, of course, only a tool to be wielded by the writer as he or she sees fit. Genre must always be molded to the story, not the other way around. The story is of prime importance in any screenplay, from big budget action movies to no-budget mumble core films. Any philosophical theme or political message must always come second to the story and the characters within that story. Any writer worth his salt does not need grandstanding speeches from characters to force feed an audience a theses statement on family, that thesis should be written in the very DNA of the film.

This all leads to the single most valuable thing I have learned in the screenwriting program: storytelling is not a one way street. There is no passive audience or reader. A writer should never believe that he is giving a monologue to the audience, but rather a dialogue. The story or screenplay is a means to facilitate my thoughts on family, on relationships, on what is truly heroic to an audience. The story in which these thoughts and ideas are contained is a method by which I will convey them an audience. These thoughts on family are all fine and good, but they would be lost without a strong story to illustrate them and to properly entertain the audience.

My ultimate goal for *The Other Side of Shadow* is that it relates a set of emotions to a reader or an audience. The audience must then take part in the dialogue with their emotional response, be it positive or negative. I bring an emotion to the table, the audience responds and connects to that emotion, and the dialogue has begun.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SHORT

The initial impulse for *Shadow* began while I was living in New Orleans, Louisiana. I was working several part time jobs including one as a copywriter for a graphic design firm. This had me writing page upon page of bland words for real estate websites and brokerage firms. At the time I was also working for a production company re-writing violent crime films which held in high esteem dubious morality and radically abhorrent norms and mores without commenting on or exploring the negative aspects of both. Creativity was not a factor in the former, and was all but manacled in the latter. These were not stories I had wanted to tell or really knew how to tell. At this time I joined a Meet-up group for local screenwriters. The screenwriting group was populated by fiction writers, amateurs (though I suppose we all were) and those with some film making experience as grips, production assistants and make-up artists. Together we decided we had not only the talent but also the means to shoot several short films and collect them into one feature length showcase which would serve as a sort of snapshot of talent present in New Orleans indie film makers. The short script I wrote for their consideration was called *The Paintbrush*.

The script detailed the story of a starving painter who cannot paint. He comes into possession of a magic paintbrush and gains the ability to paint pictures that can literally pull people into them. He gains fame and fortune, but eventually loses the paintbrush and must discover that it was his talent rather than the physical brush that gained him notoriety. The short was heavily influenced on material I was interested in at the time, which was mostly older comedies starring Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. Characters were defined heavily by physical appearance and common characterizations were used as spring boards, such as the noble bum or the corrupt cop. The influence of silent comedies gave the short a stylized feel and a complete lack of dialogue. These ideas combined with certain fantastical scenes within the "paintings" which would necessitate either CGI or animation led the screenwriting group to reject it for consideration in the feature length collection.

I stayed in the screenwriting group, submitting other work and learning to watch films with a critical eye. Each week we would take a film and break it down in terms of character and story beats. At this time I began to meet other film makers around the city and actually produce some of the shorts I had been working on. I had kept *Paintbrush*

around, and brought it out to dissect while working on a series of webisodes called *The Black Ghost*. These concerned a Batman-esque super hero working in New Orleans. These 7-10 minute episodes were shot on no budget and in black and white, with all the flavor of early Warner Brothers film noir. These shorts had a heavy influence on the next iteration of *Paintbrush*.

The Black Ghost had a film noir look but the content was consciously adolescent, most webisodes ended in speeches or life lessons not unlike after school specials. *Paintbrush Blues* became an outlet for the more deviant aspects of the noir. The main character was no longer an artist, but rather a grizzled private detective who had long since given up drinking and smoking and had developed a sweet tooth. He knocked back belts of root beer and chewed sugar cigarettes. He was given the task of finding a magic paintbrush by a red-lipped femme fatale with whom he would verbally spar at any provocation, and ran into smugglers, voodoo priestesses, hit men, and women of loose morals. My detective managed to find the brush in the end but was quickly painted out of existence by one of the many antagonists. This time there was no life lesson, no moral to the tale other than "Mind your own business". The story became a spoof of the detective film, trading in the Buster

Keaton antics for spoof and sight gags in the style of Mel Brooks. Fortunately for me but perhaps unfortunately for the production of the short, as I began to put together actors and a director I was accepted into the University of Texas, and the script was shelved once again.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PROBLEM WITH VOODOO

I began working *The Other Side of Shadow* in my final semester wanting to go back to New Orleans in my writing. I feel very strongly that a strong emotional link between author and a certain place can spur good writing, and that a great setting can enhance a great story a hundred fold. In my year and a half at U.T., I had explored numerous different settings for a story. I had told a Western in the standard genre setting of the desert in general, with a crucial plot point taking place in a brutal winter to enhance the supernatural tone. New York City was the jumping off point for a sci-fi thriller centered on a young alienated woman. Her feelings of isolation while surrounded by people were enforced by a realization that she is not part of the human race at all, but rather an alien placed on earth so as to be hidden from her evil parents. I wanted to use New Orleans to far greater effect, tapping into the beat of the city to use it as a character in my next script.

The city itself has too many faces to name, some so outlandish and colorful that it can become a caricature of itself. I think of the unfettered nature of Mardi Gras and Bourbon Street, a proud claim to fame as the birth of Jazz,

and the copious amounts of fried food present everywhere, to name a few often lampooned traits. I did not want to shy away from showing some of New Orleans' more memorable aspects, but neither did I want to be a slave to them.

I worked on several different pitches for my final screenwriting course. One was a period piece about a young man struggling with becoming a Catholic priest while his family descended into poverty and disrepute. Another followed a guitar player who was constantly trying to leave the city but was kept in New Orleans because of his drug addiction. A third option was a retrofitted *Paintbrush Blues*. The class nearly unanimously agreed that *Paintbrush Blues* was at least a kernel of a good idea, with the other two scenarios not being especially commercial for one reason or another. I would keep the same characters and concept and stretch the short out to feature length.

After revising the outline several times, I began to see problems with translating the short to a feature. The highly stylized super-detective main character worked for a short, but as the lead in a feature he would be difficult for audiences to connect with emotionally for an extended period of time. To fix this I tried to ground him as much as I could in the city. He became a new employee at an art gallery whose livelihood rested on retrieving the lost

paintbrush. This outline was set aside as well. The stakes were too low and I found that the story itself wasn't utilizing the character of the city as well as it should have. Likewise, the idea of the supernatural was all but absent from this draft.

At this point I decided to clamp onto a popular cultural touchstone that has existed in New Orleans since the city was founded, the idea of Voodoo. In New Orleans Voodoo shops are tourist attractions, and every street vendor or convenience store in the French Quarter sells voodoo dolls. Voodoo practitioners are often portrayed as half mad, emaciated men and women who curse or hex others for material gain. Doing more research into Voodoo, or Vodou, or Vodun, I found that the practitioners worship a variety of different deities, called loa. Rather than evil spirits, the loa were not dissimilar to Greek Gods, with loa being jealous and needy gods who each held sway over some aspect of life on Earth. This became a crucial aspect of my script. My detective became a loa who had fallen from grace. His job on earth became largely irrelevant as he had been analogous to Saint Anthony in the Roman Catholic faith, the "finder of the lost". I fashioned a name for him, Jukon, or Jake once he had been banished to

Earth, and detecting became a substantial part of his personality.

With the creation of Jukon and the exploration of voodoo culture, my script rapidly began taking form. The script became populated by other traditional voodoo loa, some friendly, some dangerous. Jukon's character started to form, retaining some of the detective's traits in *Paintbrush Blues*. A story began to form with Jukon tasked with finding a paintbrush (another relic from *Paintbrush Blues*) but quickly escalated into Jukon having to untangle a murder plot. The scripts immediately began to take a dark turn. I was the forced to answer the question: what kind of story did I want to tell? Would this be a dark detective story? A comedy? An action film? I asked myself all of these questions and could not find an answer.

CHAPTER THREE: TONE DEAF

Having a bare bones structure to the story, I began to delve into films to look for a suitable tone. I began with older detective stories, from Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* to *The Maltese Falcon* and on to more modern, dark noir like Mel Gibson's *Payback*. *The Big Heat* was too bleak, *Payback* was closer and the main character's single mindedness in search for his stolen money was something I held on to. *The Maltese Falcon* was entertaining but no help at all. I decided that looking at straight detective films was a mistake. My characters would be throw backs to old noir and hopefully enjoy the quick banter shared by Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, but I already knew the genre conventions. I did not need to watch a back catalogue of detective stories to figure that out. After all, all films are some form of detective story, they all have some mystery that needs solving. I needed films that exploited the detective genre, took what it needed and twisted tropes of the detective to its own end. I saw *The Other Side of Shadow* as an amalgam of different genres, a comic-supernatural-detective hybrid and began searching for films in that vein.

Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* was a step in the right direction. Elliot Gould portrayed an apathetic, very un-Bogart Philip Marlowe as a man out of place and time, his noble nature only surfacing when faced with an affront of such magnitude that he could no longer sustain his apathy. This revisionist detective was more like it, though Marlowe was not a great model character, he lacked agency throughout most of the film and his motives were unclear until the final frames. I wanted a character to immediately latch onto. Looking for more noir hybrids I watched *Blade Runner* and *Angel Heart*, but both films were not quite right. *Blade Runner* was slower and darker than *The Other Side of Shadow* should be, and while *Angel Heart* was infused with the beat of New Orleans it did not exploit the supernatural elements as I wanted to.

The final two films I looked at were perhaps less critically acclaimed than *Blade Runner* and *The Maltese Falcon*, but they hit the right note. *Constantine* was the self-centered and determined detective I had been searching for. The supernatural was well woven into a unique reality, with each scene keeping the audience guessing as to what would happen and more importantly, how it would happen. The second film was Guillermo Del Toro's *Hellboy*. This infused just the right amount of humor into a dark

story, and branched out into strange supernatural territory, just as I wanted to do. *Hellboy* also did something that *Constantine* did not: it wove in a believable, relatable love story, something I would try to emulate.

I wanted *Shadow* to have a main character with wit but with a single minded nature, surrounded by strange and unique characters all connected to the world of the supernatural, which would be exciting, visually stunning and more than a little dangerous. While visuals were relegated to note cards, I began the process of drawing and deepening characters to populate my world.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONJURING CHARACTERS

The characters in *The Other Side of Shadow* may have their roots in the film noir genre, in voodoo tradition, or both. Jukon, or Jake, has a distant cousin in both Humphrey Bogart's and Elliot Gould's different takes on Philip Marlowe. He also has the pride of a Greek god, which is the cause of his banishment, as well as a profound sense of isolation and abandonment after he is cast down to Earth. He is obsessed with finding a way back to the pantheon of voodoo loa and is continually beaten down by life on Earth. To throw his character in stark relief I created Oswald, a mentor to Jukon and the owner of a tourist-supported voodoo shop. Oswald has all the knowledge Jake has, but none of the ambition. He is ambivalent about the loa, though he has had personal experience with them. He enjoys his life and uses his knowledge of voodoo to make money.

The femme fatale from earlier drafts of *Paintbrush Blues* became Carmen, a woman who helps Jake on his mission but ultimately betrays him. She comes to Jake to ask for his assistance, her husband Mick, a known voodoo practitioner, has gone missing. Jake refuses to help her as he is on parole; that is, the use of magic, voodoo, or

any interaction with those who do, is forbidden. However, Jake is soon accosted by his supernatural parole officer, Ti Jean. Ti Jean is a throw back to the corrupt cop stereotype, but also has roots in the voodoo religion as a Ti Jean Petro, a cruel loa who lives under bridges, masquerading as a police officer. He is quick to blame Jake for any irregularities and constantly suspects him of somehow cheating his parole. Ti Jean tells Jake that Papa Legba has gone missing, and Jake's salvation may rely on him using his innate detecting abilities to find Papa Legba.

The story began to get more convoluted as I spent more time with it. Possession is not uncommon in voodoo, and it figured prominently in my original script. When Papa Legba was found dead at the first act break, it would later be revealed that he had not actually died, but managed to possess Mick's body first. Thus, Carmen's request that Jake find Mick and Ti Jean's request that he find Papa Legba would actually be one and the same. I was then left to figure out exactly why Papa Legba would be killed, and how. Who would want a voodoo loa dead, and why?

These questions led to the introduction of several deviant loa. Ogoun is the loa of politics and war in voodoo tradition. In my script he became a slick, Kennedy-

esque antagonist inhabiting the body of a low level politician. He mirrored Jake in his ambition, but was willing to go to extreme lengths to garner power over all the other loa and eventually claim Papa Legba's brush and other tools. With these tools he would control the ability to go from one world to the next and essentially control the world. However, he could not do this alone. He was assisted by the loa of death and the afterlife, Baron Samedi. Baron Samedi immediately struck me as a self important, baroque figure that was ultimately smarter than Ogoun. In the end, he would double-cross Ogoun and become the ultimate villain.

Peppered through the story were many other minor deities, such as the loa of running water, of weather, of anger. Along with the loa there was Ogoun's cult of human assistants who helped him kill Papa Legba and steal his paintbrushes. The cast began to expand, but the characters became flat and shallow, and ultimately the story began to collapse under the weight of the characters.

CHAPTER FIVE: DAMBALLAH'S WORKSHOP

As I wrote pages for class, the writing workshops became more and more divided. The other screenwriters enjoyed the dialogue and cadence of individual characters and appreciated the pacing, but found fault with the logic of certain supernatural aspects. Structurally the script was sound. I had a strong Inciting Incident in Jake being given the task of finding Papa Legba, and a strong first act break with the discovery of Papa Legba's body and the new task of finding Legba's brushes. However, as I wrote I casually introduced new supernatural elements. The world of the story became less clearly defined with each new sequence as I added new characters and elements. The class was, in short, confused.

I had added a past love interest for Jake named Lucinda. Lucinda was a mortal woman who fell in love with Jake and died tragically, leading Jake to travel to the afterlife and fight Baron Samedi for her soul. Jake lost, and for his transgressions was sentenced to imprisonment as a human on earth. This was a plausible reason for Jake's banishment, but also gave Jake a distant goal. If he could become a loa again, perhaps he could set things right by way of Lucinda. In an attempt to connect this story to

the story of the film, I transformed Carmen into a reincarnation of Lucinda. She became a vindictive character, inserting herself into the story to draw Jake away from the true crimes being perpetrated. Instead of clarifying and deepening the characters, this simply made Carmen/Lucinda too unwieldy. She was one character that was actually another character, which further muddied the water. The class also had problems with Carmen's motivation. Why would she help Ogoun and Baron Samedi, other than for the purpose of revenge? Why would she play along with Jake's investigation instead of stopping it outright? They were raising questions which I could not answer.

This continued on from Carmen to Jake's character. Why was he truly seeking out Papa Legba? Ti Jean claimed he could reinstate Jake as a loa, but Ti Jean was established as an untrustworthy character early on, he could very well have been lying. I needed to explore Jake's true feelings for Carmen, Lucinda, and the loa in general. Did he have an antagonistic relationship with the loa, was there a sense of jealousy or worship, or was he more ambivalent?

Many of these questions led into larger questions of how the voodoo of the film worked. I did not want to

make voodoo a more pervasive religion that it currently is, but rather wanted to keep it a sort of clandestine activity. This was hard to do in the original script as every other character was either a voodoo priest or a voodoo loa. There were also substantial questions about just how the loa interact with the Earth. Do they control the weather, or they only able to influence it when needed? More importantly, what happens when Papa Legba is found dead? One would assume that means that loa can no longer travel to earth. What is Earth like without loa to rule it? This question would lead to interesting developments later on in the writing process, but was, at the time, another question about the logic and rules of the world that set my head spinning.

One of the final larger notes on my initial draft was on the tone of the piece. The first forty pages read as something more akin to a comedy than a supernatural thriller. My attempt to straddle the line between comedy and drama, or perhaps write a very dark comedy, was not as successful as I had hoped. The comic pieces were funny, but did not mesh with more dramatic scenes. Some of the supernatural scenes concerning the paintbrush were intended to be dramatic, but instead came off as cartoonish or even outright laughable. The audience was laughing at my script

instead of with it, which was a huge problem. At the end of the spring semester I had stack of notes almost a foot high to delve into, and so I began to restructure and rewrite the script.

CHAPTER SIX: REWRITING IN THE VOID

My second full draft was done rather quickly. I had been polishing scenes throughout the semester and making small notes as to what were major problems, but the rewriting really began in earnest in early May. I had decided this piece should be my thesis project. It had all the elements I look for in films, a strong main character with defined goals, visually arresting set pieces, and a large cast of unique characters.

My first draft had contained a large amount of voice over to keep in line with the film noir aspect, and this was kept in the second draft. Through the voice over the audience learned some back story about Jake as well as his opinion on certain scenes, his amusement at seeing Ti Jean in a bad situation and his affection for Oswald as a mentor. Though I usually regard voice over as a way of hammering home exposition or cheating to spoon feed information, I counted my voice over as adding a particular flavor to the script.

A major addition to the script was a tweak to Carmen's character. She became bolder, rougher around the edges. One could imagine a slight rasp to her voice as though she had been smoking cigarettes since grade school.

She attempted to actively mislead Jake, pretending she knew nothing of voodoo or her husband's appreciation for it, while still being a reincarnation of Lucinda. Lucinda blamed Jake for leaving her in the afterlife with Baron Samedi, which was shown repeatedly through flash back throughout the script. She agreed to help Baron Samedi and Ogoun in their power play if she could become human again, which was the most interesting change I made to her character.

After this quick re-write the script was sent off to my advisors for notes. Their notes were surprisingly similar and both pointed to a large problem: they did not know the world of the story. Without a clear grasp of the world they could not enjoy the characters nor completely give themselves over to the story. I had not set up the voodoo mythology early enough, and when it was set up it was already too late. I had not engineering the proper set-up pay-off dynamic not only in the initial pages, but throughout the script. These problems rippled into every page. Without a proper grounding in the reality of the story, there was no reason to cheer for Jake as he went on his various adventures. It was not clear exactly what procuring a strange paint brush would gain for him or why it would be bad if he abandoned his plight altogether. The

stakes of the piece were not clear. There was a substantial amount of time spent on political maneuvering around a certain casino which was extraneous and distracted the reader from the main plot. There were also problems that carried over from my original draft, namely the inclusion of such a wide range of characters. Carmen, Papa Legba, and Ogoun all had double roles as Lucinda, Mick, and Councilman McGraw respectively. In the flurry of supernatural beings it was easy to lose sight of who did what, and what team they were playing for.

After meeting my advisor for notes I went through my script scene by scene and decided that I had lost sight of the story I wanted to tell and how to tell that story. The next few weeks were spent reshuffling scenes and revisiting notes from all my previous classes, in essence, relearning the trade.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REMEMBERING THE RITUAL

I began this extensive rewrite by focusing on character, which meant focusing on Jake. This story would be about his attempt to become a loa again, not about his past as a loa. This meant that Lucinda was banished from the script. Because Jake so badly wanted to become loa again, I decided that to do so would be bad for his character. If he finally did become a loa, he would no doubt abuse his power, always searching for more. He should, in the end, learn to accept his lot, which would mean accepting his humanity. But he must choose this end, which meant that he would have to attain loa status and willingly give it up. The basics of this character arc had been in place, but now they were concrete.

If Jake's ultimate goal was to become a loa again, then I wanted to create an antagonist with a similar goal, one who could perhaps use Jake's very nature against him. Ogoun as the loa of politics would no doubt be ambitious, and would want to take power from all the other loa and become the sole supreme being. My problem now was figuring out how to conflate both character goals into one. The answer soon became clear.

Jake was the loa of lost things. Even though he was banished, what if some part of that ability stayed with him, unbeknownst to Jake? If a loa were to die then that loa's abilities would find Jake. So a dead water loa would mean that Jake would gain the ability to control water, a dead air loa would mean Jake would gain control over wind, and so forth. And so Jake's arc began to take shape on the page. Numerous loa would die throughout the course of the script, with Jake subsequently gaining their abilities. By the end of the second act, Jake would indeed be a loa again, no less than a super loa. He would, however, have lost his friends and all attachments to earth at that point. This would achieve a certain degree of escalation, not to mention being very cool to watch.

This meant that I now needed a way to kill off loa in the second act, and a way for Ogoun to control or steal Jake's powers in the third. I had already contrived a ritual to kill loa, so I gave Ogoun and his group of followers that ritual to kill Papa Legba. Once he died, all loa on earth would be stuck there. It would be a matter of time before the other loa on earth became fully disconnected from the spirit world of the loa and died themselves. So it would be part of Ogoun's plan to make Jake a loa again. To steal Jake's powers, Ogoun would need

to lure him to a place of power (in Ogoun's case, a place of constant war - a casino would do) and steal his abilities. Ogoun then came into possession of an artifact, a mystical trunk, which could transfer the abilities of anyone as long as they were placed inside the trunk. I planted the mystical trunk early on in the script, and built a great deal of the structure around Ogoun's plan for world domination and Jake playing catch up, but really playing right into Ogoun's plans.

This had covered Jake's character arc and a great deal of plot, but other characters and the rules of the fictional world still needed to be established. Without proper grounding in my voodoo world the audience would be lost, never feeling any suspense or the stakes of the piece because they did not understand the limitations of the supernatural. I began by cutting down the number of characters. Ogoun never became Councilman McGraw; Lucinda was largely cut out of the script and became an entity entirely separate from Carmen. Papa Legba became the only missing person, and Mick, Carmen's husband, was removed completely.

The basic plot and main characters having been worked out, I began to structure the script. I followed a simple format of eight reels detailing a progression of Conflict,

Complication, Crisis, Climax, and Conclusion. Reels one and two would make up act 1 and set up the Conflict of the story, depicting Jake as a fallen loa who desperately wants to become a loa again and is given the chance to do just that. Reels three through six would contain act 2 and escalate the Complications of the story. We would experience twists and turns as Jake succeeds and fails, making friends and enemies, until his eventual Crisis at the end of act 2. He has managed to become a loa again, but his quest has cost him his humanity. In act 2, the Climax of sequence seven would see Jake fail to save Carmen and ultimately sacrifice his loa-hood to save the world from Ogoun and Baron Samedi. The final reel would see the Conclusion, with Jake managing to save Carmen from death itself and finally choosing to live his life as a mortal.

I then began to work on the problem of setting up a script that dealt largely with a mythology unknown to most people. I began by introducing Papa Legba and Ogoun and their respective supernatural powers in the first few pages. Their conversation quickly turns to an argument, clearly displaying Ogoun's disdain for Papa Legba and the power he controls. Now any reader would be knowledgeable of the world and a certain amount of rules by page five. Oswald would later give the audience a crash course in

voodoo loa as he tries to make a sale, and much of the mythology would be filled in by Jake and Carmen. Carmen was turned into a voodoo priestess and an admirer of Papa Legba, with no small amount of drama being mined from her awkward relationship with Jake. Carmen, a mortal, knows a great deal about ritual and loa, while Jake, a former loa, has a hard time handling ritual initially.

This time I also made sure there was clear escalation in the script. Every 30 or so pages there was a large shift that brought Jake deeper into the story. He begins by simply wanting to be loa again, and is subsequently presented with the opportunity to do so. This is complicated when he finds Papa Legba dead. Now he must recover the brushes or not only will he remain human, but other loa will die. By the midpoint of the script he has recovered the brushes, but Oswald has been murdered and he is now being hunted by Ogoun and his men. By the second act break Jake has lost the brushes, Carmen, and all hope- but he has gained the abilities of all the dead loa.

The last pass of the script was dedicated to the look of the story. I focused on bringing out the most interesting visuals possible in every circumstance. Papa Legba's realm became a somber, quiet field of black wheat, while Baron Samedi's afterlife became an achingly cold

place of ice and rock, where the bodies of the dead were suspended from barren trees. The look of the paintbrush was altered to a huge bull horn brush fitting with horse hair invoke some prehistoric tool. The world of the supernatural really was pulled to the forefront. Spirits walked in and out of scenes, voodoo demons, called Petro, were things to be ignored at one's own peril, and voodoo rituals became dark, hypnotic adventures.

In this way I was able to take a story with glaring problems and logic gaps and construct something that was unique to my voice. I would hope that a reader can now easily connect to Jake and his mission to become more than he is. I believe a reader can feel for, and with Jake as he connects to Carmen, as he loses Oswald, and as he is forced to leave them both behind. More importantly, I think that an audience will be able to understand Jake throughout the film, relating to him at each stage, from when he does brutal things for his own well being, to when he gives up his life for the greater good.

EPILOGUE

The fourth draft of *The Other Side of Shadow* is not the last. After submitting it to my reader and advisor, several important issues have come to light. The vestiges of the film noir that remain may not work in the evolved story, and tropes such as the femme fatale may have no place in the final draft. Carmen will still be a strong, proactive character, but she will embrace her new identity as a voodoo priestess. Focus will also be placed on the detective aspect of the story, making Jake a stronger character in the vein of Sherlock Holmes. The fourth draft made *Shadow* a more concise, streamlined narrative chock full of the supernatural, the fifth will push character into the forefront of the script.

It seems that in any field everyone can agree on at least one thing: writing is rewriting. This rewriting process has only reinforced that notion. In all types of writing, but especially screenwriting, being able to come back to the table again and again with new ideas for scene, rewriting your rewrites and then rewriting those, is the true test of a writer's talent.

APPENDIX A: 2007 "PAINTBRUSH BLUES" SHORT TREATMENT

Tom Connelly wears a fedora and trench coat, but constantly swills root beer and eats candy cigarettes. Tom has that tough old school noir voice over going for him, but undercut it with childlike/sweet toothy references.

He's hanging out drinking root beer at his office when MARION comes in. She's the classic Dame and needs help finding her boyfriend. Tom falls all over himself helping her out. He pretends to clear his schedule (think: opens up a day planner w/ blank pages and tosses it out) and dedicates his afternoon to looking for the boyfriend. She gives him an apartment.

Tom goes over, meets the landlady ROSE MARIE. Nice old lady (Rosemary baby type?) tells him the boyfriend has split, but she offers to let him look through a box of stuff boyfriend left behind. In here Tom finds a receipt for Lee's Goods. On his way out meets DEBBIE, younger, maybe. Scantly clad. They flirt and Tom thinks she might know something. Be sure to use 'doll face', 'sweet cheeks', so on here.

Tom leaves to check back in with Marion, but Rose Marie calls him back. She's found the boyfriend dead. He's been shot with an arrow. Debbie has been sleeping

with him and reveals that together they stole a paintbrush and had been in hiding.

Tom tells all this Marion, but she shouldn't be surprised. His job is done, but Marion hires him to find the paintbrush. This is at a bar where Marion drinks scotch, Tom drinks root beer. A crazy THUG with a small crossbow rushes in and breaks up the meeting. They have to escape.

Tom stashes Marion someplace safe, and then goes to look for Lee's Goods. This is in the French Market. But the store is gone. Tom talks to management, who kicked Lee out for selling smuggling good from places like Peru or Egypt or Turkey. The manager says Lee hung out with a girl dressed like a hooker. DEBBIE.

Tom goes to look for Lee's apartment, but when he gets to the apartment Lee is there, dead, and the THUG is about to do the same to Debbie. Tom fights him off. The Thug runs off, but he takes the brush. Tom brings Debbie back to her apartment, but Marion is there. She pulls a gun on everyone and the Thug shows up, kills Marion and kidnaps Tom and knocks him out.

Tom wakes up in a dungeon, with Rose Marie, the apartment manager, standing over him. She paints him out of existence.

+use noir settings (fire escape/bar/dingy apartment
+elevated dialogue
+2=3 'femme fatal'
+Tom as detective alcoholic?

APPENDIX B: INITIAL SPRING 2010 OUTLINE

"PAINTBRUSH BLUES" ACT ONE

EXT. LEVEE - NIGHT

TOMMY and MIKE wait in the fog, beaten up. A man walks in the fog toward them.

INT APARTMENT - DAY

Tommy doodles, ROXY complains about him not going to work. Tommy says he works late. She says she's been cheating (not this, but a reason for her to leave), leaves.

LATER

Tommy doodles, Super asks for rent. Tommy doesn't have it. Super says get it, Tommy doesn't need this shit. He'll move to Shreveport.

EXT. FALSTAFF BREWERY - DAY

Fog. Tommy steps out of his car to go up to the brewery. He meets Mike. Finds out the brew was closed, moved to Shreveport. He is out of a job.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - NIGHT

Tommy walks through the fog to an art gallery. "Nothing ever changes in this city. It's always damp and dirty and half drunk. I love it."

INT. MOLE'S BAR - NIGHT

Tommy asks around for a job. Carmen turns him onto Arnold.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

He gets a job from Arnold, and can live above the shop, close to Moles. Just has to take care of Drak the artist, keep him happy.

INT. NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Small. Tommy can hear the noises outside.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

Arnold leaves for weekend, just tells him to watch the place. Doesn't give him the combination to the safe. Take care of Drak.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

Tom tries to draw people in by setting a drink table. Mike is there. Cops shut him down. Drak saves him somehow.

INCITING INCIDENT

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

A TOADIE for the local mob tries to use bathroom. No dice. Drak shows Tommy the paintbrush/palette and how it can paint things into reality. Toadie sees them.

INT. MAFIA BOSS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Toadie informs drug dealer of brush.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tommy is distracted somehow.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - NIGHT

Toadie and THUGS break in, steal the SAFE.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

Tommy can't raise Arnold on the phone. He knows the missing safe is bad. Calls and tells Drakmire.

INT. DRAKMIRE'S HOUSE - DAY

Drakmire freaks out. He runs but is kidnapped along the way.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tommy goes to cops to report the missing safe.

INT. ARNOLD'S GALLERY - DAY

COPS find something Drakmire made, suspect it might be an inside job.

INT. MOLE'S BAR - NIGHT

Tommy decides to go after the brush & Drakmire. Looks over his house. WEIRD STUFF IN THERE

APPENDIX C: SECOND SPRING 2010 OUTLINE

"PAINTBRUSH BLUES" ACT ONE

Reels as Questions

1: Will Cody avoid the supernatural? No.

2: Will he be run the store? No, he'll mess it up.

He agrees to find out who killed Papa Legba.

3: Will he find out who kidnapped Manzi? No, but he will find the paintbrush.

4: Will he find out who wants the Paintbrush? Yes. A politician.

Oswald comes back from the estate sale.

5: Will he be able to find out who's behind everything? No.

6: Will he be able to stop the Politician from erasing the city? Yes.

Marie killed, Manzi and the paintbrush taken.

7: Will he stop the Politician from erasing the city? Yes.

8: Will he save Marie? Yes.

REEL 1

EXT. RIVER ROAD - MORNING

Down the Mississippi River and over the levee into an ocean of fog, halogens cut through and lead a pick up holding CODY, late 20s and already old. We won't know it yet, but Cody is *irunmole*, a minor vodun deity sentenced to time on Earth. With him is MIKE, same age, half the brains and three times the tattoos.

EXT. SHOTGUN HOUSE - MORNING

Pile of trash out front. Cody pulls over to load a discarded dresser into the truck, pick up a few landscape paintings. Mike spots a busted TV on the front porch, tries to convince Cody to take it as well. Cody refuses, "I'm on the straight and narrow".

EXT. INTERSTATE OVERPASS - DAY

A motorcycle cop, OFFICER TI JEAN pulls them over. He knows Cody, warns him about getting into trouble with Mike. Mike is bad *juju*.

INT. OSWALD'S - DAY

A resell shop, they take in your trash and fix it up and sell it back to you. Bookish OSWALD (another vodun spirit) tells Mike to unload the truck, sends Cody into the back room with the paintings.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

MANZI, think an emaciated acid-dropping Santa Claus, paints. Cody is nervous to be in the same room with him. Manzi paints an apple. His paintbrush has a crude EYE carved on it. Reaches into the painting, pulls it out and gives it to Cody. This is against the rules. Cody isn't supposed to mess around with any magic. Manzi thinks it'll be okay. He doesn't like Manzi.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Cody and Roxy (ex.)

EXT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Around the side of the building, up the fire escape.

INT. CODY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

You wish it was an efficiency, just a bed and sink. Oswald comes up to ask Cody to watch the shop for him. Cody is reluctant to watch the shop, but gives in. He just has to watch the shop, let Manzi do what he will, don't go in the safe.

REEL TWO

INT. OSWALD'S - DAY

Cody sends Mike out to look for discarded merchandise. Manzi comes in, leaving his friend the WAIF outside. Cody gives him a wide birth when he comes in, but can't resist watching Manzi work. His paintbrushes can paint items in and out of reality. The only customer is DREADLOCKS, who mistakenly walks into Manzi's makeshift studio while looking for a bathroom.

INT. OSWALD'S - next MORNING

The safe has been broken into, Manzi's brushes are gone. Cody is about to call Oswald, call the cops and give this problem to someone else when MARIE comes in. Manzi's daughter, she tells him that Manzi has gone missing. She

was told that if she ever needed anything, Oswald's was the place to ask. Cody agrees to check out his place.

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DAY

Drag rats, gutter punks street performers and bums. Cody passes a group of homeless tweens, the Waif among them. Asks for Manzi's house and is pointed in the right direction. The Waif offers him a necklace with a small burlap pouch attached, Cody turns him down.

INT. MANZI'S HOUSE - DAY

Ransacked. Cody snoops around, finds a courtyard with canvas, brushes, so on in back. Finds the paintbrush with the EYE. Breathes a sigh of relief, turns around is knocked out by Dreadlocks.

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DAY

Cody walks out, runs into the Waif, who presses the burlap pouch at him-it's gris gris, a protection charm. Could've used it before.

EXT. OSWALD'S - DAY

Mike's called the cops. Cody is accosted by Ti Jean, who wants him to find Manzi and the Paintbrush. The other

Deities can't interfere with mortal affairs, but Cody can.
If he brings back Manzi, Ti Jean will vouch for him and
have him bumped back up to the pantheon.

APPENDIX D: SPRING 2010 FULL OUTLINE

"PAINTBRUSH BLUES" FULL OUTLINE

STORY:

Jalen used to be a second-rate voodoo deity, now he's a third-rate mortal magician. No real supernatural stuff, just parlor tricks. When Legba, (the gatekeeper between the mortal world and the supernatural) goes missing, Jalen is given a chance to regain his immortality.

MAJOR DIETIES AT PLAY:

Legba-keeps the gate between the natural world and supernatural world

Baron-lord of the underworld

Yemanja-female spirit of water

Ti Jean-antagonistic spirit (kind of like middle management) who takes the form of a police officer

Ogoun-spirit of war and politics

Bakalou-dangerous spirit of the swamp

Damballa- the big one, father of all the other deities.

OUTLINE:

ACT ONE:

Reel 1: Jalen's goal: Avoid supernatural at all costs.

INT. UNDERWORLD

So we open in a sort of hell, where JALEN is attempting to strike a bargain with the BARON. For what, we don't know. But that takes us back in time to...

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREET - DAY

Jalen expertly woos tourists with a magic show. As he leaves the tourists behind, he is accosted by TI JEAN, a supernatural parole officer, who is checking up on Jalen to make sure he isn't using any real magical abilities. Jalen's on the straight and narrow, he wants nothing to do with any voodoo.

INT. OSWALD'S - DAY

Filled with junk, fake antiques and trinkets. In back, a voodoo market. Jalen comes in as a disheveled old man leaves. He hands most of the money he made to OSWALD to go to back rent. Oswald is a former spirit, a supporter of lost causes, now a mortal landlord.

INT. OSWALD'S - DAY

Past the only customer, a man in DREADLOCKS wearing an RJ Records hoodie. In a back room Jalen finds MICK, an old artist, painting.

EXT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Around the side of the building, up a fire escape and to...

INT. JALEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He wishes it was an efficiency, just a bed and sink. Oswald comes up to ask Jalen to watch the shop while he goes to an estate sale. Jalen is reluctant, but gives in.

INT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Jalen watches the place, turning away customers. YEMANJA comes in, thinks Jalen is back in the voodoo world. He is about to shut her down when Ti Jean comes in. Yemanja leaves.

Reel 2: Jalen's Goal: Find Legba.

INT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Ti Jean informs Jalen that Legba has gone missing, so there can be no travel between the natural and supernatural

worlds. Ti Jean wants Jalen to go looking for him; Jalen has the advantage of being of both worlds. If Jalen doesn't help, then Ti Jean can't go back to the spirit world. Which means he'll have nothing better to do than watch over Jalen's shoulder day and night. Jalen agrees to look for him. One more thing: Legba has been to Oswald's recently.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jalen tries to call Oswald to ask him about Legba. Fails.

EXT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Jalen is accosted by MARIE. Marie seems to think her father, Mick, should be at Oswald's. Jalen doesn't know anything about her or her father.

EXT. PIRATE'S ALLEY - NIGHT

A hub of street performers, homeless. Jalen sits down with a TAROT READER and asks her to read Legba's cards. She asks to read his cards, he says no, that's against the rules. She sends him to the St. Louis graveyard.

EXT. ST. LOUIS GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

Rows and rows of tombs. He goes to one tomb marked with coins, Xs in red chalk, candles. Shakes his head and leaves, he won't resort to magic.

EXT. RIVERWALK - NIGHT

Jalen is stopped when Yemanja comes out of the water. She overheard him speaking with Ti Jean and knows where Legba is.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

LEGBA lies dead in a circle of white chalk. He's the disheveled old man from Oswalds. Jalen tells Ti Jean that Legba was summoned then killed. Ti Jean promises to help reinstate Jalen to his former post if he helps find out who killed Legba. Legba had a set of paintbrushes that are missing.

ACT TWO: WHO KILLED PAPA LEGBA?

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

Sort of an open-air market full of musicians, artists, pickpockets. Jalen looks for Mick. A LIVING STATUE sends him to...

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DAY

More people sleeping on park benches than indoors. Jalen passes a group of homeless TWEENS, a GIRL weaving necklaces among them. He asks for Mick's house and is pointed in the right direction. The Girl offers him a necklace with a small burlap pouch attached, Jalen turns her down.

INT. MICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Ransacked. Jalen snoops around, but interrupts a man with DREADLOCKS looking around. Dreadlocks grabs something-the paintbrushes-and knocks Jalen out.

INT. MICK'S HOUSE - DAY

Jalen wakes up to Marie, Mick's daughter. Jalen admits he knows who her father is, just not where he is. He says he'll let her know if he finds anything out.

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DAY

Jalen walks out, runs into the Girl weaving necklaces, who presses the burlap pouch at him-it's gris gris, a protection charm. Could've used it before.

EXT. RJ RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

From Dreadlock's hoodie.

INT. RJ RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Jalen walks in, asking about a man with dreadlocks. He finds Dreadlocks next to a stack of money, paint still wet. Dreadlocks currently tries to paint a woman into existence, it comes out more like a cubist blow-up doll. Jalen confronts him, but they are interrupted by the PETRO CULT, who shoot Dreadlocks. Jalen manages to escape with him into...

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

Jalen pulls Dreadlocks with him. He knows nothing about Mick or Legba; Dreadlocks just wanted to try the brushes out before he delivered them to "the casino man." Dreadlocks dies, and the Baron comes to take his soul. The Baron warns Jalen about using the brushes, and tells Jalen that whatever happened to Legba, he isn't in the Underworld.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Jalen puts the paintbrushes in a locker.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Jalen asks to see the MANAGER, and tells him that he has the set of brushes, but the price has gone up. The manager has no idea what Jalen is talking about, and throws him out.

INT. RJ RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Jalen finds the studio abandoned.

MIDPOINT:

EXT. OSWALD'S - NIGHT

Members of the Petro cult set fire to the shop. The place BURNS.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jalen meets with Marie to tell her to go someplace safe. Marie wants to stick around and learn more about magic/voodoo, Jalen is heartily against this idea.

Right here there should be some relationship building between Jalen and Marie. There isn't, but there should be.

Oswald returns from his trip to find his place burned down. He was an estate sale attempting to buy a supernatural

object, but was beaten out by the assistant to a city councilman.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Jalen finds the city councilman is trying to get sections of land zoned for casinos.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie is attacked by a ZOMBIE. She handles it while..

EXT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jalen tackles a MAN who holds a crude carving of a man out of onion. The Man was controlling the Zombie. Oswald identifies the man as the city councilman's assistant.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

COUNCILMAN MCGRAW holds a ceremony complete with offering to Ogoun, thanking him for his help.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Marie insists on helping Jalen. He gives her the paintbrushes.

EXT. CITY HALL - DAY

Marie and Jalen follow the COUNCILMAN to the warehouse district.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jalen, Marie and Oswald rescue Mick. When Legba died, his spirit jumped over to Mick. With the paintbrushes, Mick can now control the gateway between the natural and supernatural worlds.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They are stopped by the Petro cult. Jalen refuses to use magic, and as a result Marie is killed, and Mick and the paintbrushes are taken. The gris-gris charm protects Jalen.

Ti Jean finds Jalen and Oswald. Jalen points out that he knows exactly where Mick and the brushes are, but Ti Jean tells him the deal is off, Jalen will stay mortal.

ACT THREE:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

With the help of Mick, Councilman Mcgraw summons the spirit OGOUN. Ti Jean tries to prevent this and is killed.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Buildings begin to tumble down around Jalen and Oswald.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Councilman Mcgraw forces Mick to uses his brushes to paint a block of downtown out of existence-the site of his new casinos. The buildings start to crumble. Ogoun kills Mcgraw, takes the brushes from Mick and starts to paint the whole city out of existence.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

With Oswald's help, Jalen uses a spell to defeat Ogoun (the same one that was used on Papa Legba) kicking him out of this world.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Jalen asks Mick to send him to the underworld.

INT. UNDERWORLD

Jalen bargains with the Baron, the Lord of the Underworld, for Marie.

APPENDIX E: SUMMER 2010 FULL OUTLINE

"TRENCHCOAT VODOO" FULL OUTLINE

ACT ONE

Sequence 1: Jake tries to cheat the system.

EXT. BLACK FIELD - DAY

OGOUN approaches PAPA LEGBA. Legba gives him a bright blue MEDALLION with an eye on it. It's obvious he doesn't like Ogoun.

Legba paints a doorway.

INT. SUBURBAN - DAY

VOODOO DOLL hanging from the rearview.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Suburban is being chased by a another car. GUNSHOTS. The Suburban flips. The occupants of the other car get out, 3 guys, CHUCK and BLONDE and SCARFACE, and go to the suburban. The guys in the Suburban get out. One of the other guys shoots them. They open the back of the Suburban and pull out a TRUNK, sea green pirate chest covered in orange spirals. Put it in the car. Blonde and Scarface

leave.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Chuck doubles over, his body a sharp upside down V. His back breaks open, terrible tearing sounds...Ogoun walks out of the alley. Looks up at the roof. Behind him, Chuck's body in the trash deflated like a popped balloon.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Ogoun watches police surround the suburban.

Papa Legba appears, tells Ogoun it's time to go. Ogoun looks at his badge, now grey. Legba has a brush. Papa Legba paints Ogoun out of this world. He mentions that Jukon is the last person to wake Damballah, and reminds Ogoun what happened to him.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake gets ready.

INT. OSWALD'S ODDITIES - DAY

A radio personality in the background ruminates on the grand meaning of snow in Jackson Square in May. Jake tells OSWALD something strange is happening. Oswald is an ex voodoo priest. He hustles a customer out so he can deal

with Jake. The customer may be DREADLOCKS, one of Ogoun's underlings. Oswald tells Jake to watch out. He's on the edge as it is, and there is rent to pay. Jake acknowledges yes, yes.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

JAKE TRIES TO DODGE?

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE - DAY

New Orleans, French Quarter. JAKE is doing card tricks for tourists. As one tourist berates him, he almost uses magic to finish a trick and shut the tourist up. But he sees TI JEAN and does not. He tries to fake it, fails. The tourists leave, including CARMEN. Carmen kind of flirts with him. Jack accuses Ti Jean of having something to do with the meteorological weirdness, he says he's just here to check in. Taps his badge, the Legba Eye on it instead of the NOPD crescent. Ti Jean admits that Papa Legba has been absent, unreachable. It is not his place to 'wrangle' papa legba.

INCITING INCIDENT

But Jake can. He tells Jake he'll turn a blind eye to

voodoo practices if Jake can find Papa Legba for him.

Sequence 2: Find Papa Legba.

INT. OSWALD'S ODDITIES - DAY

Jake asks for Oswald's help. They perform a ritual to call up Papa Legba, he does not answer.

Jake asks for arms to help him deal with supernatural beings. Oswald gives him the tracking bugs, the cat skulls which are like voodoo grenades, and the charming cloth.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Jake talks to Bakalu, who has a sort of open pass. He's basically the personification of wrath. Mean drunk. He makes fun of Jake, accuses Jake of wanting to get back to his girl, gets in a bar fight. Jake leaves him there.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - NIGHT

Jake asks Yemanja for help. She accepts his offering, and points him toward one of Legba's priestesses, a woman named Carmen. She's seen them on the river

INT. CARMEN'S HOME - DAY

Jake asks Carmen all about Papa Legba in a round about sort

of way. Carmen admits that he rented a room from her for the last few days. He hardly left. She did not/does not know he was any sort of voodoo god.

EXT. LEGBA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Jake investigates Legba's workshop, finds numerous signs that he was trying to ward off evil. He asks Carmen to take him to the lakefront.

EXT. LAKEFRONT - DAY

They look around. Day becomes night, Jake freaks out/seizes up/shakes/falls down.

He wakes up to Carmen holding him and the sound of police sirens. They follow the sirens and discover Legba dead, without tools of the trade/paintbrushes.

ACT TWO: BRING THE BRUSHES TO TI JEAN

Sequence 3: Find Legba's Brushes

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake looks at the voodoo doll. Still a hint of blue left in the doll, but definitely dull...

He convinces Carmen to get out of town, she believes him? Maybe. He is not feeling well, and has begun aging.

EXT. UNDERPASS - DAY

Cloudy. Windy. Trenchocat.

Jake goes to see Ti Jean. Jean is looking torn up. He is bleeding, human. He begs Jake to do something, but Jake tells him there's nothing to be done, Legba is dead. Jean tells him that Jake must find Legba's tools, the Paintbrushes, and then he'll have the key. He can use them. Jake tells Ti Jean to wait for him at Oswald's. TI Jean refuses.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tattooed gutter punk woman tries to give Jake a charm.
(follower of Damballah)

EXT. LEGBA'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Jake goes back to look for the paintbrushes. He runs into Dreadlocks, who uses some magic/hex to screw with Jake, then knocks Jake out. Bone harmonica.

INT. CARMEN'S HOME - DAY

Carmen finds Jake beat up, but happy. Jake used #1 of

Oswald's Q-like toys to track Dreadlocks. The Tattooed gutter punk woman gives Jake the charm (Mentions Damballah). Jake kidnaps Carmen. Jake lets the grey mosquito go, they race around following it. It leads them to RJ recording.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY/NIGHT

Jake is a dick to Carmen, trying to get her to leave. She stays. He warns her, tells her to leave if something happens.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Jake breaks in to find DREADLOCKS with Legba's bag. He has painted money, a woman, a few guns, trying to pull these items into reality with Legba's brush. He's furious. Jake grabs him and roughs him up, but Dreadlocks won't say who he is working for. Scarface and Blonde show up and start shooting. While ducking down and generally fearing for his life, Jake presses a brush against the wall, the wall disappears. He is surprised by this, but doesn't look a gifthorse in the mouth (note: find etymology of this phrase). He paints himself an exit and leaves. Dreadlocks follows.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

They run, but Dreadlocks is shot. Jake agrees to take him to the hospital if he (Dreadlocks) tells Jake who he is working for. He tells Jake the men will stop at nothing?

Sequence 4: Bring brushes to Ti Jean

INT. CARMEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Dreadlocks dies. Carmen starts to freak out over the dead body.

Baron Samedi shows up to claim Dreadlocks, but finds him already gone.

So Jake takes the brushes and paints the corpse away.

While still in "disappear" mode, he paints through the car.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

They cross through a park, where a group of lawyers attack them. Jake tells them to stop, they snap out of it.

EXT. UNDERPASS - NIGHT

They look for Ti Jean, who is gone. Cops tell him that everyone is better off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

They look for Bakalou, who is gone.

EXT. RIVERFRONT - NIGHT

They find Yemanja dead. Jake wants to ask for help from Oswald.

EXT. OSWALD'S ODDITIES - NIGHT

Oswalds has been set on fire. They charge through the wreckage and find nothing. Jake saves his voodoo doll. Ogoun shows up and tries to capture Carmen and the brush; she was a priestess of Legba, he may have taught her its secrets. Ogoun rants about not being beholden to Legba anymore. There is the trunk and the medallion, too. Jake escapes using the cat skull.

Sequence 5: Escape from Ogoun.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

They use the magical cloth to break in to a street car station, and escape using that.

INT. STREET CAR - NIGHT

Jake tells Carmen about how he 'fell' and came to know

Oswald. She comforts him.

Jake realizes that Samedi is the only one who can combat Ogoun, he wants to call him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Bleach Blonde sets up a row of onion dolls.

EXT. STREET CAR - NIGHT

BUZZING. The lawyers, now servants of Ogoun (zombified) attack them.

Jake wastes them, using lightning now. They steal the brush but leave Jake and Carmen living.

Jake discovers another mosquito capsule-Carmen has been leading Ogoun's men right to them.

She says she was told they only wanted the brushes, nobody would be hurt. Jake leaves her in the street car.

Sequence 6: Find last Loa

EXT. ST. LOUIS #2 - NIGHT

Jake finds the Damballah worshipper from earlier, the one who gave him the charm. She says something about Damballah, Jake argues with her and grabs her. He's willing to kill her to bring Baron Samedi there, so he can

become a loa again. But she is saved by spirits. Oswald among them. There is still energy in the doll, so Jake has been doing what he always did-finding lost things, namely, the spirits of the loa. There is a riot which he clears. In the dark city, only the casino is lit up. Jake flies there.

ACT THREE: DEFEAT THE BAD GUYS

Sequence 7: Stop Ogoun

EXT. CASINO - NIGHT

He is attacked by Ogoun. Jake defeats Ogoun but Baron Samedi shows up and wants in on the action. Carmen shows up. She is killed by Baron Samedi for his trunk, but puts the cloth over the lock. Baron takes her to the underworld, but Jake escapes. Jake sacrifices himself to call up Damballah.

Sequence 8: Fight Samedi

UNDERWORLD

Jake travels to the underworld with Damballah and saves Carmen.

He chooses to give up his powers for Carmen, returns

Vita

Anthony Faia was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. After graduating from The Woodlands High School in The Woodlands, Texas he attended Louisiana State University, graduating with a Bachelors Degree in English Literature with a Minor in Film Studies in 2005. While at LSU he began writing short scripts and fiction, garnering the John Ed Bradley Award for fiction his senior year. After graduating he spent time as a barista, a construction worker, managed two art galleries, and worked as a freelance copywriter in addition to being a writer for hire for H/K Pictures and its' offshoot K/2 Pictures. To learn more about the screenwriting form, he attended the New York Film Academy's 2-month screenwriting workshop in Los Angeles where he finally managed to finish his first script. He entered into the Radio-Television-Film Screenwriting program in 2008.

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This report was typed by the author.