

# BUT I DIGRESS ...

AN ETHICAL CODIFICATION FOR EXACTLY ONE PERSON (ME)

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Last Compiled: May 1, 2018

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## Disclaimer

There will be more of these later on, but the editors feel the need to have a blanket one up front. This life philosophy has been much influenced by David Foster Wallace, acclaimed author, we find this problematic. The author, personally, finds his general outline of irony in media and its potential toxicity compelling and worthy of thought and adoption. He feels that media\* which exhibits the traits outline by Mr. Wallace in such writings as *Infinite Jest*, *E Unibus Pluram*, and *This is Water* should be shown adulation.

We would like to acknowledge here the widespread adoption of Wallace's school of thought by the less-than morally upright or well-meaning. Such people, generally being of the fuck-boy, faux-intelligentsia, faux-deep, God's-gift-to-woman-and-the-world-generally type, are not whom the author wished to associate himself. Despite this, we would like to simply float the possibility that the author is actually one of those people who is in deep denial of his belonging to that category, because who truly knows his-or-her-self.

We would also, while we have your attention, to point out the absurdity of this document existing at all. Why on goddamn earth, for what reason in the freakin world, would a person who is twenty-three, just graduated college (not even yet), need to write what is effectively a memoir? I, oops, we, mean, what else to call this? It's a fuckin' memoir, like, conceited much?

—The Editors

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\*movies, TV shows, books, etc.



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## **Introduction**

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging the future but by the past.

---

PATRICK HENRY, *speech at the Virginia Convention (1775)*

This document is an attempt to layout the personal philosophy that I have developed over the course of my life so far. While realizing that I have only lived 23 years, quite a short time in the scheme of things, I believe that documenting my thoughts will serve me to reflect on from whence I came and to meditate on where I am going. I intend this to be some manner of living document, updated over time with my new insights.

This introduction exists to define some terms and as exposition regarding the development of my philosophy. We start our journey with a discussion of ethics vs. morals and follow that up with a (mostly) chronological account of my journey to this point. Just before getting to the meat of my elucidation I'll mention some influences.

## Ethics

Personal philosophy is a bit abstract, I would, to a certain degree, prefer the term *ethical code*. What does that mean exactly? I assume that we all have a passing familiarity with the term ethics, but this usage may be slightly opaque. I think a precise definition of the term ethical (or ethics) would be appropriate here, I am using a definition set forth in *Objectivity*, by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison (2007).

**ethics** normative codes of conduct that are bound up with a way of being in the world, an ethos in the sense of the habitual disposition of an individual or group

**morals** specific normative rules that may be upheld or transgressed and to which one may be held to account

I really doubt that these are very many people's working definitions of these terms. It doesn't really matter in this case, because I'm just defining these terms to mean those definitions in this specific context. Once you're done reading this (this is a sentence which will likely only ever be read by me) you can go back to whatever normal definition you have, but for now use these.

I have no real moral code (by the above definition), besides, like, the law, I guess; I'm saying that I don't believe in God or religion. My ethics are founded purely on choice, or they try to be, and I don't think there will be any reward for following them or a punishment for breaking them.



Removing incentive, I have found (along with many behavioral psychologists), tends to make one less likely to do some thing. The question that comes to mind is: why continue to follow?

The answer is in two parts, neither of which are likely to mollify current skeptics. First, this list is, at least in part, descriptive, it's how I have lived my life (which has worked out pretty well for me so far). The second part is really a rejection of the question; living this way has made my life better, more fulfilling.

## Development

Constant and frequent questioning is the first key to wisdom...  
For through doubting we a led to inquire, and by inquiry we  
perceive the truth.

---

PETER ABELARD, *Sic et Non* ( 1121)

I started college pretty goddamn depressed; for about two years, I thought about my suicide more like a historical event than a potential future choice. I started this document near the end of my 5<sup>th</sup> year of college, I am now without suicidal thoughts (for all intents and purposes—I'm not gonna say I'm perfect).

When I first decided to write this, I figured it might be beneficial or focusing to write down how I want to ideally live my life. After talking to people about my task, I decided to modify my purpose. The original goal remains: a codification of a lifestyle; a new goal enters: a reflection of how I got from preordained death to a healthy(er) human being. What this document has become for me is an accounting of how I survived, an existential *Robinson Crusoe* if one wanted to be full of oneself. The tenets enumerated below represent the codification of life changes I made in order to, in the most literal sense, save my own life. They are a product of years of hard work; I introspected and I studied and I made friends and I sought help.

There is something, quite a lot actually, to be said for getting help if you need it. Don't ever be too proud to get help, it's not even a matter of pride. The stigmatization of mental health is dangerous and buying into it can be deadly. Learning that there isn't anything wrong with me was groundbreaking and is to a large degree the reason that these rules exist.

## Influences

The commencement address delivered by David Foster Wallace on May 21, 1995 at Kenyon College, commonly referred to as *This is Water*, has had a great deal of influence on my life. Despite the frequent co-opting by somewhat douchey faux-ally types of Wallace's legacy his general philosophy resonates with me.<sup>†</sup> In particular, his rejection of the irony and cynicism of postmodernism in favor of his own, sincere style is something that I fully embrace. Despite the fact that I've never actually finished reading *Infinite Jest* and that really the only work of his I've finished is *Consider the Lobster*, I consider him to be among my most significant influences.

Another influence for the items listed here is Albert Camus, specifically absurdism. I don't embrace absurdism wholeheartedly; there were some strikingly problematic elements in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, what I do take from Camus' philosophy is the desperate, futile struggle against the void. This fight, that unwinnable, yet cosmically noble struggle against the unknowable appeals to me.

Not all of my influences are now deceased well-known acclaimed authors; the next influence I'll talk about is actually a duo: Freddie Wong and Matthew Arnold. (The acclaimed authors bit isn't intended as a slight, it was just funny, so shut the fuck up or something.) Sincerity is one of the core virtues I'll be exploring later on, and my fascination with the concept stems in large part from these two. I've been watching freddie video, I assume, since I first went on YouTube, a lot of his early work is pretty ubiquitous on the World Wide Web. Wong and Arnold also produced *Video Game High School*, which I enjoyed immensely and their Hulu series was a good spot of fun as well. Their podcast, *Story Break*, is almost certainly my favorite podcast, but their true contribution to my life comes in introducing me to sincerity.<sup>‡</sup>

I'll not get too deep into it here, as there is a whole chapter later on dedicated to it, but I, from them, realized that it was the reason I enjoyed certain works. The first example of this is *Speed Racer*, my favorite movie (well, tied for first<sup>§</sup>), but I also see it in their works.

<sup>†</sup>I fully recognize the high probability that this sentence is pretty much completely ironic and represents a pretty damning failure of introspection.

<sup>‡</sup>I don't mean sincerity the concept, obviously I know what that is. They pointed out sincerity in media, most memorably *Speed Racer*.

<sup>§</sup>With *Short Term 12* which—you know what, we'll get into it later.

## Knowledge

Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.

---

IMMANUEL KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)

I have, on several occasions, said something to the effect of that my greatest and continuing regret in my life is that I don't know everything.<sup>1</sup> Quoting oneself is ridiculous and conceited; not to mention the fact that the sentiment expressed is also ridiculous, a facially absurd notion.

Despite the true (like, literally quantum mechanical) impossibility of complete knowledge, it fits with my common practice of setting goals that are purely aspirational. For me, these goals are in a separate class from day-to-day, banal goals, like "finish homework" or "find a job"; aspirational goals are those that I recognize are unattainable. Goals such as these are, in my mind, couched in terms of calculus: as time goes to infinity, I achieve that goal.

What I'll be referring to as "aspirational goals" from here on out, are, in my experience, sort of antithetical to human nature. As humans, we generally take the path that will lead to the most immediate satisfaction and have difficulty seeing particularly far into the future. Aspirational goals offer no prospect of satisfaction, the catharsis comes in the journey.

## 1.1 Knowledge Acquisition

He who chooses to know for the sake of knowing will choose most readily that which is most truly knowledge.

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ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* (Unknown)

Pursuant to my insatiable desire to learn<sup>2</sup>, I try to read books of varying subjects. For instance, as of this writing I am reading *The Subject of Semiotics*, by Kaja Silverman, and before that I read *Battle Cry of Freedom*, by James McPherson, a single-volume history of the Civil War. These two books are illustrative of two aspects of my desire for knowledge: they are both far outside my field and they are disparate from each other. Yet, each provides value to my life.

I have never wanted to be "just" an engineer, it feels too confining. Reading on a wide variety of subject matter helps me become a more well-rounded person, a trait which I find admirable. Well-roundedness has its

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<sup>1</sup>I kinda love how unverifiable this is

<sup>2</sup>fuck, what a douche

virtues, e.g., (hypothetically) better conversation, different perspectives, a more interesting life, but it is not without potential drawbacks.

Most obvious as a drawback is being “a mile wide but an inch deep”, that property of having passing knowledge in much, but true understanding in little. This ends up only being a problem when one is interacting with other people, it’s not really an internal problem. I don’t want to discount the potential discursive drawback to this, coming across as shallow can be problematic. On a practical level, other people are often not knowledgeable enough to recognize that one lacks a depth of knowledge in a subject. While this is not, in my opinion, an adequate excuse, it at least mitigates the problem somewhat.

## 1.2 Inform Oneself

Democracy Dies in Darkness

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THE WASHINGTON POST

My sister has has considerable influence regarding the development of my political/social opinions, especially since starting college. From my point of view, some level of political consciousness is vital.



## Sincerity

What passes for hip cynical transcendence of sentiment is really some kind of fear of being really human, since to be really human ... is probably to be unavoidably sentimental and naïve and goo-prone and generally pathetic

---

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE, *Infinite Jest* (1996)

The quotation on the previous page elucidates the idea behind this point more eloquently than I ever could. Despite that, I will endeavor to clarify how this may apply to my life specifically.

To be clear, this point is not a wide-ranging proscription on lying or deceit generally.<sup>1</sup> Full disclosure, this one does not really apply to my life at all, it really applies more to the media which I consume. In an attempt to clarify my point, I will comment my two favorite films<sup>2</sup>: *Speed Racer* and *Short Term 12*. Each of these movies portray, in my opinion, sincerity in film and the powerful effect said sincerity adds to film.

JUST GONNA ADD A LITTLE NOTE HERE THAT I'M SITTING HERE, AT MY DESK IN 269 HIGHLAND, AND I'M TRYING TO PARSE THROUGH THE MIASMA, THE RAT'S NEST THAT IS THE WAY I'VE DEALT WITH POINT OF VIEW. I DIDN'T START THIS UNDER THE ASSUMPTION THAT I'D BE THE ONLY ONE TO EVER READ THIS. IN A PARTICULARLY LUCID MOMENT I CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE. I JUST REALIZED I DON'T KNOW WHY I STARTED THIS NOTE...

## 2.1 *Speed Racer*

Speed, I understand that every child has to leave home. But I want you to know, that door is always open. You can always come back. 'Cause I love you.

---

FROM *SPEED RACER*, *The Wachowskis* (2008)

Most people don't like this movie.<sup>3</sup> Whenever I tell people that I love this movie, that it's my favorite film, I always feel the need to caveat my love or justify it in some way. Something like stipulating a state of mind which must be entered in order to facilitate enjoyment; I do this for their benefit, my love is without restrictions or qualifications. It's difficult to fully convince people I'm serious, that my favorite movie<sup>4</sup> is an American adaptation of a Japanese kids show that nobody likes (the movie that is, people can take it or leave it with the show I think). But I am serious, and

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<sup>1</sup>TO BE ADDITIONALLY CLEAR: I'm not goddamn encouraging lying and shit

<sup>2</sup>They're tied for first

<sup>3</sup>see., e.g., a 39% on Rotten Tomatoes and a 37 on Metacritic

<sup>4</sup>Again, 1(a) (or 1(b))



now that I've convinced you<sup>5</sup> that I am indeed serious we can actually fucking talk about sincerity or whatever the fuck.<sup>6</sup>

*Speed Racer* is convinced, to an almost disconcerting degree, that race car driving is (almost) the most important activity in which one may participate; that being the best is the second most important thing in the world. We are meant to truly believe in this primacy, besides family (this is a hella important point), racing trumps all.

## 2.2 *Short Term 12*

Everything good in my life is because of you

---

FROM *SHORT TERM 12*, Destin Daniel Cretton (2013)

As with the previous film we discussed, this is a difficult movie to introduce to people, like, its hard to tell people "oh, my favorite movie, it's *Short Term 12*." A typical rejoinder to such a revelation is: "What the fuck is that?" and I have to explain that it's a beautiful and wonderfully small indie film that very few human beings have had the pleasure of seeing.

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<sup>5</sup>me

<sup>6</sup>Like for real, get to the darn point already



## **Empathy**

The really important kind of freedom involves attention and awareness and discipline, and being able to truly care about other people and to sacrifice for them over and over in myriad petty, unsexy ways every day.

---

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE, *Kenyon Commencement Address* (2005)

## Disclaimer

I GET THAT THE LAST TWO EPIGRAPHS WERE BOTH DAVID FOSTER WALLACE, I'M NOT REALLY TRYING TO BE A BIG OL' DOUCHER HERE, SO BEAR WITH ME. ON REFLECTION, I REALIZE THAT I'M ACTUALLY WRITING MY "PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY" SO I GUESS I'M FAILING PRETTY HARD HERE. JUST, I GUESS, PLEASE TRY TO SEE ME AS A SEMI-NON-DOUCHE FOR A LITTLE BIT HERE. ALSO, IF YOU'RE READING THIS, THEN YOU ARE ALMOST CERTAINLY ME, SO TAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF MAN.

### 3.1 Becoming Empathetic—The M.V.W. Story (unfinished)

I don't relate to people very well, it's just a part of my life. I've always been awkward, unable to converse.

#### Aside: Recognizing Empathy

I had a realization while watching *The Office*, re: how it expresses its empathy. *The Office* is, truly, representative of so much of what I'm trying to express in this section. At first, I thought to myself, "the empathy presents itself in the character's true desire to connect with one another", or something to that effect. That sentiment is true, but empathy is shown in the deepest fiber of the show, specifically, in its most recognizable quality.

The show is awkward as hell. Countless times I've had to pause and count to three or take a deep-ass breath<sup>1</sup> before restarting because the cringe is so utterly overwhelming. In so many of these situations, the cringe may be the product of a character trying to reveal their truest self in what may be an inadvisable manner or inappropriate context. It's because they're trying, trying their damned heart out, to connect with their fellows or represent themselves in a better light. Since their urge is so

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<sup>1</sup>deep ass-breath, a.k.a, butt inhale

plain, their sentiment so open, we tend to feel almost physical pain at just the possibility (in some instances, the inevitability) of rejection.

Empathetic pain comes from our innate sociability as human beings, it's in our DNA. We want to be accepted by our peers, by those we admire, and the sight of someone falling on their face in the attempt is far too real. The pain is, I feel, exacerbated by the rejection of real feeling exhibited in contemporary pop-culture.<sup>2</sup>

An additional note is the way that the show handles Ryan, the B.J. Novak character. At not point is there any attempt to show Ryan as actually cool, or like, a truth-teller type. He's shown as he is: an asshole, cause a lot (or most) of the time, cynical dudes who think they they see through the veil are actually just fuckin' dicks.

### 3.2 Practicing Empathy

This is the important part.

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<sup>2</sup>see, *E Unibus Pluram*



## **The Immutable**

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away.

---

PHILLIP K. DICK, *How to Build a Universe That Doesn't Fall Apart Two Days Later* (1978)

Complaining, expressing one's discontent, is not only natural, but essential. This does not enjoin complaints generally, but only when they are *against what one cannot affect*.

## 4.1 Corollary: The Mutable

Arising naturally (or not, I have really no idea what people ever mean when they say that) from the previous item, one should not complain (about the mutable) without *attempting to effect change*. I have found this hard to put into practice, as I am naturally quite averse to going outside and/or expending energy.

## 4.2 What is Immutable?

We all goddamn complain.



## **The Void**

Can one be a saint without God?, that's the problem, in fact the only problem I'm up against today.

---

ALBERT CAMUS, *The Plague* (1947)

This comes pretty clearly from my (partial) embrace of the absurd. I struggle with Camus' absurd, caveat that I have read *The Myth of Sisyphus* but once; my difficulty stems from the acknowledgment of some form of higher power and the extremely gendered terminology in *Sisyphus*. Intellectually I cannot really brook any consideration of god. Generally I will describe myself as agnostic, partially out of my fear of nothingness, but in reality I am an atheist. I'm not even really anti-religion, people are free to believe what they believe, and if it doesn't infringe on me, then more power to them.

I originally titled this section *Fight the Void*, which is not necessarily inappropriate; the current title reflects a broadening of scope.

## 5.1 Branching from Camus

Again, I don't subscribe fully to Absurdism.

# **Appendices**



A

## **Quotations**

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Some quotations that I decided to not use as epigraphs (and also other quotes that I like).

Morality is not properly the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness.

---

IMMANUEL KANT, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)

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How does it happen that a properly endowed natural scientist comes to concern himself with epistemology? Is there no more valuable work in his specialty? I hear many of my colleagues saying, and I sense it from many more, that they feel this way. I cannot share this sentiment. When I think about the ablest students whom I have encountered in my teaching, that is, those who distinguish themselves by their independence of judgment and not merely their quick-wittedness, I can affirm that they had a vigorous interest in epistemology. They happily began discussions about the goals and methods of science, and they showed unequivocally, through their tenacity in defending their views, that the subject seemed important to them. Indeed, one should not be surprised by this.

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ALBERT EINSTEIN, *Physikalische Zeitschrift* (1916)

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One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

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ALBERT CAMUS, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942)

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## Quotations

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Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation—not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” That is the true genius of America—a faith in simple dreams, an insistence on small miracles.

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BARACK OBAMA, *DNC Keynote Speech* (2004)

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B

## **Top Ten Lists**

This is gimmicky, but I felt like I should write these down somewhere.

## B.1 Movies

The top two here are rock solid, but the rest can mostly be shuffled around.

### 1. ***Short Term 12***

1. ***Speed Racer***: This movie encapsulates perfectly the idea of sincerity. Made with the usual non-subtlety of the Wachowskis, it is so true to itself that it is, in my opinion, impossible not to love.

3.

4.

### 5. ***Mad Max: Fury Road***

### 6. ***No Country for Old Men***

### 7. ***Detention***

### 8. ***Good Night, And Good Luck***

9.

### 10. ***Hunt for the Wilderpeople***

### B.1.1 Honorable Mentions

## B.2 TV Shows

### 1. ***The West Wing***

C

**Just Random Bullshit**

## C.1 Random Thoughts on Speech

Our (humanity's) ability to describe is, as far as is currently known, unique amongst animals. Other species, most or all of them, have the ability to speak, some form of language exists. However, they deal purely within the scope of the prescriptive. They don't recall. They don't tell they're friends what they did the preceding day. We do.

Not only do we flap our gums (and twirl our pens) regarding things that have happened, we communicate ideas and concepts that have no basis in reality (hot take, e.g., religion). In *Sapiens*, it is asserted that this ability is our most fundamental property, what renders *Homo sapiens* alone alongside all other animals. It has been found, independently (I think, haven't checked) that *Homo sapiens*' superlative pattern recognition (superior pattern processing) is a foundational element of language.

An anecdote, from Barthes: Karl von Frisch, sought to prove the commonly held hypothesis that bees had some form of language. He succeeded in this pursuit, but found that their language contained no description, it was all prescriptive; they had to coordinate in order to get their food, they didn't talk about what they were doing or had done, if such information was not imminently necessary for survival. Basically, we're the only animals that talk about shit that doesn't really matter/exist.

## C.2 The Pumping Lemmas

D

## **Some Poems and Stuff**

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## The Road Not Taken

ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

## **The New Colossus**

EMMA LAZARUS

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

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## When I Consider How My Light Is Spent

JOHN MILTON

When I consider how my light is spent  
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,  
And that one talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest He returning chide;  
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"  
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need  
Either man's work or His own gifts. Who best  
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state  
Is kingly: thousands at His bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait."



## **Eulogy (*Synecdoche, New York*)**

CHARLIE KAUFMAN

Everything is more complicated than you think.  
You only see a tenth of what is true.  
There are a million little strings attached to every choice you  
make; you can destroy your life every time you choose.  
But maybe you won't know for twenty years.  
And you'll never trace it to its source.  
And you only get one chance to play it out.  
Just try and figure out your own divorce.  
And they say there is no fate, but there is: it's what you create.  
Even though the world goes on for eons and eons, you are  
here for a fraction of a fraction of a second.  
Most of your time is spent being dead or not yet born.  
But while alive, you wait in vain, wasting years, for a phone  
call or a letter or a look from someone or something to  
make it all right.  
And it never comes or it seems to but doesn't really.  
And so you spend your time in vague regret or vaguer hope for  
something good to come along.  
Something to make you feel connected, to make you feel whole,  
to make you feel loved.  
And the truth is I'm so angry and the truth is I'm so fucking sad,  
and the truth is I've been so fucking hurt for so fucking  
long and for just as long have been pretending I'm ok,  
just to get along, just for, I don't know why, maybe be-  
cause no one wants to hear about my misery, because  
they have their own, and their own is too overwhelming  
to allow them to listen to or care about mine.

Well, fuck everybody.

Amen.

---

## Professor Perlman's Monologue (*Call Me By Your Name*)

JAMES IVORY

PERLMAN So? Welcome home. Did Oliver enjoy the trip?

ELIO I think he did.

*PERLMAN takes a drag from his cigarette, then pauses a moment before speaking.*

PERLMAN You two had a nice friendship.

ELIO (*somewhat evasive*) Yes.

*Another pause, and another drag on his cigarette.*

PERLMAN You're too smart not to know how rare, how special, what you two had was.

ELIO Oliver was Oliver.

PERLMAN "*Parce-que c'était lui, parce-que c'était moi.*" (*Because he was he, because I was I*)

ELIO (*trying to avoid talking about Oliver with his father*) Oliver may be very intelligent –

PERLMAN (*interrupting his son*) Intelligent? He was more than intelligent. What you two had had everything and nothing to do with intelligence. He was good, and you were both lucky to have found each other, because you too are good.

ELIO I think he was better than me.

PERLMAN I'm sure he'd say the same think about you, which flatters the two of you.

*In tapping his cigarette and leaning toward the ashtray, he reaches out and touches Elio's hand. PERLMAN alters his tone of voice (his tone says: We don't have to speak about it, but let's not pretend we don't know what I'm saying).*

PERLMAN (*cont'd*) When you least expect it, Nature has cunning ways of finding our weakest spot. Just remember: I am here. Right now you may not want to feel anything. Perhaps you never wished to feel anything. And perhaps it's not to me that you'll want to speak about these things. But feel something obviously you did.

*ELIO looks at his father, then drops his eyes to the floor.*

PERLMAN (*cont'd*) Look—you had a beautiful friendship. Maybe more than a friendship. And I envy you. In my place, most parents would hope the whole thing goes away, to pray that their sons land on their feet. But I am not such a parent. In your place, if there is a pain, nurse it. And if there is a flame, don't snuff it out. Don't be brutal with it. We rip so much of ourselves to be cured of things faster, that we go bankrupt by the age of thirty and have less to offer each time we start with someone new. But to make yourself feel nothing so as to not feel anything—what a waste!

*ELIO is dumstruck as he tries to take all this in.*

PERLMAN (*cont'd*) Have I spoken out of turn?

*ELIO shakes his head.*

PERLMAN (*cont'd*) Then let me say one more thing. It will clear the air. I may have come close, but I never had what you two had. Something always held me back or stood in the way. How you live your life is your business. Remember, our hearts and our bodies are given to us only once. And before you know it, your heart is worn out, and, as for your body, there comes a point when no one looks at it, much less wants to come near it. Right now there's sorrow. Pain. DON't kill it and with it the joy you've felt.

*PERLMAN takes a breath.*

PERLMAN (*cont'd*) We may never speak of this again. But I hope you'll never hold it against me that we did. I will have been a terrible father if, one day, you'd want to speak to me and felt that the door was shut, or not sufficiently open.

ELIO Does mother know?

PERLMAN I don't think she does.

*But the way he says this means "Even if she did, I am sure her feelings would be no different than mine."*

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## Monologue (*Rick and Morty* S03E03–*Pickle Rick*)

JESSICA GAO

DR. WONG Rick, the only connection between your unquestionable intelligence and the sickness destroying your family is that everyone in your family, you included, use intelligence to justify sickness. You seem to alternate between viewing your own mind as an unstoppable force and as an inescapable force, and I think it's because the only truly unapproachable concept for you is that that it's **your** mind, within **your** control. You chose to come here, you chose to talk, to belittle my vocation, just as you chose to become a pickle. You are the master of your universe and yet you are dripping with rat blood and feces, your enormous mind literally vegetating by your own hand. I have no doubt that you would be bored senseless by therapy, the same way I'm bored when I brush my teeth and wipe my ass, because the thing about repairing, maintaining, and cleaning is; it's not an adventure. There's no way to do it so wrong you might die. It's just work, the bottom line is some people are okay going to work, and some people, well, some people would rather die. Each of us gets to choose.