

THE WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR WORKSHOP  
MAIN SCENE PREP NOTES

<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Lea Nakonechny
<b>MAIN SCENE TITLE:</b>	SCENE FROM RAVENSCRAG ROAD
<b>AS OF DATE:</b>	05/11/12
<b>SCENE DESCRIPTION:</b>	
<p>Dave and Michelle, son and mother, have just been reunited after having been estranged for almost ten years. Their feelings towards each other are still very raw. Dave is grappling with his emotions and trying not to let them get the better of him; meanwhile, Michelle is up to old tricks, doing what she needs to do to survive.</p>	
<b>LOCATION WITHIN THE NARRATIVE:</b> (what happens just <b>before</b> and just <b>after</b> this scene)	
<p>Just before this scene, Michelle has shown up out of the blue with Dave's 7-year-old half-sister, who he's never met before. They ate a meal together, dancing around their uncomfortable emotional history for the benefit of the child.</p> <p>Just after this scene, having drugged her son with a sleeping pill, Michelle sneaks out of the trailer, leaving the child with Dave.</p>	
<b>CHARACTER BIOS</b>	
<p><b>Character #1 Name:</b>  Dave Hillstead</p>	<p>Dave is a young man who is wiser than his years from a hard life growing up. Because of his mother's substance abuse and the questionable company she always kept, by age twelve he had seen things most people don't see until their twenties, if at all. He took care of her more than she took care of him and yet he somehow remains devoted, wishing she would come and find him in spite of his anger towards her.</p> <p>Although he wants to keep a clean record, Dave is the typical "angry young man" and still gets into trouble, living in the moment. He has a sensitive, artist-type personality but lives in a hardened, masculine world. He doesn't quite fit in with his friends and sometimes gets teased for being quiet, which feeds his tendency to show off and drink to excess. His mysterious quality makes him popular with women and he's had his share of girlfriends but never lets them get too close. He has a hard time trusting anyone and this is a constant emotional stumbling block.</p> <p>Dave might not seem like anything special at first, but the more we learn about him, the more we understand that he is actually exceptional. He survived his childhood with Michelle more or less emotionally intact and has created a viable existence for himself. That's a substantial accomplishment given the circumstances and it makes it all the more believable when he takes charge and pulls off the smuggling job later in the film. It also raises the stakes because he ends up putting everything he's accomplished on the line for his</p>

	<p>mother who not only doesn't seem to appreciate him, but has outright abandoned him more than once.</p>
<p><b>Character #2 Name:</b>  Michelle Hillstead</p>	<p>Michelle has psychological defects going back so far it's hard to tell if they caused or were caused by years of substance abuse. She never finished high school and started her self-destructive behavior around the same time she dropped out. Although uneducated, she is street-smart, cagey and resourceful enough to make a go of living hand-to-mouth. She thinks on her feet and knows how to get what she wants—two skills without which she wouldn't have survived for long.</p> <p>She had Dave at a young age and although she and Dave's trucker father loved each other, their relationship was stormy and he was always on the road. She left him (and Dave) for another man but ended up getting dumped and spent the next few years bouncing from job to job, town to town and boyfriend to boyfriend.</p> <p>Working at a bar, she struck up acquaintance with some bikers who ended up giving her a loan she couldn't honestly repay. She knew where her son was living but made no effort to contact him until she needed his help, not even attending Dave's dad's funeral. Her daughter Lucinda was the outcome of a one-night stand and although not cut out for motherhood, she did make an effort to provide for her daughter in her own way.</p> <p>She can never bring herself to apologize for the years of pain she caused Dave even though deep inside, she wishes she could. This guilt feeds her addictions and fouls up her efforts to do better with Lucinda, heightening her self-destructive tendencies.</p>
<p>If applicable <b>Character #3 Name:</b>  Lucinda Hillstead</p>	<p>Although we don't see her in the main scene, she is sleeping off-screen and the characters make reference to her so it's important to know about her.</p> <p>Like Dave, Lucinda is wise beyond her years. Weary from an unsettled life, she sees in Dave a friend and father figure but, like him, has trouble opening up. She is a hard read and doesn't talk much.</p> <p>Lucinda has a secret, which she goes to great lengths to hide: at the age of seven, she still can't read. Although this is partially her mother's fault for not reading to her and for always switching schools, she is terribly ashamed and avoids other children because she doesn't want them to find out.</p> <p>Despite her tough exterior, what she yearns for most is the carefree life of a regular kid. She wants to read, go to school, and go to bed in the same house every night—something as evasive to her as love is for Dave.</p>

**MOOD and TONE:**

Underneath the domesticity of the setting, the mood of the scene is fraught with tension and history.

**LOCATION /SETTING:**

Dave's trailer in the Swift Current Ponderosa Trailer Park is a small-town, blue-collar bachelor crashing pad with outdated Wal-Mart style décor. The undivided kitchen/dining area where the scene takes place should feel quite small and full of clutter, as though to symbolize the characters' emotional "baggage". Dave likes to keep things tidy, so *loaded* is perhaps a better description than *cluttered*. Since he's an auto-painter, Dave has a sensitive, artistic side so there should be some colour and personality within the chaos.

**SEASON / WEATHER / TIME OF DAY:**

It's just after sunset in late fall or early spring. We see faint blue light coming in the window and perhaps hear a skiff of snow against the glass or bare branches shaking in the wind.

**VISUAL STYLES / IMAGES:**

The hard, yellowish interior light motivated by a hanging fixture over the table clashes with the blue exterior light and casts a lot of shadows. The camera style is somewhat 70's (think of Robert Altman's *Three Women* or Scorsese's *Mean Streets* as references) with long, wider master shots emphasizing the performances punctuated by close shots for coverage. The window glass above the sink acts like a mirror, reflecting the actors back.

**SOUND / MUSIC INSPIRATIONS:**

Lucinda has the TV on in the other room (possibly a nature documentary) so we hear that off-screen, as well as the highway at about 1km distance. Musical references include albums such as Steve Earle's *Exit 0*, Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska* and Bob Dylan's song *Girl From the North Country*.

**OTHER NOTES (props, wardrobe, special effects, etc.):**

PROPS:

- Dishes (including a heavy-duty workman's Thermos)
- Drying rack
- Cupboards with gak in them (boxes of pasta, crackers, etc.)
- Fridge
- stove
- Beer bottles
- Empty peanut butter jar
- Cash (various bills)
- Polaroid photograph of Michelle and husband
- Other more recent photos on fridge (i.e. Dave with his truck?)
- White gel capsule (i.e. vitamin pill)

WIDC MAIN SCENE PREP NOTES

- Fridge magnets from trucking companies/auto body shops

Wardrobe for Dave:

- Old T-shirt, jeans and zip-up hoodie (Carhartt style)

Wardrobe for Michelle:

- High-waisted jeans and ugly 90s knit pullover