

The image shows the interior of a bar with a nautical or beach-themed aesthetic. The walls are primarily blue and white, with a white lattice pattern on the left side. A long bar with a dark countertop runs along the left wall. Several white bar stools are arranged around the bar and in the center of the room. The ceiling is white with several ceiling fans and blue pendant lights. In the background, there is a pool table and a glass display case containing various items. The overall atmosphere is bright and clean.

# CLOSING TIME

BY RUSSELL GOLDMAN

**IF YOU COULD STEP BACK INTO YOUR GLORY DAYS...  
IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE TO DO ALL OF IT AGAIN...**

**WOULD YOU CONSIDER IT A GIFT...**



**...OR A PUNISHMENT?**

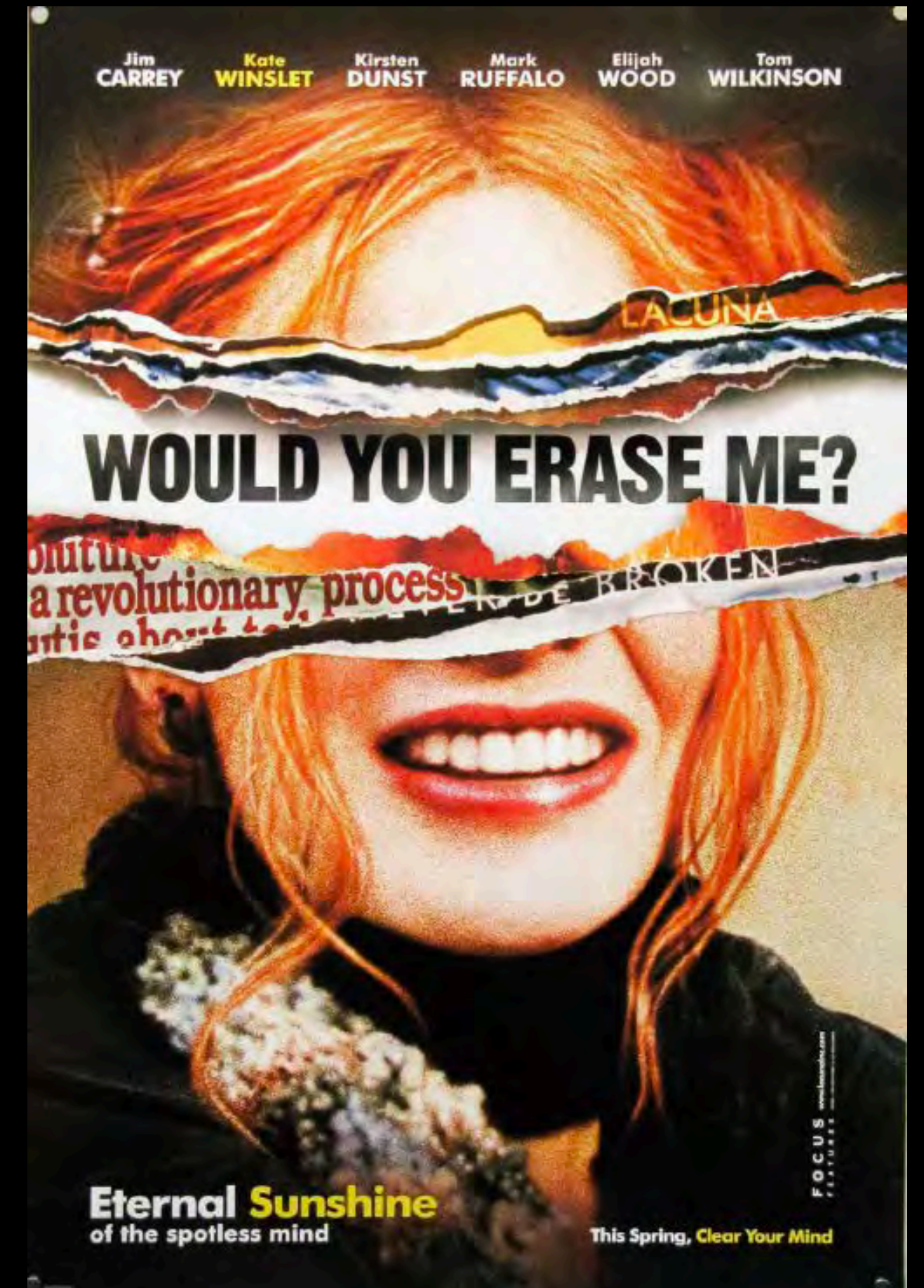


## LOGLINE

An awkward college reunion is hijacked by an embittered friend who traps his former best friends in a SHARED PSYCHOSIS to make them relive the night their relationships fell apart. Their minds held hostage in the past, they each must confront their regrets in order to escape.



CLOSING TIME takes inspiration from I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER (where a reunion of college friends are stalked by a mysterious figure because they've wronged someone in their past) with ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND's surreal meditation of lost relationships (where a couple undergoes a procedure to erase memories of their relationship). By pulling from these (very) different movies, CLOSING TIME will feel original, relatable, and consistently thrilling.



# THE CHARACTERS



CALEB FOOTE

## TRENT

The odd one. Think Travis Bickle meets Doc Brown. Yet he can put a face over that strangeness... he's suave when he tries to be. A feud with his friends and lab partner Joy results in Trent drunkenly driving away from their favorite bar... and making a fatal mistake that will ruin his young adult life. Almost a decade later, he stages this reunion because he's hungry for a second chance at the dreams he had in school—and getting his relationships with his friends back to *exactly how they were before*.

# THE CHARACTERS



TERRY HU

## JOY

(They/Them) The one hiding a stress disorder. Once a budding chemist with an unprecedented grant and a lifetime of opportunity in front of them; today, a professional event planner for influencers. When Trent puts the crew into a shared psychosis, Joy believes they have a chance to “kick” everyone back to reality if they can recreate the serum they once made with Trent. Yet there’s a dark secret to why Joy le# this path behind— one that Trent doesn’t even know. Tonight, they will be forced to reencounter those memories.

# THE CHARACTERS



DEMI ADEJUYIGBE

## GARLAND

The popular one. Then a newcomer to this crew, giving up crew to become an actor; today a hot-shit actor about to shoot a franchise series in New Zealand for two years. Always the most well-liked, spending some time with Garland before he goes is the only thing that could get these five to reconvene. Yet his new self-centered tendencies, including forcing his relationship to fit into his professional life, will be brought out on full display.

# THE CHARACTERS



SAMANTHA BARTOW

## TERESA

The world-weary, romantic one. Once a theater director, now a disaffected bartender, Teresa is dubious about spending her night watching her ex-girlfriend Kerry and ex-friend Garland make out. It's making her feel existential for letting Kerry go in the first place. Yet Trent worms into Teresa's head an idea there's a way to get back the kind of lives they had at school together. She becomes invested in Trent's plan after she and Kerry unexpectedly rekindle their spark. Their connection feels real to Teresa... who might still love Kerry.

# THE CHARACTERS



ALYSSA LIMPERIS

## KERRY

The one who's afraid she is boring. A genius at design and carpentry who is now passing by at a graphics job for a tech firm. The most identity-confused of the five, her personality has grown over the course of her 20s from gregarious to timid. She can't decide if she should rediscover what she wants... or just subordinate herself to her charming boyfriend's journey. Yet this night rekindles something between her and Teresa. It feels real to Kerry... but it might not be love.

# THE STORY

We're in a bar called CLOSING TIME, two nights until our five friends graduate from Willow University in Colorado. It's clear from how they're signing karaoke together that this friend group has LOVED each other. Yet this is also the night where this friend group will FALL APART, forever.

Two pivotal events happen simultaneously. TERESA and KERRY are in the process of amiably breaking up after being together since the end of sophomore year. They're not planning to be in the same city after college, and Teresa has always thought they should end it before things get complicated. Yet they both know there's still love there, and Kerry is confused why it will be going to go to waste. Drunk and upset, Kerry impulsively hooks up with their good friend, GARLAND. She wants to take the sting out and force both her and Teresa to move on. Garland haplessly shoves his guilt out of mind: they're both drunk, attractive and single, so why not? Yet Teresa is shocked... and heartbroken she let this happen.

Meanwhile, TRENT is pressuring JOY to test a compound they've concocted together. They've spent their final undergrad year developing a SERUM that can amplify one's memories, recall lost or buried ones... fully let you experience them in front of your eyes, as if they're REAL. They've received a prestigious grant to continue researching after they graduate. All they have to do is test and report their findings. Yet Joy is afraid to test the serum on themselves. And they don't believe Trent when he says they have nothing to worry about. In a HUGE FIGHT, Joy decides to leave their study entirely, jeopardizing their grant and future. Joy RIPS UP Trent's notes in the process.



# THE STORY

Garland sees Trent is upset and promises to follow him outside, but Garland ends up staying to comfort Joy instead. They all choose to sing “CLOSING TIME” by Semisonic on the karaoke machine with JOY. As Trent waits in his car that he meant to leave overnight—freezing and upset—he starts hearing the karaoke music. Feeling volatile, Trent STARTS HIS ENGINE and drives back to campus DRUNK...

Trent loses control of his car. He nearly veers into a tree, instead CRASHING through a fence and breaking into an alleyway. Moments after the crash, Trent realizes he HIT A MAN working a night shift at a restaurant. Trent rushes out of the car to press his hands against the man’s wound. The man, Allard, is 10 years older than Trent. Months later, he will die from complications due to his injury. And Trent will be sentenced to prison for FOUR YEARS. Not only has the potential for his future disappeared... he doesn’t have ANY IDEA how to continue going.

We watch through Trent’s eyes that all of these events play out like a CHAIN REACTION... like sliding doors. If just one moment during this night went a different way, fate might not have led Trent to a cataclysmic decision. This idea racks in his brain for SIX LONG YEARS...



# THE STORY

From a CUT TO BLACK, we start watching the same scene at the Closing Time bar over again, REPEATING right from the beginning of the drama. Trent approaches Joy the same way, only this time, he seemingly appears self-aware that he gets to make a DO-OVER of what went wrong the first time: “Of course, if we’re partners for the long run. I’ve got to earn your trust...” He intervenes with Teresa and Kerry: “Just remember, no matter what you’re going through, the two of you love each other...” Everyone is responding to Trent kindly. He’s saying all the right things. Trent is EXCITED... but at the same time he can’t help but feel something is OFF...

The group starts to sing “CLOSING TIME” as they did before. Trent starts SHAKING, overwhelmed. He BLINKS: the group in front of him now appears like they actually did six years ago— Joy crying, Teresa and Kerry somberly embracing. He BLINKS AGAIN: the bar has CHANGED, everyone is YEARS OLDER, and they’ve fallen down LAUGHING. These iterations repeat back and forth, like flipping through a camera roll. Each of these flickering worlds start to SHAKE before Trent, as if an earthquake is uprooting each of them. His vision HALOS, like a DREAM he is waking up from...

# THE STORY

...as we CUT TO Trent six years later, approaching a bar in LA called DIMINISHING RETURNS. Trent brings everyone back together to celebrate Garland's coming two-year departure to New Zealand, where he'll be starring as the lead of an upcoming major franchise movie. Garland's still with Kerry, and has been a huge help to Joy in their surprising career pivot to event planning for influencers. He's even been reaching out to Trent after he left prison two years ago, so he believes he's on good terms with everyone here. Garland knows everyone here tonight loves him. Teresa would suggest otherwise, but Trent's paying her to bartend tonight, so she'll shut up. They all come to Diminishing Returns believing that Trent is hosting a bigger party with a lot of people... NOT their reunion. And the rest of them still feel awkward around Trent after that night, and everything since his crash. Trent convinces his former friends he is here to make amends. That's all he's been doing the past six years. He just wants the same amends for the closest friends he's ever had. He wants ONE LAST CHANCE to have a good night with them before it's too late.



**Where the CLOSING TIME short film will be shot**

The girls feel divided, so it's up to Garland... it's his night, after all. Though their lives couldn't be more different today, Garland hasn't forgotten that for a moment at school, Trent was more popular than him. So Garland likes treating Trent like a little brother now. He likes feeling bigger than Trent in subtle ways, even just through one or two off-color jokes about what happened to him. So, Garland is willing to humor Trent—and the group is willing to give tonight a shot.

# THE STORY

Throughout an evening of darts, Jenga and karaoke, the group grows more nostalgic as they drink. Trent sparks discussion topics that make his friends regretful for the way that night shaped their lives. Teresa feels an unexpected chemistry between herself and Kerry— and learns that Kerry and Garland may break up once he leaves, to Garland's dismay. Joy cuts at their fingernail, admitting to unhappiness with their new career, embarrassed they missed out on their potential. Trent is honest about his own scars. He begins reminiscing about his accident, something the group cannot stomach hearing. They remind him he tried to help the man, that he's already atoned, that he could've hit that tree with his car instead of the fence. Trent scoffs and puts the issue aside. He just says he's hopeful there's a way back to the MAGIC they all had together.

In a bittersweet burst of drunken energy, the group sings "CLOSING TIME" together— their favorite karaoke song. As the song plays, the group starts to see their old bar, their clothes, everything that they are now embracing. But one by one, they stop singing, realizing they aren't projecting these memories... **THEY ARE ACTUALLY SEEING THEM.**

**TRENT HAS SPIKED EVERYONE'S DRINKS** with the serum he was developing six years ago. As they all started to faint, Trent wrapped **HEADSETS** around each of them, connecting their brain waves. **TRENT IS SENDING HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS INTO A SHARED VISION OF THE NIGHT THAT BROKE THEM APART.** In this new reality Trent has trapped them in, they have a second chance at their entire adult lives. **TO DO ALL OF IT AGAIN... THE RIGHT WAY.**

And the group is **TERRIFIED.**



# THE STORY

Trent plays at the air hockey table he missed so much, calmly explaining how the serum he drugged them with works. No one else can bring themselves to even walk out the door. They can all hear the sounds of their old school down the street. They are breathing in the moment when their graduation was only a few days away. None of them can wrap their heads around it. Trent encourages them to go back to their dorms, wake up tomorrow, and settle into this new reality.

That's when Garland POUNCES on Trent, tying him up with the bar's string lights, shouting at him to get them out of this hellhole. Joy shares the reason they and Trent were afraid to test their serum was that neither of them could find a way out of memory amplification. But Trent reveals he *did* try it and he *did* find a way out. Years after his accident, at a hopeless moment where didn't see a path forward in his life, he tried the serum, not knowing if he'd ever wake up from it. We learn the psychosis Trent experienced was the dream sequence we saw earlier. Versions of his four friends were right in front of him. Yet the memory of recreating that night— of Trent trying to push its series of events in a different direction— was too overwhelming for him to stay. So, he was “KICKED” back into consciousness.



# THE STORY



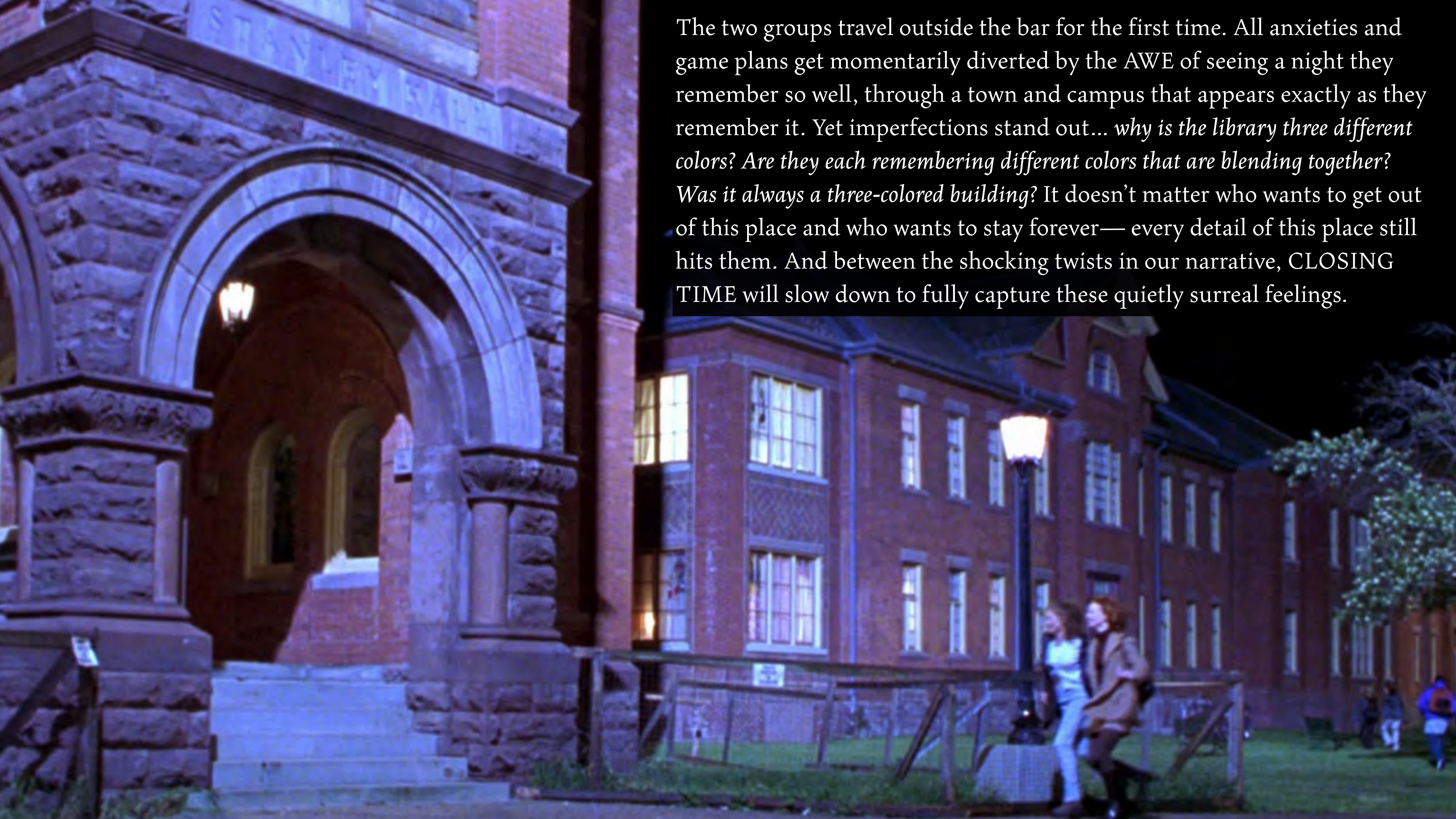
Trent explains that to create a truly authentic experience of the past, he needed the brains and memories of each of his friends. That's what makes the psychosis feel REAL. Between everything the five of them collectively remember, the psychosis can capture every detail of their past. Their minds are bound like a polymer: meaning, they can never be ejected from this dreamscape. For Trent, a DAY in the psychosis proved to be only a MINUTE in real time, meaning they could all spend the rest of their natural lifespans in here before their brains rot. Trent insists he put everyone in here to HELP EACH OF THEM... now, they have a chance to confront their past regrets and live a life bettered by hindsight. The world in here is *so authentic*. IF YOU CAN'T TELL IT ISN'T REAL... DOES IT MATTER IF IT'S A LIE?

# THE STORY

Emotions RUN HIGH at the bar, as Trent realizes his good intentions are not yet being read as good. He pleads with Joy to return to their laboratory: he wants them to feel everything they've been missing out on... realize how much success and love they can still experience if they can just start over. Joy starts pulling at one of their fingernails, their nervous tic. Garland starts BEATING TRENT UP—he is scared and infuriated. Kerry pulls his collar back, telling him to listen to Trent's words: an emotionally overwhelming memory from this night could be enough to “kick” them out of the psychosis and into consciousness. That's all they have to do... LOOK FOR THE RIGHT TRIGGER.

Joy's eyes WIDEN hearing that idea. They agree to go back to their lab, believing the right trigger could be there. Yet she seems more DISTURBED than relieved by the prospect of finding it. Trent is thrilled to spend an 0.8 mile walk reminding Joy how right they will feel doing work that matters to her again. Garland frantically follows them, afraid Joy could give into Trent, reminding them Garland has always been there for Joy when Trent hasn't. Kerry feels raw from Garland's blowup and shitty he seems to care more about Joy's feelings than hers. Before Kerry and Teresa watch the trio leave, Trent *whispers* in Teresa's ear “*Now is your chance.*” He knows Teresa is taking his invitation to live in this psychosis seriously. That *Teresa could still be with Kerry.*

The two groups travel outside the bar for the first time. All anxieties and game plans get momentarily diverted by the AWE of seeing a night they remember so well, through a town and campus that appears exactly as they remember it. Yet imperfections stand out... *why is the library three different colors? Are they each remembering different colors that are blending together? Was it always a three-colored building?* It doesn't matter who wants to get out of this place and who wants to stay forever— every detail of this place still hits them. And between the shocking twists in our narrative, CLOSING TIME will slow down to fully capture these quietly surreal feelings.



# THE STORY



Teresa takes Kerry back to their senior house. Their roommates are throwing a graduation party downstairs, so they tuck themselves in their bedroom (Teresa asks why one guest is wearing five party hats at once... Kerry says “*That’s what I remembered*”). They search for the letters they used to write each other. The ones that address the “gentle breakup” they tried and failed to handle the right way. Teresa claims she is looking for an emotional memory so powerful it could break them out, but stealthily Teresa wants to find a memory so powerful SHE COULD CONVINCe KERRY TO STAY. Teresa reads a letter that makes Kerry’s eyes start to MIST. Seizing the moment, Teresa suggests they should take their time. Rest. Wait until morning, and see how they feel. Kerry looks off in the distance. Thinks. She then says... “*Read me another.*”

# THE STORY

Joy and Trent arrive at their old lab. It feels very lived-in: at this time, the two were in the midst of grant research, so there's no white left on any of the whiteboards and all their test tubes are caked in residue. She tells Trent she wants to start working. Trent tries to facilitate, but she insists she has to start alone. Confused but still confident she's coming around, Trent steps aside. When Garland starts to protest, Joy takes both Trent and Garland outside the glass-walled lab door and LOCKS IT from the inside. Trent grows uneasy...

Joy starts working, readjusting to their old environment. CLOSE on their face as they pour sulfuric acid into a vial. When they pour just barely too much, they suddenly PULL OUT THE EDGE OF THEIR FINGERNAIL. Joy's finger starts to bleed onto the lab table. They restart, not acknowledging what just happened. They plug an equation into their calculator. After a few different figures, Joy hits a wrong number. To zero out their calculator, they SLAM their thumb against its side, HARD, cracking through the side of another nail. Trent gradually sees for the first time that JOY'S PERFECTIONISM TAKES THEM TO A DARK PLACE. We start to understand they left the profession not necessarily because of Trent, but because when she erred in an equation, compound, or anything involving their passion, they started to be so hard on themselves to the point of self-harm. They tried to hide it from Trent, but it was always there, and he just never paid attention.



# THE STORY

In Teresa and Kerry's dorm, Teresa keeps reading letters, sporadically looking up to check Kerry's response. But Kerry's eyes are still just misty. Kerry admits *she doesn't remember these letters*. They're either what Teresa *wished* she wrote, thus never existed, or they didn't stay with Kerry. Teresa asks Kerry what would help her find the right memory. She knows it's out there. The spark the two of them felt earlier tonight was real, that it felt like the old days, that it had to mean *something*. Yet Kerry isn't sure. She stammers over a suggestion that earlier tonight she may have been more excited about the re-ignition of their LOVE TRIANGLE with Garland. That energy is what fueled her initial flirtation with Garland. And she's *liked* Garland these past six years... she just doesn't know if she feels *love* for him. Or for Teresa. Teresa listens, silently horrified. But she chooses to not buy it. The two of them were together for two formative years... she KNOWS they loved each other. She thinks Kerry is afraid to leave Garland and commit to living in here with Teresa. Kerry just needs time to remember how real it was. TERESA JUST NEEDS TO FIND MORE MEMORIES...

# THE STORY

At the lab, time becomes BRUTALLY SLOW as Trent and Garland struggle to watch Joy's self-destructive behavior as they produce a vial of the memory amplification serum. Garland grasps Trent: "*How could he have not seen this before?*" Trent's dream of a reimagined future is collapsing: he had no idea how painful their cherished career was to Joy. He didn't see the signs. As they grow overwhelmed, Joy starts to SEE DIFFERENT REALITIES. Joy BLINKS: they watch themselves YELL into their phone, looking down at their fingers, telling an unnamed figure "I NEED THIS TO STOP." Our Joy watches herself on the phone as if they're a ghost visiting upon their former life. They BLINK AGAIN: now, Joy and Trent are in their late 20s. Their lab has transformed into something more futuristic and professional. Their whiteboard is filled with new equations and ideas. Yet the older Joy seems to have life DRAINED from behind their eyes. Their nails are stubs. Trent and Garland watch these reality changes happen to Joy from behind glass walls. Trent is wide-eyed, remembering the visions we saw him experience in his "dream" earlier.

# THE STORY

Meanwhile, Teresa grows OVERWHELMED, turning over souvenir after souvenir of their relationship, throwing them to the floor of the bedroom, she BLINKS: Teresa and Kerry watch their former selves give each other the letters they used to break up with each other. Teresa BLINKS AGAIN: it's another night, Teresa is sick in bed, and Kerry is walking upstairs, bringing her tea. Another BLINK: Teresa and Kerry are taking care of a CAT. Not a cat they ever got, but the cat they always talked about getting. Kerry can see all of these visions. Teresa is transfixed by them, but Kerry just doesn't know what the FUCK is happening...

Another BLINK, and Teresa and Kerry are no longer in their dorm. They are standing behind the bar counter at a place we don't recognize. They look OLDER. Teresa holds her eyes wide open so this vision doesn't blink away. She wants to explore it. PHOTOS on the walls suggesting a shared future for the couple. Teresa celebrating Kerry's 28th birthday. Kerry building their bar counter, continuing her carpentry passion. Teresa is seeing A MEMORY OF HER IMAGINED FUTURE OF WITH KERRY... A FUTURE WHERE THEY ARE AT PEACE TOGETHER...

# THE STORY

In the lab, Garland can't take any more of Joy's visions. He grabs an extinguisher kept behind nearby glass and SMASHES the glass barrier open. Garland notices a WHITE HALO appearing in the room. Kerry notices the same WHITE HALO appear around Teresa's imagined future. Garland grows transfixed as the GROUND RUMBLES. Lab vials start SHATTERING to the ground. The floor of Teresa and Kerry's dorm room starts to CRACK. Their bedroom is starting to CAVE INTO TO THE PARTY DOWNSTAIRS. Kerry tries to pull Teresa away from the image of their future as their friends and roommates down stairs run outside. Trent holds onto Joy, getting them to breathe slowly, calming them down. The halo around Joy, Trent and Garland DISSIPATES. Kerry GRABS Teresa and throws her toward the staircase. As they pour out of their home and their roommates' guests all run away, the halo surrounding Teresa and Kerry's vision GOES AWAY...



# THE STORY

Battered, Joy now believes there is no way individual “kicks” could help them get out. The emotional trigger they just tried to confront in making the serum was the strongest they could imagine. It caused their reality in here to warp and break. And that couldn’t even break up the polymer. Joy believes they all have to experience some kind of overwhelming “kick” at the same time. Trent takes her serum vial: *“Then it’s impossible. Because Garland doesn’t have a trigger in here.”* Garland looks up. He’s angry. Because Trent is right. Garland does not have the same emotional relationship to the infamous Closing Time night. He got the callback for his first big acting job. He got the girl he had a crush on. TRENT HAS THOUGHT ABOUT ALL OF THIS. He knows there’s nothing that could open up any trauma for Garland. This was Trent’s ace in the hole all along. Yet in his anger, Garland realizes there’s something else he could do to destroy the balance of the psychosis... to make living inside it unsustainable... ELIMINATE TRENT.

# THE STORY

Garland picks up a knife from the lab table, calmly explaining to Trent what needs to be done. Joy protests, believing Trent wouldn't wake up if Garland killed him in here. Trent's demise wouldn't even guarantee the rest of them would be able to get out, it's completely unproven. Yet Trent and Joy's faces both suggest it's *possible*. And Garland has gone so far over the deep end, he's willing to take the risk. Trent and Garland engage in a TENSE, CAUTIOUS FOOT CHASE all across campus: through the rowing gym Garland left behind for his new life as an actor. Through the theater where these five friends met while performing. Trent calls out to him, still trying to convince Garland that his life right out of school was Garland at his most honest, earnest self. *He wasn't an asshole yet. And if he stayed here, he never would be.* Yet Garland's worked too hard in the real world to trade it away for a fantasy. Trent's life might be over, but Garland's is just getting started.



# THE STORY

Meanwhile, Teresa and Kerry confront each other on the desolate street outside their home. Teresa feels invigorated by the future she saw: a confirmation of the possible. Kerry is retreating inward, seeming more quiet, confused and guilty. Teresa starts rambling about how poorly her life has gone since she let their breakup happen. She hasn't been able to catch a break, to move out of bartending, to build a community the same way she did at school. Most importantly, TERESA HAS SEEN THE FUTURE WITH KERRY SHE WANTS. If they stay in here, they can build to exactly what they saw. *"Don't tell me that life looks worse than what we have now."* Kerry is still shocked. But she admits she hasn't been able to shine as herself, either. Kerry: *"Maybe it's time I try something else..."* Teresa KISSES her. Kerry RECIPROCATES... as she sees JOY approaching. They're pointing down Main Street, where Trent and Garland have gone. Joy knows the way out of this now— but THEY'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME...

# THE STORY

His precious serum still in hand, Trent runs down Main Street. To circumvent Garland he passes through the ALLEYWAY he drove through... and runs straight into the RESTAURANT EMPLOYEE HE STRUCK WITH HIS CAR. His name was Allard. He stares back at Trent, confused why this stranger is looking at him with dread in their eyes. Trent starts to tear up. He starts SHOUTING into the ether that he's forgotten what this man looks like. Yet he appears as real to Trent as he did six years ago. He seems to think Trent is troubled. He asks Trent if he wants help. Trent hears Garland's footsteps POUND against pavement. Trent stumbles away.



# THE STORY

This NIGHTMARISH 3AM CHASE culminates at the Closing Time bar. Joy asserts that the only way all of them get out of this is to create a new, emotionally raw memory that can collectively pull them all out. Teresa supports them, knowing that Trent dying now would end her dream entirely. Garland reminds Kerry and Joy that Trent drugged them into an endless coma. He played with their lives, so there is no moral question about playing with his. They don't fully agree... but they also don't feel strongly enough to stop him. So TWO OPPOSING CAMPS surround Trent. Teresa sees that Trent's spark and confidence about this reality he created has totally vanished. He looks TORTURED. As if he's done putting up a fight. Teresa, however, is not done fighting. She sees ONE WAY she can have the future she imagined with Kerry...

Garland CHARGES his knife toward Trent. Trent doesn't move. Teresa GRABS THE SERUM from Trent and DOWNS IT. Garland STOPS, astonished by what she did. Joy SCREAMS, but it's too late...

**TERESA IS PULLING THE FIVE DEEPER INTO MEMORY AMPLIFICATION.**

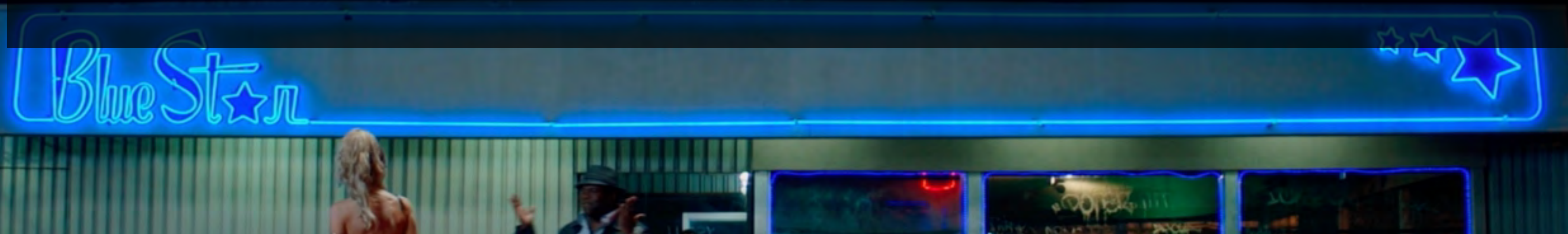


# THE STORY

Act Three of CLOSING TIME takes a completely SURREAL LEFT TURN. Each of our characters are thrown into different crazy corners, mind-bending situations designed to test who they are and who they want to be. Their only way out will be through coming together again.

Teresa WAKES UP. She is sitting in the risers of her old college theater, watching a staged rendition of the CLOSING TIME NIGHT that opened this film. It's the bar we've seen, now a STAGE SET. The people who appear to be her friends are asking her for notes on their performances. Kerry asks Teresa how she wants Kerry to perform the scene where she hooks up with Garland. Kerry holds up her script: *"It reads like the other girl wanted our relationship to end. So what am I supposed to play?"* A bewildered Teresa asks them to play the scene from when Garland and Kerry emerge from the bathroom. On her "ACTION," Garland appears out of the bathroom, seeming tormented. The stage lights amplify his eye veins. It's OUR Garland, the one who's still out for blood. He takes a WRENCH from a stagehand and heads out the door...

...and through that door Garland enters the CREW GYM he practiced in. He gets on a row machine, and rows in place as hard as he can. As he pushes himself further, the wall in front of him starts to WARP. It looks like he is MOVING THROUGH CAMPUS, toward Main Street, at the same rhythm he is rowing. It is a DREAMLIKE IMAGE. Close on Garland, a FIRE growing in his eyes...



# THE STORY

Kerry finds herself outside the Closing Time bar. She turns behind a dumpster to see Garland taking a smoke break in the corner. He stands up and makes eyes at her. From his pick-up line, she recognizes this Garland as the version of him from six years ago, RIGHT BEFORE THE FIRST TIME THEY KISSED. The version of Garland she fell for. She distracts herself from the fear of where she is or what is happening to her by falling into a conversation with him. She gets to re-experience all the little pieces of their initial spark that she had forgotten about, but were still in their subconsciouses somewhere. KERRY IS CHARMED BY GARLAND ALL OVER AGAIN... until she sees the past version of Teresa through the Closing Time window, sitting patiently, waiting for Kerry to come back to her. And finally, KERRY BREAKS DOWN, confessing to her guilt of playing with Teresa and Garland's feelings when she could not reciprocate them.

# THE STORY

Trent and Joy wake up on some metal plank. A totally WHITE VOID surrounds them. They look up to see their formula for memory amplification laid out in GIANT shapes and figures— they realize they are in front of their WHITEBOARD, shrunk down to the size of a Dry Erase marker. Trent climbs to find a wipe to sterilize for Joy's wounds: they've remained on them and are beginning to sting. He starts to apologize, but Joy cuts him off: they chose to not let him in about what they were really going through. Their life and profession became pointless busywork because they couldn't let ANYBODY in. So there was nothing Trent could've done to change things.

Trent starts to WHIMPER. *"I can't plug him in here."* Joy asks who he's referring to. Trent fixated on this night because it was the last good night of his life... it was the night before HE ENDED A LIFE. But he sees everything he made as a lie now. Because the man he killed will always be in his memory amplification. It won't ever be the real person. Trent may have another shot in here, but that man will not. Joy turns their attention to the equations above them—the world they once built on this board. They wonder if there's something else they could make together. Something better. Because in memory amplification, they're not limited by anything.

Joy and Trent lift a dry erase marker with their full body weight. They slowly create a NEW SERUM. With all the failures and restarts that implies. Joy lets him in this time. He helps Joy make their mistakes feel as small as they really are. They share a sip of this new concoction. When they do, the nearest doors to Teresa's theater and Kerry's alleyway open up. Garland's row machine takes him through a portal. EACH PERSON ENTERS A FULLY REIMAGINED VERSION OF THE CLOSING TIME BAR...



# THE STORY

Stepping into the new Closing Time bar, Garland slowly approaches Trent. He SMASHES a glass bottle and holds up its edges against him. Garland remains determined to eliminate Trent and leave this psychosis. Yet in the corner of his eye, Garland notices this bar is *different*. He sees his row oar next to a call sheet for the sitcom he was called back for that night, which is next to a photo of him and Teresa in his first play. OBJECTS FROM EVERYONE'S PAST, NOW JUXTAPOSED WITH MEMORIES OF THEIR FUTURE. Gone are the nostalgia goggles... this Closing Time reflects the people they were AND the people they were becoming. It looks less authentic than the Closing Time they stepped into, but feels more authentic to both who they were and how they've changed. Garland feels a pang of self-awareness. He and Trent offer each other forgiveness. Kerry tells Teresa she does not belong in Teresa's vision of the future. She wishes she could. Trent puts on a song at the karaoke machine: it's a NEW SONG: "DON'T DREAM IT'S OVER" by Crowded House. They've sung the old song too much. Time for something else.

The group SINGS. Kerry is able to kiss Teresa and Garland goodbye. Teresa smiles. She couldn't give Kerry away six years ago, but she can now. Joy is able to look at the establishment they were able to build with pride in themselves and hope for their future. In a moment of overwhelming catharsis for all of them, the five start to BLINK THROUGH every karaoke moment they've experienced together in their lifetimes. A GLOW crescendos around them... but the bars in these visions are not starting to COLLAPSE like they did before. It's as if the "kick" is not quite experiencing lift-off. Trent looks around. He steps outside, telling everyone to keep the party going until he's back. Joy seems confused. Trent tells Joy HE UNDERSTANDS NOW: he recognizes the past is as much of a lie as the present. And TRENT IS GOING TO EMBRACE THE LIE...

# THE STORY

Trent gets in his car outside the bar and starts his engine. He looks at Closing Time as he drives away, its glow matching the sunrise behind it.

He approaches the FENCE that he once hit... and swerves to the TREE standing right next to it.

And he CRASHES HIS CAR.

He lays upward as the world around him starts to HALO... then, HIS OWN VISION STARTS TO GO WHITE..



# THE STORY

We're back in the LA bar. Teresa, Garland, Kerry and Joy wake up. Trent does not.

The ones who survived are able to grow from this night, no longer running away from who they want to be. The one who did not is sent to the ICU. Trent is placed in an indefinite coma.

Trent's vitals are just barely suggesting life. We track closer and closer to a comatose Trent, faintly hearing "CLOSING TIME" start to play...



# THE “COLLEGE REUNION FROM HELL” MOVIE HAS NEVER BEEN MADE. LET’S MAKE IT.

Working for Blumhouse, I’ve learned that all of their original projects are rooted in BIG, WIDE INVITATIONS TO AN AUDIENCE... something everyone can innately relate to, and in the right context can become genuinely upsetting.

With THE GIFT: “We all know the awkwardness of reconnecting with someone from your high school decades later. What if that experience became a psychological mystery?” With MA: “We all remember that time we were underage and asked someone older to buy us liquor. What if your relationship with that kind of person was the start of a horror movie?” And with CLOSING TIME: “We all know college reunions can be hellish. What if that was the setup of A MIND-BENDING, INTIMATE SCI-FI THRILLER?”

There is an enormous audience who can relate to the CLOSING TIME story, and they will be shocked by the twists of this premise and become invested in the lives these characters could lead.



# WHO 'CLOSING TIME' IS FOR

There are so few movies that speak to the self-reflection people who have gone through their late 20s know so well. As we settle into professional lives and adult friendships, we remember all the sliding doors moments that led us to where we are — and some of the regrets we've had along the way. It's the reason we love movies about MULTIVERSES... the possibility of infinite versions of our lives is a thrilling but melancholic feeling. I'm excited to deconstruct that feeling using the level of heightened emotion that only genre filmmaking can allow.

It was important to me that in telling a story about the dangers of nostalgia, we see it through a diversity of perspectives; the film's ensemble is predominantly queer or POC, and the story is centered on queer romance and a nonbinary character struggling with their identity. In this moment, where my generation is terrified our planet's best days are behind us, where over the past two years we've grown more used to isolation, I believe there is an audience for a story about anxiously longing for the past like CLOSING TIME. And it's important to me to be able to approach the WIDEST AUDIENCE POSSIBLE with these ideas.



# ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

Russell Goldman (writer/director) is a filmmaker from Virginia obsessed with sliding doors and toxic relationships (in movies!). His latest short film RETURN TO SENDER was an official selection of 30 film festivals, including Fantastic Fest, Flickers' RIFF and the opening night of HollyShorts. He is adapting RETURN TO SENDER into a feature film this year, with producers Jamie Lee Curtis and Molly Hallam (THE MUSTANG, BAD BEHAVIOUR). He wrote with Curtis the upcoming Blumhouse graphic novel and feature film MOTHER NATURE out this July. CLOSING TIME is his seventh short film on the festival circuit.

His favorite genre pieces foreground character studies, where extraordinary circumstances activate one's deepest fears and interrogate how they will choose to respond. Much of his work is inspired by his relationship with physical disability, namely how he prohibited his own healing by attempting to "push through" his childhood infections and his recent post-concussive syndrome. The stories he tells today are linked by a desire to unpack that destructive psychology: nothing is scarier or more absurd than what we are capable of doing to ourselves.



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to get involved

**THANK YOU**