

BOOMTOWN
“Monsters Brawl”
Second Revised Outline 7.10.02
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TEASER

EXT. BILLBOARD – DOWNTOWN L.A. - NIGHT

A homeless man (BRADLEY, early 20’s) stands on the ledge, illuminated by the row of lights beneath. He yells and raises his hands. Below, a CROWD OF CRAZED, DEVOTED WRESTLING FAN-TYPES cheer and hold up signs, screaming for him to jump. A POLICE OFFICER, an ominous backlit figure, climbs up and tries to stop him. Bradley opens up on the cop, beating him down – each punch getting applause from the crowd. Bradley finally jumps...but the cop makes a lunge and grabs him by the shirt. The shirt rips, exposing a large tattoo on Bradley’s chest. As a spot-lit Bradley falls onto the arms of the adoring mob...

SMASH TO MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

Teresa

EXT. DOME CITY - DOWNTOWN – DAY

A brawl between two homeless men escalates into a near-riot. Cops and EMTs arrive.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Teresa cleans a cut on one of two out-of-place clean-cut young men (DARIN and PETER, early 20’s). Charming and well-spoken, Darin describes himself and Peter as documentary filmmakers. Darin is the producer, Peter the director. Darin says something about how Peter is an artist with a “need to document the plight of the homeless” that makes for a bright spot in Teresa’s otherwise grim day. The conversation is cut short - Teresa is called to help an injured man.

EXT. DOME CITY - DITCH – MOMENTS LATER

The injured man is face down, clutching a jacket as if for dear life. Theresa goes to work – but quickly realizes that he is beyond help. He dies in her arms.

EXT. DOME CITY – DAY

Joel and Fearless arrive. Teresa tells Joel about the filmmakers – sensitive socially conscious kids - getting the riot on film. Fearless makes a comment about how this murder will be low priority, given that it involves the homeless. Most of these murders happen with little motivation and it’s difficult to make an ID or find next of kin. Fearless examines the victim’s jacket and finds a gas station credit card bearing the name “STEPHEN DUMONT.”

Anita Dumont

INT. DUMONT HOUSEHOLD – SEATTLE – DAY

A day in the strained life of a middle-aged couple. ANITA DUMONT argues with her husband STEPHEN about their bills: they have been using a private detective to track down their runaway son without success. Stephen is chafing under the financial strain. The phone rings: it's Detective Robert Smith from the L.A.P.D., asking when they can get down to Los Angeles. They may have to ID the body of their son.

INT. MORGUE – DAY

Anita and Stephen meet Joel and Fearless. Stephen has been preparing – his demeanor is stoic. Anita is overwrought. The emotional valence of the scene changes when they see the body and realize it is not their son. Stephen's brave front deflates. Anita becomes hopeful. Fearless: they now have to ID the deceased and find Bradley – he may be a witness to the murder.

INT. MORGUE ANTEROOM – DAY

Anita outlines her strategy to help the L.A.P.D. find her son (bringing in pictures, procuring his police records from Seattle, postponing their return home indefinitely). Stephen tells her that he doesn't know how much longer he can take this. For years his life has revolved around cleaning up the mess that is Bradley. The more they try, the more he pulls away. It's time to realize that they can't control his actions and let go. Anita blasts Stephen for using his Al-Anon rhetoric against her. Stephen counters that he at least is getting help. Anita accuses him of losing his compassion. Stephen: you must be right, because the only thing I could think about in the morgue was seeing Bradley dead and finally having some release. Stephen will return to Seattle as scheduled – it's Anita's choice whether to join him.

INT. STATION HOUSE – BULLPEN - JOEL'S DESK - DAY

Anita brings pictures of Bradley: he started as a good, if hard-partying teen and before she knew it, he was a full-blown drug addict, stealing his parents' money and running away from rehab too often to count. Anita blames herself - she recounts how many times she should or could have put a stop to her son's self-destructive spiral. Anita begs Joel to bring her son back so she can finally make things right. Joel tells her not to worry, they'll find Bradley.

Tom

INT. SQUAD CAR – DAY

Tom and Ray have been assigned to assist Joel and Fearless. Tom is psyched to do detective work. Ray doesn't buy into Tom's junior G-Man fantasy: the only reason they are letting the grunts in on this one is that the homeless are involved...if this were a rich people murder they wouldn't be allowed to touch it with a twenty foot pole.

EXT. DOME CITY – DAY

Ray and Tom talk to a BUM about Bradley: though generally incoherent, he says that Bradley has been telling everyone how he is going to “jump off the nesity.” As Ray and Tom wonder what the hell that means, an outreach worker named LEANN MERRICK approaches. She can't believe the clean cut young man in the photo is the Bradley she knows. Bradley lives under a bridge, but isn't at his bivouac until nightfall. She usually leaves food for him at a park. Tom asks if he can take Bradley's food to him today...

EXT. PARK – DAY

Tom leaves the food on a bench, then hides alongside Ray. The two try to figure out what it means to “jump off the nesity.” There isn't a street, bridge, pier or overpass in the city by that name. The conversation ends when Bradley arrives. The two cops try to corral him. Bradley runs –

EXT. L.A. STREETS – DAY

Tom chases Bradley, who has absolutely no regard for his own safety: running out into the street, almost getting hit by cars, running through people, places and things to avoid getting pinched.

Off Tom, as Bradley manages to evade him...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BRIDGE – NIGHT

Tom and Ray arrive to stake out Bradley's bivouac. Tom realizes what Bradley meant by “jumping off the nesity.” Just beyond the bridge is a billboard for Hennessy Cognac. Half the ad is torn: the billboard reads “nessy.”

EXT. BILLBOARD - NIGHT

Tom and Ray arrive – and find Bradley climbing up. Tom follows – a replay of the teaser from his POV, in which he is just a friendly cop trying to help. Bradley attacks Tom, then jumps to the barren ground, breaking his leg. The spotlight seen in the teaser comes from the cruiser – Ray shines it on Bradley. Tom looks down as Ray cuffs Bradley - notices the large symbol tattooed on his chest. Ray shoots Tom a final insult: “nice work, Serpico, I think you broke his leg.”

Fearless

EXT. EMS MOTOR POOL – DAY

Theresa digs up a service invoice Peter had to sign so he could be billed for the first aid. Joel ribs Teresa when she describes Darin as a “charming guy.” Joel and Teresa’s easy, friendly banter makes Fearless feel like a third wheel.

INT. DARIN AND PETER’S EDITING BAY - NIGHT

Fearless and Joel interrogate. Darin does most of the talking. Peter appears to be a weird, introverted artist. Darin and Peter have no idea who Bradley is until they see a picture. A shudder goes through the room. Darin tells Fearless and Joel that they have some tape from the night of the riot that the cops should see: Darin motions for Peter to cue it up.

DOME CITY – VIDEO

The footage shows Bradley beating a man over the head. The victim grabs Bradley’s jacket, ultimately ripping it off. Bradley picks up a rock and throws it at the camera before running away. The video cuts off.

RESUME ON THE EDIT BAY

Fearless asks why they didn’t come forward before. Darin explains they were afraid – it was a bad night, Peter got hit with a rock, and it’s only now that they realize they taped a homicide. Peter looks up, a naïve look on his face – “are we in trouble for not showing this to you earlier?” Joel shakes his head: they’re not in trouble. Fearless gets a call – Ray and Tom have Bradley. As they leave, Joel wonders what he is going to tell Anita: he promised to bring back her son but is delivering a killer.

INT. HOSPITAL – NIGHT

Ray tells the Detectives that Tom was the star in this collar and is out following up on some details. Anita arrives, wanting to see her son. Fearless and Joel stop her. It’s a hard moment, but she has to be told. Fearless takes the plunge, explains to the increasingly upset Anita that her son is not just a witness to the murder – they have proof that he committed the killing. Anita asks the name of the victim, and why her son killed him. Fearless tells her they have yet to ID the victim or establish motive – but the evidence is indisputable. As the despairing mother goes in to see her son, Tom returns to the hospital. He has been looking up the symbol tattooed on Bradley’s chest – he remembers seeing it on posters around the city. Tom hands over a videotape. Tom hasn’t seen it but has heard that it’s pretty awful. The tape has the symbol emblazoned on the cover, over a legend that reads *Monsters Brawl*.

INT. STATION HOUSE – BULLPEN - DAY

Joel and Fearless find Anita waiting for them. Bradley didn’t even know he killed the man he fought – and he told her he did it all for a movie he was in. Something called *Monsters Brawl*. Anita wants to know if her son is completely delusional – Joel and Fearless explain that *Monsters Brawl* is a commercially available reality tape that depicts homeless men fighting and performing stunts. Anita wants to see the tape. Joel strongly discourages it, but she presses the issue...

INT. STATION HOUSE – PRIVATE OFFICE – NIGHT

Joel and Fearless screen *Monsters Brawl* for Anita. It’s that horrible moment from *Hardcore* as she sees:

MONSTERS BRAWL – ON VIDEO

Bradley fights brutal bare-knuckle fights against other homeless men, throws himself down flights of stairs, chews glass and allows other homeless men to drive nails into his back. In the last scene, a bludgeoned Bradley mugs for the camera, proclaiming himself the champion of *Monsters Brawl* – he calls himself the Hulk Hogan of *Monsters Brawl*.

Off Joel and Fearless – watching Anita descend into even deeper despair at the sight of her son’s degradation...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

Bradley

EXT. L.A. CITY STREETS – MONTAGE/VIDEO - NIGHT

Bradley performs for Darin and Peter. Peter eggs him on to do even more dangerous things for the camera – culminating in the glass-eating stunt. A bleeding Bradley tells Darin and Peter that he’d be happy to let someone drive nails into his back. Darin wonders if they can do that – Peter, now more assertive than before, tells Darin not to worry about it “let’s just make our film.”

Some time later, Darin and Peter take Bradley around the streets, showing him the posters they’ve put up for the video website. Darin and Peter tell Bradley that hundreds of thousands of people have bought and are watching the video - he is a star, the champ of *Monsters Brawl*.

Bradley tells Darin and Peter that he was a wrestling fan as a kid and that he should get some kind of a *Monsters Brawl* costume – like Hulk Hogan or Rick Flair. Peter tells Bradley that he has an idea about that:

INT. TATTOO PARLOR – NIGHT

Peter films as Bradley has the *Monsters Brawl* logo painfully tattooed across his chest. People keep stopping at the chair, recognizing Bradley from the tape – a woman even asks him to sign her ass. Bradley is ecstatic. He wants to do bigger and better stunts and tells Peter that he has an idea about jumping off a billboard...

EXT. BRADLEY’S BIVOUAC – NIGHT

Darin and Peter come to see Bradley. They tell him they feel they need some new blood for the *Monsters Brawl* sequel and they have found a new guy to be their champ. Bradley can’t believe it. Darin and Peter are sorry, but they need to keep it fresh. Bradley is left behind, raving that he is the champ and he’s gonna fight for it if he has to.

EXT. DOME CITY – DAY

A man recognizable as Bradley’s victim finishes a bumfight and yells “I am the champion!” as Peter films. Bradley watches from the bushes, until he can take it no more and jumps in - beating the “new champion” mercilessly. Chaos erupts. Other homeless men join the brawl. The victim falls, ripping off Bradley’s jacket. Peter laughs as he films. Bradley grabs a rock and throws it at Peter, who drops the camera as the rock hits him on the head. Bradley screams something about being “the only champ,” then runs away as sirens sound in the background.

INT. HOSPITAL – NIGHT

Fearless and Joel usher Anita in to see her son. Anita breaks down as she holds Bradley. Bradley's demeanor changes – he smiles and asks Anita if she saw his movie. "I'm a star," he tells his mother. "I'm a star."

Darin

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR – NIGHT

Peter films an exuberant Bradley as he talks to his fans and signs the biker chick's ass. Outside, Darin pays people off to go in and pretend they have seen the video and are fans of Bradley. The biker chick comes out, and angrily tells Darin that she wants more cash – Bradley signed her ass with a Sharpie. Bradley runs out of the tattoo parlor and into the night, screaming "I'm the champion!" Darin: how are we going to get this guy to top himself for *Monsters Brawl Volume 2*? Peter: didn't you ever watch wrestling? All they have to do to get Bradley to really whale on some other guy is to "take away his crown."

EXT. DOME CITY – DAY

Darin and Peter film their "new champion" finishing off his opponent. Peter spots Bradley creeping in the bushes, shuts off the camera and starts berating him – egging him on to take on the new champion and get back his title. The victim keeps crowing "I'm the champion!" and Bradley finally snaps: Peter turns the camera back on as Bradley jumps in to reclaim his title.

INT. DARIN AND PETER'S LAWYER'S OFFICE – DAY

Darin and Peter sit with their lawyer, showing him the tape of Bradley beating his victim to death. Mirroring the question he asked of Joel in Act Two, Peter asks the lawyer if they are in any trouble for not turning the tape in. The lawyer: as long as they did not incite the event or lied to the police, they have no responsibility to the authorities. Peter looks at the lawyer – "does this mean I can put it in *Monsters Brawl 2*?" Darin and the lawyer both look at him like he's sick, but as long as he has releases from both Bradley and the victim, the answer is yes. Peter smiles.

Joel

INT. STATION HOUSE – PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Fearless ejects the *Monsters Brawl* tape. Anita can't believe her son has been turned into a freak and a killer. Now he is going to spend the rest of his life in prison. Joel: it's obvious that the *Monsters Brawl* producers egged him on to do the things on the video. If they can prove that, they may be able to shift the criminal liability away from Bradley – Fearless shoots Joel a questioning look, but says nothing.

INT. MONSTERS BRAWL LOFT - DAY

Joel and Fearless come in with a warrant – they are to search the premises for information that may help them ID the victim. Joel is stunned – the place is huge. Tapes stacked to the ceiling. *Monsters Brawl* is big business. Darin: they have done nothing illegal, they have releases from everyone on the tape. Realizing that Darin and Peter knew the name of the dead man from a release and didn't disclose it the first time around, Joel goes ballistic. Peter picks up his camera and starts filming. Darin tells the detectives that since they assumed that Darin and Peter were just there documenting the event and never asked them if they knew the deceased, they had no responsibility to disclose anything. Joel

knocks the camera from Peter's hands – he wants the releases, now.

EXT. HOUSE IN A LOW-RENT SUBURB – DAY

Joel and Fearless visit ROBERT WYNN, the victim's brother. They have to break the news – Robert shakes his head, regretful. His brother ran away from home three years ago, soon after the death of their parents. Robert did the best he could but... When Robert asks how his brother died, Joel starts to tell him about *Monsters Brawl* – growing angrier and angrier by the moment. Joel's speech carries over into...

INT. D.A.'S OFFICE – DAY

Joel and McNorris discuss the possibility of a case against the *Monsters Brawl* producers. McNorris is dismissive – he has an open and shut case against Bradley. The filmmakers are untouchable: they have signed releases from all the bums they used in their tap... all of them consenting adults doing things of their own volition. An increasingly emotional Joel counters that the filmmakers must have egged Bradley on to commit the murder. McNorris shakes his head, Joel has no proof: and Bradley is hardly a credible witness. McNorris tells him that his job is to objectively build a case, not to decide who is guilty or innocent and side with them from the top. Joel blows a gasket: who the hell is McNorris to tell him his job? For years McNorris has been riding Joel and his colleagues, impugning their evidence and methods, calling them on their "sloppy" procedure and paperwork. Now Joel is handing McNorris a clear-cut case of the lowest kind of exploitation one human being can visit on another. The *Monsters Brawl* producers threw an emotional fragmentation grenade into Bradley's family. Does McNorris have what it takes to make them pay or not?

INT. BULLPEN - NIGHT

Joel obsesses over the paperwork seized from Darin and Peter. Fearless asks why he's here into the wee hours of the night. Joel tells Fearless to put himself in the parents' shoes. The day-to-day life of these people is a search for closure that never arrives, a situation that keeps finding ways of getting worse even as they think they've finally hit rock bottom. Fearless knows there is something Joel needs to get off his chest. His son died, and he just went on working, then his wife "ran into a shower door" and he just went on working. Now Joel is habitually avoiding his home, burying himself in work, has a friendlier relationship with Teresa than with Kelly, and is in his own way doing exactly what Anita is doing – punishing himself. Fearless asks Joel if he's just going to live the rest of his life like this. As opposed to what? Asks Joel: letting go? Like Stephen just let go of his wife and son when they needed him? Maybe they should all just "let go" – of everything – shut down the police station, let murderers walk the streets, do nothing while others suffer... Fearless realizes Joel is too close to this to talk and walks away from the argument. Maybe Joel's not ready to talk. Joel calls out to Fearless, he is talking, why is Fearless walking away? Is this him "letting go?"

As Joel goes back to work...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

McNorris

INT. HIGH-POWERED CENTURY CITY LAW FIRM – DAY

McNorris talks to ELLIS PIERCE, a smug, self-satisfied attorney in private practice. McNorris has come to ask if there are any holes in the contracts used by the *Monsters Brawl* producers. McNorris is not comfortable coming to Ellis with a favor, and Ellis is licking his chops at the sight of his righteous, crusading friend coming all the way from downtown to ask for a consult on contract law. Ellis tells McNorris that the contracts are tremendously well-designed. He can't find any loopholes: if there's a way to get to these filmmakers, it won't be through contract law.

INT. HIGH-POWERED CENTURY CITY LAW FIRM CORRIDOR – DAY

McNorris' phone rings. It's Joel. McNorris sees the name on the phone display and lets it ring – but ultimately picks up. McNorris is about to spring the bad news on Joel, but Joel surprises him by telling him he has an angle. Maybe they can't get Darin and Peter into a murder trial, but they can hit them where it hurts... As McNorris listens...

Stephen

INT. AL-ANON MEETING – DAY

Joel enters. The meeting is in progress, but he manages to pull Stephen aside to tell him that they have a chance to get justice for Bradley. Stephen tells Joel that he can't talk just now. Joel takes a seat. Stephen's turn comes up and he talks about how grateful he is that he has been allowed into this meeting for the last three days during his crisis. In these two days, as he has learned the news of his son, he has realized that he has to return to his wife: that he has mistaken accepting his inability to control his son and his wife's behavior and "letting go" for abandoning the ones he loves. The truth is that even though he doesn't want to enable his wife in her obsessive quest to save Bradley, he did swear an oath to stand by her, and he is going to find a way to make it work. Joel listens – the parallels to his life painfully clear. As the meeting breaks up, Stephen walks across the hall to find Joel. Joel dials Kelly on his phone – she picks up. He tells her that he felt a need to ask how she's doing. Off Stephen, watching as Joel makes a tentative connection with his wife...

Andrea

INT. *MONSTERS BRAWL* LOFT - CONTINUOUS

A big party for the release of *Monsters Brawl 2*. Darin unveils their stock of hundreds of thousands of tapes, most of them already pre-ordered. Andrea interviews Peter, who pontificates about how he is on the brink of signing a deal to do a reality series. Peter portrays himself as a visionary artist whose gritty vision has touched a raw nerve. Darin steps up and points out Joel, standing at the bar, then Fearless, at the buffet, and McNorris at the entrance. Peter confronts Joel, but Joel holds out a warrant allowing him to confiscate the entire run of *Monsters Brawl 2* videos. The young man who died during the making of *Monsters Brawl 2* was only seventeen years old when he signed the release – making the release null and their use of his image on the tape illegal. A group of black-and-whites led by Ray and Tom enter to take the tapes away. The party breaks up. Peter becomes defiant: he has earned four million dollars with the first tape. People want what he is making. If they want to confiscate these tapes, go right ahead...he'll just make

Monsters Brawl 2, and 3, and 4 and so on. Joel and the gang simply turn their backs on Peter and exit. Andrea follows the ranting Peter to –

EXT. *MONSTERS BRAWL* LOFT – NIGHT

Where Peter finds himself face to face with Anita, who hands him a picture of Bradley, and tells him the man he exploited was a child once, with a mother and father. Peter is speechless. Stephen walks up to his wife, tells her it's time to go home. As they walk away, Peter starts yelling at the cops again – the sound plays over the transition to –

Peter

INT. LOW RENT PORNO SHOOT – DAY

An aging, pot-bellied Peter rants to and equally badly-aged Darin about how this is going to be a great and artistic scene as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL the squalid conditions in which they are now working. Fifteen years have passed and no one pays attention to Peter anymore...he has become another deluded has-been...

Robert

EXT. HOUSE IN A LOW-RENT SUBURB – DAY

A knock on the door. Fifteen years older, Robert Wynn opens up to find himself face to face with a cleaned-up Bradley. Bradley tries to introduce himself – Robert knows who he is. Bradley explains that he has spent the last fifteen years recovering from his addictions and delusions – the last thing he needs to do is to apologize for what he did to Robert's brother. As Robert receives Bradley into his home, and the two men set about the task of healing...

END OF EPISODE