

THE LAST WORD

Written by

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1 **INT. WAITING ROOM - CASTING OFFICE - MORNING**

Well groomed, slick, immaculate. A room full of doppelgangers wearing black suits. Each going through their pre-game routines and memorizing lines.

The meeting room door opens.

CASTING ASSISTANT
Wooster, Wes. Wes Wooster?

The CASTING ASSISTANT, a young professional with a practiced smile, looks around, all eyes eagerly upon them.

CASTING ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Wes Wooster?

The door BURSTS open and WES WOOSTER (30s, ill-fitting, wrinkled suit, with an air of disheveled charm) stumbles in, hindered by the sunglasses still perched on his face.

CASTING ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Wes Wooster?

Wes straightens up, smoothing the front of his suit while acknowledging the unimpressed Casting Assistant.

2 **INT. MEETING ROOM - CASTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Wes strides in, met by six decision-makers seated around a table, among them are the DIRECTOR.

CASTING ASSISTANT
Wes Wooster.

Each gives Wes an unenthusiastic nod of acknowledgement as he takes his position before them.

Suddenly, Wes panics and pats his pockets...

The Casting Assistant rolls their eyes, reaching out to Wes with a script, which he gratefully accepts.

DIRECTOR
Alright, Sarah.

SARAH stands from the table and heads over to a mark in front of Wes as he attempts to covertly study the script.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Sunglasses?

WES
Oh, shit, sorry.

Wes removes the sunglasses, winces immediately, and gradually unveils his bloodshot eyes.

DIRECTOR
When you're ready...

Wes inhales deeply, preparing himself. He closes his eyes, entering a state of intense concentration leaving Sarah slightly confused.

His eyes suddenly reopen, maintaining the same, focused state. However, his concentration fades as he lets out a brief, frustrated huff, suggesting whatever he was looking for isn't there.

Wes retches slightly, his hand instinctively reaches up to cover his mouth. Believing he is OK, Wes exhales as he lowers his hand.

SARAH
Jesus! He smells like a beer bottle
someone's been using as an ashtray.

WES
Fuck you, Bi-

3 INT. WES' CAR - SHORTLY AFTER

Wes is settled in the driver's seat of his clunker.

He reaches for a half-smoked joint from the console and lights it up, taking a deep drag as his other hand mindlessly grabs a beer in the cup holder.

Without a second thought, Wes takes a swig...

WES
BLURGH!

He spits, spraying all over himself and the dashboard. Choking and wiping his mouth, Wes grimaces in disgust.

He examines the beer bottle, tilting it to see the vile contents inside... a soggy heap of cigarette butts, floating in the remaining dregs.

WES (CONT'D)
Yeah, fair enough. Sorry, Sarah.

Wes spits and sputters, turning the key. The engine also spitting and sputtering before finally mustering the strength to turn over.

4 INT. FAST FOOD OFFICE - AFTERNOON

In the Manager's office - small, cramped, and messy. Wes, still in his suit and sunglasses, makes a concerted effort to listen as the MANAGER (50s) speaks at him.

MANAGER

If you intend to work here,
motivation, cleanliness, loyalty,
and honesty are non-negotiable. As
for emotional issues, sort them out
with your meds.

The Manager reclines in his chair.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Life's not fair. The world
doesn't give a damn about your
self-esteem. You've got to
achieve something *BEFORE* you
start patting yourself on the
back.

Wes smirks to himself.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Something funny? Let me guess. You
think flipping burgers is beneath
your dignity? Your grandparents had
another word for burger flipping:
opportunity.

Wes inhales deeply, taking a moment to weigh the consequences
of a less than polite response. *Fuck it.*

WES

My grandparents instilled in me the
belief that without an education,
I'd be stuck flipping burgers. The
entire education system and society
echoed the same sentiment. In fact,
it was used as a threat! Somehow,
it flipped. Just like one of your
burgers, out there... Now it's *if*
you're lucky, maybe you can flip
burgers. Now it's an *opportunity*.

(beat)

It's fucking confusing.

The Manager is puzzled as he attempts to grasp Wes' point.

MANAGER

According to the state, I have to
pay you \$15.96 an hour. Therefore,
I expect genuine effort from you.
Be prepared to come in on your days
off! We operate as a family
business, and just like family, we
help out around the house.

WES

What do you mean by help out?

MANAGER

Didn't you help out by bringing in the groceries or mowing the lawn?

WES

Yes. But I got to eat the groceries and play on the lawn?

MANAGER

When you come in, be clean and presentable. Not like you've been out all night drinking and smell like you've been eating cigarettes.

Wes tries to appear unaffected as the Manager's arrogance intensifies. However, his inner turmoil, made worse by a long night out, suddenly manifests as PROJECTILE VOMIT all over the floor.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

You fuck-

5 INT. WES' CAR - SHORTLY AFTER

Wes sits in his car, finishing the joint from earlier.

WES

Yeah. Not sorry.

Turning the key to his car, it coughs out exhaust but fails to turn over. He tries again. No luck.

Third time lucky, perhaps? Nope. Wes buries his head into the steering wheel.

6 EXT./INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DUSK

After a long walk, Wes unlocks his apartment door and steps inside.

"The Dark Knight Trilogy," "Taxi Driver," "The Shawshank Redemption." Just a few of the film posters adorning the walls, accompanied by various lobby cards and fan art.

On the shelves, a *Bauer C3 Super 8*, *DeJur Citation 8mm*, and a *Wollensak 8mm - Model 53* rest with other vintage cameras.

Blu-ray, DVD, and VHS cases organized by size and alphabetized, stand in formation along the wall, alongside several books and magazines on the same subject.

The furniture is strategically arranged, all facing the centerpiece to ensure visibility from every angle. That centerpiece being a 60" LED TV which commands attention at the forefront of the seating area.

This typically pristine homage to celluloid is marred by meticulously organized piles of disorder. Separated laundry, washed and unwashed. Trash, neatly stowed in shopping bags, systematically sorted by type, alongside bottles and cans, all poised for recycling.

Wes checks his phone and sees he has a voice message. As the message plays, Wes starts rummaging through the kitchen cupboards.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Hello Wes, it's your mother. We haven't heard from you in a while. Just wanted to remind you that if we have to keep sending you money, you'll have to put your parents down on your W-2 form as your employers.

With a forceful SLAM, Wes shuts the cupboard and shifts his attention to the fridge.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Kate had her baby last week. Must be a handful being one of the top attorneys in town and having a young one. She must have found a good man. I see that Daisy found herself a lovely new man. I hear she's also moving back.

Wes glances at a note on the fridge door: "Daisy - 9pm" before looking over at a filing box sitting on the floor.

MOTHER (V.O.)

How you ever convinced those girls to fall for you, I'll never know -

Wes SLAMS the fridge shut.

7

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Wes, disheartened and still in his suit, enters his neighborhood dive bar.

The bartender, MYLES (early 40s, dressed like an adult toddler, with his own air of failure), nods in acknowledgment as Wes takes a seat on a stool.

MYLES

Any luck?

Pouring a pint, Myles gestures toward Wes's sophisticated attire. Wes shakes his head, discouraged.

MYLES (CONT'D)
You swore at someone again, didn't you?

Wes nods.

MYLES (CONT'D)
You know they'll stop asking you to come in, right?

Wes shrugs, unaffected by the advice.

WES
You move into your new room?

MYLES
Yeah, the guy finally moved out.

WES
That mean the sofa is free now?

Myles casts a disapproving glance.

WES (CONT'D)
In case of an emergency... Or a place to hide?

While Myles slides the pint across the bar, Wes, in turn, pulls out a DVD from his jacket and slides it over.

MYLES
What fine piece of art are we experiencing this evening?

WES
The 1950s classic *"It Attacked from a Planet!"*

Myles inspects the sparse DVD cover.

MYLES
Looks like they need a whole new alphabet to class this movie.

WES
I think even Ed Wood rejected directing it.

Myles chuckles before they are interrupted by another patron seated farther down the bar.

HENRY (late 50s, bald, very gaunt, and a regular at the bar) stares up at the sports playing on TV.

HENRY
Why can't you play any of the classics? *The Godfather*, *Unforgiven* or *Driving Miss Daisy*?

Wes turns to Henry, deadpan.

WES

Jesus Christ, Henry! You look like
shit. What happened!?

Henry glares back.

HENRY

Why do you indulge these shitty
movies? Is it because deep down you
know it's the only type they'd ever
let you be a part of making?

Wes smirks at Henry to deflect the subtle blow to his ego.
"Touché."

WES

Driving Miss Daisy!?

HENRY

You heard me.

WES

Well, if you weren't so preoccupied
neglecting us with whatever's been
keeping you so busy, you would know
that classics week was last month.
However, I regret to inform you
Miss Daisy didn't make the cut.

Wes is relieved once he hears Henry's familiar chuckle,
though when it arrives, it's somewhat distorted, likely due
to his current predicament.

HENRY

Just don't play that shit until
this is finished.

Henry points at the sport he's watching as Wes shifts over to
the stool next to him.

WES

Treatment must be going well if
you're able to come in for a beer.

Wes barely gives Henry a chance to respond.

WES (CONT'D)

Have you been getting the gift
cards? I know you're supposed to
make the meals yourself, but I
can't cook for shit! I'd probably
just make the cancer grow back. So,
you're better off.

Wes smiles cheekily as Henry continues watching the TV.

HENRY

Yeah, we got them. Thank you. We really appreciate it, and I appreciate you checking in every week, but...

Henry glances over at Myles, suddenly apprehensive. The two share a knowing look before Myles quietly heads out the back.

WES

But... what?

Henry turns from the TV to face Wes directly.

HENRY

I haven't been completely honest with you, kid.

(beat)

They're sending me home to die. So, I thought it'd be rude not to stop in.

Wes freezes, his eyes glistening as his voice catches.

WES

Henry... I -

Henry wags his finger, eyes back on the TV, cutting Wes off before he can say more. Wes swallows hard, choking back the emotion.

He glances at Henry, searching for a way to respond...

WES (CONT'D)

How's the beer?

HENRY

It burns all the way down and on the way out. But 1 beer gets me twice as drunk now, so fuck it!

Henry lifts his glass and takes as big a sip as possible.

WES

Any other stops planned on your adventure?

HENRY

I was thinking of stopping by a friend's house and pissing on his door. But given my current predicament, I don't think I could pull off the quick getaway... Or even produce the piss when I need it.

They both sip mindlessly, watching the TV.

WES

Think they'll do any good this year?

HENRY

They better fucking not. 53 years of torture supporting this team. Not a single championship. That'd be just my luck, they'll win it as soon as I'm dead.

Both of them react to a poorly executed play.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Who knows, that might be my heaven.

WES

What do you mean?

HENRY

I get up there, and all my teams win the championship every year for the rest of eternity. Compared to what I'm expecting, that would be amazing.

WES

What are you expecting?

HENRY

Honestly? Nothing.

Henry sighs, his resignation making Wes unsure how to respond. Wes takes a sip of beer.

WES

The closest I come to believing is for people like my Grandparents. The ones who spent their lives living in his name, for the hope of there being something on the other side. I don't want their lives to have meant nothing. But to me, if there was a God, he gave us everything we need and left us on our own a long time ago.

Henry manages to muster another chuckle.

WES (CONT'D)

I guess I'm more worried about what people will think of me when I'm gone. I try to treat people the way I like to be treated. That way, they shouldn't have anything bad to say.

HENRY

And how's that going so far?

WES

It's a... work in progress.

Wes takes a sizable gulp of his beer.

HENRY

I hate to think what they're gonna say about me.

WES

Really?

HENRY

Oh, it just always ends up being bullshit. He was this, he was that. It's just the people still alive trying to get a moment of attention in their otherwise miserable lives...

Wes is taken aback by the bitterness in Henry's words.

WES

You ever thought about writing your own eulogy?

HENRY

What the hell for?

WES

I don't know, it might help you look at things from a different perspective?

HENRY

They'd never read what I had to say. Also, my will explicitly states there is to be no funeral.

WES

I don't think it being read out is the point. It's supposed to be a for-your-eyes-only, therapeutic thing. Help you feel at peace.

(beat)

But if they do end up having a funeral, you could just pay someone to crash it.

HENRY

Ha! That'd be funny! But it's straight to the crematorium for me. I never liked funerals, they always seemed pointless.