

PLAY TAI CHI

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT

A male DAREDEVIL, 17, climbs a cable leading to the south tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.

The lights of San Francisco sparkle in the background.

Cars on the bridge's roadway stop. DRIVERS and PASSENGERS get out to watch the Daredevil and to use their smartphones to shoot video of his escapade.

The CHUNKA-CHUNKA sound of a police HELICOPTER grows louder.

When the Daredevil reaches the top of the 746-foot-tall tower, he raises his arms in triumph.

The helicopter switches on its searchlight, focusing the beam on the Daredevil, who now turns toward the north tower a mile away.

The Daredevil crouches, takes a deep breath, and then leaps toward the distant tower.

BYSTANDERS below SCREAM in horror at what appears to be a suicidal act. Many people cover their eyes or turn away, not wanting to witness a frightening death.

But miraculously, the Daredevil--soaring high and far--lands gently atop the north tower.

The people in the crowd CHEER. The Daredevil takes a bow.

A COP in the helicopter shouts to the Daredevil.

COP IN HELICOPTER  
(from loud speaker)  
Easy now. Climb down and you'll be  
all right. We're on your side.

Instead of obeying the Daredevil gives the cop the finger and dances to a ROCK SONG coming from the Bridge's loudspeakers.

INT. ERIC SONTAG'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

CLOSE UP on a smartphone that shows the commotion at the Golden Gate Bridge.

Pull back to reveal ERIC SONTAG, 17, sitting on his bed and staring at the phone. His feet dance like the Daredevil's feet.

Resembling the Daredevil, Eric is the nerd's nerd: confident, cocky, arrogant, and amused by his own twisted brilliance.

ERIC'S FATHER (O.C.)  
(from the living room)  
Eric, come here. There's a lunatic  
on the Golden Gate Bridge.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - SIMULTANEOUS

The Daredevil completes his dance, waves "goodbye" and takes off like a bird, flapping his arms.

Stunned onlookers on the bridge fall silent.

INT. ERIC SONTAG'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Eric is flapping his arms.

ERIC'S FATHER (O.C.)  
You have to see this guy.

ERIC  
(to himself)  
See him? I am him!

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT

The Daredevil circles the tower and then...vaporizes, leaving behind a cloud of GLITTER.

COP IN HELICOPTER  
What the fuck?

INT. ERIC SONTAG'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Eric raises his arms triumphantly the way the Daredevil did, then tosses aside his phone, and stretches out on the bed.

He turns his head toward his desk lamp.

ERIC  
Lights off.

The lamp shuts off. The bedroom falls into darkness.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
(gleefully cackles)

INT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO: PERFORMANCE AREA - DAY

CHRIS MANLEY, 40, appears in silhouette, performing a Tai Chi move (known as a "form").

The room is so plain and lacking modern devices, it might have existed in the 18th century. Instead of electric lights, large candles provide illumination.

A few beautiful sculptures portray Chris practicing Tai Chi. On the wall is a series of dramatic black-and-white photos of TONY ZHAO, 60, demonstrating Tai Chi.

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: DESIGN LAB - SIMULTANEOUS

A comic-book style drawing of two angry WARRIORS appears in a PowerPoint presentation projected onto a large screen. The fearsome fighters, armed with mean-looking weapons, face off in the middle of an urban intersection.

ART DIRECTOR (V.O.)  
Here the battle will continue  
while cars...

JOE (V.O.)  
(angry)  
I've seen this crap a million  
times. You think it's cutting edge?

CLOSE-UP: the art director's hands tremble as they tap a laptop key controlling the PowerPoint show.

On the screen, a new slide appears. The warriors are pictured racing down the stairs of a subway entrance.

ART DIRECTOR (V.O.)  
But, Joe, check this out.

The next slide pictures the combatants facing off on a subway track as a train bears down on them.

JOE (V.O.)  
I asked for something thrilling.  
Not this shit.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUS

Through the window a DAD, 30, and his SON, 5, watch Chris practice Tai Chi. Their faces reflect Chris's peacefulness.

It's a universe that's a million light years away from the bloody comic-book scenes in the PowerPoint presentation.

On the studio window English letters in Chinese-style calligraphy spell out the studio's name: "Tai Chi For **All.**"

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: DESIGN LAB - SIMULTANEOUS

In the next slide a subway train is about to behead one of the fighters. Having leapt to safety, the other grins with blood lust at the plight of his soon-to-be-killed enemy.

Suddenly a digital pen scribbles over the scene, obliterating the beautifully drawn art.

JOE (V.O.)  
You're fired!

Pull back to show the faces of six GAME DESIGNERS. Five of the them look frightened out of their minds.

Only one of them is unaffected by Joe's rants. He's Eric, the nerd responsible for the wild Golden Gate happening. Eric smirks as if he's enjoying Joe's rage.

The camera ends up on JOE YANG, 40, an Asian guy whose expression tells us he's verging on apoplexy.

JOE  
Get the hell out. All of you.

ART DIRECTOR  
(pleading)  
Joe, we can do it. Give us one more chance.

Joe stares into the Art Director's face.

ART DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Please.

Joe turns his gaze from face to face. If looks could kill, all the artists would be dead.

JOE  
You have until midnight tonight.

ART DIRECTOR  
Joe, we worked on this for a month, and you want something brand new in hours?

JOE  
(fiercely)  
Forget midnight.



INT. CHRIS'S TAI STUDIO: PERFORMANCE AREA

Chris teaches Tai Chi to a tiny class with an OLD MAN in a wheelchair and BECKY KAUFMAN, 30, pretty but not showy.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO

Joe approaches the studio and looks through the window. He first notices Becky, then his gaze is drawn to Chris.

When Chris sees Joe outside the window, he smiles and beckons for Joe to join the class. Joe considers entering. But then his expression suggests disappointment. Chris isn't what he expected. He shakes his head and turns away.

Chris completes the form that he was teaching, gestures for the class to continue, and exits the performance area.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

Joe is crossing the street, heading toward his Ferrari.

CHRIS  
(calling to Joe)  
Hey, you wanted something?

JOE  
(obviously lying)  
Wrong address.

Chris crosses the street. Annoyed, Joe swings his hand in a way that says, "Leave me alone."

JOE (CONT'D)  
It was a mistake.

CHRIS  
Mistakes are important...if we pay  
attention to them.

Joe moves forward toward his car, his back to Chris.

JOE  
I hate fortune-cookie bullshit.

Joe gets into his Ferrari. But before he can start the engine, Chris raps on the window. Joe lowers it.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

CHRIS  
You came for Tai Chi instruction?

When Joe shakes his head "No," which is another obvious lie, Chris points a finger toward himself.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I want to be your Tai Chi teacher.

JOE  
I'm not interested.

CHRIS  
And I'm a really good one.

Joe starts the Ferrari's engine. Chris reaches through the open window and shuts off the ignition.

JOE  
What the hell do you think you're doing?

Joe picks up his iPhone from the passenger seat.

JOE (CONT'D)  
You want me to call the cops?

CHRIS  
I'm responding to what brought you to my studio.

JOE  
If I needed to learn Tai Chi, I wouldn't want to learn it from...

Joe struggles to keep himself from saying something racist.

JOE (CONT'D)  
...from someone like you.

Joe's glance flits to the studio's Chinese-looking sign.

JOE (CONT'D)  
You're as authentic as chow mein.

Chris nods, getting Joe's perspective. When Chris responds, he's calm, with no trace of defensiveness.

CHRIS  
Tai Chi is universal. It can be taught by someone who's Chinese,, black, Mexican, Native American, ...or white.

Unmoved, Joe restarts the engine.

JOE

Get lost.

Chris points a finger skyward.

CHRIS

When we find habitable planets in  
distant galaxies, we'll meet aliens  
who are terrific Tai Chi teachers.

JOE

I hope they're not as crazy as you.

As Joe raises the window, Chris pulls a business card from his pocket and flips it toward the Ferrari. Before the window fully closes, the card wedges into the window frame.

Joe speeds off with the business card flapping in the wind. Chris reads the license play--"2Morrow." It means nothing to him. He shrugs and heads back toward his studio.

LANDLORD (O,C)

Hey Chris.

Chris turns back to the street as his LANDLORD, 60, parks his car where the Ferrari had been.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

How's it going?

CHRIS

Really good. Interest is growing in  
my approach.

Chris demonstrates a Tai Chi form. Traffic goes around him. The landlord acknowledges Chris's move with a phony smile.

LANDLORD

The thing is that us folks in the  
real world measure interest by what  
you can take to the bank. Like the  
rent check.

The landlord extends a hand, palm up, inviting Chris to put a check into it.

CHRIS

Did you get my note?

LANDLORD

See, I can't take a note to the  
bank or use it to pay my mortgage.

CHRIS  
I'll have the rent in a month.

LANDLORD  
Which would make you...

The landlord counts on his fingers.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)  
...three months late.

CHRIS  
I understand.

LANDLORD  
But I can't take understanding to  
the bank. You know what I'm saying?

CHRIS  
How about a trade: Tai Chi lessons  
for the rent. You'd love the  
practice.

The landlord slaps an eviction notice into Chris's hand.

LANDLORD  
Sorry.

CHRIS  
Are you?

LANDLORD  
Not really.

The landlord starts the engine.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)  
Be out by this time next week.

The landlord drives off.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris prepares a veggie stew when his wife TARA, 40, enters. She's dressed like a middle school art teacher, which she is.

Tara drops a folder containing student drawings on a chair. The folder slips onto the floor spilling the drawings. Chris helps Tara pick up the art work.

CHRIS  
Some future Picassos thanks your  
teaching.

Tara gives Chris a kiss, then checks out the stew pot.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
On the table in 30 minutes.

TARA  
Time enough to complete the foot  
I'm working on.

CHRIS  
(kidding her)  
Be quick about it.

TARA  
Never say "quick" to a sculptor.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: GARAGE

The garage has been converted into a sculpture workshop. Several clay sculptures--like those seen in Chris's studio--portray Tai Chi forms.

Wearing an artist's smock splattered with clay, Tara sculpts a foot that balances precariously on its toes. Although unfinished, it's already a thing of beauty.

When Chris peeks in, Tara doesn't look up, but senses his presence.

TARA  
Sculpting is not a spectator sport.

Chris smiles and leaves. Tara continues sculpting with intense concentration. She's clearly a master.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: DINING AREA - NIGHT

Chris sits at the table, which is set for dinner. A bowl of stew occupies the center of the table.

On Chris's lap is a notebook in which he writes poetry. His lips move as he works.

Tara enters. Her joyful expression tells us that her sculpting went well. As she sits, Chris closes his notebook on the table and spoons stew into her bowl and then his.

Tara uses her spoon to point at Chris's notebook.

TARA  
A new poem?

Chris shrugs.

TARA (CONT'D)  
Or maybe a shopping list?

CHRIS  
Whatever it is, it's a struggle.

TARA  
Don't you teach your students to  
let things work out according to  
their own rhythm?

Chris nods.

CHRIS  
(ironically)  
I'm such a wise person.

TARA  
So can you give me a preview of  
your latest wise poem.

CHRIS  
It's about the relationship between  
Tai Chi and sculpting a foot.

TARA  
You'll need to split the royalty  
with me.

Tara eats. When she looks up, she sees that Chris is lost in thought. It's as if he's forgotten that Tara is there.

She studies him thoughtfully, trying to determine the best way to reestablish contact.

TARA (CONT'D)  
A gorilla escaped from the zoo  
today and entered my classroom.

Chris blinks his eyes, not sure if he's heard Tara correctly.

TARA (CONT'D)  
When I tried to shoo it away, it  
grabbed a brush and created an  
astonishing watercolor.

Chris grins at Tara's way of teasing him back to reality.

CHRIS  
I'd like to see that piece of art.

TARA  
Unfortunately, the principal bought  
it for a million dollars.

Tara can tell that Chris's smile is masking a problem.

TARA (CONT'D)  
What's up, my love?

CHRIS  
Nothing.

TARA  
Your nothings are more profound  
than most people's somethings.

CHRIS  
No one dishes out compliments like  
a clay-splattered sculptor.

He leans over the table and kisses her tenderly.

TARA  
Does this have anything to do with  
being late on the studio rent?

Chris shakes his head "No."

CHRIS  
I chatted with the landlord today.

TARA  
And?

CHRIS  
He and I have an understanding.

Tara studies Chris's face. She doesn't buy that there's an understanding. But she feels something else is going on.

TARA  
So what is on your mind?

Chris eats, recalling his encounter with Joe.

CHRIS  
A Chinese guy came to the studio  
today.

Tara listens with real interest.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
When he saw I was white, he left.

TARA  
Did he actually say that he was  
leaving because you're white?

CHRIS  
No one actually says that sort of  
thing out loud.

TARA  
Some people do.

CHRIS  
Well, he didn't.

TARA  
So you're assuming...

CHRIS  
I'm telling you, he wanted a  
Chinese teacher.

TARA  
Well, then, to each his own.

CHRIS  
I ran after him.

Tara is astonished by what Chris did.

TARA  
Ah, the strong-arm method of  
marketing your spiritual practice  
to earn the rent money.

CHRIS  
Forget about the rent. This guy  
needs what I have to offer.

TARA  
And you know that...how?

Chris put a hand over his heart, showing he knows by feeling.

CHRIS  
But his prejudice wouldn't let him  
accept me as his teacher.

TARA  
So how did you overcome his bias?

Chris closes his eyes for a moment, replaying what he did  
after Joe started to drive away.

CHRIS  
I gave him my business card.

TARA  
You gave your card to a guy who  
just walked out on you?

CHRIS  
OK, "gave" isn't exactly the right  
word. I threw it at him.

TARA  
How did that work out?

Chris says nothing.

TARA (CONT'D)  
I'm guessing not good.

CHRIS  
A dodo bird could make that guess.

Tara pretends to look hurt by Chris's words.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I didn't mean to insult you.

TARA  
(as if reciting a line)  
No one can insult me except me.

Tara glances to a shelf holding Chris's book LIVING TAI CHI.

CHRIS  
Stop quoting my book.

TARA  
I don't get why you're upset about  
losing one measly student. As your  
dad has told you a hundred times...

CHRIS  
Don't bring him into this.

TARA  
(in a deep male voice,  
channeling Chris's dad)  
If you want to make a go of a  
business, you got to advertise.

CHRIS  
Big difference between selling real  
estate and teaching Tai Chi.

TARA

(still in the dad's voice)  
Put a video of you teaching on  
Facebook and you'll have crowds of  
students knocking on your door.

CHRIS

I could've made a difference with  
this guy.

TARA

But it didn't happen, did it? And  
now you're turning a wished-for  
outcome into an attachment.

Chris crosses his arms, imitating the Buddha.

CHRIS

Oh, no. The evil attachment. Bane  
of Buddhists everywhere.

TARA

Listen, you can't make anyone do  
anything unless you put a gun...

Tara shapes her hand into a gun.

TARA (CONT'D)

...to his head. And even then you  
haven't changed his soul.

Chris nods at Tara's insight.

TARA (CONT'D)

Did you even get the guy's name?

Chris shakes his head "No."

CHRIS

Just his vanity plate: "2Morrow."

Tara's eyes widen in amazement.

TARA

2Morrow?

Chris shrugs.

TARA (CONT'D)

You must be the only person on the  
planet who doesn't know that  
2Morrow is the world's biggest  
computer game maker. They  
practically own Silicon Valley.

Tara grabs her phone and finds the Wikipedia article about 2Morrow. It has a photo of Joe, which she shows to Chris.

CHRIS  
Hey, that's the guy.

TARA  
Not a guy. Joe Yang. A billionaire  
genius. And you think he needs you?

Chris nods.

EXT. 2MORROW CAMPUS - DAY

Chris bikes through the park-like, high-tech campus.

INT. 2MORROW HEADQUARTERS: LOBBY - DAY

Chris enters the vast lobby, which features a stunning, three-story fountain. Dramatic clips from video games play on giant screens that cover the walls.

A friendly RECEPTIONIST, 25, gestures to Chris.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hi, there. How may I help you?

CHRIS  
I'm here to see Joe Yang.

RECEPTIONIST  
And you would be...?

CHRIS  
Chris Manley.

The receptionist consults her computer.

RECEPTIONIST  
I don't see your name on Joe's  
calendar, Mr. Manley.

CHRIS  
We didn't formalize a meeting. But  
he needs to see me.

The receptionist studies Chris, trying to figure out if he's dangerous or just nuts.

Deciding that he's not a threat, the receptionist slides an e-tablet across the smooth marble desktop.

RECEPTIONIST

Write Joe a message and if he wants  
to meet at some future date...

CHRIS

Could you please just ring him up  
and tell him I'm here?

RECEPTIONIST

(cooler and all business)  
No, that's not how we do it.

CHRIS

You see...

The receptionist nods to a GUARD who has been watching from a security desk. The guard moves quickly toward Chris.

Realizing that's he's getting the bum's rush, Chris takes the e-tablet and types a message, then slides the device back toward the receptionist.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Chris exits the lobby.

The receptionist looks at the tablet. Chris's note reads: "Hi Joe, nice place you have here. Your Tai Chi teacher Chris."

EXT. 2MORROW HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Pedaling through the campus Chris spots Joe's Ferrari in the executive parking area.

On the grass nearby, a few of 2MORROW'S young STAFFERS are tossing a Frisbee.

After leaning his bike against a tree near Joe's car, Chris begins to practice Tai Chi.

The Frisbee players notice Chris. Awed by the beauty of his movements, several of them briefly join in. Then leave.

MONTAGE: Chris continues his practice. Day becomes night.

Joe emerges from the headquarters building and sees Chris.

JOE

What the hell are you doing here?

Chris finishes a movement before he answers.

CHRIS  
Practicing Tai Chi.

Joe shakes his head, not buying Chris's explanation.

JOE  
You're stalking, which is a crime.

CHRIS  
Tai Chi is not stalking.

JOE  
You're trespassing on my property.

CHRIS  
I'm just inviting you to join my  
class.

Chris demonstrates another Tai Chi form.

JOE  
I'd never study with a loser like  
you.  
(off Chris's puzzled look)  
Someone who can attract only a few  
students

CHRIS  
I choose quality over quantity.

Joe gets into his car and speeds off.

Chris watches him go, then mounts his bicycle and rides off.

MONTAGE: Joe drives aimlessly through the city, seeing nothing. Text messages appear with animated clips from his team. He texts back "Pure shit." "Fuck this garbage."

INT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

Chris leads a small group of students including Becky and a TOM, 40, a huge beefy guy who might once have been a football linebacker.

Off camera, the front door bangs open, then Joe appears. Having been up all night, he looks a mess.

CHRIS  
(to the students)  
Let us welcome our new...

JOE  
 (angrily)  
 Cut the bullshit.

Stunned by the outburst, the students are unsure what to do.

Chris gestures that they should resume their practice. He demonstrates a form and they follow along, quickly getting back into the routine.

Joe studies the movements and then, awkwardly, attempts to imitate what Chris is doing.

Chris observes Joe's ineptitude but says nothing.

Joe's phone RINGS. Stopping the Tai Chi exercise, he pulls the phone from his pocket and listens for a second.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 (shouting into the phone)  
 I warned you. Show me something  
 good today or you're fucking gone.

Joe pockets the phone and resumes his clumsy efforts.

Joe's phone rings again. As he pulls it out, Chris holds up a hand to get Joe's attention.

CHRIS  
 (to Joe)  
 Please turn off the device. It's  
 interrupting our practice.

Listening to the caller on his phone, Joe gestures to Chris that the call will only take a minute.

JOE  
 (into the phone)  
 Don't worry. I've got it  
 under control....

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 (to the class)  
 Here we have a living example  
 of how mindlessness conflicts  
 with spiritual and physical  
 health.

Joe ends the call and stares hard at Chris.

JOE  
 I heard what you said.

Chris continues to lead the class.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 But it's bullshit about me being  
 mindless. I can multitask. You  
 should try it sometime.

Joe resumes his attempt at the Tai Chi moves.

JOE (CONT'D)  
And if someone called you about  
something important...

Chris gestures for Joe to stop talking. But silence doesn't interest this particular billionaire.

JOE (CONT'D)  
...you'd take the call, I guarantee  
it.

CHRIS  
I don't have a smartphone.

Joe grins as if he's won the argument. He looks at Becky, inviting her to agree with him. But she focuses on Chris.

Frowning at Becky, Joe returns his gaze to Chris, still trying to do Tai Chi while continuing his diatribe.

JOE  
You're a goddam Luddite, that's  
what you are.

CHRIS  
Tai Chi brings a calm that enables  
troubled people to heal themselves.

JOE  
You're saying I'm sick?

Joe steps aggressively toward Chris. Tom, the beefy guy, moves to intervene, but Chris waves him off.

Joe is surprised that Chris isn't intimidated. Then his phone RINGS again. He pulls out the phone and shouts into it.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Yeah, I'm on the way.

Joe pockets his phone.

JOE (CONT'D)  
(to Chris)  
Fuck this.

Joe hurries from the room. Chris continues the practice as if nothing happened.

TOM  
What a jerk.

CHRIS  
But inside...

Chris moves a hand smoothly through the air, suggesting that there's a calmer, different person inside Joe.

The class continues.

INT. 2MORROW HEADQUARTERS: DESIGN LAB - DAY

Joe, Eric, and the group of designers watch a presentation by a young ANIMATOR, who sits alone at a table.

Controlling the action from a laptop, the animator attempts to project a 5-second holographic action test, but the animation runs jerkily for only two seconds and then freezes.

Terrified, the animator looks at Joe. The other designers--all frightened except for Eric--stare down at their hands.

ANIMATOR  
(to Joe)  
I'm sorry...

Furious, Joe charges toward the animator.

ANIMATOR (CONT'D)  
It was working earlier.

JOE  
Here's what I think about excuses.

Joe picks up the animator's computer and tosses onto the ground, stomps on it, and destroys it.

On his way out of the lab, Joe turns to the animator, who is on the verge of tears.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Go find a place where they don't  
mind failures.

Joe slams the door on his way out. All the staffers are silent except the arrogant Eric.

Eric points to the frightened animator.

ERIC  
(cackling like a hyena)  
You're fucked.

Eric draws a finger across his neck, imitating a guillotine blade.

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: WALKWAY OUTSIDE THE DESIGN LAB

As Joe exits the lab, his rage boils over. He grabs his chest, indicating pain. Sweat appears on his brow.

INT. CHRIS'S TAI STUDIO: PERFORMANCE AREA - SIMULTANEOUS

Chris is giving a one-on-one lesson to a CEREBRAL PALSY TEEN. The kid's MOTHER, 40, watches.

Chris encourages the boy's mother to participate. She does.

A sense of serenity fills the studio.

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: JOE'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Joe enters his office, slams the door, and takes a pill bottle from a desk drawer along with a bottle of booze.

He opens the pill bottle, then sets it down and locks the office door.

Taking a deep breath, Joe tries a Tai Chi form. He can't remember how to do it, stumbles, and gets angry with himself.

He returns to the desk, shakes out the pills, and gulps a handful of them. He washes them down with a swig of booze.

INT. CHRIS'S TAI STUDIO: PERFORMANCE AREA - NIGHT

Chris teaches a class. There are only four STUDENTS, but they are enthusiastic.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - NIGHT

Students file out of the building, saying goodbye to Chris, who stands in the doorway.

When the last student has gone, Chris notices Joe across the street, leaning against his Ferrari. Joe looks like hell.

Chris dodges traffic and approaches Joe.

CHRIS

I'm glad you came this morning.  
Your determination showed.

JOE

I felt awkward as shit.

CHRIS  
You don't need to judge yourself.

JOE  
I judge everyone.

Joe closes his eyes.

FLASHBACK: We get a near-subliminal shot Joe berating the hapless animator and stomping on his computer.

RETURN TO SCENE

Joe opens his eyes.

JOE (CONT'D)  
But mostly I judge myself, every second of every day.

CHRIS  
And what happens when you do that?

Joe gives Chris the finger.

JOE  
You auditioning to be my shrink?

Chris looks at Joe with compassion.

CHRIS  
What happens when you judge yourself, Joe?

JOE  
I find that I'm always better than anyone else in the room.

He nods toward Chris's studio.

JOE (CONT'D)  
I don't like being the worst, and that's how I felt in there today.

CHRIS  
There is no "best" and no "worst" in the practice of Tai Chi.

JOE  
New-age bullshit.

Joe pantomimes puking.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Everything is competitive. The  
space race. The arms race.

Joe clenches his fists, adrenalin pumping.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Football teams. Guys winning girls.  
Car companies competing for  
business. Nations fighting over  
worthless territory because they  
fear the other side might get an  
edge. The essence of life is  
winning vs. losing.

Joe expects Chris to respond, but Chris waits patiently for  
Joe to finish his rant.

JOE (CONT'D)  
It's always been this way. You can  
pretend otherwise, but you're lying  
to yourself or you're being stupid.

Joe stops talking, his fury spent. If Chris had reacted with  
anger, Joe would have known what to do. But he's stymied by  
Chris's refusal to battle with him.

Chris waits a beat to make sure Joe is done.

CHRIS  
Will you be returning to the class?

Joe nods, reluctantly.

JOE  
I have to give it a try.

CHRIS  
You don't have to do anything.

Joe gazes down at the sidewalk, unable to look Chris in the  
eye as he confesses something he's told no one else.

JOE  
Everyday I take pills. For  
hypertension, insomnia, mood  
swings, acid reflux...You have no  
idea. I've got to try Tai Chi even  
though I know it won't work.

CHRIS  
Nothing's more dangerous than being  
sure of a fact that isn't true.

JOE

You expect me to take advice from you? I'm the country's 38th richest person. You're broke.

Chris is surprised that Joe knows about his financial problems.

JOE (CONT'D)

I checked your credit online.

Chris shrugs, accepting Joe's violation of his privacy.

CHRIS

But how's our relative wealth relevant?

JOE

Someone who runs a multi-billion dollar business like I do knows more about life than someone who's net worth is underwater.

Chris smiles at Joe's mindless embracing of materialism.

CHRIS

Would you mind driving me home?

Joe shrugs and points for Chris to climb in.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe starts the car.

CHRIS

I live at....

Gesturing for Chris to shut up

JOE

(to the dash screen)  
Directions to Chris Manley's house.

CHRIS

Isn't where I live private information?

JOE

Private? You're living in the past.

GPS VOICE (V.O.)

In 400 meters, turn right, then drive...

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Joe's car moves through the city.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe drives aggressively, at one point tailgating another car. He leans on his HORN, then makes a dangerous pass. He grins.

JOE  
I love driving.

He looks at Chris and sees that his passenger wasn't impressed by the dangerous maneuver.

JOE (V.O.)  
You probably don't even have a driver's license?

CHRIS  
Why do you say that?

JOE  
You said you don't use a smartphone. It follows.

CHRIS  
You're right.

JOE  
Bingo. I should've been a psychologist.

He makes another daring move through the traffic.

Chris closely studies Joe's operation of the car as if he's a driving student.

JOE (CONT'D)  
For me, driving is a stress reducer. When things are going bad at work--which happens a lot--I go out on the freeway to relax.

CHRIS  
Lots of people get killed on the freeway.

JOE  
Death is the ultimate form of relaxation.

Chris responds with the smile that Joe was looking for.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 You ought to try driving some time.  
 It'll relax you.

CHRIS  
 My drug is Tai Chi.

JOE  
 Fucking Tai Chi.

CHRIS  
 You must be the first person  
 anywhere who used that phrase.

JOE  
 Wrong. Google it.

CHRIS  
 I don't Google.

JOE  
 Big surprise.

CHRIS  
 So if for you it's "fucking Tai  
 Chi"...?

Joe cuts off a MOTORCYCLIST. The motorcyclist gives Joe the  
 finger. Joe reciprocates.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 ...what brought you to my studio?

Joe pulls out his smartphone.

JOE  
 (address his phone)  
 Hey, Siri, play Chenguang rant.

A video plays the car's dashboard screen.

INT. JOE'S KITCHEN - DAY (IN THE VIDEO)

CHENGUANG, 90, sits at the table in a posh kitchen. She faces  
 directly into the camera.

CHENGUANG  
 (in Chinese)  
 B? nàgè diànhuà ná z?ule, qiáo,  
 t?ng w? shu?.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - DAY

Chris turns to Joe.

CHRIS  
Isn't playing a video illegal?

JOE  
Just watch the screen.

INT. JOE'S KITCHEN (IN THE VIDEO)

Chenguang reaches out to grab the phone. Joe backs away.

Chenguang speaks in Chinese. Joe gives a running translation for Chris. In translating, Joe imitates his grandmother's voice--then uses his own voice for his responses to her.

JOE (V.O.)  
(to his grandmother)  
I'm recording this so I'll remember  
everything you say.

CHENGUANG  
W? s? li?o zh?hòu?

JOE (V.O.)  
(imitating grandmother)  
"After I'm dead?"  
(own voice)  
Who said anything about death?

CHENGUANG  
W? 90 suì, s? tú pí xi?nsh?ng.

JOE (V.O.)  
(imitating grandmother)  
"I'm 90, Mr. Stupid."  
(own voice)  
You're calling me stupid? In  
Silicon Valley, I'm known as The  
Big Genius.

CHENGUANG  
Nàxi? sh?d?izi zh?dào shénme?

JOE (V.O.)  
(imitating grandmother)  
"What do all those nerds know?"  
(own voice)  
Listen, Grandma, I have to go to  
work. You said you wanted to tell  
me something. Here's your chance.

CHENGUANG

N? zuó w?n shì z?nme shuì de?

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"How did you sleep last night?"

(own voice)

Who cares?

CHENGUANG

N? kàn q?lái h?n k?pà.

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"You look awful."

(own voice)

I slept fine.

CHENGUANG

Bùyào shu?hu?ng.

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"Don't lie."

(own voice)

"I took a couple of sleeping pills  
and was out in three seconds."

CHENGUANG

Wán!

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"Pills!"

(own voice)

Prescribed by my doctor.

CHENGUANG

T? zh?dào shénme?

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"What does he know?"

(own voice)

He's a she and she went to Harvard.

CHENGUANG

H?fó zh?dào shénme?

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"What does Harvard know?"

(own voice)

I'm late.

CHENGUANG

T?ngzhe, n? x?yào fàngqì su?y?u  
x?f?ng móf?, ránhòu cóng w?men de  
g?nyuán huígu? j?ch?.

JOE

(imitating grandmother)

"Put away all that Western magic  
and go back to our roots."

(own voice)

Yeah?

CHENGUANG

N? xi?ng shuìjiào? N? xi?ng yào  
jiànk?ng ma? N? y?ngg?i cóng  
zh?ngwò tàijí quán k?ish?

JOE

(imitating grandmother)

"You want to sleep? You want to  
feel healthy? Start with Tai Chi."

(own voice)

Grandma, you're practicing medicine  
without a license.

CHENGUANG

W? bùshì zài liànxí. W? qiú n?

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"I'm not practicing. I'm begging  
you."

(own voice)

Grandma. Stop it.

CHENGUANG

(sobbing)

Bàitu?, qiáo

JOE

(imitating grandmother)

"Please, Joe."

(own voice)

Don't cry, Grandma. I'll check it  
out.

CHENGUANG

J?nti?n!

JOE (V.O.)

(imitating grandmother)

"Today!"

Yeah, instead of focusing on my  
billion dollar new product....

CHENGUANG

Jiànk?ng bùj?n j?n shì j?nqián.  
D?yìng w?.

JOE

(imitating grandmother)  
"Health is worth more than money.  
Promise me."  
(own voice)  
Yeah, I promise. OK?

The video ends.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe looks at Chris.

JOE

So I Yelped "Tai Chi" and you came  
up higly. But when I saw you, I  
knew you wouldn't satisfy my  
grandmother. She's old school.

CHRIS

You misunderstand her. It's the  
practice she cares about, not the  
race of who teaches the practice.

Joe shakes his head "no."

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'd like to meet her.

JOE

Watch out. She's tough.

CHRIS

Is that where you got it from?

EXT. CHRIS'S HOME - NIGHT

They pull up in front of Chris's bungalow.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Chris turns to Joe.

CHRIS

Can you come in for a second?

Joe notes the clock: nearly midnight.

JOE  
At this hour?

CHRIS  
I want to show you something.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris leads Joe into the room. On one wall are photos of Tony Zhao performing Tai Chi. Joe looks at them.

CHRIS  
That's Tony Zhao, my teacher.

Joe nods. Tony is the kind of teacher he was looking for.

Joe see a canvas with Chinese writing. He stops and reads it.

JOE  
(Chinese with subtitles)  
Cottonwoods, green to silver, in  
the Wind.

Chris is impressed that Joe can read Chinese.

JOE (CONT'D)  
My grandmother insisted that I  
learn Mandarin. I told her I had no  
use for it. She said useless things  
can be the most useful things.

CHRIS  
You should listen to her.

JOE  
I have no choice. She lives with me  
and she can't be shut up.

Joe continues to study the calligraphy.

JOE (CONT'D)  
You wrote this?

CHRIS  
You could tell by my American  
accent?

JOE  
It's not bad.

CHRIS  
For a white guy.

Joe gives Chris a look, then notices a photo of Tara working at a potter's wheel.

JOE  
Your wife's an artist?

CHRIS  
When she's not being a teacher. She made the sculptures in my studio.

Chris points to Tara's work displayed in the room. Joe lifts one and feels its shape, then sets it down carefully.

JOE  
She's good.

CHRIS  
Are you into pottery?

JOE  
Not really, but good always announces itself.  
(off Chris's surprise)  
I didn't think that up.

CHRIS  
Your grandmother?

JOE  
(laughs)

Chris leads Joe to down the hall toward his bedroom.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris opens the door and the two men enter. Tara is sleeping.

JOE  
(whispers)  
I don't think your wife would appreciate my being here.

CHRIS  
(whispers)  
She's a deep sleeper. Typical of someone who doesn't have a worry bone in her body.

Chris moves toward the bathroom. Joe reluctantly follows.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: BATHROOM - NIGHT

Chris opens the medicine cabinet and gestures at a top shelf that's packed with pill bottles. He moves his hand along the shelf, touching each drug. Both men talk in whispers.

CHRIS

Anxiety, migraine, heartburn,  
asthma. I was taking all these  
before I started Tai Chi. Now I'm  
off the pills...for six years.

JOE

Why don't you throw the stuff away?

CHRIS

The bottles remind me of how I used  
to be.

JOE

So Tai Chi is a cure-all.

CHRIS

No. But it's a mistake to forget  
the wisdom of a civilization that's  
eight thousand years old.

The two men exit the bathroom.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joe indicates Tara.

JOE

(whispers)

Did Tai Chi make it possible for  
you to find such a beautiful woman?

Chris smiles.

CHRIS

(whispers)

Tai Chi isn't Love Potion #9, but  
it helps us accept who we are and  
accept others who are different.  
That's the first step toward love.

JOE

(whispers)

I find it hard to do.

CHRIS  
(whispers)  
What?

JOE  
(whispers)  
Accepting others.

CHRIS  
(whispering)  
Realizing that about yourself is a  
starting point for change.

JOE  
(whispering)  
Who said I want to change?

Chris laughs. Tara stirs but doesn't wake.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Chris leads Joe toward the front door, Joe stops and studies the photos of Tony.

Responding to Tony's admiring look, Chris goes to a bookshelf and fetches a DVD, with a cover photo of Tony.

CHRIS  
This showcases Tony's teaching.  
Besides demonstrating Tai Chi, he  
shares original aphorisms about  
meaning and happiness.

JOE  
I'm surprised you even have a DVD  
player.

CHRIS  
Actually, I've never looked at the  
disk. But my students love it. Tony  
sold millions of copies worldwide.

Joe takes the disk. That's the kind of success he relates to.

After Joe leaves, Chris fetches his poetry notebook, sits on the sofa, and begins to write.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe drives while watching Tony's DVD. Tony is astonishingly graceful and witty. The students who appear with him in the video seem mesmerized by their teacher.

At one point Joe is so engrossed that he almost crashes the car. He laughs at himself and parks in a supermarket lot--a wasteland that contrasts with the beauty shown on the screen.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris continues to write in his notebook. The phone RINGS.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - SIMULTANEOUS

Joe has stopped the video at a dramatic frame.

JOE  
 (into his phone)  
 I really like the way this man  
 teaches. No insult to you, but I  
 want to sign up with him.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 (from the phone)  
 That will be difficult.

JOE  
 He'll make room for me.

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 He's dead.

There's a long pause.

JOE  
 Fuck!

CHRIS (O.S.)  
 (from the phone)  
 Since I was his student, to gain  
 his wisdom, your best bet is to  
 take my class. I'm in his lineage.

JOE  
 New age bullshit. I'll use the DVD.

Joe ends the call.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: LIVING ROOM

Chris stares at the photo of Tony.

CHRIS  
 (imitating Joe)  
 Fuck.

INT. 2MORROW HEADQUARTERS: DESIGN LAB - DAY

Joe works with the design team, but his mind is elsewhere.

INT. 2MORROW HEADQUARTERS - JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe transfer the video of Tony to his powerful computer, and generates a holographic (3D) image of Tony teaching Tai Chi.

The image is surprising realistic, but its functionality isn't good. The movements are jerky. Then it freezes.

Without knocking, Eric--the arrogant programmer--enters.

JOE

What do you want?

Eric holds up an iPad.

ERIC

Test animations for the new game.

Eric smirks at the frozen holographic figure of Tony.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What's that shit?

JOE

Any other CEO would have fired you long ago.

ERIC

I know that the board of directors is on your ass. I'm your only hope.

Joe grabs Eric's iPad and plays the test animations.

While he does, Eric walks around the unmoving holographic image of Tony, evaluating it.

Joe finishes looking at the test animations and flings the iPad at Eric, who deftly catches it.

JOE

The stuff's OK. Go with it.

ERIC

(smugly)

We're already implementing it.

JOE

What?

ERIC

I knew you couldn't say no. I'm too brilliant.

JOE

Get the fuck out of here.

Eric reaches the door, turns and points to the holographic of Tony.

ERIC

If you want help with this whatever-it-is, let me know. I can make that dumb thing work.

Joe picks up a coffee cup from his desk and hurls it at Eric who ducks and leaves, cackling as he goes.

Joe stares at the door, takes a few steps as if going after Eric to fire him, then stops, realizing he needs Eric.

He goes back to working on the Tony holograph but the actions remain awkward, far from stunning movements in the DVD.

Frustrated, Joe punches at the holography, then goes to his desk and downs a handful of pills.

INT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

Chris leads a class with Becky and a few other students. Joe enters, totally stressed out.

CHRIS

Welcome back.

JOE

You're not much, but you're better than a dead guy.

Chris tries to smile, but the comment pisses him off.

CHRIS

There are hundreds of Tai Chi teachers in town. Perhaps you should find someone else.

Joe takes out his wallet, pulls out a wad of hundred dollar bills, and throws the money at Chris.

JOE

That's for the lesson.

Chris gestures for Joe to leave. Joe stands his ground.

Tom, the former football player, picks up the money, stuffs it into Joe's shirt pocket, grabs Joe, and drags him out of the room.

Tom returns and immediately goes into a Tai Chi move.

Chris nods a "thank you" to Tom.

Upset by the encounter, the other students do their best to focus.

Then Chris notices something out of the corner of his eye, and he turns toward the window.

Outside, Joe looks in at the class and does the Tai Chi moves. Rain begins to fall. Joe ignores it. The rain comes down harder. Joe looks pathetic but he persists.

Becky stops her practice and watches Joe. Tears come to her eyes. Her emotional response cools Chris's anger. He goes to the window and taps on it, inviting Joe to come back inside.

Joe enters the studio. Becky makes room for him.

The class continues even as water drips from Joe's soaked clothing, forming a puddle on the floor.

The class ends and all the students leave except for Joe and Tom, who lingers thinking he might need to protect Chris.

Chris smiles at Tom and gestures for him to leave.

Chris and Joe stare at each other in silence. It's an awkward moment. Finally...

CHRIS

How's your grandmother?

JOE

You really want to know?

EXT. JOE'S MANSION - DAY

The place is so grand it would make ordinary billionaires envious.

INT. JOE'S HOME: KITCHEN - DAY

It's a fabulous room, which gives a hint of Joe's immense wealth. Through windows we see a magnificent garden.

Joe's grandmother Chenguang sits at the table sipping tea and reading a book of Chinese poetry. She's as in real life as she was in the video. But here she shows more vitality.

JOE

Grandma, this is Chris, my Tai Chi teacher. Chris, this is Chenguang. Her name means "morning glory."

Chenguang bows toward Chris.

CHRIS

(mangles the name)  
Chenguang.

Smiling at Chris's pronunciation Chenguang slowly and clearly repeats her name.

CHENGUANG

Chenguang. Chenguang. Chenguang.

CHRIS

Chenguang.

Chenguang nods.

CHENGUANG

(Chinese, with subtitles)  
You're a quick learner.

JOE

She says you're a quick learner.

CHENGUANG

(Chinese, with subtitles)  
My grandson has told me all about you. You're his best friend now.

JOE

(to Chris, deliberately  
mistranslating)  
She says she's glad to meet you.

Chenguang gives Joe a nasty look, focuses on Chris, and speaks more emphatically.

CHENGUANG

(Chinese, with subtitles)  
I said you're his best friend.

Chenguang now pantomimes "best friends." Chris gets it and laughs.

CHRIS

Yes, best friends, but Joe won't admit it.

CHENGUANG

(Chinese, with subtitles)  
He's a stubborn boy. Always has been. But he's got a good heart. It's just hidden away.

Mystified, Chris turns toward Joe, who shrugs.

JOE

Something about the weather.

Chenguang pantomimes that Joe has a good heart.

CHRIS

(to Joe)  
She understood what I said to you.

JOE

Yeah, she understands English but refuses to speak it. Stuck in her old ways.

CHRIS

(to Chenguang)  
I've been greatly influenced by Chinese ideas.

CHENGUANG

(in Chinese)  
To understand them, it is good to speak the language.

Chenguang pantomimes speaking and listening.

CHRIS

You want to teach me Chinese?

CHENGUANG

(in Chinese)  
Would you like some tea?

She picks up the cup of tea, and points at it.

CHENGUANG (CONT'D)

(in Chinese)  
Tea. Tea. Tea.

Chenguang dips her finger into the liquid so that Chris will know she's teaching him "tea" and not "cup."

JOE  
She's asking...

Chris waves for Joe to be quiet. He understands her gesture.

CHRIS  
(in Chinese)  
Tea. Tea. Tea.

Chenguang slowly speaks the Chinese word to help Chris learn the correct pronunciation.

CHENGUANG  
(in Chinese)  
Tea...

CHRIS  
(in Chinese, closer to the  
correct pronunciation)  
Tea.

CHENGUANG  
(in Chinese)  
Tea.

CHRIS  
(in Chinese)  
Tea.

Chenguang claps and rises slow but steady to prepare the tea.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I can do it.

CHENGUANG  
(in Chinese)  
Do you think I'm too old to get a  
guest tea?

She pantomimes being old, her shoulders drooping, her face momentarily expressing weariness. Then she comes out of the performance and becomes her vibrant self.

She points to a chair opposite where she was sitting.

CHENGUANG (CONT'D)  
(in Chinese)  
Sit.

Chris sits. Chenguang gestures for Chris to say the word.

CHENGUANG (CONT'D)  
(in Chinese)  
Sit.

CHRIS  
 (in Chinese)  
 Sit.

Joe watches the two of them.

JOE  
 I believe I'm not needed here.

CHENGUANG  
 (in Chinese)  
 That's right. Go. Go. Go.

She makes a gesture indicating "Go."

CHRIS  
 (in Chinese)  
 Go. Go. Go.

JOE  
 (laughing)  
 Careful. Although Chenguang is  
 cantankerous, She's easy to love,  
 and you're a married man.

CHENGUANG  
 (in Chinese, to Joe)  
 Go!

CHRIS  
 (in Chinese)  
 Go!

CHENGUANG  
 (Chinese)  
 You have a good ear.

She points to his ear.

CHENGUANG (CONT'D)  
 (in Chinese)  
 Ear.

CHRIS  
 (in Chinese)  
 Ear.

MONTAGE

Chenguang leads Chris on a journey around Joe's posh home,  
 teaching Chris many Chinese words: rug, mirror, book, chair,  
 toilet, lamp, television...



Joe studies Becky's Tai Chi moves.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Maybe you could...

BECKY  
I'm not much ahead of you. I've just been practicing for a few months. My community college allows me to take Tai Chi for PE credit.

JOE  
Well, you look like a pro.

Becky bows, grateful for the compliment.

BECKY  
Chris is a terrific teacher.

JOE  
I've seen better.

Joe looks at the photo of Tony.

BECKY  
(getting angry)  
It's not a competition.

JOE  
All life's a competition.

BECKY  
If you think it is, OK. But that's not the only way to think.

She turns away from him and resumes her practice. Joe observes her, and attempts to imitate what she's doing.

Chris enters followed by several other students.

MONTAGE We watch Joe's progress over several weeks. He's receptive now to Chris's help. Chris is impressed by Joe's dedication to learning and to the progress he's making.

Joe always positions himself next to Becky, and they do the movements in ever-closer sync.

Chris notices the growing affection between Joe and Becky.

End of montage.

INT. CHRI'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

During a lesson with Joe, Becky, and a few other students, Chris's landlord enters the studio. He briefly watches the students and mockingly applauds.

LANDLORD

I was never much for ballet, but  
you guys are good.

Chris steps toward the reception area.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

We can handle our business here. No  
secrets, hey?

The landlord hands Chris a three-day notice.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Be out by the weekend or I'll be  
forced to bring in the sheriff.

He looks around the room.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

Lucky for you, there's not much  
crap to move out.

The landlord heads toward the exit. The students are dumbstruck. One begins to weep.

Becky whispers something in Joe's ear. When eh doesn't respond she gives him a push. He heads out of the studio.

Chris re-starts the lesson. The students resume their practice. But then one by one they look out the window and see Joe and the landlord screaming at each other. The two men are close to coming to blows, but then Joe says something--which we can't hear--and the landlord looks interested.

The arguing stops. The two men engage in intense dialogue. Then Joe puts his arm around the landlord's shoulder and the two move out of sight.

Chris continues the lesson. The students follow. But their concentration isn't good.

CHRIS

Be here. Right here. Right now.

The students get back on track.

Joe returns, smiling broadly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
What was that all about?

JOE  
Nothing important.

CHRIS  
What was it?

Joe begins a form.

JOE  
Shhh. I'm trying to get this move  
right.

Chris laughs and leads the lesson.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

Becky emerges from the studio and sees Joe waiting for her.

BECKY  
What happened between you and that  
landlord?

Joe shrugs.

JOE  
Just two A-type guys working things  
out. Finding out who's the top dog.

BECKY  
So you're not going to tell me?

JOE  
Maybe over lunch. All that Tai Chi  
has made me hungry.

EXT. HAMBURGER JOINT - DAY

Through the window we see Joe talking to Becky. When he stops, she leans across the table and gives him a gentle kiss.

INT. HAMBURGER JOINT - DAY

Joe is smiling from the kiss.

JOE  
Now it's your turn to talk. What's  
your story?

BECKY  
I'm a single mom.

Becky shows Joe photos of her two young kids.

JOE  
Raising two kids must be stressful.

BECKY  
Some people take Prozac. My drug is  
Tai Chi. No side effects.

JOE  
When you're not doing the forms...

BECKY  
I'm earning a degree in marketing.

Joe's impressed.

JOE  
Are you close?

BECKY  
My classwork is done. I just have  
to write a thesis--a faux marketing  
plan for a real company.

JOE  
Like 2Morrow?

BECKY  
I don't think your company needs  
help marketing. I'm thinking of  
something a bit smaller, like this  
place.

She indicates the hamburger joint.

JOE  
It'd be all right with me if you  
did a marketing plan for 2Morrow.  
I'd get to see more of you.

She gives him a look.

JOE (CONT'D)  
That didn't come out right. I'm not  
hitting on you.

Becky smiles.

BECKY

I wouldn't have a problem if you were.

JOE

You must not have heard about my reputation.

BECKY

Who hasn't heard about you? Plus I get to see you close-up.

JOE

The SOB in action?

BECKY

Something like that. But you're not entirely awful.

JOE

Thank you.

He touches her hand briefly. She smiles.

JOE (CONT'D)

I do know a company that needs a marketing plan.

Becky looks interested.

JOE (CONT'D)

Chris's company.

BECKY

Our Chris.

JOE

I like the sound of "our."

Now Becky touches Joe's hand.

JOE (CONT'D)

Without more students he'll go broke.

BECKY

You can't market Tai Chi like a video game.

JOE

I agree. It needs a totally different approach.

BECKY

Like what?

JOE

I'm a coder, not a marketeer. So  
how the fuck would I know?

Joe checks to see if he's shocked her. She shows no reaction,  
which he likes, and he rushes on.

JOE (CONT'D)

But you could come up with a plan.

BECKY

I doubt Chris would be interested.

JOE

That's your step one. Convince the  
guru to embrace selling.

BECKY

I don't know.

Joe takes out his phone and projects a tiny holograph of Tony  
onto the table. The figure does starts a form, then freezes.

JOE

This isn't even a prototype, but  
maybe it's possible to teach Tai  
Chi to the world using 3D figures.

Becky tries to touch the holograph and grins at its ghost-  
like nature.

JOE (CONT'D)

But don't mention this to Chris.  
He's not in love with tech. But I  
can change his mind.

The eat in silence for a few moments.

BECKY

How did you change the landlord's  
mind?

Joe shrugs.

BECKY (CONT'D)

How much did it cost you?

Joe gives Becky a kiss.

JOE

I like the way you think.

INT. CHRI'S TAI CHI STUDIO - DAY

Chris is sweeping the floor of the studio when his landlord enters. Chris's expression shows concern.

LANDLORD

Relax and keep your wallet in your pocket.

Chris doesn't get it.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

I've been thinking about your work. You seem really devoted to helping people.

CHRIS

Is this some kind of joke?

LANDLORD

Haven't you noticed? I never joke. But let me cut to the bottom line. Pay me the rent when you get the money. That's our new deal.

The landlord turns and heads toward the exit.

CHRIS

Wait a minute.

LANDLORD

Merry Christmas.

CHRIS

It's July.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: DINING AREA - NIGHT

Chris and Tara are eating.

TARA

But why did your landlord do an about face?

CHRIS

Maybe seeing my students got to him.

TARA

Didn't he have a confrontation with the guy from 2Morrow?

CHRIS  
That has nothing to do with it.

Tara shakes her head, not buying it.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Why question good karma?

INT. TARA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Tara's art STUDENTS are deep in a project.

She moves to a distant part of the room, takes out her phone, and taps in a number.

TARA  
(softly so as not to  
disturb her students)  
Please connect me with Joe Yang.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
(from the phone)  
Who may I tell him who's calling?

TARA  
Tara Manley.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
(from the phone)  
I'm afraid that...

TARA  
Tell him it's Chris's wife. He'll  
want this call.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
(from the phone)  
But...

TARA  
You'll be in big trouble if you  
don't connect me to him.

RECEPTIONIST (V.O.)  
Just a moment.

Tara walks around the room, giving pointers to her students.

Her phone signals a FaceTime call from Joe. She accepts it. During the conversation, Tara gives non-verbal guidance to her students.

JOE  
(FaceTime)  
We meet again.

TARA  
We've not met.

JOE  
(FaceTime)  
You were sleeping.

Tara doesn't understand what he means..

JOE (CONT'D)  
(Facebook)  
Chris brought me by to view his  
medicine cabinet.

TARA  
And you walked into my bedroom?

JOE  
Take it up him. But I thought you  
looked...

TARA  
What?!

Joe realizes that whatever he says about this isn't going to go over good with Tara. So he pivots.

JOE  
Anyway, you called?

TAR  
Did you pay the rent on the studio?

JOE  
Why do you ask?

TARA  
Did you?

JOE  
I'm not saying yes or no, but what  
if I did?

TARA  
I've spent years encouraging Chris  
to work things out for himself. It  
hasn't been easy because of his  
domineering father. So I don't need  
you butting in.

JOE  
Giving a gift is butting in?

TARA  
I've read about you--manipulating  
people to get your way.

JOE  
Chris is my teacher. Why would I  
want to manipualte him?

TARA  
Don't try to take over his life.

Joe stares at her but says nothing.

TARA (CONT'D)  
Do you understand what I'm saying?

JOE  
I've seen your art.

TARA  
What has that to do with anything?

JOE  
I'd like to commission you to do  
some art for my Chinese campus.

TARA  
You can't buy me.

JOE  
When the Pope asked Michelangelo to  
paint the Sistine Chapel ceiling,  
was that "buying the artist"?

TARA  
I'm not Michelangelo and you're not  
the Pope.

Tara ends the call. She goes back to teaching. But within  
seconds a text message comes: "Request for three large  
sculptures. Proposed fee: \$100,000. Details to follow."

Tara stares at the message, stunned.

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE DESIGN LAB

Smiling to himself, Joe pockets his phone, then puts on a  
fierce face before entering the design lab.

INT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: DESIGN LAB - SIMULTANEOUS

On the white board a new video clip plays: two warriors battle each other in martial arts style combat.

Joe studies the clip intently, then raises his hand to stop the presentation.

JOE  
What's this?

The designer controlling the presentation hyperventilates, fearing Joe's wrath. Joe puts a hand on the guy's shoulder.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Easy. I like it. But what is it?

DESIGNER  
(relieved)  
Wushu. A martial art related to  
Kung Fu, which relates to Tai Chi.

JOE  
Tai Chi?

DESIGNER  
Yes, but...

JOE  
Go for it!

Joe hurries out of the room.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A dozen PEOPLE occupy a small urban park at lunch time.

Chris stands on a picnic table holding a poetry book titled WATER SEEKING LIGHT. On the table are copies of this book plus a stack of flyers for his Tai Chi lessons.

Across the street, sitting in her beat-up car, Becky uses binoculars to observe Chris.

Chris's audience consists of OFFICE WORKERS, NANNIES with BABIES, and a few HOMELESS MEN and HOMELESS WOMEN.

CHRIS  
"Sky Lake."

Chris pauses so that his listeners will understand that "Sky Lake" is the title of the poem he's about to read.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 (reading from the book)

Eating fire-baked  
 west-slope cutthroat

trout from a wedge of lodgepole  
 pine plate.

As fish fat seeps  
 through the cracks

and drips on my lap  
 I grin with delight,

for had we remembered  
 butter or pan,

I'd have never had the  
 pleasure of such fish

leapt from granite mountain  
 reflection onto baking stones

by the popping fire  
 into  
 mouth in awe,  
 pearly eyes,

tail curled  
 in still  
 motion

Some of the people in the park concentrate on their sandwiches. Several are busy texting. But there's scattered APPLAUSE from the few who were listening. A HOMELESS WOMAN, 50, wearing tattered clothes, approaches Chris.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
 That was good.

CHRIS  
 Thank you.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
 I'm not sucking your dick. I was  
 once a high school teacher.

She looks down at her sad garments, then comes closer.

HOMELESS WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 You wouldn't believe it, but I was.

CHRIS  
 I can tell.

The homeless woman scrutinizes Chris's expression. Her defensive anger is pushed back by the thought that this man might really see who she is beneath her shabby exterior.

HOMELESS WOMAN

You believe me?

Chris nods.

CHRIS

Where did you teach?

HOMELESS WOMAN

Balboa High.

CHRIS

Good school. I have friends who went there.

A well-dressed BUSINESSMAN approaches. He points to a copy of Chris's book.

BUSINESSMAN

How much?

CHRIS

Fifteen dollars, but it's on a sliding scale. Pay what seems right.

The man pulls out his wallet, thick with big bills, and hands Chris a twenty.

BUSINESSMAN

Keep the change.

CHRIS

Thank you.

The businessman waves the book in the air.

BUSINESSMAN

I don't understand this shit, but my wife will like it.

CHRIS

She's into shit?

At first the businessman doesn't know how to respond, but then he laughs.

BUSINESSMAN

That's good. You ought to write funny poems.

CHRIS  
You might be onto something.

The businessman goes off with his book,

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(to the homeless woman)  
You want a copy?

HOMELESS WOMAN  
I like your poetry, but I can't eat  
it. Fifteen bucks? That's four days  
of food if I play it right.

Chris hands the homeless woman a copy of the book.

CHRIS  
And here's a bookmark.

He slips the businessman's \$20 into the pages.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Eat and read. An unbeatable  
combination.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
You're joking.

CHRIS  
You heard what the businessman  
said. Jokes can be profitable. But  
no joke about the book. It's yours.

The homeless woman shakes her head in disbelief. She carries the book to a bench where all her possessions are stowed in a shopping cart. She sits and begins to read.

Chris checks the time, then stuffs his books into his backpack. He walks out of the park.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE PARK - DAY

Joe pulls his Ferrari alongside Chris, who continues to walk. Joe lowers the window and drives slowly.

The homeless woman comes running after Chris, holding the book high in their.

HOMELESS WOMAN  
I forgot to say thank you.

CHRIS  
Enjoy it.

The homeless woman heads back to the park.

JOE  
Did you give that homeless hag one  
of your books?

CHRIS  
Yep.

JOE  
That's stupid.

CHRIS  
Maybe she'll tell all her homeless  
friends about it.

JOE  
You won't monetize your poetry with  
that demographic.

Chris takes out a notebook and writes as he walks.

JOE (CONT'D)  
What're you doing?

CHRIS  
Notes for a poem about your idea  
that poetry should be monetized.

JOE  
You're hopeless.

CHRIS  
Maybe I'll win the Pulitzer Prize.  
Of course, I'll share the cash with  
you.

JOE  
To thank you in advance for all the  
money your poetry will make me, I'd  
like to invite you to an event.

Chris realizes this is a sign of their deepening friendship,  
and he notes.

JOE (CONT'D)  
I'll pick you up at midnight.

CHRIS  
Midnight?

JOE  
You'll see why.

EXT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: IN FRONT OF HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A FULL MOON illuminates the night sky.

A dozen PROGRAMMERS have gathered in the park-like area, apparently waiting for something. A few play catch with a lighted Frisbee as Joe's Ferrari pulls up.

INT. FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe and Chris watch the guys horsing around.

CHRIS

It appears that we made it in time.

JOE

They were waiting for me.

CHRIS

I forgot that you're the big boss.

JOE

I never let them forget it.

Joe points toward Eric, the snarky young designer. Eric sits by himself on the grass fiddling with his smartphone.

JOE (CONT'D)

That's Eric, the manager of our latest game project.

CHRIS

He looks like a middle school kid.

JOE

Best game designer on the planet.

CHRIS

Next to you.

JOE

Goes without saying.

CHRIS

One of those Stanford whizzes?

Joe shakes his head "No."

JOE

He started building games when he was seven. Quit school at 16. He's a product of Bedroom U. His parents let him find his own way.

CHRIS

They say Mozart composed his first symphony when he was eight.

Chris HUMS an early Mozart symphony.

JOE

Writing a game is way harder.

CHRIS

You think?

JOE

Judge for yourself.

EXT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Joe leads Chris toward the group of engineers.

JOE

Hey guys...  
(pointing to Chris)  
...this is my pal Chris.

ERIC

Did he sign a non-disclosure agreement?

JOE

(pissed)  
What part of "pal" don't you understand, Eric?

Eric is so socially immature he doesn't even know he should at least pretend to respect his boss.

ERIC

Just saying...

JOE

(to Eric, slowly,  
emphatically)  
He...doesn't...need...an...NDA.

Eric isn't convinced but he's too involved with his phone to argue.

ERIC

Whatever.

JOE

Let's get on with it.

Eric holds up his smartphone and takes a selfie. CLICK.

Joe pulls out his phone and does the same thing. CLICK.

The two men square off and tap the screens of their phones. Suddenly two VIRTUAL WARRIORS appear. One has Eric's face, the other has Joe's.

The two holographic figures engage in a fantastical fight: part martial arts and part parkour.

The warriors race up the front of main building, swing from trees, and use every other object in the location. They even incorporate the live engineers--and CHRIS--in the action.

At one point, the virtual warriors soar into the sky and appear to be fighting on the surface of the full moon.

Chris watches, astonished, as the battle continues.

The engineers shout encouragement to each player:

ENGINEER 1  
Get him, Joe.

ENGINEER 2  
Look out, Eric. He's above you.

At first, neither warrior has an advantage. Then Joe's avatar gains the upper hand. It looks as if Joe will win the game.

But Eric's figure makes a stupendous acrobatic move and becomes the aggressor. Joe's figure valiantly fights back, but eventually he's killed.

ERIC  
(cackling like a  
triumphant rooster)  
Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!

The other engineers fall silent. They've not seen their boss lose before. For all they know, he'll fire Eric on the spot for being an arrogant, bad winner.

Making things worse, Eric dances a little victory jig, like a football player who just scored the winning touchdown.

All eyes go to Joe.

JOE  
(to Eric)  
Nicely played.

Eric shrugs contemptuously. His body language suggests that the victory didn't surprise him.

JOE (CONT'D)

Enjoy the victory, Eric, because it's the last time I'm going to let you win.

ERIC

Let me? You were trying everything you had. I'm just better.

The engineers laugh nervously.

JOE

We'll see.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe drives, heading toward Chris's home.

JOE

What do you think of the game?

CHRIS

(with genuine enthusiasm)  
I've never seen anything like it.

Joe is pleased.

JOE

You a gamer?

Christ shakes his head "No."

CHRIS

I'm more into reality. But somewhere I heard that good always announces itself.

Joe smiles, enjoying being quoted.

JOE

What you saw tonight is just the tip of the iceberg.

CHRIS

I don't see how it could be improved.

JOE

In six months we'll be marketing a version that allows someone in one place to play against an opponent thousands of miles away.

CHRIS

Aren't there already online games like that?

Joe nods "Yes."

JOE

Except with our game, anyone in the world will be able to watch the contest.

CHRIS

So the players will also be like TV stars.

Joe nods.

JOE

We call them virtual gladiators. But we're going beyond games. Do you know quantum mechanics?

CHRIS

It's about the weird behavior of sub-atomic particles.

JOE

I didn't expect a good answer like that from a new-ager. Did you study physics?

Chris shakes his head "No."

CHRIS

Everything I know about quantum mechanics I learned from a graphic novel I once read.

JOE

Well, let me tell you what we've got going.

CHRIS

Without signing a non-disclosure agreement?

Joe laughs.

EXT. ROAD NEAR THE PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT

Joe's car moves along the scenic "Great Highway" that runs near the beach.

The huge round moon is setting. It silhouettes a COUPLE standing on the sand and looking out at the water.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Chris points to the moon.

CHRIS

Why let those lovers have all the fun? That's a perfect setting for Tai Chi.

Joe stops the car and the two men get out.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chris and Joe walk to a level part of the beach and begin to practice Tai Chi.

JOE

The most intriguing idea in quantum mechanics is that anywhere is everywhere. What that means is...

CHRIS

Maybe we should focus on our moves.

JOE

I can practice Tai Chi and talk at the same time.

CHRIS

According to tradition...

JOE

Stop looking backward. Tai Chi was conceived before multi-tasking. If the inventor of Tai Chi were alive today he probably would love talking while practicing the moves.

Chris shakes his head at Joe's outrageous statement, but he realizes that arguing about it won't accomplish anything.

Joe extends his hands as if framing a logo.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 (enthusiastically)  
 "Talking Tai Chi." That could be  
 the next big thing.

CHRIS  
 A monetization opportunity?

JOE  
 I'll have my lawyer trademark it in  
 the morning.

Chris laughs as he and Joe continue their Tai Chi practice.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 The point is that it's possible to  
 travel from one place to another  
 without the passage of time.

CHRIS  
 Like what happens with the  
 transporter in Star Trek.

JOE  
 But it won't be science fiction.  
 Our game is leading the way to  
 actual teleportation.

CHRIS  
 Mark me down as a doubter.

JOE  
 A year after the Wright brothers  
 flew their plane, a Princeton  
 physics professor said that we'd  
 never have commercial air travel  
 because it would require a light-  
 weight 400 horsepower engine. Which  
 he said was impossible to build.  
 His problem? No imagination.

A jetliner RUMBLES overhead on its way to landing at SFO. Joe  
 stops his Tai Chi practice and points up at the plane.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 One modern jet engine puts out  
 100,000 horsepower--twice the power  
 of all the engines on the Titanic.

CHRIS  
 Which sank, last I heard.

JOE  
 I'm just trying to get you to stop  
 using the word "impossible."  
 Teleportation is possible.  
 Everything is possible.

Chris gestures for Joe to resume the Tai Chi, and he does.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 While you look backward, I move  
 forward. That's why we're called  
 "2Morrow Digital."

CHRIS  
 You're missing out on the benefits  
 of "be here now."

JOE  
 Means nothing to me.

CHRIS  
 My job is to teach you to  
 appreciate living in the moment.

The young couple--MATT, 20, and CAROL, 20, approach.

MATT  
 What's up??

JOE  
 We're testing out a new exercise:  
 "Talking Tai Chi."

MATT  
 Neat.

CAROL  
 Can we join you?

Joe gives Chris an "I told you so" look. The four people  
 practice Tai Chi.

CAROL (CONT'D)  
 I study art at San Francisco State.

MATT  
 I'm into construction. You know  
 that new high-rise near the Bay  
 Bridge?

Carol and Matt continues to jabber away while doing Tai Chi.  
 Joe loves it.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOME - NIGHT

The Ferrari pulls to a stop.

CHRIS  
How'd you feel about Eric beating  
you?

JOE  
I like subordinates who don't kiss  
ass.

CHRIS  
I wouldn't turn my back on him.

JOE  
The kid'll make the company  
hundreds of millions of dollars.

CHRIS  
You like monetizing people?

JOE  
What else would you do with them?

Chris shakes his head, appalled by Joe's question.

JOE (CONT'D)  
How's it different with your  
customers.

CHRIS  
You mean my Tai Chi students?

JOE  
Call them what you will. Each  
contributes to your bottom line.

CHRIS  
I don't think of them that way.

JOE  
You should.

CHRIS  
How would you react if I thought of  
you as an item to be monetized?

JOE  
I'd think you were getting smart.

Chris points at the dashboard clock. It reads: 1:00 AM. His expression says that it's time to call it a night.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Hold on a second.

Joe reaches into his glove compartment and brings out a smartphone.

JOE (CONT'D)  
I could tell you enjoyed the game.

Joe points to an app icon on the screen.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Here's the Beta version for you to play with. Just tap the icon.

CHRIS  
I'm not really up on stuff like icons.

JOE  
Tapping isn't tough. Even toddlers can do it.

CHRIS  
I don't know.

JOE  
If you can't figure it out, ask your wife to show you.

CHRIS  
How do you know if she even has a phone?

JOE  
(not missing a beat)  
Intuition.

Joe slaps the phone into Chris's hand.

CHRIS  
I'm curious about the part where you and Eric battled on the moon.

Joe smiles.

JOE  
Eric's idea. Very cool.

CHRIS  
Did you get permission to include that in your game?

JOE

No one owns the moon.

CHRIS

But I imagine environmentalists and peace activists would not like you using it.

JOE

Who pays attention to them?

CHRIS

Well how about the government?

JOE

Luckily, the military guys love our software and want to keep us happy. That's why they won't get in the way of a billion dollar product.

CHRIS

So even the moon gets monetized?

Joe makes a sweeping gesture taking in the whole world.

JOE

It all gets monetized.

CHRIS

How did I get so old without knowing that everything's for sale?

JOE

Speaking of selling: I'm taking the game to China next week to open our marketing push. Want to come? We've got a great group in the Shanghai office. Some might be into Tai Chi.

Chris is surprised and touched.

CHRIS

It's a stupendous offer. But I'm going to focus on being here.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris enters and finds a note from Tara: "Working on a new piece. I'll come inside around 2:00 A.M."

He sits on the sofa and, after some hesitation, taps the icon and begins to play Joe's virtual reality game.

The game offers a variety of opponents including Tarzan, Achilles, Bruce Lee, and Joe's arrogant subordinate Eric.

Chris chooses Eric.

MONTAGE

The two avatars--Chris's and Eric's--come to life in the living room.

At first, Eric's figure easily crushes Chris's, but gradually Chris gets the hang of the game and he wins a few rounds.

End of montage.

Chris continues to play. He's so engrossed in the game, he doesn't notice that Tara has entered.

Silently, she watches Chris play the game.

When Eric's figure moves in Tara's direction, she defends herself by kicking at the holographic image.

TARA

Get away from me you...thing.

Chris exits the game-induced trance and pauses the software.

TARA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

CHRIS

I'm playing a game Joe's company invented. But that's all I can tell you because it's top secret.

TARA

Looks to me like you're just having fun.

CHRIS

Pretty soon people all over the world will be playing it.

TARA

That doesn't make it a good thing.

Tara heads toward the bedroom.

Chris unfreezes the game and continues to play. He makes a dazzling move, trapping Eric's avatar.

TARA (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Coming to bed?

CHRIS  
I'm about to figure out this game.

TARA (O.C.)  
(sexy voice)  
I've got a different game for you  
to try.

Chris looks toward the bedroom door and stops the game,  
turning both figures into statues.

CHRIS  
(to Eric's avatar)  
I'll deal with you next time.

The frozen figure of Eric stares at Chris with a sinister  
expression. Chris hits the "off" button of his phone and the  
Eric vaporizes.

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: DINING AREA - DAY

Chris and Tara are having breakfast.

The phone that Joe gave to Chris signals an incoming text.  
Chris doesn't know how to find the text. Tara shows him how  
to access the message.

The text reads: "I'm serious about having you go to China.  
There's a billion possible students for you!"

The message is accompanied by stunning photos of China.

Tara catches Chris smiling.

TARA  
What?

CHRIS  
Joe wants me to go to China. Says  
it's a big Tai Chi market.

TARA  
He's a manipulator.

The comment makes Chris suspicious.

CHRIS  
Did you talk to him?

Tara shrugs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
About what?

TARA  
I don't want him taking over your  
life, that's all.

CHRIS  
Why would he do that?

TARA  
He likes to play God.

CHRIS  
You're imagining things.

TARA  
He offered me a commission.

CHRIS  
(enthusiastic)  
That's great.

TARA  
He did it so that I wouldn't block  
what he wants.

CHRIS  
Which is?

TARA  
I don't know.

CHRIS  
You think I can't handle him?

TARA  
I'm just saying...

CHRIS  
(angry)  
How do I send him a message?

Tara shows Chris how to text.

TARA  
But maybe we should talk about  
this.

Chris grabs the phone and texts to Joe: "Not going to China.  
Ever."

Joe responds: "Understood."

INT. CHRIS'S HOME: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris and Tara are in bed.

TARA  
Maybe you should take that trip  
with Joe.

CHRIS  
How much did he offer you?

TARA  
Are you afraid your dad will say  
that you're irresponsible?

CHRIS  
Who cares what he says?

TARA  
You do.

CHRIS  
That's bullshit.

TARA  
A hundred thousand.

Chris gets out of bed and leaves the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris does Tai Chi in the dark with just a slender beam of  
light coming in from the street.

As he practices, his face loses its tightness. His breathing  
quiets.

Tara watches him.

TARA  
What I said about your dad was  
wrong

Chris continues to do Tai Chi.

CHRIS  
Unfortunately, it's true. I'm not  
free from him.

She moves to Chris and briefly touches his arm, then pulls  
back as he continues the form.

TARA  
I shouldn't interrupt your  
practice.

CHRIS  
No problem. I can do Tai Chi and  
talk to you at the same.

TARA  
You're joking.

CHRIS  
It's Joe's idea. He calls it  
"Talking Tai Chi."

Tara shakes her head skeptically.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
He says it'll make a fortune.

TARA  
(laughs)

CHRIS  
It's not funny.

Tara continues to laugh. It's infectious.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(laughs)

While laughing Chris continues to do his Tai Chi practice  
Tara moves in front of him and kisses him tenderly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
(in Chinese)  
Love.

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Chris once again reads his poetry to a mixed group of  
listeners.

When Chris puts away his books and DVDs and leaves the park,  
Joe pulls up and signals for Chris to get into the car.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - LATE AFTERNOON

Joe seems relaxed and happy.

CHRIS

Don't you have anything better to do than stalk me? I mean, who's running 2Morrow Digital?

JOE

I've trained my staff so that they are self-directing.

Joe guides the car through heavy traffic, but he's driving less aggressively than before.

CHRIS

You seem...different.

JOE

I've been practicing on my own. Well, also with the help of your guru's DVDs.

CHRIS

And Becky?

JOE

Yeah, and Becky.

Joe drives.

CHRIS

So exactly where are we going? I should tell Tara if I'm going to be late for dinner.

JOE

It's a surprise. And I already checked with her.

CHRIS

You checked with my wife?

JOE

Maybe that sounds strange but I wanted to make sure your schedule was free.

CHRIS

Free for what.

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

A mixed martial arts battle is going on between two well-matched FIGHTERS. The action is fierce. The CROWD goes wild.

Joe and Chris are sitting close to the action.

The fight becomes more brutal.

Chris watches it with wide-eyed astonishment.

CHRIS  
Why are we here?

Joe points to one of the fighters.

JOE  
This guy's specialty is Kung Fu,  
which as you know is a form of Tai  
Chi. If you started offering  
classes in it, you'd do big  
business.

One of the fighters lands a blow that opens a cut, sending a shower of blood onto Chris and Joe.

Joe is so caught up in the energy of the fight--in the violence--that he doesn't notice that Chris is appalled.

The battle continues until the Kung Fu expert beats the other man into submission. The crowd goes wild.

JOE (CONT'D)  
See what I mean? This is what  
people want, and it's what they can  
use to protect themselves.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe drives. He glances at Chris and realizes that Chris wasn't as thrilled by the evening's entertainment as he was.

JOE  
You worried about the blood on your  
shirt. I'll buy you a new one.

CHRIS  
It'll come out.

JOE  
So what are you thinking?

CHRIS  
It's true that a branch of Tai Chi  
involves aggression. But that isn't  
the path I'm on.

JOE

But if someone attacks you,  
wouldn't you want to do to him what  
that kung fu fighter did to the  
other guy tonight?

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Becky and Joe face each other across the table.

JOE

And you know what he said?

BECKY

I can guess.

JOE

He said that there was no need to  
answer violence with violence. He's  
so naive.

Becky shakes her head, not agreeing.

Joe brings out his phone and calls up a clip of the new game  
his team is developing. He holds up the phone so Becky can  
see the action.

ON JOE'S PHONE the animated violence is way over the top:  
broken bones, blood, decapitations, stabbings...

Appalled by the carnage, Becky pushes the phone away.

She brings out her own phone, finds a video, then slides the  
phone across the table to Joe.

BECKY

Not long after I started studying  
with Chris, we came out of the  
studio one night. He was going to  
walk me to my car.

Becky gestures for Joe to start the video on her phone. He  
clicks the play icon.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - NIGHT (ON BECKY'S PHONE)

A video--shaky at first, then smoother--captures TED  
FORESTER, 40, and JANET FORESTER, 40, having an argument  
standing next to their parked car.

Ted is a big, aggressive man, over six feet and weighing 300  
pounds. Janet is petite, 100 pounds, and defensive.

TED  
(screaming)  
I can't believe you lost the  
fucking keys.

Janet frantically looks through her large purse.

JANET  
I know they're somewhere.

Ted grabs Janet's purse and fishes around inside it. Failing to find the keys, he dumps all the contents onto the sidewalk: wallet, keys, lipstick, tissues, coins, tampons, comb, smartphone, etc.

Janet gets down on her knees and starts scooping the stuff back into her purse. Ted pushes her with a foot.

A small CROWD gathers.

A GOOD SAMARITAN, rushes to Janet's aid. Ted grabs the man, and it looks like there'll be a brawl. But before punches are thrown, Chris pulls the Good Samaritan aside.

CHRIS  
(to the Good Samaritan)  
Let me give it a try.

Chris crouches down to help Janet pick up her things, ignoring her husband's angry expression.

TED  
What the hell are you doing?

Chris retrieves some of Janet's possessions and helps her put them back into her purse. He keeps his eyes down and speaks without looking up at Ted.

CHRIS  
Giving this woman a hand.

TED  
No one asked you.

Chris continues to pick up coins and small items.

CHRIS  
That's no reason to be indifferent.

TED  
She's my wife.

CHRIS  
You're a lucky guy.

TED

Fuck off or I'll mess you up.

Ted gives Chris a hard push, but Chris easily maintains his balance as he collects Janet's stuff.

CHRIS

My cousin, who's a big-time lawyer, would say that you just committed battery.

TED

What?

CHRIS

(evenly, as if reading a definition in a law book)  
Unwanted touching is a crime.

TED

I didn't do anything.

CHRIS

Your word against everyone here who saw you touch me.

Ted surveys the crowd. He notices Becky filming the encounter and shakes a fist at the camera.

TED

(to Chris)

You want to feel what it's like to be really touched?

Ted balls his hands into big fists.

CHRIS

My lawyer friend says, "The harder they hit, the larger the lawsuit."

After giving Janet the last of her stuff, which she puts into her purse, Chris slowly stands and calmly faces Ted.

Ted takes a swing at Chris, who easily avoids it. The big man throws another punch. Chris employs a basic martial art move that channels Ted's aggressive energy, sending him into a somersault. Ted ends up on his back.

A police cruiser pulls up. The COPS study the situation.

TED

(under his breath)

If there weren't so many witnesses, I would knock the shit out of you.

Janet, meanwhile, has looked into the car and spots the keys on the seat.

JANET

Ted, the keys are in the car.

She tests the door and it's open.

Chris takes out a business card and hands it to Ted.

CHRIS

Visit me in my studio anytime. You might find Tai Chi illuminating.

Chris turns to Janet and hands her a business card.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Our Tai Chi classes are excellent for flexibility and health.

The video ends.

BACK TO SCENE: COFFEE SHOP

Becky retrieves her phone.

JOE

Chris should've kicked the guy's ass.

BECKY

Like that would have solved something? There's already enough violence in the world, don't you think?

Joe shuts his eyes and sees VIOLENT CLIPS from the new video game. He opens his eyes.

JOE

Maybe.

Becky smiles and holds his hand.

MONTAGE

Joe takes more classes with Chris. He also gets up at dawn and practices in a park with other Tai Chi students. He even does Tai Chi in the garden with his grandmother.

INT. HOTEL MEETING ROOM - DAY

Half a dozen 2Morrow Board Members sit around a table.

CHAIRPERSON

Let's begin.

LARRY, a board member, raises a hand.

LARRY

I want to register my opposition to these proceedings. And the fact that we're doing it in secret, at this out of the way hotel, shows that you're all ashamed of it.

CHAIRPERSON

Larry, there was no way we could meet corporate and keep our options open.

Larry looks around the room.

LARRY

Even if this proves to boost our stock value, what will this say about us?

PHIL, another board member interrupts.

PHIL

Money talks. It's the only language that counts. And it's telling us we have to act.

There's a knock on the door. An ASSISTANT peers in.

ASSISTANT

Mr. Sontag is here now.

CHAIRPERSON

Send him in.

Eric enters, dressed in his usual nerdy outfit, completely at odds with the corporate style.

CHAIRPERSON (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming, Eric. What we're discussing here must be kept in strict confidence.

ERIC

Whatever.

CHAIRPERSON

You emailed me your concern that our founder has decided to reduce the violence of the new game.

ERIC

And totally fuck it up, yeah. That's why I blew the whistle.

CHAIRPERSON

I sent you a Harvard study that suggested excessive violence in video games could negatively impact young players.

The Chairperson holds up the Harvard study.

CHAIRPERSON (CONT'D)

Could you tell us what you think about that?

Eric does a mocking impression of Rodin's "The Thinker."

ERIC

What I think is...

Eric gives the finger to the study. This shocks most of the board members, but the Chairperson smoothly intervenes.

CHAIRPERSON

(to Eric)

Thanks for spending time with us this morning.

ERIC

Yeah, I'm a busy guy.

CHAIRPERSON

We'll be in touch with you soon.

ERIC

Whenever.

Eric leaves. The Chairperson looks at KELLY.

KELLY

He doesn't exactly look the part of a CEO.

CHAIRPERSON

Our H-R department did socio-metric interviews with the designers on his team. They don't hang out with him. But they view him as a leader.

RANDOLPH, a banker-type board member, clears his throat.

RANDOLPH

I wonder how the investment  
community will react.

PHIL

They react to one thing: the bottom  
line. Gore sells. End of story.

Larry stands and heads toward the door.

LARRY

I'm off this board.

CHAIRPERSON

We admire your ethics, Larry. But  
your accountant may question the  
wisdom of your action. Our stock is  
down now but if Eric is right, it  
could be way up in six months.

LARRY

As 2Morrow's new CEO might say...

Larry gives the group the finger, and storms out of the room.

INT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO: PERFORMANCE AREA - DAY

Chris teaches the class that Joe usually takes but he's not  
there.

MONTAGE

Chris teaches other classes. In between each, he checks his  
phone. No message from Joe.

Chris practices the virtual reality game and has greater  
success in outsmarting Eric's avatar.

Chris teaches another class. Joe isn't there but Becky is.  
There's an empty space next to her. Tears roll down her face.  
She catches Chris watching her. For a moment, it seems that  
she'll run from the room but then she takes a deep breath and  
continues the Tai Chi moves.

End of montage.

INT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO: RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

Chris sits at a desk writing checks to pay bills.

He opens an envelope and takes out a sheet with the letterhead "Commercial Management Partners."

CLOSE-UP on the letter: "Dear Mr. Manley, The new owner of your building has determined that the rent is too high, and has decided to lower it by 50% as of six months ago. Expect a rebate check shortly."

Chris at first is puzzled. Then he gets it.

CHRIS

Joe!

The phone rings. He looks at the screen and sees he's getting a FaceTime call from Eric. Chris accepts the call.

ERIC

(abruptly, no greeting)  
I have a proposition.

CHRIS

So much for warming up your audience before making a pitch.

ERIC

I don't have time for what people like you call "manners."

Chris could respond in a hundred ways, but he know that Eric isn't someone you can dialogue with. So Chris says nothing.

Eric grins maniacally, glad that his response shut Chris up.

ERIC (CONT'D)

We're shooting video trailers for the new game. I want you to be a consultant. You'll get \$3,000 a day plus stock options.

CHRIS

Why do you think I'd be any value regarding the game?

ERIC

I've been watching you play against me.

CHRIS

You were spying on me?

Eric nods smugly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

In my studio?

Eric nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
In my house?

ERIC  
I hope you're not one of those  
idiots who still thinks there's any  
privacy in the world.

CHRIS  
I suppose this conversation is  
being recorded for quality control.

ERIC  
Just give me an answer.

CHRIS  
Why isn't Joe making this offer?

ERIC  
Joe doesn't work here any more.

Chris is dumbfounded. Eric smirks at Chris's reaction.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
So are you in?

CHRIS  
2Morrow Digital is Joe's company.

ERIC  
Was.  
(cackles like when he beat  
Joe in the video game)

Chris realizes that the twerp has carried out a coup.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I don't have time to watch you  
think.

CHRIS  
Where's Joe?

ERIC  
I'm not my former boss's keeper.

Eric grins, pleased with his effort at being witty.

CHRIS  
Eric, you're the kind of guy who  
makes people believe that the Devil  
really exists.

Eric gives Chris the finger and ends the call.

Chris taps in Joe's number. The call goes to voicemail.

JOE  
Leave a message.

EXT. CHRIS'S TAI CHI STUDIO - NIGHT

An Uber car appears. The UBER DRIVER, 30, gestures for Chris to get in.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT

The car moves through the city.

EXT. JOE'S HOME - NIGHT

The Uber car pulls to a stop in front of Joe's mansion.

CHRIS  
(to Uber driver)  
Please wait.

EXT. JOE'S HOME: FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Chris rings the bell. Chenguang opens the door. She looks worried.

CHRIS  
Do you know where Joe is?

CHENGUANG  
(clear but accented  
English)  
He called an hour ago and said he  
loved me. He never says that.

CHRIS  
You're speaking English.

CHENGUANG  
As young people say today, 'Duh.'

CHRIS  
Why didn't you do it when we met?

CHENGUANG  
Where would the fun have been then?

CHRIS  
We'll debate that tomorrow.

CHENGUANG  
(in Chinese)  
Tomorrow.  
(in English)  
Tomorrow. A very important word.  
(in Chinese)  
Tomorrow.

CHRIS  
(in Chinese)  
Tomorrow.

CHENGUANG  
When I called Joe's company, no one  
would talk to me.

Chris squeezes Chenguang's hand.

CHRIS  
When I find what's happening, I'll  
let you know.

CHENGUANG  
(in Chinese)  
Thank you.  
(in English)  
Thank you. And now you say.  
(in Chinese)  
You're welcome.

CHRIS  
(in Chinese, with  
subtitle)  
You're welcome.

EXT. 2MORROW DIGITAL: PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Uber car enters the vast parking lot, now almost empty.

INT. UBER CAR - NIGHT

Chris sees Joe's Ferrari up ahead. He points to it. The Uber driver brings his car alongside the Ferrari.

Joe is sitting inside his car, motionless.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Chris exits the Uber car, sends it on its way, and walks to the Ferrari. He tries the door. It's locked.

CHRIS  
Open the door, Joe.

Joe shakes his head "No."

Chris finds a rock and raises it high, threatening to break the window.

Joe starts the engine.

Chris runs in front of the car, blocking its forward progress.

Joe backs up the car.

Chris runs to the passenger side and breaks the window. Although the car is still backing up, Chris pulls open the door. As he attempts to enter the car, the door slams into his side and knocks him down.

Joe jams on the brakes.

Chris struggles to his feet.

JOE  
I didn't mean to hurt you.

Although in serious pain, Chris gets into the car.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe says nothing but his face shows anguish.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Joe's Ferrari moves at a high rate, leaving the city behind.

EXT. COASTAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Joe's car negotiates hairpin turns that run along high cliffs.

INT. JOE'S FERRARI - NIGHT

Joe refuses to make eye contact with Chris, who patiently waits for Joe to talk. Finally...

JOE

They stabbed me in the back.

The car accelerates.

JOE (CONT'D)

They might as well have killed me.

EXT. COASTAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The car comes dangerously close to going over the edge of a cliff. It's 300 feet straight down to rocks and the big waves crashing against them.

The tires SQUEAL.

INT. JOE'S CAR - NIGHT

Joe seems oblivious to the danger.

CHRIS

Would you like me to drive?

JOE

I know what I'm doing. I know what I'm going to do.

He pulls the car into an overlook area, then turns to Chris.

JOE (CONT'D)

It was my company. I chose the board. The staff. And now I'm out.

He snaps his fingers.

JOE (CONT'D)

Just like that. Because of that son-of-a-bitch punk.

Joe falls silent. Outside, WAVES crash on the rocks.

JOE (CONT'D)

You tried to warn me. Maybe if I had started Tai Chi earlier, I would have seen it coming.

CHRIS

There's plenty I don't see. Like the fact that you bought the building to save my business. I missed a lot of the good that's in you.

JOE

Get out of the car.

CHRIS

Why should I do that, Joe?

JOE

Get out and I'll show you.

Joe revs the engine.

CHRIS

I'm staying right here.

JOE

You don't understand.

CHRIS

Maybe I do.

JOE

It's over for me.

Chris shakes his head "No"--rejecting Joe's statement.

CHRIS

Only if you view life as a binary program: right, wrong; win lose. But you're more than computer code.

Joe tries to push Chris out of the car. Chris resists.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I won't be a witness to your folly.

JOE

Then you'll die with me.

CHRIS

I hope not.

Chris turns off the ignition and pockets the key.

Joe opens the glove compartment and takes out a handgun, which he points at Chris.

JOE  
Give me the key.

In a move that's so fast it's a blur, Chris knocks the gun out of Joe's hand and onto the floor. Joe reaches for it. Using the side of his hand, Chris smashes Joe's arm.

JOE (CONT'D)  
(screams out in pain)  
You're against me like the rest of  
them.

Calmly Chris picks up the gun, opens the door, and throws the weapon into the ocean.

CHRIS  
I'm not against you. I'm for you.  
The difference is important.

Joe breaks down and weeps.

JOE  
I've got nothing left.

CHRIS  
Take a breath.

JOE  
I'm not listening to your bullshit.

Like a child having a tantrum, Joe refuses to breathe in.

CHRIS  
I don't want you to listen to me. I  
want you to listen to you.

Finally, Joe gasps for air.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Now breathe in slowly. All the way.

Reluctantly, Joe breathes slowly and deeply.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
How can you say you've got nothing  
when you can take a breath. It's  
one of the most beautiful things in  
the universe. And then there's your  
grandmother...and Becky.

Joe looks out at the ocean, the picture of a man whose dreams have been shattered.

JOE  
What am I going to do?

Chris closes his eyes a moment, thinking.

CHRIS  
How about you do me a favor.

JOE  
(desperate)  
What?

CHRIS  
How about you show me China.

INT. JETLINER: FIRST CLASS - NIGHT

Joe is awake, programming a game on his iPad. Next to him Chris is sleeping.

Joe looks over at Chris.

JOE  
You sleeping?

CHRIS  
(eyes shut)  
Depends.

JOE  
On what?

CHRIS  
On whether what you have to say is more interesting than my dream.

JOE  
What are you dreaming about?

CHRIS  
I could tell you, but dreamland is our last private place.

JOE  
I have a question.

Chris opens his eyes.

JOE (CONT'D)  
What's the use of being able to kick someone's ass if you don't do it when you have the chance?

CHRIS  
What are you talking about?

JOE  
Becky showed me the video where  
that big guy was abusing his wife  
and then threatened you.

CHRIS  
I have to get her to erase that  
recording.

JOE  
Don't avoid my question.

CHRIS  
Tai Chi began as a martial art, but  
it's become an art of peace. It's  
about knowing ourselves.

JOE  
Yes, but...

CHRIS  
We try to learn how to flow along  
with life's up and down currents  
instead of battling real or  
imagined adversaries.

JOE  
Yes but...

CHRIS  
"Yes, but." One of the most  
problematical phrases ever  
invented.

JOE  
(insistent)  
Yes, but I can tell that you could  
have laid that guy out.

CHRIS  
Maybe knowing that you can do  
something is enough.

JOE  
But...

CHRIS  
Now I am sleeping.

Chris's breathing quiets. Joe shuts off the iPad and thinks  
about what Chris said.

EXT. SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A jetliner lands.

INT. SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

When Chris and Joe exit passport control, they're greeted excitedly by two CHINESE BUSINESSMEN, old friends of Joe.

The businessmen unfold a huge map with stars on it identifying places that they will be taking Joe and Chris.

And so the journey of a lifetime begins.

INT. CHINESE TAI CHI CENTER

Chris observes a class led by a very old, celebrated Chinese Tai Chi master. The class is magnificent, and Chris is thrilled when the master gestures for Chris to participate.

The Chinese Master invites Chris to the front of the room where the two take turns demonstrating various moves--to the delight of the Chinese students.

When done, the Chinese Master and Chris bow to each other.

CHINESE MASTER

(in Chinese)

Thank you for coming to my class.

JOE

(translating)

Thank you for participating.

CHRIS

(in English, to the  
Chinese Master)

The trip coming here was long. But now it seems like nothing. Thank you for teaching me.

JOE

(translates Chris's words  
into Chinese)

The Chinese students applaud.

INT. CHILDREN'S SCHOOL

Chris watches kids 5 years old practicing Tai Chi. They invite him to participate, and he does.

INT. TV STUDIO

On a morning show two CHINESE TV HOSTS, a man and a woman, interview Chris. Joe is on the stage with him.

FEMALE HOST  
(in English)  
So, Chris, why did you come to  
China?

Joe looks at Chris, wondering what he'll reveal. Chris gives Joe a wink, then faces the hosts.

CHRIS  
Tai Chi has become the center of my  
life. I thought I was a master, but  
my good friend Joe suggested I  
might learn something by coming to  
the source of my practice.

FEMALE HOST  
Yet you are a noted teacher.

CHRIS  
A great Chinese saying explains:  
"Every teacher must be a student."

MALE HOST  
Would you be willing to give us a  
lesson? Us and the 50 million  
people who watch our program?

Chris leads the two hosts in a Tai Chi lesson.

INT. WORKING PERSON'S RESTAURANT - SIMULTANEOUS

People in the restaurant watch the lesson on TV. Many rise and practice along with the two hosts on the screen.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - DAY

TV sets in the window are tuned to the show. Passers-by stop and some of them participate in the lesson.

INT. HOUSING FACILITY FOR OLD CHINESE PEOPLE

RESIDENTS in the center watch the show, and some of them get up and practice Tai Chi along with the hosts on the TV.

## INT. POSH CHINESE RESTAURANT

When Chris and Joe enter with the Chinese Businessmen, people eating in the restaurant applaud.

Chris is surprised until the MAITRE D' points to the huge a flat TV screen near the bar.

MAITRE D'

We saw you on the morning show.

He then performs a Tai Chi form.

JOE

(to Chris)

You're becoming a celebrity.

## MONTAGE

On a whirlwind tour of China, Chris, Joe, and the businessmen visit famous landmarks such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, the Summer Palace--plus places only locals know about.

They visit museums, factories, and schools at all levels.

At each place, Chris demonstrates his approach to Tai Chi and learns from Chinese practitioners: young, old, city dwellers, and farmers. Chris even gives a lesson on a bullet train.

The Chinese clearly are fascinated by Chris's Tai Chi approach, and it's clear that Chris is learning a great deal.

End of montage.

## EXT. CHENGUANG'S VILLAGE - DAY

This is the place where Joe's grandmother grew up.

Joe and Chris meet Joe's COUSINS and other RELATIVES. Using FaceTime on Joe's smartphone, the relatives talk with Chenguang back in Palo Alto.

While a feast is being prepared, Joe leads Chris a short distance from the crowd.

JOE

I've been thinking about Eric.

CHRIS

Is he worth thinking about?

JOE

I hate remembering that he beat me.

CHRIS

Hate is at the heart of so many conflicts, big and small.

Joe uses a hand to brush away Chris's homily.

JOE

When I gave you a copy of the game, what happened?

CHRIS

It doesn't matter.

JOE

You figured out how to beat him, didn't you?

Chris shrugs. Joe smiles, knowing that he guessed correctly.

JOE (CONT'D)

I understand that you don't like fighting, but tell me how you defeated that son of a bitch.

Joe's face expresses the rage he feels toward Eric. Chris puts a hand on Joe's shoulder, to calm him down.

CHRIS

I'm not sure that you're ready.

JOE

I need to find out.

With great intensity Chris studies Joe's face.

JOE (CONT'D)

Teach me.

Chris uses his hands to illustrate how he overcame Eric. One hand represents Chris, the other Eric. The hands move in a slow, beautiful Tai Chi way--a kind of dance. Chris triumphs by allowing Eric to defeat himself.

Joe watches, mesmerized.

The instruction is wordless but clear.

When Chris finishes, Joe gives him a hug.

JOE (CONT'D)

I gotta try it.

Joe takes out his smartphone and moves a finger toward the game icon on his screen. But before he can tap it...

...with the speed of a black mamba making a strike, Chris knocks the phone out of Joe's hand.

Astonished, Joe looks at Chris.

CHRIS

Eric has a way of using the phone to spy. If you practice the moves, he'll see what you're doing and might find a counter-move.

JOE

So where can I practice what you' taught me?

Chris taps Joe's head.

CHRIS

In here.

Joe closes his eyes and envisions the combat.

EXT. SHANGHAI BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

A limousine moves through traffic.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

In the sitting area, Chris, Joe, and Joe's two business friends watch the passing scene.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN 1

We have enjoyed getting to know you, Chris.

CHRIS

This was the best trip of my life.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN 2

Just one more site to visit.

EXT. SHANGHAI BUSINESS PARK - DAY

The limo pulls up in front of an impressive building with two signs: one in Chinese and the other in English. The English sign reads "2Morrow Digital: Shanghai Division."

Across the street in a park is a huge tent of the sort used for special events. There's much activity around the tent.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Businessman 1 points to a sculpture garden in front the 2Morrow building.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN 1  
(to Chris)  
The best contemporary Chinese sculptors are represented here.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN 2  
We think you'll enjoy a closer look.

The Chinese businessmen lead Chris and Joe toward the sculptures.

CHINESE BUSINESSMAN 2 (CONT'D)  
Joe chose the sculptures himself.  
And here's a new one.

The businessman moves to a sculpture hidden by a canvas cover. He removes it and reveals a piece by Tara capturing Chris in a Tai Chi move.

CHRIS  
(to Joe)  
For a nerd, you've got good taste.

Chris hugs Joe.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

Suddenly two CHINESE SECURITY GUARDS approach on the run.

SECURITY GUARD 1  
(to Joe)  
Yang Chen. You have been banished from all 2Morrow properties. As such, you're guilty of trespassing.

SECURITY GUARD 2  
(to Chris)  
Let me see your identification paper.

Chris hands Security Guard 2 his passport. The guard inspects it carefully, giving the impression that he thinks Chris might be a spy.

SECURITY GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

This is a serious breach of security, but as it's a first offense, we will overlook it.

SECURITY GUARD 1

However, you must vacate the property and promise never again to violate this space.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Now it is our duty to escort you off this campus.

The Security Guards lead Chris and Joe toward the sidewalk. But instead of stopping at the limo, they point toward the tent across the street.

SECURITY GUARD 1

We must first clear you with top authorities.

JOE

What are you talking about? We're not going over there.

SECURITY GUARD 2

We can invite the police to help if you insist.

CHRIS

(to Joe)

Maybe it's best that we play along.

SECURITY GUARD 2

(to Chris)

Ah, an American with wisdom.

CHRIS

Just scared.

SECURITY GUARD 2

Sometimes fear is wisdom.

The guards push Chris and Joe across the street and to the tent.

EXT. TENT ENTRANCE - DAY

The guards point for Chris and Joe to enter.

INT. TENT - DAY

As Chris and Joe enter, a SHOUT from a crowd fills the air.

We now see that the tent contains about a hundred Chinese, most of them young and all of them cheering Joe as if it's a surprise birthday party.

JOE  
(to Chris)  
Oh, my God. These are the people I  
worked with here.

Members of the crowd rush forward and take Joe's hand, slap his back, and otherwise demonstrate their affection.

One member of the group, CHANG BOQIN, 30, climbs onto a chair and makes a speech.

BOQIN  
Joe, hope you enjoyed our little  
play. We could have sent you a  
text. Maybe we've been spending too  
much time playing games.

Joe casts a suspicious eye toward the beefy security guards.

BOQIN (CONT'D)  
Yes, they were in on it. A prize-  
winning performance.

Joe realizes it was all a farce, and he laughs.

BOQIN (CONT'D)  
We got a memo from corporate that  
you are no longer welcome in the  
building. Which is why we all  
chipped in for this tent. We are  
dismayed that the board turned you  
out. We want to let you know how  
much we respect and love you.

Joe opens his mouth to say thanks, but he's overcome with emotion. Boqin sees tears on Joe's cheek.

BOQIN (CONT'D)  
Here's something new, everybody.  
Joe crying instead of making us cry  
with his slave-driving methods.

Lots of hoots and laughter from the crowd.

BOQIN (CONT'D)

What did he used to tell us to get  
us to work so hard?

Boqin scratches his chin as if he's forgotten the phrase.

THE CROWD

(Chinese with subtitles)  
Make it right! Make it right!

BOQIN

You worked us hard, but we did good  
things thanks to your leadership.  
We are so glad you took this trip  
to China even under bad conditions.  
We wanted to tell you personally  
that we are ready to quit 2Morrow  
Digital and join you in any new  
venture you may create.

Voices in the crowd call out "Yes. We want to work with you,  
Joe." "Let's start again." "We're with you."

Joe regains his composure. Boqin climbs down and gestures for  
Joe to climb up and address the group.

The crowd applauds.

JOE

I never felt so bad in my life as  
when the board members, who I  
thought of as friends, betrayed me.

The crowd boos.

JOE (CONT'D)

But it was worth the pain to be  
received like this from you. I will  
never forget it.

The crowd cheers.

JOE (CONT'D)

Finding a good job is not easy. I  
would not want any of you to give  
up your work as a protest. So I say  
to you that you should keep going  
at 2Morrow Digital. After all, who  
knows what tomorrow will bring?

The crowd cheers.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 (to Boqin)  
 I'm concerned that by leaving the  
 office, you will be penalized.

BOQIN  
 (laughs)  
 Our Shanghai management team helped  
 arranged this whole thing.

Boqin indicates four MANAGERS who have stationed themselves  
 in the background. They bow to Joe.

BOQIN (CONT'D)  
 The bosses here encouraged us to  
 surprise you. The only thing they  
 forgot to do was to notify the  
 board in Silicon Valley.

The crowd laughs. The managers look embarrassed but pleased.

BOQIN (CONT'D)  
 Now, let us eat.

Servers appear with platters of beautiful Chinese food.

Some of the 2Morrow Digital workers gather around Chris,  
 wanting to get to know him and to practice their English.

Chris demonstrates Tai Chi and others join him. He watches  
 their performances with great interest.

Joe's phone signals an incoming text. It's from Eric. The  
 message reads: "Wanna fight or are you chicken."

Joe texts: "You want to humiliate me in front of my friends?"

Eric texts: "Yeah!"

Joe signals that he wants to tell the crowd something.

JOE  
 I'd like to demonstrate the new  
 game. My opponent will be Eric.

The crowd boos. Joe gestures for the boos to stop.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 Eric is our guest. A virtual guest,  
 but still a guest.

Eric's avatar appears. Joe taps the phone to launch his own  
 avatar.

The crowd OOOHS and AHS.

A memorable confrontation ensues. The acrobatic movements astonish everyone in the tent.

The combat is intense. The two virtual foes are evenly matched and the outcome is in doubt at first.

Then, using the insights that Chris provided, Joe gains the upper hand. But instead of pummeling Eric, Joe's moves make it impossible for Eric's avatar to land a blow.

Finally, Eric is utterly vanquished. But instead of killing him, Joe steps back and bows to his enemy. Eric's avatar disappears.

The crowd roars.

INT. POSH HOTEL: LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Chris and Joe relax after the day's festivities.

JOE

I had no idea they felt that way about me.

CHRIS

Maybe you weren't looking.

JOE

You might be right. In the past it was always about the computer code.

CHRIS

That focus helped make your products so good, but maybe also explained why life wasn't as wonderful for you as it could be.

JOE

I wanted this trip to be for you. And now look how it turned out. The best time of my life.

CHRIS

I'm glad I was here to see it.

JOE

I really believe all of them would have quit.

CHRIS

Will you start another high tech  
company and hire them?

Joe shakes his head.

JOE

They don't need me. They're ready  
to go off on their own. And  
besides, I have another idea.

Joe takes out a pen and begins to draw on the tablecloth.  
It's a store front. The name on it is Play Tai Chi.

Joe draws a logo and the interior design.

JOE (CONT'D)

It'll be a franchise. First in  
Silicon Valley. Then throughout  
California. Then the whole country.

CHRIS

Mississippi isn't the same thing as  
California.

JOE

Tai Chi is universal. My meflipntor  
and best friend taught me that.

Joe sketches book covers, videos, T-shirts, and all sorts of  
products that'll be sold in each Play Tai Chi facility.

Joe pulls a flip book from his pocket. He flips the pages.

CLOSE-UP FLIP BOOK: The little animation shows one of the Tai  
Chi forms. Joe's drawings are beautiful.

Joe hands the flip book to Chris, who plays with it.

A STRANGER at the bar sees the flip book and gestures that he  
wants to try it.

JOE (CONT'D)

(to the stranger)  
A free sample.

STRANGER

(in Chinese)  
Thank you.

CHRIS  
(in Chinese, remembering  
what Joe's grandmother  
taught him)  
You're welcome.

Joe turns to Chris and lowers his voice, treating the situation like a business pitch meeting.

JOE  
There's such a big market for this stuff.

CHRIS  
You're really going to monetize Tai Chi?

JOE  
From your lips to my bankers.

Chris grins.

CHRIS  
You are consistent.

JOE  
Does that mean you're in with me?

CHRIS  
I don't know. I've never been big on monetization.

JOE  
Well, here's an idea: What if we make it free?

CHRIS  
That's the last thing in the world I'd expect a capitalist like you to come up with.

JOE  
Actually, it was Becky's idea. And she got an A on it in her marketing class.

CHRIS  
I don't get it.

JOE  
Treat it as priceless. People will pay what they can. Sure, some people want something for nothing. But plenty give what they can.

CHRIS

Maybe so. I once knew a guy who bought a storefront so that his friend's business wouldn't fail.

The two men hug.

JOE

Are you in?

Chris signals with his hands that he's not sure.

JOE (CONT'D)

You love China. Well, we can expand here in three months. You'll run the Asian division.

CHRIS

I have to wait three months before coming back here?

JOE

Patience, that's what my Tai Chi master taught me.

CHRIS

I didn't teach you anything, Joe. You did what everyone successful learner does. You taught yourself.

JOE

This is all going to work out.

Suddenly a problem occurs to Chris.

CHRIS

I'm not sure that Tara will want to move here.

JOE

Who wouldn't want to experience this place? And wait until she hears about all the upscale galleries.

CHRIS

Monetizing sculpture?

JOE

She'll make a killing.

INT. SHANGHAI AIRPORT: GATE AREA - DAY

The vast place is packed with people of every ethnicity and age. A snapshot of the scene could illustrate the Wikipedia entry on "Humankind."

GATE ATTENDANT (O.C.)  
 (over a loud speaker)  
 Flight 625 to San Francisco has  
 been delayed for three hours.  
 Please stay in this area for  
 updates.

People waiting to get onto the plane GROAN.

Some shout at the gate attendants. There's pushing and shoving. Many folks talk angrily into their smartphones.

Joe looks around and sees an opportunity.

JOE  
 (to Chris)  
 I hear Destiny knocking.

Not having a clue what's about to happen, Chris watches intently as Joe climbs up on an electric cart.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 (loudly first in Chinese  
 and then in English)  
 Hey everybody. I have an idea.

At first, only people near Joe pay any attention. Those who notice him react as if he's a madman.

But Joe ignores them. He enthusiastically waves his arms and continues booming out a message:

JOE (CONT'D)  
 Let's use this delay to do  
 something really wonderful.

A few people exhibit interest. That interest moves out like a wave. Gradually, the room quiets.

JOE (CONT'D)  
 We have with us one of the world's  
 great Tai Chi teachers: Chris  
 Manley.

Joe points down at Chris who remains seated. Chris covers his head with his hands, not wanting any part of whatever Joe is doing.

JOE (CONT'D)  
Chris has taught Tai Chi in the  
U.S. and throughout China.

CROWD MEMBER 1  
I saw him on TV.

CROWD MEMBER 2  
He was great.

CROWD MEMBER 3  
The People's Daily did a feature on  
him.

JOE  
If you give Chris encouragement,  
he'll lead a class right here,  
previewing what he's going to be  
teaching in a thousand Tai Chi  
studios around the globe.

CROWD  
(chanting)  
Chris! Chris! Chris!

Chris refuses to get up.

JOE  
(whispers to Chris)  
If you don't teach them, I will.  
And I'll make it my "Talking Tai  
Chi multi-tasking method."

Chris's expression says, "Oh God, not that!"

CROWD  
Chris! Chris! Chris!

Chris looks around. Thousands of eyes are on him. Many people  
in the crowd use their smartphones to take video.

Chris stands.

CROWD (CONT'D)  
(cheers)

Chris demonstrates the first form.

A few people respond by imitating Chris's move. Then a few  
more. Then a lot more.

Slowly, everyone in the waiting area joins in, even the gate  
attendants, the pilots, the stewardesses, security guards,  
janitors, old people and children.

It's a FLASH MOB...for Tai Chi.

The noise fades. The rage that was there dissipates.

Joe uses his phone to record the event from a variety of angles. He takes in the whole scene. He snatches dramatic close-ups. No one pays attention to him. They are all into the Tai Chi experience.

Joe suddenly lowers his phone and turns directly toward the camera, facing us--the audience--and he breaks the fourth wall.

JOE

(to the camera)

This is going to make a fantastic commercial.

JOE'S COMMERCIAL (IMAGINED)

Joe's "Play Tai Chi" commercials appears on TVs, tablets, and billboards. The commercial contains scenes of the flashmob intercut with scenes of Play Tai Chi studios that have opened in all sorts of places: big cities, villages, rich areas, ghettos. Many countries are represented: Spain, Australia, Russia, France, Germany, the U.S., and of course China.

In one of the Play Tai Chi studios, we see Ted Forester--the bullying husband who confronted Chris in the airport--and his wife Janet. The two of them now are serenely doing Tai Chi together. They look like real lovers.

In another studio, Joe's grandmother is doing Tai Chi next to a young child. Behind them, we see Chris's former landlord.

And then there's a shot of Joe and Becky.

RETURN TO SHANGHAI AIRPORT: GATE AREA

Now as more and more people join Chris in performing Tai Chi, the huge room becomes absolutely silent. We sense each person finding peace.

FADE OUT.