

LIFE IS LIKE LINT

February, 1999

Gerald Saul

## Introduction

I began shooting this film on December 31, 1992, *without a script*. I had received a grant from the Saskatchewan FilmPool Co-operative to purchase some film stock and to begin. Later, still without a script, I received money from the Canada Council and from the SaskFilm Special Projects fund. All I knew was that the film was to be about my relationship with Margaret. I experimented with adapting real situations into fictional scenarios with the hope of distilling an essential truth. For example, the verite scene taking place at a reception after Wilbur's film screening was in fact shot in early 1993 at a reception for *Dread*, my 25 minute long film. As I play Wilbur in *Lint*, the film became a melding of fiction and documentary. This process was a guiding force in the evolution of film.

If I had completed the film in 1994, Wilbur and Helen would not be the characters they became. The process of life continued to inform the story.

In the spring of 1994, I was accepted into graduate school at York University. Margaret and I packed up everything from our apartment and put it into storage and headed on our summer vacation, up the Alaska Highway. I shot colour reversal film on that trip, which I processed as negative. At the end of the summer, I shot the scaffold and balloon segments on the Bessai farm near Southey, Saskatchewan. With a two hour assembly of the film under my arm, I set off for Toronto, planning a quick finish for *Lint* at York. In 1996, at the completion of my MFA, I had accomplished my thesis film and paper in two years but had spent only two days looking at *Lint*.

The longer I went without working on *Lint*, the more I began to doubt the validity of my approach. It was with trepidation that I sat down at the editing bench to review the project. However, with a fresh mind, I quickly began to see even more possibilities for the film. I cut scenes until it ran under 80 minutes.

I was inspired to shoot more footage. Wilbur and Helen had grown and changed. The puppet show in the epilogue reflects Wilbur and Helen's growth both metaphorically and actually. Margaret and I had collaborated on a similar puppet video, "The Golem of Socks", at York.

Early in the spring of 1998 I began to write in earnest, constructing voice-overs based on real experiences. I extracted text from my personal journals and especially from the travel journal that Margaret and I had written up north. Script completed, I began to record voices. The words were shaped around and against the backdrop of the footage to create a collage of the real and fictional. Image and voice correspond indirectly, building multiple layers of meaning.

*Life Is Like Lint* began with its title. I instinctively knew that this title was the key to the story but it me took five years to understand why. "Lint" is about the unavoidable triviality of everyday life which is the fabric of our society. We are storytellers - not of epic tales but rather of mundane day to day events. If we were to stop telling our stories, no matter how meaningless or untrue those stories may seem, we would cease discussion of the greater truths.

Gerald Saul - writer/director - February, 1999

PROLOGUE: IN WHICH THE RESULT OF TAKING THE TRIVIAL ASPECTS OF LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY IS  
DEPICTED THROUGH A PARABLE.

1 TITLE CARD  
"A Film By Gerald Saul"

NARRATOR

Someday, all films will be made this way.

2 ANIMATION - BILL, THE PERFECT GUY  
Cut-out style animation using a mixture of photographs and  
drawings is used to visually underline the following story.

ANIMATION NARRATOR

This is the planet earth. Everybody thinks that Christopher Columbus proved it to be round. Actually, it's not. It bulges in the middle like a short fat guy waiting in line for lottery tickets. This is Bill. Bill was a perfectionist. He did everything the way he wanted to all of the time because, he decided, he always knew the very best way. He wore a necktie every day, even on Saturdays. Bill liked the ballet but he never went. Ballet dancers sometimes make mistakes. The sun always rises in the east, without fail, every day, even on Saturdays. That is why Bill liked the east and always planned to move there. He owned a very unhappy dog which he named Rover, even though it was never allowed to rove anywhere. Rover also wore something around his neck every day. It was a collar which sent radar signals. An alarm would sound if Rover ever tried to leave the yard. Every July first, Bill would take Rover to watch the fireworks. One year Rover saw another dog. This dog's name was spot because it had one big spot on its face. Rover and spot ran off to play. Bill noticed that Rover was nowhere to be seen when the fireworks ended. Bill wanted nothing to do with such an irresponsible dog, so he went home. Now Bill lives alone in his perfect little house. Bill believes he is happy, so he is. The end.

ACT 1: IN WHICH WILBUR AND HELEN MEET AND WILBUR MUST DECIDE IF HE IS WILLING TO CHANGE.

3       TITLE CARD  
          "Feature Presentation"

4       INT DAY - NURSING HOME  
Aunt Verna is sitting in chair beside her bed. Wilbur enters and crouches beside her.

                                  WILBUR  
Hi Verna. Hi Verna. Hi, it's me. How are you doing? I'm starting a new film. I just got the film stock in. It's all in my fridge. It's going to take me a while to do it but I really want you to see it. Okay? How are you feeling? Here, a chocolate. Would you like a chocolate? No? Here. I just wanted to thank you for helping me out while I make my film. Hang in there. Everything's okay.

5       TITLE CARD  
          "Life Is Like Lint"

6       EXT DAY - CITY SCAPES OF REGINA  
Series of shots of Regina city streets in black and white. Music from titles fades out.

                                  NARRATOR  
Once upon a time there was a filmmaker named Wilbur Reykdal who had a girlfriend who hated him. She used to fill his head with stories aimed at driving him insane. On this particular day, Wilbur would discover that his loveless relationship had suddenly ended ... while he napped.

7       INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM  
Wilbur wakes up on his couch, leans up into the shot and sleepily calls out.

                                  WILBUR  
Stacy! Stacy, is there any more coffee? Stacy?

8 ANIMATION

SCREAMING CARROT

Flapping randy swine! My family jewels! Heaven and earth moved! Butt plug in left ear. And then, the universe exploded!

As the carrot continues to scream, its roots rise up and strangle it, squeezing it into a thin twig. Its scream becomes the sound of a telephone ringing.

9 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM

Wilbur is playing cards as his phone rings. He answers. We hear only one side of the conversation.

WILBUR

Hello. Oh, not much.

....oh yeah, Stacy left me.

10 EXT DAY - REGINA

Wilbur's phone conversation continues as a voice over black and white images of Regina city streets.

WILBUR

Yeah, I guess I was expecting it but I'm still pretty upset. My apartment feels... I mean I feel really empty. She's gone and I know something is missing. Listen, do you know what that is? (pause) It's the sound of grime drying onto the dishes in my sink. Everyone was expecting to see her, if not in this scene, then at least in the next, (listens) No, she won't be coming back. Actually I never cast anyone to play her in the first place.

11 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM

Wilbur continues to talk on phone and play cards.

WILBUR

Well, as you'll soon see, it is a film about me and Margaret, except I'll call her Helen. ... That's about it. I guess from the start it was just a device for us to make something together. It's taken quite a while but I think in the end we've really built up our emotional as well as our creative relationship. The trick is in what isn't seen.

11 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM (CONTINUED)

WILBUR (CONTINUED)

Like this photo of Elvis. If we could see his face, then we would know if it truly is the king or not. Without it, we can't immediately denounce it as a fake. Oh, I've got to go, the plot is about to thicken.

12 ANIMATION

With all of the "Stacy" narrated animation, the image consists of variations of Wilbur's face being manipulated via cut out photo animation.

STACY (V/O)

At a convenience store on the other end of town one of the guys that worked there used to fish the paper cups out of the garbage and re-sell them so the inventory would look better, but when all of his regular customers got mono at the same time and the store started losing money, they fired him.

13 INT DAY - HELEN'S BEDROOM

Helen is reading a book.

NARRATOR

Fate, as it only happens in the movies, is about to trompe on Helen Bauer.

The phone rings, Helen answers it. Some dogs barking can be heard faintly through the phone.

HELEN

Hello. Oh hi Jeff. You can't make it tonight? I guess I can go without you. Hello? Jeff, what's that noise?

14 ANIMATION - JEFF AND DOGS

An animated version of Jeff stands on a chair with phone in hand while dogs bite at his feet.

JEFF

Sorry, can't talk now. Got to go.

15 INT DAY - HELEN'S BEDROOM  
Helen can hear nothing but the dogs.

HELEN  
Jeff? Jeff? Hmmm. Weird.

Helen hangs up the phone.

16 INT DAY - BARBER SHOP  
Rapid hand-held pixilated images of Wilbur getting his hair dyed and rinsed.

WILBUR (v/o)  
I was one of many who were raised on moralistic cartoons which told us that looks don't matter, that someone who is ugly can have a heart of gold; that beauty is only skin deep. I also grew up on playgrounds where people who looked different were picked on and not treated as well as others. Now, years later, it's apparent that people who are treated differently become different. It's the nurture part of the nature/nurture thing. So while maybe our personalities aren't originally based on what we look like, we do become who we are perceived to be. Image and hair. That's the only way I can explain it.

17 INT NIGHT - FILM THEATRE  
Film opening poster then interior theatre. Intercut JAMES watching in terror with ANIMATION of Screaming Banana.

SCREAMING BANANA  
Life is like lint. Sometimes, it gets stuck in your belly button, all safe and secure, but other times you have to vacuum it up off the carpet.

18 INT NIGHT - FILM THEATRE LOBBY  
Film reception in the lobby. Camera moves around verite style.

GEOFF YATES  
I love the hand. This is what kills me.

18 INT NIGHT - FILM THEATRE LOBBY (CONTINUED)



TODD IRVING

Sounds like a coffee grinder.

RICHARD KERR

Oh my god, we were just talking about you, you're drifting farther from the life raft of sanity is what I say.

JAMES WHITTINGHAM

Art is things that are colourful and have a lot of lines, like the veins in my legs when I'm old. I'm slowly becoming art.

ATTENDIE

Art isn't here right now, he's uh...

WILBUR

Hi

HELEN

Hi

WILBUR

Ever been in the movies?

HELEN

Uhhhhh....

19 INT DAY - CLAY STUDIO

Helen and Karen in clay studio.

HELEN

.... me in a film? I could just see it now, I would be "The Starlet".

20 INT DAY - WILBUR'S APARTMENT

Wilbur is sitting on his couch thinking.

21 ANIMATION

STACY

Underneath a cemetery in Saskatoon there used to be a water storage area but it was supposed to have been filled in over fifty years ago. I met a guy who had a friend who was really into occult stuff up there and he once went down under the cemetery. It's all been tunnelled

21 ANIMATION (CONTINUED)

STACY (CONTINUED)

out and there were circles and pentagrams all over the ground. The place was crawling with accountants and lawyers and school teachers, praying to the devil for more money and better cars.

22 INT NIGHT - WILBUR'S APARTMENT

Wilbur is sitting on the couch when the buzzer sounds. Wilbur gets up to answer it off-screen.

WILBUR

Hello?

HELEN

Hi. It's me, Helen. Can I come up?

WILBUR

Come on up.

Sound of door opening off-screen and Helen entering.

HELEN

Hi.

WILBUR

Hi, thanks for coming. Come on in.

They enter the shot and sit on couch.

HELEN

I brought you something

WILBUR

Thanks.

HELEN

(Laughs) I knew you'd love it.

WILBUR

It's a toaster.

HELEN

You kind of reminded me of a small appliance kind of guy.

WILBUR

You know I collect these.

22 INT NIGHT - WILBUR'S APARTMENT (CONTINUED)

HELEN

Do you really? How many do you have?

WILBUR

I was going to collect them. I collect them now. I have one. So; we're going to shoot some tomorrow. The ice castle is set up, they set it up the other day. It's only up for a couple days and so if we go around noon, one, grab a couple shots, maybe go for coffee afterwards... you'll be great. It'll be fine.

HELEN

What's it about?

WILBUR

Well, there's this guy and...

HELEN

Is there a script I can read?

WILBUR

I've got some rushes back we could look at. I haven't even seen them myself yet.

Wilbur exits and returns with a 16mm projector.

HELEN

Good grief, you actually have a projector. Is it yours.

WILBUR

Well, I sort of have possession of it.

HELEN

Sort of have possession of it? It's really cool. It has that projector smell to it.

WILBUR (holding up film)

I have it right here.

HELEN

Cool, that's really neat.

22 INT NIGHT - WILBUR'S APARTMENT (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

I hope that it works.

HELEN

It's not reliable is it.

WILBUR

I'll just hang this up here. Okay. I'll get this light and we'll have to get this other light. Find this thing, what the hell....

23 IMAGES ON FILM SCREEN - EYE, MOON ECLIPSE, SHADOWS, DINOSAURS

HELEN

It's a bit dark isn't it?

WILBUR

They can lighten it up at the lab.

HELEN

I mean, a bit depressing.

WILBUR

Yeah, I was going for a mood thing. You like it huh? ...

HELEN

So isn't there a script?

WILBUR

I don't really like to be tied down by those sorts of conventions. I feel it's better for my work if I just let the work guide itself, to take on a life of its own. It's going along just fine without one so far.

HELEN

Is it really? At the beginning of this scene, you had me just sitting on the couch and I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing or thinking. Now that you've typed out words for me, I have a clearer idea of who I am, but I'm still just a two dimension representation of the object of your .... desire? Hey! What's that supposed to mean?

22 INT NIGHT - WILBUR'S APARTMENT (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

Why should it matter!? It's my film and I should get to dictate what everyone says in it. I only have one viewpoint so what do you expect? The film is just an extension of me and what I think about.

HELEN

Well if you take that standpoint, what will you say if the film bombs? By taking all the responsibility, you've also forfeited all your options to cast off blame. No more believable deniability.

WILBUR

Then I better make this the best film I can.

HELEN

The best film you can make on \$25,000.

WILBUR

Yeah. But back to what we're looking at, the film within the film - what do you really think?

Images on screen change to home movies of babies and children playing.

HELEN

I don't know. It's just weird, dark imagery without any soul or... wait, what's this (laugh).

WILBUR

Oh shit, I didn't mean that to be there.

HELEN

Who are they?

WILBUR

My nieces and nephews. I just shot a bit...

HELEN

You have family?

22 INT NIGHT - WILBUR'S APARTMENT (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

No, I was just found under a log one day.

HELEN  
Sorry, it's just that you don't seem like someone  
who...

WILBUR  
Who what?

HELEN  
(long pause) Yes.

WILBUR  
(pause) Yes? Yes what?

HELEN  
Yes, I'd like to be in your film.

WILBUR  
Cool. (pause) Bring mitts.

24 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN  
James and Wilbur are sitting at the table.

JAMES  
That's what it is, isn't it? You're crazy about  
her.

WILBUR  
No.

JAMES  
That's right. You could get anyone for the part.  
The eyes don't make the actress.  
It's you.

WILBUR  
Cheesecake?

JAMES  
Sure.

WILBUR  
It's on the plate.

JAMES  
How long has it been sitting there?

24 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN (CONTINUED)

WILBUR  
Oh, I don't know.

JAMES

Well, if you're not in love with her, you could at least look for another actress.

WILBUR

I'm shooting in two hours.

JAMES

I'd do it.

25 ANIMATION

STACY

There's a place in Moose Jaw that will buy used brides maids and high school grad dresses for ten bucks or something and they cut them into mini dresses and sell them in a chi chi boutique in Toronto for two hundred bucks. I knew this girl who moved from Regina to Toronto and started acting really stuck up, as if being married and living in Toronto was some big deal. The last time I saw her she was showing off one of these dresses because it matched the brides maid dresses from her wedding and I just laughed and didn't tell her.

26 EXT DAY - ICE CASTLE

Wilbur is setting up the camera, seen from viewpoint of the camera. Behind him is an ice castle and Helen.

WILBUR

(to self) I just don't want to be in love again. I don't want to go through that.  
(Shout) Okay, camera's rolling, let's go NOW.

Wilbur and Helen run around ice castle in fast motion. Music plays loud and fast. They kiss and Wilbur rushes back to turn off the camera.

27 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN  
James and Wilbur are sitting at the table.

JAMES  
You know, you don't pay them and...

WILBUR  
Good news, I'm in love.

JAMES  
You're in love. So you admit it now. But I don't  
know what I'm going to do.  
Everything's cut off. I'm probably  
never going to get a job if nobody  
can phone me.

WILBUR  
Salsa?

JAMES  
Sure. Change the subject. Don't listen to my story  
because you're in love.

WILBUR  
Gets your heart beating.

JAMES  
Looks like a ground up gopher. Bad chocolate  
experience.

WILBUR  
Yeah, road kill.

JAMES  
If you like it, fine. Have you got any more of  
that cheesecake?

WILBUR  
Yeah.

JAMES  
That's my piece from yesterday. The piece to begin  
with was sitting around for a week.

WILBUR  
Saved it for you.

JAMES  
You're not much a host.

28 EXT DAY - SNOWY FIELD



Wilbur and Helen walk through the snow towards three bins.

Helen

Tell me about her.

Wilbur

She used to make so much sense to me. Now there are only fragments, only fleeting words. We had good times, never fought or anything.

Helen

Then how did you guys break up? Did you just talk about it and decide or what?

Wilbur

Not really. As time went on I suppose we talked less and less, like we had used each other up. In fact the only conversations I remember having with her now were rather one sided. She would turn to me and tell me a story, something outrageous but as if she had just heard it a moment before. I can still hear those stories, they were all screwed up and full of paranoia, just like her.

29 EXT DAY - SUMMER PORCH

Wilbur and Helen are making the "walking in snow" sounds by squeezing two boxes of baking soda. Above dialogue continues.

30 EXT DAY - SNOWY FIELD

Wilbur and Helen continue walking across snow with above dialogue.

31 ANIMATION

STACY

There was a guy I knew in high school named Johnny. I think his last name started with a 'D' because everyone else in his homeroom's name started with 'D', but I never knew because everyone called him Johnny Thickneck 'cause his neck was so thick. One time he asked me out on a date in front of a bunch of people and I was so embarrassed that I got

31 ANIMATION (CONTINUED)

STACY (CONTINUED)

another guy to key his car. I just heard that Johnny Thickneck finished law school and has a really high paying job and travels all around the world but I can't call him because I don't know his name.

32 INT DAY - JO'S APARTMENT

"Mouse" dashes around in its cage.

HELEN

We think of our friends as normal, except when we describe them to others, like my friend who has a gerbil that has its own condo complex, a multi-layered den around which it roams freely. When my friend would bake, she'd feed her gerbil bits of food off her fingertips. One day, "Mouse", that was its name, got so high on coffee that it bit her finger and drew blood.

33 EXT DAY - BEAVER STATUE IN PARK

Wilbur and Helen sit below a giant gopher.

WILBUR

...then Larry says "The caps lock didn't work! I was so mad, I'm thinking of putting a nail under his back tire" so I ask him, "Did you talk to him?" and Larry says "Oh, I didn't think of that". So I tell him "I'd talk to him" but Larry says "It's been too long. I had it months before I noticed it didn't work".

HELEN

Funny.

WILBUR

Oh, but Larry doesn't hate everybody. You just have to understand what qualities he values most. Larry told me about his best friend; "He was the best. He lent me his truck when I was drunk, even though I didn't have my licence."

33 EXT DAY - BEAVER STATUE IN PARK (CONTINUED)

HELEN

But he wasn't your friend. Don't you have any other friends, other than... her?

WILBUR

Oh, there are people I see...

34 INT DAY - UTOPIA CAFE

Roger Ing shows some painting to Wilbur then plays a note on a saxophone.

WILBUR

...but I've drifted away from them, or them from me, I don't know. Time drags us slowly away from the celebration of life. I guess I don't really socialize much anymore. (pause) There's something about the short summer nights that compels us to want to make the most of its short cloak of darkness, to value the moments when the heat subsides so that, momentarily, we can rise to our feet. inhale deeply without panting, and climb the ladder of straw up to the cloud of self awareness.

HELEN

Well! My friends are always good for a bit of that. Let's go see what Gerda and Joan are doing.

35 INT DAY - ENCLOSED PORCH

Nicole, a ten year old girl, dances.

JOAN (v/o)

Oh, Barbie, listen close now, it's near the end, it has to be. Smooth your stiff hands down the creamy smooth sides of your body, your skirt, your beautiful pastel edible oil self. It's almost done. Don't think we haven't tried Barbara, you know we have. We've prayed all manner of prayers, oh saint Barbie, mother of no one, sister to none, goddess of greed alone. Barbie. Barbara. Giver of only dissatisfaction with ourselves, of



37 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

It was a long time ago...

38 EXT DAY - ALLEY

Wilbur is diving into a dumpster. He pulls out a film can, opens it and holds some film up to the sky. Cut away to images of a monster and of two people at a sunset.

NARRATOR

According to HG Wells, vortexes can form within an automatic clothes dryer, where the krono-naughts spin and spin, drawing socks away to the end of history, a place with no water because it's all been boiled away and where little crab things crawl around in the rocks under the giant red sun.

39 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN

Wilbur and James at the kitchen table.

JAMES

That's it? A flashback!?

40 ANIMATION

STACY

When I was a kid I buried a Barbie doll in the back yard. When my parents got me to help put in a new fence, I found it again, except now it has Ken's head on it instead of Barbie's, even though I never had a Ken.

41 EXT DAY - FROG PARK

Wilbur and Helen walk into a park in which a large frog statue is standing.

WILBUR

It was rather smooth and glossy. Not at all like cheese.

HELEN

Look, this isn't easy for me to say but...

WILBUR

Yes.

41 EXT DAY - FROG PARK (CONTINUED)

HELEN

What do you mean yes?

WILBUR

Whatever. What was your question?

HELEN

No, I want to know what you are saying "yes" to.

WILBUR

To anything you ask.

HELEN

Do I have to explain how dumb that is?

WILBUR

Only if you want to fight about it.

HELEN

Fine.

(Long pause)

My mom called, she...

WILBUR

Your mom?

HELEN

Yeah, what did you think, I was found under a log?

WILBUR

Or grown in a potato patch and ... it's just that  
you never... Um, go on.

HELEN

(sigh) She wants me, needs me, to come home. And  
I...

WILBUR

You want to go.

HELEN

I have to.

WILBUR

What does this mean?

41 EXT DAY - FROG PARK (CONTINUED)

HELEN

I think you know. They are very traditional and

they wouldn't...

42 EXT NIGHT - FILMPOOL BUILDING ON FIRE

Large flames come out of the roof of a warehouse building.

TV NEWS VOICE

Fire broke out earlier this evening in this building which housed *Len's Lunch*. As well, the second floor was scheduled to be the new home of the Saskatchewan Filmpool co-op. The cause of the blaze has not yet been determined. Firefighters reached the scene and were....

WILBUR

(v/o the above tv voice)

Just when you think you know what you want, things suddenly begin to change.

43 INT DAY - WILBUR'S KITCHEN

Wilbur and James at the kitchen table.

WILBUR

I'm getting this feeling that she's thinking about something but I don't know what it is. What's it all about?

JAMES

Women are like toast. Sometimes you have to heat them up. Then they pop. Then you can have them. Work with her. I don't know. What do I know? Do you have any more of that cheesecake?

WILBUR

Yeah, it's over on the counter there.

JAMES

Oh God.

44 ANIMATION

STACY

I don't know how to play the violin but I bought one anyway. A friend of mine sold it to me for twenty bucks. He got it in trade for cab fare when he

was driving a cab. I asked him if the guy was going to come and ask for it back but he didn't think so because the guy had won the violin at a poker game. When I try to use it, I only make screeching noises but I carry it around anyway, just to look cool.

45 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM

Distorted reflection of Wilbur lying on couch, seen through the chrome toaster.

NARRATOR

Observe Wilbur over in the background. He's been laying there all day, trying to figure out what to say to Helen that will allow him to maintain the only happy relationship he's ever had. In one scenario he ceases her shoulders and exclaims "I am what I am, don't try to change me" but his grasp on reality remains strong enough to anticipate her reply, "I know, that's why I have to leave you". Multiple rejections have given Wilbur a sixth sense about these things. Later today he will approach her and the right words will finally come out, the true words...

WILBUR (v/o)

I'm not ready to break up. I like you too much to stop.

HELEN (v/o)

I've got to go home, to the farm. Things aren't the same there, you...

WILBUR (v/o)

I'd love to see it.



45 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM (CONTINUED)

HELEN (v/o)  
My parents are very traditional, but if you'd  
marry me for a year...?

WILBUR (v/o)  
Why just a year? .....  
..... Yes.

HELEN (v/o)  
Yes?

WILBUR (v/o)  
Yes.

46 INT DAY - WILBUR'S LIVING ROOM

Black and white shot of Helen on couch. Wilbur enters frame and  
they kiss. Romantic, wedding-like music.

47 EXT NIGHT - SKY

Fireworks explode across the sky. Wartime explosions sound.

48 INT DAY - NURSING HOME

Verna is sitting in her chair. Wilbur enters.

WILBUR  
Hi Verna. Hi Verna.

VERNA  
Am I going to .... live?

WILBUR  
You're going to be okay. I'm going away Verna.

VERNA  
Are ya?

WILBUR  
I'm getting married.

OFF SCREEN WOMAN  
You're kidding! .....

WILBUR (to other woman)  
Thank you ma'am. I'll see you soon Verna, okay.  
I'll see you soon.

49 INT DAY - WILBUR'S APARTMENT

Shot of answering machine with blinking light. Sound of footsteps approaching. Wilbur's hand reaches into shot and pushes button. Messages begin and play over following shot.

50 INT DAY - WILBUR'S APARTMENT

Wilbur makes coffee in a vacuum pot while listening to messages.

MESSAGE #1

Welcome back. I got the prettiest flowers. I love flowers. It seems so awful to pick them. I have this huge flower garden in our yard.

MESSAGE #2

That's so strange that you'd be talking about strange food today because I just called you nonchalant while eating a bowl of Greek salad without no lettuce in it because I just love feta cheese and then I was eating Bretta crackers smothered in spice and herb cream cheese along with a bowl of quaker nuts and crunch covered with salt and brown sugar.

MESSAGE #3

Talk about dreams. I had the weirdest dream today. I was in the nurse's office after slipping - see I go to high school right - and I slipped and I cracked my leg pretty bad on the concrete and I was in the nurses office laying on the bed with one of those neat little clear blue liquid ice packs on my leg and I fell asleep for about three hours - like all the way through the morning you know - and I woke up at lunch and had the strangest dream. I dreamt that my hair had grown down past my ass and to the floor and would drag when I walked. And then I was walking down the hall and I picked a fight with my wood working teacher, a strange man named Mr. Schneider who has a skull shaped scar on his lip from a motorcycle accident and I had the strangest dream because I picked a fist fight

MESSAGE #3 (CONTINUED)

with him. I kicked his ass! which is strange because he's a rather big fellow. Then I went to the hospital for a blood transfusion but they took out all my blood and they injected me with that blue stuff from the ice pack and left me there. I was really worried then I woke up and I went to lunch.

MESSAGE #4

Good art, bad art. What the hell, it's all art.

MESSAGE #5

How can you tell good art and bad art? Art is like a personal preference. If you like it, you like it. If you hate it, you hate it. Personal, not... I don't know. It's not like you think, you know, because somebody else likes it. That's what's great about art, you don't have to like it. You like what you like and you hate what you hate. Personally, I like ... I don't know.

MESSAGE #6

Speaking of wants, I've got a problem. There's this guy and I have another friend and they haven't met but they've talked on the phone and I love him and I think that they like each other but... It really sucks. He doesn't know her and she just sort of knows him and I know that they're going to go out and ... [sigh] ... What should I do? They're going to meet, I mean they go to the same school. I can't keep them apart for four years. He's got a girlfriend but he's going to break up with her because she's fucking with his mind and I'm just his good friend but I want to be more and ... I don't know.

MESSAGE #7

It's about twelve o'clock right now and I just had this dream that I was reincarnated as a cow and I was this farmer's favourite cow and this farmer had grown this cow, no this broccoli, and it looked like Jimi Hendrix and one day I was walking along and he had it out on a table and was showing it to somebody and anyway, I ate it. So I was the farmer's favourite cow, but he pulled out his uh, he slaughters me, with his rifle and that was where my dream ended.

MESSAGE #8

What I really want is to go somewhere and think. I'm depressed and want to cheer up. Got a lot of life decisions to contemplate, make. I go to a playground and I sit on the swings and I just swing. Actually what it is is it takes me back to my childhood when life was carefree but its just a really neat feeling because the higher you swing and the faster you swing - I don't know. They just sort of go away. Kind of neat. Bye.

MESSAGE #9

Hey dude, what's up man? Name's Fred. Not my real name but I don't have to give you my real name 'cause don't know who you are. Well, I understand what you mean, man, you know, how you want to be by yourself one day, maybe every day, and you're thinking about other people than yourself. You want to be by yourself and shit. Thing is, you have to man, you have to be by yourself because the best thing in life man, besides music and money and shit like that, is freedom. You have to have your freedom. It means no girls, no friends, no family, just freedom. You have to hang out

by yourself and shit. Go walking,  
walk around. Be by  
50 INT DAY - WILBUR'S APARTMENT (CONTINUED)

MESSAGE #9 (CONTINUED)  
yourself, what it's all about man. Think your next  
topic should be 'freedom'. Where we  
should deal with our freedom. None  
of this imperial shit like other  
people think "oh wow, I've got an  
expensive car, hey, I'm cool, I got  
a stereo in it". I don't give a  
shit man. What of it. Not here,  
never. Fred the best. All right.  
Later man, see you tomorrow.

MESSAGE #10  
Dyslexics of the world, untie.

MESSAGE #11  
I like possibly this is what I'm feeling, hanging  
around with younger people. I like  
to think of myself as sort of a  
child-like adult, keep those  
qualities of childhood alive. Watch  
cartoons. Not to become a child but  
I enjoy them.

MESSAGE #12 - DAD  
Verna passed away. It's 2:30.

ACT 2: IN WHICH WILBUR STUBORNLY CLINGS TO HIS SUPERIORITY COMPLEX AND HELEN DISCOVERS  
THAT CHANGE DOES NOT MEAN HAVING TO LOSE EVERYTHING.

51 EXT DAY - COUNTRY ROADS  
Montage of black and white shots of country and farm.

52 EXT DAY - THE WELL  
Wilbur and Helen walk and hold hands near the well.

WILBUR  
...then if you were making a film, what would it  
be about?

HELEN  
Something funny I guess, something that has a  
beginning, middle, end, that people  
would watch a few times and not get  
bored by. I like to laugh and so do  
other people.

WILBUR

HA! That's a long road to take just to get some  
"instant gratification".

52 EXT DAY - THE WELL (CONTINUED)

HELEN

All roads are long. You've got to learn to enjoy  
the ride. Besides, who's driving?  
Are you?

WILBUR

If this were a real movie, we'd just be extras.

HELEN

If I did grab the wheel, if I were driving, I  
might tell a story, like about  
someone searching... for the prize  
in a cereal box only to find that  
she's the prize in someone else's  
cosmic cereal lottery.

WILBUR

Uh, huh. Witnessed only by the ever faithful cat  
... which would represent the  
concerned but powerless Canadians  
in a metaphor for the democratic  
struggle against the American  
supported dictatorship in  
Nicaragua.

HELEN

Hmmm... difficult fit but sure, why not. But I  
just think that people have enough  
confusion in their lives. Why not  
let them laugh and be happy. Let  
the couple live happily ever after,  
even if it isn't realistic.

WILBUR

I strive for realism.

HELEN

You?

WILBUR

Yeah, and in fact this film ends with the couple  
also living happily ever after -  
because that is what happened.

HELEN

Then love works?

52 EXT DAY - THE WELL (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

Well, in our case it does. If we weren't still together while I'm finishing this film, I'd be looking for ways to write you out of it. Instead, I've given you large portions of dialogue.

HELEN

I've not really seen that yet.

WILBUR

It's coming.

HELEN

Then we better get on to it then.

53 INT DAY - FARMHOUSE TABLE

Intercut between a shot of Wilbur, a shot of Helen's father, and a title card which reads "One Week Later". At the end of three cycles, Fred smiles.

HELEN

April twenty-first. It seemed to be extremely important that Wilbur be able to win my father over - perhaps because he was having such a hard time doing it.

54 EXT DAY - FARMYARD

Nicole and Katie fly kites off the back of a standing truck.

55 EXT DAY - FARMYARD

Wilbur runs across a shot pulling a kite. The kite crashes.

HELEN

May twelfth. Success has so far eluded Wilbur. I'm afraid that I've made a mistake in letting him come to the farm. He tries, but he can't let himself be happy unless he's somehow succeeding at something.

56 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Wide angle image begins with Helen holding wooden duck and croquet mallet then going to fast motion image moving around the farm yard seeing George, Allen and Wilbur smoking.

HELEN

May fourteenth. I've always had a place to call home. There is a security in that. I'm not sure if I liked it or didn't like it, it was just the way it always was. Is. It's not that I didn't go places, but every road trip always began with the understanding that at the end, I would be walking back through that same door, sleeping in that same bed. Oh, I've lived in the city and wiled away many an hour debating the pros and cons of leather versus tupperware, but never did I feel uprooted from where I knew I belonged. That makes me feel very strong, that sense of belonging. I've got a favourite feather pillow and that sort of thing, comfort items, but there's nothing like standing on the piece of land where you were born. In the city they never understand this yearning. Maybe it's the crowds or something, but leaving home is much more important to them than returning.

57 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Wilbur attempt to chop wood. He is clumsy and get the axe stuck.

58 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Wilbur's hands enter shot and put a blender down. He pours some juice into it. Cut-away to time laps clouds.

HELEN

May twentieth. Wilbur can be such a sweetie. Today he got up at the crack of dawn, even before dad, and started a fire in the stove. By the time I was up he'd already burned most of the pancakes and brewed up a pot of coffee so strong that only he and I could stomach it.



58 EXT DAY - FARM YARD (CONTINUED)

Return to image of blender as Wilbur pours more liquid in. When the blender is turned on, the liquid turns a creamy pink.

HELEN

June second. Wilbur bought me a blender .... chrome, I like it. We feel a need to celebrate by shopping. The larger the event, the greater the extravagance. He got some new grant today and that seems to mean something. Apparently he can develop all the film he's been shooting so far. Canada Council he said - a big deal. He's happy and that's cool with me.

59 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

In fast motion, Wilbur and George build a scaffold in the middle of the yard. Wilbur stands on top of it then climbs down and walks out of frame towards farm house.

HELEN

June fifth. Wilbur set up this thing in the yard today, said something about Louis Bunuel's *Simon of the Desert*. I don't get it, but it is important in some way. He needs a place of his own, a spot where he can go without worrying about invading others' spaces, in getting in the way.

Strange thing, I was just down at the slough and I was walking around and the ground makes a really funny squishing noise when you walk on it. So I'm there and I sit down on this rock that's there because it's the only thing dry enough and I just hate to stand up for very long, so I'm sitting there and this bird comes and lands on a an old post just couple feet away. It was big and black, a crow, and it looks at me with no fear. It occurred to me right away that it was just checking me out, taking a closer look at a creature that it regards as having little or no importance in its life. I got feeling really

mad like I wanted to yell that I  
was much  
59 EXT DAY - FARM YARD (CONTINUED)

HELEN (CONTINUED)  
better than it was and I had worries and problems  
that it could never understand, but  
before I had a chance it got this  
glazed over look in its eyes as if  
it was really quite bored of me,  
and it flew away.

60 EXT DAY - FARM YARD  
Wilbur walks into farm house.

WILBUR  
Helen?! Helen? Come out and see this.

61 INT DAY - FARM HOUSE - CU HELEN  
Helen is sleeping. Wilbur approaches and wakes her with a kiss.

62 EXT DAY - FARM YARD - OVERHEAD VIEW OF FARMHOUSE  
Helen and Wilbur exit farmhouse. Wilbur points out scaffold. Cut  
to shot of scaffold as the two of them walk around it.

HELEN  
Oh yeah, you've been busy.

WILBUR  
What do you think?

HELEN  
Hmmm.

WILBUR  
What's the matter, isn't it interesting?

HELEN  
Oh NO! It's not THAT bad.

63 EXT DAY - FARM YARD  
Wilbur is overly-theatrical as he crawls across an angled shot to  
the scaffold. Jump-cut between shots of him on different  
portions of the scaffold.

HELEN  
June eighth. Wilbur spends his whole day up there  
now. I dug through his stuff and  
found his journal. It read: "When I  
was a kid I liked to

63 EXT DAY - FARM YARD (CONTINUED)

HELEN (CONTINUED)

climb. During one summer in grade school, a bunch of guys liked to climb on top of the maintenance shack on the school grounds. I was a bit uncoordinated and I needed three of them to get up. Eventually I learned to climb to the top on my own; I could get up on the roof faster than most of the others, two or three seconds or so. The world was a better place up there. We were the watchers. We were closer to the sky so had more knowledge of it's mysteries. We were given clues to the future through the shapes of the clouds, through the patterns in the dust as it blew through the playground.

64 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

George and Simon and others play some baseball.

HELEN

June tenth. They say you can't change a person - that is entirely untrue. What you can't do is avoid changing a person, or prevent that person from changing you. If you do things right then change will be growth. If you're really lucky, you will grow together. It's funny, I find it harder to imagine being apart from him than being apart from home. All growing started in the farm but I guess, for me, it finally stopped.

65 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Helen, seen from scaffold, walks towards the farm house.

HELEN

You be careful up there.

Wilbur is on top of the scaffold, standing and looking around. The wind begins to howl. Wilbur is shaken. Shot of farm house from above.

65 EXT DAY - FARM YARD (CONTINUED)

WILBUR

(shouting from off screen)

HELEN! Helen, can you come out here?!

HELEN

(shouting from inside house)

What?

WILBUR

Come out here.

HELEN

What is it?

Wilbur is hanging off the top of the scaffold, his legs swinging wildly.

WILBUR

Could you just come out here.

HELEN

Now what do you want.

WILBUR

Uhhhhh??

66 EXT NIGHT - FARM YARD

Wilbur and Helen dance around scaffold during sunset.

HELEN

Wilbur's journal then says, "Louis, how did you come up with those ideas? I sit on top of my tower but I see no devils dancing below, only the grain. The grain dances but it fails to seduce. I watch it for hours, swaying this way and that, the heads full and ripe, the stocks trembling beneath the weight. It too reaches for the heavens, a million fingers caressing the wind. The grain, like the golden ore of the Klondike, rolls across the land like a sea dream, as vast as the limitless sky. All that is gold is not metal but still the grain is the chain which binds us, ties us to this soil. No, it does not seduce."

67 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Series of shots and jump-cuts as Wilbur notices then catches a snake, puts it in a jar and stares at it.

HELEN

June thirteenth. Wilbur caught a snake this morning. He stuck it in a jar and

.....  
[sigh] Gerald has been working on this film for about five years now. I don't even know if he is capable of finishing it anymore. Expectation, that propels him and strangles him. Had he whipped the thing together in a few months as he's originally planned, then it could be dreck and no one would blame him. But after all this time, he's feeling the pressure to do something really cool. He really is making this for you, he cares what you think about it, but at the same time is afraid that you'll not understand the hardship of making a film with so little money. He told me a secret, he told me that he doesn't like to ask people favours, as if he perhaps doesn't deserve the attention, that other people's time is more valuable than his own. When you stop to think about it, how much is our time worth? We work and work so that we can afford to do things which distract us from working. We go to films to be swept away, to be seduced by the moment. If the moment isn't blinding enough, if it doesn't obliterate everything we know under a thick layer of melodrama and explosions, then we complain. Aren't the flickering images enough? He's just one guy trying to show you something in a way you've never seen it before.

68 BLACK

WILBUR

Is that camera rolling?

69 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Shot of scaffold. Wilbur removes the lens and replaces it during the shot. He puts the jar containing the snake down in the foreground and walks over to the scaffold. After some deliberation, he pushes it over in a big crash. The sound over the entire scene is a series of audio head markers for slating scenes. After the crash, laughter. Wilbur then picks up the jar. In another shot, he releases the snake.

70 EXT NIGHT - FLAX FIELD

Series of shots of flax straw being burned.

71 EXT DAY - FARM FIELD

Wilbur pokes his head out from behind a large round hay bail.

HELEN

Sometimes I resent not telling my own story. He uses me as a device to tell his. But at least he is learning something, changing. He's left his old baggage behind ... I think?

72 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Wilbur, Helen and George fill large balloons with helium. Then Wilbur attempts to use the balloons to lift his camera. Intercut camera's pov with wide shots of Wilbur flinging them into the air. Finally, the camera crashes and the image goes black. Sound is Wilbur making a phone call. Begin with push button sounds.

WILBUR (v/o on phone)

Hi, it's me, got a minute? I'm trying to put together a new film and I need you in it. Here's the set up: it is a post apocalyptic future, ... yeah, just the same as last time but a few years later. The gods are dying. Sam's journey has taken him to the sea which is as smooth and still as glass because the sea god is dead.

The almanac is stolen which means that the goddess Al, which is connected to Sam through the book, is kidnapped by The Sunflower King who we recognise because he is always spitting shells. There will always be that sound around him, you know; "crack, spit, crack, spit, crack, spit".

72 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

WILBUR (v/o on phone - CONTINUED)

So then you must find Al without the book to guide you. Within your mind you'll trace your way through the pages of the book, like a big dream sequence on a stage with enlargements of all the pages behind you, and eventually find her.

You'll come to a spot where you can see mountains but the next day they will be gone until you catch up to this guy, the Great Earth Flattener's embodiment on Earth. He'll be sitting on his lunch box eating a sandwich with a sign beside him that reads "under de-construction".

73 EXT DAY - FARMYARD

Series of shots of flowers, farm landscapes.

WILBUR

Then you'll get to an atomic power plant. It's the temple for a fire god. As usual, it requires regular sacrifices to calm it. The legend will be that the fire has dug itself deep into the Earth but will someday return.

We call the film Wheat Stew and the catch phrase is "This time we lay it on thick".

74 INT NIGHT - FARMHOUSE

Wilbur is at the table on the phone.

WILBUR

You don't want to do it!? ... I wrote it for you. Maybe this time I'll find a way to pay you. Yeah, well same to you!

Wilbur slams down the phone and looks up to see Helen watching him. She exits.

75 EXT NIGHT - POTATO PATCH

Wilbur's point of view, running through very dark garden, encountering a scarecrow and finding Helen and potatoes.

WILBUR

Look, whatever it is I'm sorry. I was just talking. It's too dark out here.

HELEN

This is where it all began. This is where we came from.

WILBUR

The potato patch? And all this time I was watching the cabbage.

HELEN

Let me tell you a story. It's an old story, about when the world was young and selfish. One day a pool of water formed and lay there very still. The world looked at itself and saw for the first time the blue sky reflected in the water. The world grew fascinated with the sky and called out to it with love, desire. The sky came down to the earth and brought with it the four winds which swept across the land.

76 EXT NIGHT - THE SKY

The sky is a blaze of northern lights.

HELEN (continues)

Look! Look!

77 EXT DAY - GARDEN

Wilbur and Helen's feet enter shot as the two embrace.

HELEN (continues)

It is said that the animals and the people were the earth's response to the sky. From the soil grew the people and they reached for the sky, gazed upon it and in doing so expressed the affections of the planet. There doesn't have to be more when there is enough.



78 ANIMATION

Woman looks at cereal box, sees Cthulhu prize offer, shakes boxes, reaches in, is pulled in by Cthulhu and into another world where she is eaten.

79 EXT DAY - FARM YARD

Helen kisses a balloon and lets it go. It flies far away.

HELEN

Perhaps it's a sign.

WILBUR

North?

HELEN

North.

ACT 3: IN WHICH WILBUR AND HELEN EXPLORE THE ROAD OF LIFE AND DISCOVER THE CHANGES THEY HAVE MADE IN EACH OTHER.

80 EXT DAY - HIGHWAY

Series of shots of country road signs, Wilbur's car, Wilbur leaning against his car, a Saskatchewan sign, Wilbur and Helen kissing in their car, the car driving and an Alberta sign.

WILBUR

I never thought the country was of much use. Road trips were fun but it was the love of the roadside cafes and cable tv from other cities that were the main attraction. I guess I went camping now and then, like with my school, but even then we ended up obsessing more with the city than all the trees and junk around us. Like for example we would get around the fire and everyone would have a flashlight even though the fire was very bright, and the stories were about city people, not the other folk.

One I recall was about a lonely stretch of highway that the Smith family went driving on. It's getting late but they decide for some reason to keep driving for a while after dark. Along the way a motor home comes up behind them and wants to pass so this Smith guy

pulls a bit to the side and it  
cruises by. A few minutes later  
another motor home comes up behind  
them and passes too.

80 EXT DAY - HIGHWAY (CONTINUED)

WILBUR (CONTINUED)

As soon as that one was out of sight, the whole  
thing happens again. The guy thinks  
it must be some kind of convention  
because all the motor homes look  
alike. By this time it was really  
dark and the Smith family started  
looking around for a place to stop.  
After many miles they finally  
reached a camp ground which was  
empty but for a single motor home.  
When they started to talk to the  
owner of the vehicle, they were  
told that he has been driving along  
that road ever year, looking for  
signs of the Smith family who all  
disappeared twenty years ago along  
there and who are rumoured to still  
haunt that road.

81 EXT DAY - SUNFLOWER FIELD

Helen jumps out from behind sunflowers, happily frolicking.

WILBUR

OOOoooo, scary stuff. It's just like the ghost car  
thing except that the story is told  
by the ghost and we all thought  
that was really something. It  
always shifted into a big  
discussion of what you would do if  
you were a ghost and could go  
anywhere you wanted.

82 EXT NIGHT - EDMONTON

Fast flashing light, time exposures and superimpositions of lights  
from a high building at night in Edmonton.

WILBUR

All the guys would try to out imagine the others  
in coming up with situations  
including their teachers or  
friends' big sisters or famous  
actresses changing clothes. Rather  
boring I thought, just like the  
rest of the camping trip. So much

for the great outdoors.

83 EXT DAY - NORTHERN BC

Series of shots of signs in Dawson Creek, including signs for the "Mile 0" of the Alaska Highway.

84 EXT DAY - ON THE HIGHWAY

Series of black and white shots from car window. Many are pixilated and/or superimposed.

WILBUR

June sixteenth. Drove nowhere today and I didn't notice. Suddenly, like when the thunder strikes and the rain pours over you in a torrent before you have time to run for cover, we were there. Nowhere. It was kind of a happy thing I suppose, one of those moments that you never would have planned because if you tried then you would expect too much. I guess that's it, you can't expect to be happy because that would be too arrogant, like you deserve it for some perverse reason.

85 EXT DAY - YUKON

Yukon sign then a series of events with nature including a waterfall, chasing a squirrel, a moose and shallow river full of small fish.

WILBUR

When I was a kid I would catch bugs and put them in jars. One friend of mine was convinced that ants could be trained to perform in a miniature circus and I believed it too. I guess I liked to believe what my friends believed in. That made life a lot simpler, gave me a feeling of belonging. Now, we are strangers but we feel welcome everywhere, like we belong. It's June 20, the summer solstice and we made it to Whitehorse. Everything has the clarity of a sun drenched autumn day. Travel cleanses and fills me with memory.

86 EXT DAY - ALASKA

Series of shots beginning with Alaska 'Gateway' then a tire pile, an auto repair garage and some American flags.

WILBUR

I'd like to always have something clever to say.  
Sometimes it's not that easy.  
Irrelevance! Banal comments creep  
into every sentence,

86 EXT DAY - ALASKA (CONTINUED)

WILBUR (CONTINUED)

drawing me away from my goal. So if I wanted to  
discuss overpopulation in India,  
how it is becoming a pressure  
cooker of diseases that will  
inevitably destroy the world, all  
of a sudden I'd feel the urge to  
take up a cooking subtext, like the  
smell of pressure cooked cabbage  
which will permeate your hair and  
clothes, even the shingles on your  
roof. Triviality. It's just too  
much a part of me.

87 EXT DAY - HIGHWAY

Superimposed images of a ghostly motor home moving behind and past  
our car.

88 INT DAY - ANCHORAGE

An industrial musician shows off his sculptures.

WILBUR

I like to use the phrase "when I was a kid" in my  
films. Those words make the viewers  
think that I'm really sensitive,  
like as if I'm reminiscing and  
romanticising some real past which  
I must have learned a valuable  
lesson from.

89 EXT DAY - ANCHORAGE

At river mouth, people stand in water or sit on rocks and are  
fishing for salmon.

WILBUR

After I finish a film, if the first audience  
doesn't like it, my enthusiasm is  
shot. I just want to bury it and go  
on to the next one. I guess in a  
way, that means that my failures  
are what cause me to be so  
prolific.

90 EXT DAY - ALASKALAND

Helen is eating salmon. Wilbur is gnawing on ribs.

91 EXT DAY - GLACIER

Camera follows Helen along path to view a large glacier in distance.

WILBUR

I never seem to have a real job, not like my sisters have, not like my parents had. I don't make very much money, but I work hard for the small amounts I do get. I'm happy. I feel good about what I do and I think I help others as much and as often as I help myself. I still feel guilty all the time, that I'm not living up to my parents' expectations of what a successful son should be. I don't know why I need this sort of validation, and I don't know if I'm ever going to get it.

92 EXT DAY - UGLY HOTEL

Hundreds of sea gulls fly around a large hotel shaped like a multi-storied igloo.

93 EXT DAY - MOOSE NEAR HIGHWAY

Colour image of moose standing by road.

94 EXT DAY - DAWSON CITY

Fast motion images around the old town of Dawson City, Yukon.

WILBUR

July first, Canada Day. We drove a bit overtime to get back into Canada in time for the celebrations. Missed the parade but superimposed a old one in its place. A hundred years ago, there were a hundred thousand people here in Dawson City. Where are they all now?

95 EXT DAY - CANADA DAY(S)

Intercut between Canada Day in Dawson City, Yukon with gold panning competitions and Canada Day in Ottawa in 1992.

WILBUR (continued)

The cemetery is full but not nearly big enough. In a couple of minutes, Helen is going to reveal to me that she lost the ring I gave her, the one that I've had for twenty years that I got on a trip to Mexico. She put it down

at the last campsite and

95 EXT DAY - CANADA DAY(S) (CONTINUED)

WILBUR (CONTINUED)

we then drove along some very bad roads that we don't want to cross again.

96 INT DAY - NATIONAL GALLERY  
The Voice of Fire.

WILBUR

I'll get really really mad. I guess I felt betrayed.

97 EXT DAY - DAWSON CITY

Series of shots beginning with Canadian flag, then fast images in old cemetery, then the bike repair guy.

WILBUR

I know it was just an accident, but don't symbols mean something. Objects have value beyond their manufactured cost, at least they do to me. That's part of the cult of capitalism creeping in again, blinding me to what really matters.

98 EXT DAY - DAWSON CITY ROAD

Helen reveals to Wilbur that she has lost his ring. Some very fast jump cuts to where she thinks she left it. Wilbur is upset but in the end they embrace. Music plays.

HELEN

I used to be afraid of the slough. People used to push cars into there to abandon them. I thought that the cars just got stuck there and the people must have just died in the mud and sunk like the cars. I used to be scared of crows because they were always eating some dead animal on the road and when you went near them they would caw at you, as if they knew what you were thinking. I used to be scared of the potato patch because when it was dark out you could hear the beetles eating the leaves from a stone throw away. I used to be scared of the city, of travelling, of meeting someone and

having my whole life change.

99 EXT DAY - ROCK PILE

Helen and Wilbur climb around on a pile of rocks from river dredging. An old rusty boiler stands there. Wilbur finds a sock. Music plays.

HELEN (continued)

I didn't want to be taken away. I didn't want to sink in the slough or be eaten by crows or any of that. Now, at seventy miles an hour on a road I've never seen before with wild animals everywhere and wheat and potato crops nowhere, I feel more safe than ever before. It's not because of him, or rather it's not because he's here. It is because I no longer have those fears. I finally realize what I want.

100 EXT DAY - GOATS NEAR HIGHWAY

Some goats. Music plays.

101 INT DAY - CAFE

Helen is sipping coffee as sunlight shines through the window onto her. She appears happy.

HELEN

Hmmm. Coffee. A chair. Feels good. Perhaps this is what life is all about - stopping.

WILBUR

Yeah, but before you can stop, you have to go.

HELEN

Yeah.

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY

Many people are in an art gallery looking at paintings by Jeff Nachtigall. Camera moves amongst them.

WILBUR (v/o)

Have we tied up all the loose ends yet?

HELEN (v/o)

I never did settle anything with Jeff.

WILBUR (v/o)

Who?

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY (CONTINUED)



HELEN (v/o)  
Jeff. The animated guy with the dogs. There he is  
now...

WILBUR  
Jeff?

JEFF  
Hey.

WILBUR  
Thanks for inviting me. Real cool.

JEFF  
You're welcome.

WILBUR  
Like you to meet Helen, this is Helen.

HELEN  
I think we've met.

JEFF  
Somewhere.

HELEN  
How you doing?

JEFF  
I'm swell.

WILBUR (v/o)  
I doubt anyone even remembers this character: your  
previous love interest. He's an  
artist it seems, and doing pretty  
well.

HELEN (v/o)  
I've never dated him. You just made all that up.

Wilbur wanders away from Helen and Jeff to talk to another  
attendie.

WILBUR (v/o)  
So I guess that begs the question, what are we  
doing here now?

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY (CONTINUED)

HELEN (v/o)

I think there's something else we have to resolve.  
We've begun to figure out who we  
are as individuals and as a couple,  
but perhaps there is more.

WILBUR (v/o)

Perhaps this is a forum to discuss deeper aspects  
of art, you know? This is a  
gallery.

HELEN (v/o)

I think we'd be the only ones. If you look around  
for a moment you'll notice that  
everyone is just using the gallery  
as a meeting place to stand around  
with old friends and gossip about  
stuff.

In the lobby/reception area.

ANOTHER MAN

There, I said it. It's too late hey.

WILBUR

No, I've already got it.

ANOTHER MAN

I'll only say it once, you should have cued me.

WILBUR

That's okay, I already taped it. I'm recording  
everything.

ANOTHER MAN

Jeff, he's ready to go. Everything we say will be  
on tape.

WILBUR

You understand?

JEFF

I understand. ... Remember the old days when you  
used to drink a beer, it's always a  
beer, a smoke was a smoke, but a  
woman was never a woman.

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY (CONTINUED)  
In the gallery.

WILBUR (v/o)

These stories, they're just the bits and pieces of everyday life that make us who we are. Life is too big to discuss in one large chunk, so we carve it up into little bits so we can digest it, one day at a time.

HELEN (v/o)

Most of the stories are so trivial. Are you trying to say that our lives have that little meaning?

WILBUR (v/o)

Perhaps we're afraid to admit it but yes. Is that such a bad thing? We're just people, doing the best we can. If telling each other stories makes us happy, then let's be happy.

HELEN (v/o)

Tell me a story.

WILBUR (v/o)

What about?

HELEN (v/o)

Maybe about a magician or a trip to the moon or something.

WILBUR (v/o)

I'll tell you what, if you help me, I'll try to tell the best stories I can. We'll make our lives better by describing them better.

HELEN (v/o)

I can hardly wait to see that.

Wilbur talks to Jan.

JAN

I like them, they're humorous

WILBUR

... and this one over here, I like these too. And it's got this whole circle and it's like a moose.

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY (CONTINUED)

JAN

Yeah

WILBUR

... and I come here to record stuff and there's the alligator and everything but, it's kind of child like, it's so innocent, but so complex as well. He knows how to use his colours and he really knows what he wants to do. But you know there's this dog and I feel terrorized by it as well. I feel scared.

JAN

yeah. I think that's part of the humour though. I don't know.

Wilbur talks to Mike.

WILBUR

The moose. I like the moose. Life is like a moose you know.

MIKE

It is.

WILBUR

it is, because... what's this? What can you say right? It says everything.

MIKE

That's right, it screams. It say's "I'm a moose".

WILBUR

It says I'M A MOOSE, AND I'M PROUD TO BE A CANADIAN MOOSE.

MIKE

And you look it.

WILBUR

I thought everyone just painted stripes, I didn't think I'd find a moose, I thought I'd just find blue stripes.

Helen and Wilbur eat snacks at the reception.

102 INT DAY - ART GALLERY (CONTINUED)

HELEN (v/o)

So is this the end of the journey?

WILBUR (v/o)

If there is one thing I've learned, there is no end to the journey.

HELEN

No, only beginnings.

WILBUR

We could pull off to a side road, more to see, more to experience.

HELEN

The path of most resistance.

WILBUR

We'll make a movie, together this time. Not an important story, just one that we want to tell.

HELEN

I like that idea. You and me?

WILBUR

Yeah, you and me.

HELEN

We.

Helen and Wilbur exit.

EPILOGUE: IN WHICH WILBUR AND HELEN LISTEN TO EACH OTHER AND TELL A PARABLE ABOUT THE PAIN AND REWARDS OF CHANGE.

103 PUPPET FILM

Hand puppets of characters move about while the voices of Helen and Wilbur tell the story collaboratively, one finishing the sentence of the other. Sometimes they correct each other, other times they laugh at each other's readings.

HELEN AND WILBUR

"The Basset Hound" -- Once upon a time there was a Basset Hound who was a Hobo. All he ever wanted to do was wander around doing not much of nothing, begging and scavenging, sleeping in alley ways and ditches.

103 PUPPET FILM (CONTINUED)

HELEN AND WILBUR (CONTINUED)

One day he was eating with another hobo. The

Basset Hound was chewing on old carrots while the other heated beans over a fire. The food smelled and tasted so good and the conversation so lively that the Basset Hound failed to notice that his tail was in the fire until it was all ablaze!

"Ow Ow Ow Ow Ow" he yelped. Quick as anything he ran off to find a place to put the fire out. Miles and miles he ran until he fortuitously came to a glacier (I guess he was in Alaska or something) and sat down on it and put out the flame. Unfortunately it was too late, the Basset Hound's tail had burned right off!

Now the Basset Hound was cold and sore and so far from his friends that he couldn't find his way back to them. He began to walk but an icy rain began to fall. It was a sad day. Then the Basset Hound heard a noise, it was a carnival show. There was a huge tent and lots of trailers and people running around. He went in to see if he could get a warm place to sleep. He saw the fat man [eating, does not see dog], ... the strong man [tries to kick dog]... the trapeze artists [laughs at dog] but no one helped him until he found the magician.

"Hey Basset Hound! Do you want a job?" the Magician called. Of course the Basset Hound would usually prefer eating stinky old socks to working at a job, but when he saw the sirloin steak in the Magician's trailer, he agreed. All that night, the Magician fed him his favourite things and entertained him with card tricks. Soon he was asleep in a nice warm bed.

"Wake Up! Wake Up!" the Magician called, "It's 6 am and time for work!"

103 PUPPET FILM (CONTINUED)

HELEN AND WILBUR (CONTINUED)

"Like heck" grumbled the Basset Hound in reply,

rolling over to sleep further. But suddenly he was beset with the aroma of frying bacon and was on his feet again.

After seconds and thirds of crispy bacon, the Magician took the Basset Hound to the large tent.

The strong man is guarding the door, but this time he was very courteous. Inside, the two of them were alone.

The Magician wanted to try out his new secret trick.

He gets the Basset Hound to stand in the middle of the large circle and then began throwing magic dust all around him.

[Magician]: "Alacoroonko! Bibilboomba! Psteroctis! Pandactus!".

The magician started scrambling through an old book, looking for the rest of the words.

The Basset Hound was getting nervous, having just realized that the Magician had never done this before and didn't know what he was doing. He sniffed at the magic dust to try to figure it out for himself but got some in his nose and "Achoo!", [dog sneezes] POOF!

Smoke appeared all around and the Basset Hound's feet lift off the floor. Sparkles glittered everywhere the room spins.

PLOOMP!

The Basset Hound lands on light sand. He was no longer in the tent. The sky was dark.

#### WILBUR AND HELEN

The Basset Hound was no longer in the tent and he got very scared and he began to howl. Owwwwwwwwww.

But then he heard someone howling back. It was other basset hounds and they were coming his way.

103 PUPPET FILM (CONTINUED)

Dozens of basset hounds of all different colours. Some were black and brown, some were purple and green, some were blue and red

and yellow. Some were spotted, others striped, and others checkered.

WILBUR AND HELEN

Our Basset Hound Hobo had seen other basset hounds before, but never with such extraordinarily huge foophy coloured tails!

"Welcome to the moon. We have been expecting you but we were afraid that you would not get here in time."

"In time for what?", the Basset Hound Hobo asked.

"The tail pinning of course. All the puppies are getting their tails and becoming hounds today." With that, all the basset hounds went back to their town for a grand celebration. It was quite a grand time with speeches and raffles and everything.

Basset dignitaries wearing sash gives speech.

"Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah."

There is a rack of tails.

WILBUR AND HELEN

"Pick which ever one you want." The Basset Hound Hobo was very happy with the one he picked. It was green and yellow and smelled faintly of lemons and limes. When they put it on him, it hurt for a moment but then it was over. Everybody was very happy and had lots to eat.

After a month of comfort, the Basset Hound Hobo decided he missed sleeping in alley ways and in ditches, so he went back to the spot on the moon where he first arrived. Down on the ground he saw a few flakes of magic dust. He sniffed at them. "Achoo!"

Spinning effects and smoke again. He is back in the tent.

103 PUPPET FILM (CONTINUED)

The Magician was standing there, surrounded by a variety of dogs.

WILBUR AND HELEN

The Magician was very upset but when he saw



the Basset Hound he was very happy.  
"I haven't been able to do that  
trick again and everyone makes fun  
of me now and so they took away my  
trailer and I had to sell my hat to  
buy some noodles for supper".

The Basset Hound didn't forget the kindness  
the magician had paid him, so  
quickly agreed to do a few magic  
shows with him. They were quite a  
success. Eventually, the Magician  
found another trick to do

Magician beside flower, it opens via time lapse.

... so the Basset Hound was free to be a hobo  
again and to happily wander around  
begging for meals, sleeping in  
alley ways and smelling like a  
lemon. The end.

104 INT DAY - FILM RECEPTION LOBBY  
Jean Oser speaks to the camera.

JEAN OSER

Okay, that was quite some film you showed there,  
but you took the most beautiful  
girl in all Regina, and you have  
her there like crap, all that, all  
that [some french] crazy, you are  
crazy, [some german] okay, so you  
got that, you got the mean  
professor right now, besides that,  
I love you, I think you do great  
things. Okay.

105 END TITLES (SEE APPENDIX)

106 EXT DAY - A PRAIRIE ROAD  
Crew shot features "Wilbur" and James standing in coats.

107 TITLE CARD  
"Life Is Like Lint © Gerald Saul, 1999"

108 EXT DAY - WOODS

The monster which was seen in the "how did you get into film" flashback crawls into the frame along a wooded path. It makes a pathetic roaring noise, similar to the monster in the cereal box animation. Two people run out and remove the monster's shell revealing a man beneath it. They all exit.

NARRATOR

...and best of all, it's trendy.

APPENDIX (End credits)

**Cast:**

<b>Gerald Saul</b>	<b>Wilbur Reykdal</b>
<b>Margaret Bessai</b>	<b>Helen Bauer</b>
<b>James Whittingham</b>	<b>The Wacky Neighbour</b>
<b>Richard Kerr</b>	<b>Film Reception Attendie</b>
<b>Geoff Yates</b>	<b>Film Reception Attendie</b>
<b>Karen Opus</b>	<b>The Ceramicist</b>
<b>Jeff Nachtigall</b>	<b>Himself</b>
<b>Mike Jozsa</b>	<b>Art Gallery Attendie</b>
<b>Jan Seitz</b>	<b>Art Gallery Attendie</b>
<b>Brett Bell</b>	<b>Narrator</b>
<b>Carmen Pauls</b>	<b>Voice of Stacy</b>
<b>J. Kostell</b>	<b>Perfect Man Storyteller</b>
<b>Michael Grzesina</b>	<b>Image of the Perfect Man</b>
<b>Paul Grzesina</b>	<b>Image of the Short Guy</b>
<b>Jean Oser</b>	<b>Himself</b>

**Ode to Barbie written and read by Joan Skogan**

**Music Ellie Jorgenson, Patrick Johnson, Frank Bessai**

**People at the farm: Gertrud, Fred, and George Bessai, Simon Moritz, Katie Gustin, Nicole Saul,**

**Also appearing, my neices and nephews: Nicole Saul, Chris Miller Sean Taylor, Michelle Miller**

**Puppet designer and puppeteer: Margaret Bessai**

**"Cereal Box Prize" animation by Margaret Bessai. Other animation by Gerald Saul**

**Cinematography: James Whittingham, Gerald Saul**

**Additional camera for puppets: Michael Grzesina**

**sound recorded and edited by Gerald Saul**

**Sound edited and mixed on ProTools at the Saskatchewan Film pool**

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