

THE AMAZING TRUTH ABOUT DADDY GREEN

LOGLINE

An ex-convict in Los Angeles asks a visiting filmmaker to help him overcome his anxiety for writing. While the filmmaker documents the process, the ex-con's imagination takes over the narrative.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

THERE IS A STANDOFF in a damp garage somewhere in Inglewood, Los Angeles. An ex-convict, 55-year-old Darryl Francis is staring down a broom wearing a baseball cap. In Darryl's mind, the broom is his 19-year-old self that walked into a hamburger stand in 1988 with a friend. A clerk got killed and Darryl was in and out of prison for two decades. The standoff is a part of a coaching session where Icelandic filmmaker Olaf de Fleur is helping Darryl to face his past. The goal: To repair Darryl's cognitive trauma during his incarceration in order for him to reach his writing ambition.

DARRYL HAD WRITTEN a script in prison called Towtruck. He became a popular joke-teller amongst the guards and inmates. Fresh out of prison, through a string of coincidences, Darryl sold his script. That was twelve years ago and to this day, Darryl hasn't been able to hit a paper with a pencil without an anxiety attack. Being an ex-con with a tear-drop under his eye made it impossible to provide for his wife and three kids. Life outside the walls proved too demanding, the pressure of freedom too suffocating for Darryl's charismatic powers to emerge from the dark.

EIGHT YEARS AGO Icelandic filmmaker Olaf de Fleur wrote and directed a local crime thriller. The film sired him towards Hollywood, Los Angeles. Someone asked if he needed a driver, and that's when Olaf met Darryl Francis. For a few years, the two would connect through tragedy and humor — spending days in the car during Olaf's biannual visits to Hollywood. In 2017 Darryl asked Olaf to help him write. Olaf suggested they'd document the process, to keep Darryl accountable and they could even make a film about it if Darryl would do well.

THE FIRST LESSON took place at the end of 2017. Olaf visited LA just before Christmas and Darryl picked him up at the airport. After his meetings, Olaf laid out the first task: What story is Darryl trying to write and what specifically is stopping him. Darryl pitched Olaf his story about an old bus driver who makes turnaround trips to Las Vegas. Darryl wants to write a story full of humor, taking place on a bus with passengers transcending age, race, and gender. The bus, Darryl explained, is a metaphor for life, he saw himself as the bus-driver, 'Daddy Green' who is making his last trip to Vegas. On the bus are young couple sneaking off to get married, parolees going out of city limits to rob whoever wins the biggest, tailing the bus are parole officers and bitter parents trying to stop youth from committing to love. During this first lesson, Olaf helps Darryl identify where he hits a wall. Darryl is unable to get 'Daddy Green' and his bus out of Los Angeles in the story because he's going too fast.

ACT II

THE NEXT LESSONS focuses on slowing Darryl down, Olaf helps Darryl with identifying his inner negative 'voice', and together they start exploring how it sounds, where it comes from and what it wants. When they've done that, Darryl tries writing on his own, but the powers of procrastination overwhelm him. Olaf starts to suspect that Darryl's heart is not in it.

WHEN OLAF LEAVES Los Angeles, Darryl and Olaf communicate on Skype as much as possible. However, the two drift apart when Olaf has to travel to Scotland to direct a film for Netflix and Darryl oldest son, Marquis suffers from cystic fibrosis. The two loose contact and Darryl stops writing when his son dies. When Olaf returns to LA, he spends time in Inglewood with Darryl and his wife, Tonya. Little by little, Darryl wants to start writing again, but this time it's different. After losing his son, Darryl's heart is broken, and in that state, he asks Olaf to help him again.

AFTER MORE SESSIONS, Darryl decides it's time to visit the Hamburger Stand where he was arrested for murder with his friend. Darryl says that his friend shot the clerk and robbed the place but blamed it on Darryl who took a deal - and by that was thrown into the system. Darryl takes Olaf through this day of destiny, from the time his friend called him on the street, when they got chilly-cheese fries, when his friend shot the clerk, the escape through the back alley and how Darryl hid in his room for two weeks until the police knocked down the door and arrested him.

ACT III

WE'RE IN THE garage again, the same scene we saw in the beginning. Darryl is playing the 'bad guy', the 'friend' that shot the clerk, he's mocking the young version of himself, Darryl goes all in, detailing how his 'friend' had six guys beating on him from seven in the morning to lunch. They destroyed his body, leaving Darryl with metal plates in his neck and taking away his ability to walk straight.

AFTER THIS LESSON, Olaf sits back and waits. It's up to Darryl to process this experience. Suddenly, Darryl goes from being able to write for 5 minutes up to 100 minutes straight. He even creates his own tool, which he calls 'stopping time' and shares it with Olaf. Darryl writes a pitch for the film and Olaf trains him to execute it. Darryl starts pitching the film around town. But he's not going to wait or chase it. In his words, he's a writer now, it's about doing the work.

IN THE FINAL scene, we see Darryl hanging out at a bus station in Los Angeles where people take turnaround trips to Las Vegas. Darryl is doing research, talking to bus drivers and passengers, ready to embrace the daggers of his talent and deepen his writing.

TOPIC, THEME & URGENCY

The importance of this film is layered in the following three themes. The urgency of protecting our psyché in a modern world, the damage of incarceration and how different backgrounds can contribute rather than divide a connection between two individuals.

The film *The Amazing Truth about Daddy Green* is a metaphor for the world war aiming for our most valuable resource, our attention quality, and cognitive health. Through social media, clickbait culture, extreme reductionism, 'fake news', this war has evolved into using primal triggers such as guilt and shame to penetrate our daily lives. In the film, this metaphor is played out through the main character trying to rebuild his concentration after traumatic two-decade incarceration in the American prison system. Though the film focuses on creative writing as a way to face this invisible 'radiation', it is vital, in a general sense to reflect the importance of protecting our cognitive health because the enemy thrives on underestimation.

'Daddy Green' is also a tale of the black experience in America. A tale rooted in injustice, once explicit, but now baked into the crust, less visible, but no less pernicious. Scarcely a moment passes without the American media bombarding us with grim tales of the black condition. It serves as a toxic fix for a public more

interested in titillation than revelation. 'Daddy Green' will be the exception because in Darryl Francis we have a true representation of where America stands, the living breathing ethos of the country itself. Despite a traumatizing back-story, his good humor and wit and talent have survived. This is a tale of resilience, not victimization.

The third layer is the odd-couple friendship between Darryl and the filmmaker, Olaf de Fleur. The rich contrast between the two will not only contribute against ethnic divides, but it'll also show how life works in mysterious ways. Olaf was raised in a remote village in Iceland, Darryl in the thick of Inglewood. They go from sharing boyish jokes in a car towards becoming men by crying together. In the middle, Olaf starts to coach Darryl to write, and Darryl ends up creating original writing tools and Olaf becomes the student.

The urgency of this film is layered in these three themes, the fight to protect our cognitive ability, the damage of incarceration and how two men with opposite backgrounds can develop deep trust and vulnerability.

LOOK & FEEL

Because 'Daddy Green' is filmed over a long period (starting by using iPhones back in 2014 until using pro cameras in 2019), the challenge has been to 'bind' all styles into one. It's essential for me as an artist to maintain the intimate feel that comes with various techniques. After careful consideration, I've decided on using two precise 'gears' to discipline the narrative. The visual style will lead by example and be supported by pace and sound. It's vital to be consistent in applying these rules for the audience to 'trust' the narrative.

THE TWO GEARS:

VISUAL STYLE - To provide the most intimacy without sacrificing aesthetic quality, the visual style will shift between traditional steady 'tripod' look, and when suitable, rock towards 'primal pov'. (For example, when the narrative is showing characters in their daily life: we'll be traditional, but when shifting into coaching session between Olaf and Darryl, we'll go 'primal POV'.)

PACE - The editing pace will support the above. With steady 'tripod' look, the rhythm will be leaning back, slow-burning to allow the audience to 'read' and 'wonder' about what is going on. A shift up will happen within 'primal pov', the

editing might not always be fast, but the feel will be raw.

SOUND - The sound design during traditional sequences will rely on high-quality background atmospheric stems intended to create a hypnotic pull into the world. For the 'primal POV' sequences, the sound editing will oppose the former by hard sound cuts to help us 'be there.'

The concept of using VOICE-OVER is usually something that makes my filmmaking heart flip a table. However, because Darryl is a writer, and because we're doing a film - it's hard to convey Darryl's talent visually, or rather, it's hard to convey the written word visually. During our rides in LA, Darryl would make mini-poems about our relationship, about life, always seeing the adventure side of things. This element I'd like to breadcrumb sparingly in the form of voice-over in the film. This will go on top of the 'TWO GEARS' structure, giving the film a playful quality that represents Darryl's inventive soul.