

Chris Korkos

3/22/17

Prospectus: "Till Next Time"

1. This will be written in the form of a screenplay.
2. In terms of length, the screenplay is intended to constitute a shorter, more complete script. My eventual goal might be to flesh it out with more content and time spent on characters, but for the purpose of the final I want it to be self contained.
3. This project will be largely original, but as a concept I hope to draw from sources like *Office Space* and *Groundhog Day*. I'll show these connections through homages and by presenting similar themes across the story.
4. I will draw heavily from the material covered during this course - in particular the absurdist themes of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. I will also touch somewhat on the power structures and abuse present in *The Color Purple*, but focused on hierarchies within workplaces rather than within races and genders. To accomplish this, I want to detail camerawork that creates claustrophobic and oppressive scenes. In particular, I'm interested in the use of blurred backgrounds that manipulate viewers' depth perception and muted, almost grayscale colors.
5. The Pitch: A group of people are trapped in an office-style building where they are forced to perform menial and meaningless work. Any who attempt to escape are hunted down by the ruthless, Terminator-esque manager. When (not if) she kills them they are "reset" at their office desks, and continue to exist in the seemingly infinite continuum. The main character - an old and out-of-shape copywriter named Lebon - must work with the others to escape and discover what lies beyond this drab and claustrophobic world. The film is just as much a dark comedy jailbreak as it is psychological commentary on life at an office job.

Chris Korkos
"Till Next Time"
3/22/17
LTWR 110: Screenwriting
Meliza Bañales

INT. OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE UP of a blinking cursor on a computer screen. A blank document is centered, with no edges of the monitor visible. This remains for five seconds or so, then CUTS to the man sitting in front of the computer. He is around 40, balding, with chubby cheeks and thick-rimmed glasses. He wears normal office attire. Behind him is the low wall of a cubicle, with beige coloring. The CAMERA remains on him while he speaks.

MAN (V.O.)
I'm going crazy.

CUT BACK to blinking computer screen.

MAN (V.O.)
Fuck. I just saw...I don't know what I saw. A
dream? A vision?

CUT BACK to facing the MAN. He's sweating now. The MAN stands up and walks out of the cubicle. A TRACKING SHOT keeps him at the center-right of the frame as he moves through the aisles between cubicles with determination. The background remains somewhat blurry, but shape and movement of people is still visible. As he gets past the cubicles, his BOSS notices him and starts walking after him. She shouts his name, but it is muffled behind the fog of the background. She shouts again. The fog lifts.

BOSS
Lebon!

LEBON (V.O.)
I hate that name.

LEBON stops with his hand on the door knob. CLOSE UP SHOT of his hand, which he slowly pulls back.

BOSS
You walk out that door, you know what it means.

CLOSE UP SHOT from behind BOSS - framed so that LEBON looks tiny and she looks massive.

LEBON
I quit.

SHOT from the other side of the door, opening and spilling light into a dark gray concrete stairwell. LEBON hurries through and down the stairs.

BOSS (O.S.)
I hope you can run fast!

CUT BACK to the inside of the office. The door closes slowly in the LEFT side of the frame, while to the RIGHT the BOSS goes inside and REACHES TOWARDS A DESK DRAWER. CUT BACK to the stairwell, in a LONG VERTICAL SHOT of LEBON moving down the stairs.

LEBON (V.O.)
I don't know why I did it. I don't know why I'm doing anything right now. But something here is just...wrong.
Maybe I was dreaming back there - or maybe I'm starting to wake up.

SLIGHTLY ANGLED VERTICAL SHOT as LEBON stops at the bottom of the stairs and hunches over - he is drenched in sweat now and struggles to regain his breath. He looks up towards the CAMERA, which CUTS TO a LOOKING UP the stairwell. A shadow is descending the stairs rapidly.

LEBON (V.O.)
I've been here before. I think I know what happens next.

He gets up quickly and starts down the hallway at the bottom of the stairs. A TRACKING SHOT follows him through the concrete hallway, which is dark in the foreground with fluorescent lighting coming from a fork at the other end. The colors and lighting almost make the scene look grayscale. He puts a hand on the wall for support, but is slowing down. The fork is getting closer. CUT TO the start of the hallway, where the BOSS walks through holding a pistol.

LEBON (V.O.)
It's happening again.

In a CLOSE UP SHOT from behind, BOSS levels the gun at him. She stops walking and fires. A puff of blood appears from his back. CUT TO a FRONT SHOT of LEBON, who falls to both knees and lets out an agonized scream. He puts a hand on the ground but keeps the other firmly against the wall. Blood flows freely from his back and onto the floor around him. He persists, pushing himself back up and continuing down the hall. Another flash and crack ring out behind him, and the front of his left leg explodes outward.

LEBON (V.O.)
This can't be the end.

He reaches the fork at the end, considers for a second, and turns left. He limps to the end, and tries to open the door. It's locked.

LEBON (V.O.)
Fuck, this is it. It ends like this.

He turns around and slides down to the floor. VERTICAL SHOT as the BOSS comes around the corner and walks towards him.

LEBON (V.O.)
Fuck fuck fuck.

She raises the gun and fires. The SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN
INT. OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE UP of a blinking cursor on a computer screen. A blank document is centered, with no edges of the monitor visible. This remains for five seconds, then CUTS to Lebon sitting in front of the computer. Behind him is the low wall of a cubicle, with beige coloring. The CAMERA remains on him.

MAN (V.O.)
Fuck.

With the CAMERA still focused on LEBON, ALICE (53) rolls up to the cubicle "door" in a rolling office chair.

ALICE
Hey.

LEBON doesn't turn around or respond. He still looks in shock. ALICE THROWS a rolled up ball of paper so that it bounces off his head. He TURNS TO FACE HER.

ALICE
Turn right next time, dummy.

The OFFICE WORKER pushes off the edge of the cubicle wall and rolls away. LEBON SLUMPS on his desk, looking confused.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN
INT. OFFICE - DAY

WIDE SHOT of a break room in the office building.
ALICE (53) is at the counter MAKING A POT OF COFFEE.
LEBON WALKS IN through a door from OFFSCREEN LEFT, and SITS against the counter with his arms folded.

LEBON
What did you just say?

ALICE
I said go right.

LEBON
Are you talking about the -

ALICE
The hallway, dummy. The left door is always locked. Most people try right first anyway.
You're a weird one.

LEBON (V.O.)
I'm the weird one.

ALICE
Not that it makes much of a difference.
She'll catch you either way.

LEBON
Did I just...die?

ALICE
Define "die".

LEBON

I don't know, like, get shot in the face?

ALICE

Ha! Yeah, that happened. I'd say you get used to it but that's probably not what you want to hear.

LEBON

I won't have to if I get out.

ALICE

You want out huh? Do you even know what's there?

LEBON (V.O.)

Does it matter?

LEBON

No, I don't.

ALICE OFFERS the coffee pot she's holding. LEBON HESITATES for a moment, then TAKES it. In a CLOSE UP SHOT of his hands he pours himself a cup.

ALICE

Alice.

LEBON

Huh?

ALICE

My name...?

LEBON

Oh. Right.

ALICE

(slowly) And what's yours?

LEBON

Oh yeah. Lebon. But don't call me that.

ALICE

Sure thing. Dummy.

They SHAKE HANDS, then ALICE WALKS OUT. LEBON is left with his coffee. He WALKS to the small break room table and the CAMERA PANS TO FOLLOW HIM. He SITS DOWN at a chair, seemingly deep in thought. Dark, ambient music swells. He LOOKS UP. A door across the room is marked "Escape". The CAMERA CUTS to BEHIND LEBON, as he stands and slowly walks towards the door. The music GROWS LOUDER. He GRABS the knob, but doesn't turn it.

LEBON (V.O.)

What is that feeling?

LEBON begins to TURN the knob, and cracks it slightly. A powerful light shines from behind the door - it is almost cartoonish and completely out of place. The music hits its peak, and he walks in.
CUT TO:

As the light "fades out", reveal a massive room filled with desks and chairs. PEOPLE sit behind them, watching as colorful beams of light dance on their faces. LEBON WALKS down an aisle until he finds an empty chair. He SITS and LOOKS into a circular screen on the table. It projects a light onto his face, which instantly becomes placid. A FIRST PERSON SHOT shows the light source CENTERED in the frame. The shot SLOWLY ZOOMS FORWARD into the light, until a snapping sound is heard.

ALICE

Wake up, Dummy.

CUT TO a shot from LEBON's RIGHT SIDE, framing LEBON on the LEFT and ALICE on the RIGHT. She FLICKS LEBON again, on the side of the head.

ALICE

You don't want to end up like them, do you?

CAMERA PANS LEFT as LEBON looks over. An enormous man is slumped over his desk, staring into the light. He DROOLS onto the gray metal surface.

LEBON

What the fuck? What is this?

ALICE
This is break.

Behind ALICE, a WORKER's light goes out. He PUTS HIS PALMS TO HIS FOREHEAD and looks like he's going to cry, but recovers and GETS UP to leave. CUT BACK to LEBON's horrified face.

ALICE
You do work, you get break time. It's our treat for being good dogs.

LEBON
I have to get out of here.

ALICE
Wait, stop!

LEBON STANDS UP from the desk and QUICKLY LUMBERS to the door leading out of the room. A TRACKING SHOT FOLLOWS LEBON as he WALKS through the other rooms of cubicles and offices until he reaches the stairwell door placed at a corner with the Boss's glass-walled office. The CAMERA PANS AROUND him as he peers around the corner of a cubicle, and STOPS to focus on the office, which is empty. LEBON takes notice of a set of keys hanging above the BOSS'S desk (QUICK CUT TO CLOSE UP OF KEYS THEN BACK), but MOVES TOWARDS EXIT instead.

ALICE
(hushed) Lebon, stop!

LEBON STOPS for a moment with his hand on the knob, but continues through without looking back. CUT TO a FIRST PERSON VIEW FROM LEBON, with the BOSS'S gun pointed directly into the CAMERA.

BOSS
Probably should've listened.

CUT TO a SIDE VIEW of both the BOSS and LEBON standing on the stairs. She is slightly further down, pointing the gun upwards at him.

LEBON
Why are you keeping us here?

BOSS

This is where you belong.

CUT TO BEHIND LEBON. The BOSS FIRES her gun, but LEBON has already moved. He TACKLES her and they both FALL down the center of the stairwell. The CAMERA PANS OVER and ANGLES DOWNWARD as they fall. CUT TO a shot from the long hallway's entrance as they hit the floor. She cushions his fall slightly, and he rolls off, grabbing a wrist in agony. CUT TO behind him as he makes his way down the corridor, keeping a shoulder against the wall for support. CUT TO the end of the hallway, where he gets to the fork and turns right without hesitation. A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS show him moving through a barren, winding passage until he reaches an opening.

LEBON

No...

CAMERA SHOT FROM BEHIND LEBON: A high wall rises at the end of an open, vacant lot. A bright blue sky stretches above LEBON, but the obstacle doesn't look climbable. He limps to the base of the wall, QUICK CUT to a side angle of him REACHING the wall and beginning to SIT. CUT BACK to a FRONT VIEW of him as he slides to the bottom, groaning in pain. CUT TO the hallway, where the BOSS emerges LIMPING, then CUT BACK to LEBON.

LEBON

(sarcastically) How'd I do?

CUT BACK to BOSS.

BOSS

Better than most, actually.

The BOSS kneels down to face him.

BOSS

But not as good as others. Look, I like you kid. You're a real straight-shooter with a lot of ambition. But you're going to have to show some real effort if you want to rise around here.

LEBON
Noted.

CUT TO BEHIND the BOSS as she shoots LEBON. The CAMERA is angled such that only the blood splatter is seen before LEBON SLUMPS. She TOSSES the gun to the side and LEANS BACK, looking tired.

FADE OUT.

***Cut scene is a montage of failed attempts to escape. LEBON becomes continually more frustrated as it goes on.

FADE IN
INT. CUBICLE - DAY

LEBON is LAYING FLAT on the floor looking up at the ceiling and holding a pillow behind his head. ALICE sits in her rolling chair with her feet crossed over his protruding belly. In the background, a radio plays a muffled newscast. It is droning and boring enough to not grab attention, but not completely inaudible.

LEBON
No, I tried that.

RADIO
The Warp Disaster was a failed experiment in the early efforts to reach Faster-Than-Light speeds for interstellar space travel.

ALICE
Then the other staircase.

LEBON
That doesn't work either. She's just *there*, every single damn time.

RADIO
...tearing a hole in the fourth dimension, leaving a singularity at the center and devastation throughout normal space.

ALICE
Did you try asking nicely?

LEBON puts the pillow over his face and SCREAMS. CUT TO a shot of other office cubicles as his muffled screaming continues in the background. A WORKER looks up and shakes his head disapprovingly, then goes back to work.

LEBON
Thanks for this.

ALICE
I stole it from HR. So, you're welcome.

RADIO
While not physically viewable, the singularity is theorized to contain various fragments of space from other times...

LEBON
(after a pause to think) This place has HR?

ALICE
It's pretty shit. Look, you've been trying to escape for how long now?

LEBON
I don't know. I can't really tell anymore.

ALICE
I must have tried hundreds of times before I gave up. God, it feels like ages ago. It doesn't work, Dummy. Some people just aren't meant to escape.

LEBON
What's to stop us from just all walking out at once?

ALICE
Ha! Look at these people. Do you think they're in any condition for some mass revolt? Against *Her*? Content people aren't very useful, no matter how many.

ALICE POINTS to the computer monitor at LEBON's desk. On the screen a WORKER is trying to lower himself out of a window using a makeshift rope.

ALICE

Do you know what that is? To the rest of us?

LEBON

What is it?

A second window opens and a HAND EMERGES to SLICE the rope with a pair of scissors.

ALICE

Entertainment. It's just amusing at a point
- people trying over and over to achieve
this thing that we've all given up on. It's
not like no one ever escapes. But most break
eventually. Just stop now before it makes
you toxic.

LEBON

What's the alternative?

ALICE

Hmm. I steal people's pens.

LEBON

And pillows from HR.

ALICE

And screws from chairs.

LEBON

Wait, really?

ALICE

And all the coffee mugs from the kitchen.

LEBON

You're a klepto.

ALICE

Nope. Kleptos can't control it. I do it to
watch these fuckers complain.

LEBON

Then you're crazy.

ALICE
Thanks!

LEBON
Okay, fine. I'll stop for now. But I'm not
doing any bullshit work.

ALICE
Want to steal something?

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.
INT OFFICE - DAY

In the background, LEBON speaks through a voice-over.
The scenes depict LEBON and ALICE creating minor havoc
around the office - stuffing silverware down the
garbage disposal, flooding the bathroom, stealing
things.

LEBON (V.O.)
I felt a lightness in that time. In that
unbroken continuum of trivial, effortless
activity I was safe from the dark thoughts
at the back of my mind. I could ignore the
thought that one day I would need to escape
and discover what lay beyond this world of
desks and hallways and monitors and...and...
nothing else.

Clip 3: LEBON finishes drawing a mustache and glasses
on his computer monitor, and sits back to admire his
work. His face is reflected in the glass.

LEBON (V.O.)
I should have stayed.

FADE OUT.

ALICE (O.S.)
You look better.

FADE IN.
INT ROOF - DAY

In a HIGH-ANGLE SHOT FROM ABOVE, LEBON and ALICE
stand against the low wall lining the building's
roof. They pass a cigarette back and forth. Below
them the side of the building falls into a dense

fog - a fog that stretches outward as well, such that the surroundings are fully blocked. At the very edge of the horizon, peaks of mountains are visible. Throughout the fog, shadows of other buildings are vaguely visible. Other WORKERS line the edges of the roof, talking and smoking.

LEBON

You know, I didn't know I could, but - I
feel better. I'm even losing weight.

CUT TO behind the two of them, facing the roof's stairwell entryway. The door bursts open and ALEC (25) RUNS OUT. He looks eager and excited, but PANTS from running.

ALEC

They're gonna do it!

ALICE

Do what?

ALEC

Escape! A few of the others - I don't know
their names. They're almost out. Boss is
pissed. Come on!

CUT TO CAMERA SHOT FROM BEHIND ALICE and LEBON joining a crowd grouped around a computer monitor. The CROWD MURMURS and occasionally SHOUTS or CHEERS. CLOSE UP of the monitor screen, where three WORKERS have formed a human ladder and push others over the top of the high wall, while another HOLDS OFF THE BOSS. One manages to escape before the BOSS overpowers her opponent. CUT BACK TO BEHIND ALICE AND LEBON.

ALICE

I've never seen anyone get out before. I'd
heard stories, but I never really thought it
was possible.

LEBON

It is, Alice. There's your proof.

LEBON starts to walk away from the group, and
ALICE FOLLOWS.

ALICE

Let's go. Let's escape with them. Right now.

LEBON

There won't be time now. They're out.

ALICE

I don't care! We can make it down there.

LEBON

You said yourself, we don't even know what's out there. I thought you were content here.

ALICE

I don't care what's out there anymore. It's not here, and that's what matters.

LEBON LEADS ALICE to his cubicle and they SIT on the floor. A CIRCLE SHOT moves around BOTH as he speaks.

LEBON

She has a key. Somewhere in that office, there's a key I'm sure we can use.

ALICE

So we steal it?

LEBON

That's your specialty, isn't it?

ALICE GRINS and NODS.

LEBON

I'll delay her on her way back up. I'll probably have to die, but you can search her office and get those keys. Go down as soon as she's back, and I'll follow.

ALICE

The keys - they must be for the left door.

LEBON

It's a chance we'll have to take. Ready?

ALICE

Let's do this, Dummy.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The BOSS is returning from the end of the hallway as LEBON reaches the bottom of the stairwell. Her hands and suit are covered in blood, and the tight bun at the back of her head has come loose. SHOT FROM BEHIND HER shows LEBON entering the hallway. The only sound is a gentle drip of blood from her hands.

LEBON

Well, don't you look gorgeous this evening.
Is it wrong to flirt with superiors here?
What's the policy on that?

BOSS

I will kill you where you stand.

LEBON

Ooh, I sure do like a dominant woman.

She LIFTS her gun and FIRES THREE TIMES at him. He DUCKS to his RIGHT and sprints at her, knocking the gun out of her hands. They have an EPIC FIGHT which ends with the BOSS PINNING LEBON and beginning to choke him out. A VERTICAL SHOT shows him TRYING TO PUSH HER AWAY. But she is stronger than him and his arms FALL to his sides. A BANG rings out and the BOSS'S head explodes. She falls to the side. LEBON COUGHS and GASPS FOR AIR.

ALICE

She should be resetting now. Get off your
ass, let's go.

LEBON

(still coughing) It's nice not to have to
die again. Thanks.

The CAMERA SWIVELS AROUND and PANS UP as ALICE PULLS LEBON to his feet. He clutches at his side and coughs harder. QUICK CUT to his hand, which is pressed over his ribs and spilling blood.

ALICE

Fuck, I think you spoke too soon.

LEBON

It's too late to go back. We're leaving now.

THEY WALK to the end of the hall, and in a VERTICAL SHOT they head down the left path.

LEBON

Moment of truth.

SHOT FACING ALICE AND LEBON as ALICE PULLS OUT THE KEY and inserts it into the lock. It turns with a click, and SHE SWINGS THE DOOR OPEN. CUT TO the other side - a supply closet.

LEBON

Fuck! Fucking fuck!

ALICE

Dummy, look.

ALICE POINTS to the corner of the closet, where a ladder sits behind other assorted items.

LEBON

Oh shit. That's our ticket out, isn't it?

LEBON suddenly DOUBLES OVER COUGHING, and a FIRST-PERSON CLOSE UP of HIS HANDS show he is bleeding from the mouth now.

ALICE

I think I'll get the ladder. Can you walk?

LEBON NODS.

They MAKE THEIR WAY through the winding corridors leading out to the vacant lot in a SERIES OF SHOTS that become more blurred and distorted. In the lot, a LONG VERTICAL SHOT from the top of the wall shows them SET UP AND CLIMB THE LADDER, then DROP to the bottom of the other side. They take a moment, then look around.

CUT TO WIDE SHOT FACING OUT: Skeletons of old buildings rise from a wreck of a city surrounding them. ALICE PUTS LEBON'S ARM AROUND HER SHOULDER and they WALK forward, away from the CAMERA and towards the ruins.

A DISTANT AERIAL SHOT captures the two nearing the edge of the buildings, where vast sand dunes begin. They climb a dune and descend part of the other side before LEBON COLLAPSES. CUT TO a CLOSE UP of them SITTING TOGETHER.

ALICE

We made it, Lebon. We're safe. I would never have left without you. Thank you.

LEBON

And you taught me how to be happy. Thank you for that.

A CLOSE UP SHOT shows their hands clasped. Hers begins to change - become tanned and wrinkled.

ALICE

(in a weak voice) I feel...heavy.

LEBON

Oh no, no no no.

CUT TO ALICE'S face, which is growing ancient and weathered. She is aging decades over the course of seconds. LEBON LAYS HER on her back but still HOLDS ONTO HER. Her voice is unnatural when she speaks.

ALICE

I think I should rest a while...I feel like I'm at the end of a long and busy day. Do you ever feel like that? Like you just need to let yourself go for a moment?

As she speaks, ALICE becomes slow in movement and speech. She becomes shrunken and tiny, like a mummy. She closes her eyes, and LEBON STROKES HER CHEEK. Tears have streaked his own bloody face.

LEBON

Yeah. I'm tired too.

A WIDE SHOT of the dunes stretching out beyond them. Their shadows, leaned against each other, are silhouetted against the dust.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE UP of a blinking cursor on a computer screen. A blank document is centered, with no edges of the monitor visible. This remains for five seconds or so, then CUTS to the man sitting in front of the computer. LEBON.

LEBON

Are you FUCKING kidding me!

SHOT FROM OUTSIDE glass-walled office: Before he has time to rage further, the office door OPENS and the BOSS WALKS IN. LEBON LOOKS AROUND, confused. This isn't his cubicle, but rather the BOSS'S office. CUT BACK TO BEHIND THE DESK, now FACING THE BOSS who is seated on the other end.

BOSS

Well, this has been an interesting set of developments.

LEBON STANDS and looks ready to fight, but the BOSS steadies him with a hand on his forearm. He SITS BACK DOWN.

BOSS

I'll explain everything I know.

CUT TO LEBON, who looks enraged but NODS. CUT BACK TO BOSS.

BOSS

This place...it has a way of keeping us suspended in time. You know this. We don't need food or sleep or...well, we don't need anything.

LEBON

But what the *fuck* does that have to do with-

BOSS

Just give me a minute. People pass in and out of this place. While they're here, they don't age. When they get out, time...

LEBON

...catches up with them.

BOSS
Yes.

They SIT IN SILENCE for a moment.

BOSS
That's why you could return after you went
out there, but your friend couldn't.

LEBON
What does this mean then? Any of this?

BOSS
Well, I know that it means I get to retire.
And it means you get a promotion.

She takes out her gun and PUSHES IT towards LEBON.

LEBON
What if I don't want to?

BOSS
It's not a matter of what you want. It's a
matter of how you choose to deal with this
position that you're in. I chose to oppress
these people and bury them in idleness,
because I learned the truth and hated it. I
didn't want them to know. But now that
someone can take my burden, I'm leaving this
awful place and you can do with it what you
like. (a moment of silence) Abandon it, for
all I care.

A VERTICAL SHOT shows both LEBON'S and the BOSS'S hands
resting on either side of the gun. She pulls hers away.

BOSS
Well, good luck. I'm going to walk until my
bones turn to dust. Happy retirement!

She WALKS OUT. As the door closes, LEBON LOOKS OUT across
the cubicles populating the office. A FINAL VERTICAL SHOT
shows his hand resting on the gun.

FADE OUT.