

ESTIMATED VALUE

an original screenplay by

Jonathon Myers

Jonathon Myers
853 Beacon Street, 4F
Boston, MA 02215
(857) 363-0727
myers.jonathon@gmail.com

FADE IN:

INT. CASINO - POKER TABLE - DAY

JASON (mid 20s) approaches a private poker table with a few middle-aged men. He wears a polo shirt with a casino logo on it -- an employee shirt.

MR. DAVENPORT (60s) smokes a cigar, chewing on it slowly. He sits at the table and plays his hand. Full house. The dealer slides the chips from the pot to him. Without looking directly, he watches Jason come to stand by the table.

Jason immediately takes out an envelope with a letter.

JASON

I don't understand what you mean by
this, but--

Mr. Davenport now eyes Jason viciously, then returns to the cards as a new hand is dealt.

Jason fidgets. He looks around. The other players smirk at him. Uncomfortable, he starts to sit.

MR. DAVENPORT

(without looking)
Don't sit. Stand.

Mr. Davenport scans his cards and raises the pot with his chips. Player 1 and others fold. Player 2 calls the bet, tossing in chips. Mr. Davenport tosses away two cards.

JASON

Mr. Davenport, you... You should
know that I love Claire, sir, and--

MR. DAVENPORT

Did your family teach you patience?

JASON

My family... They taught me the value
of.. We--

Another stare silences Jason. The Dealer tosses two new cards back. Taking them, Mr. Davenport now has nothing, with King of Hearts high.

Mr. Davenport puffs on the cigar and tosses in chips to raise.

INT. CASINO - OFFICE - LATER

Mr. Davenport ushers Jason into the office. Jason holds out a hand to shake.

JASON
Can we please call a truce?

Mr. Davenport stares at Jason. It shakes Jason up a bit and he withdraws his hand, fidgeting again in the silence.

MR. DAVENPORT
What's your price? How much, Jason?

JASON
I'm not here to negotiate anything.

MR. DAVENPORT
Everyone has a price. Name it.

JASON
If this is some sort of test, to see
if I--

Mr. Davenport lightly pushes Jason down into a chair.

MR. DAVENPORT
You arrogant little kid. You really
think I'm just fooling with you,
don't you?

With an amused smile Mr. Davenport moves behind the desk.

JASON
I-I do hope that you'll see to it to
give us your blessing.

Mr. Davenport takes a white trinket-like figurine off of the desk and throws it to Jason, who catches it.

MR. DAVENPORT
How much would you say that's worth?

JASON
How should I know?

MR. DAVENPORT
Humor me. Guess.

JASON
I'm not here to--

MR. DAVENPORT
I said guess.

JASON
A few dollars.

MR. DAVENPORT

You see, in my world we learn to size something up immediately.

Mr. Davenport snaps his fingers a few times quickly.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

It's a necessary survival skill. At one look, I can give you an estimated value.

Mr. Davenport snaps his fingers once. Jason is unimpressed with Mr. Davenport -- and the figurine, which he turns over in his fingers.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

People make the most mistakes at face value. They don't look at what's inside. Intrinsic value. What it means to them. And when they do that, they tend to make unwise decisions. Emotional reasoning. Do you understand?

JASON

You think Claire and I are making an emotional and unwise decision. You're very clear.

MR. DAVENPORT

No. You're wrong. I'm trying to give you some advice. Accuracy. I've seen a lot of full pockets turn empty out of inaccurate estimation.

JASON

I've seen some people happy with either full or empty pockets.

MR. DAVENPORT

You're worthless.

JASON

By your standards, I'm sure I am.

MR. DAVENPORT

Shake it... Go ahead and shake it.

Jason shakes the figurine and it TINKLES from something small inside it.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)

I bought that for two dollars and fifty cents.

JASON
Congratulations.

MR. DAVENPORT
There's a diamond in it worth \$50,000.

Jason does a double-take look at the figurine. Mr. Davenport smiles and sits.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)
You could walk out with it...

JASON
Sure. With a diamond in it.

MR. DAVENPORT
Try this: smash it.

Jason gives him a funny look. Where is he going with this?

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)
I'm serious. If there is no diamond, you're free to go be with Claire. I swear to you I won't interfere. But if there is, you have to take it and leave. Deal?

JASON
This is ridiculous.

Jason puts the figurine on the desk.

MR. DAVENPORT
Not a gambling man? Straight and simple.

Mr. Davenport takes a checkbook out of the inside pocket of his sport coat and a pen from the table. He writes.

MR. DAVENPORT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You're young, you've got your life ahead of you. You're going to put this in your pocket, walk out of here, and do what you like. How's that?

Mr. Davenport rips off and hands Jason a

CHECK

For \$50,000 from Davenport Resorts.

Jason takes it and looks at it, dumbfounded. He stands up from the chair, leaning forward across the desk, face to face with Mr. Davenport.

He tears up the check.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)
Smart. Never accept the first offer.
Name it.

Jason walks away to the door as Davenport calls after him.

MR. DAVENPORT (CONT'D)
Don't be a fool.

Jason looks back from the doorway.

JASON
No wonder she's ashamed of you.

Mr. Davenport stands up aggressively. His face turns red in anger.

MR. DAVENPORT
Your job: gone. Reputation: gone.

JASON
I'll spare her the embarrassment of
knowing you did this.

MR. DAVENPORT
And I'll see to it that she leaves
you.

JASON
I'm not the one who's breaking her
heart.

MR. DAVENPORT
Mark my words, Cartwright. Someday
she'll leave you with nothing.

Jason closes the door as he exits. Not a slam, a close.

Mr. Davenport takes out a handkerchief, wiping his face, out of breath. He sits, loosening his tie and collar. He briefly holds his chest. His breathing slowly returns to normal.

He then looks at the figurine, which sits near a

PICTURE

Of a smiling child holding the figurine. The picture frame is labeled "CLAIRE." We hear the TINKLE of the figurine.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

CLAIRE (mid 20s) is attractive and graceful. She and Jason sit at opposite ends of a kitchen table together, smiling and sipping coffee. They wear wedding rings. He wears a shirt and tie, she wears a nice blouse.

She smells a freshly cut rose.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

He looks at her and smiles. She smiles back.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - MORNING - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Same positions, similar dress. They drink coffee.

He circles job opportunities in the paper. He ruffles the paper, breaking the silence.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Anything?

JASON

A new possibility with Riverside.
Entry level in the marketing division.

CLAIRE

Oh... Are you sure you want to apply there?

JASON

Who does he know?

CLAIRE

...The CEO.

Jason draws an "X" over the listing.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - MORNING - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Same positions. She is dressed similar to before, but he is now in a retail outfit. They drink coffee as he reads the paper, looking for jobs. He looks at her, concerned.

JASON

Have you thought more about this weekend?

She stirs the coffee with a silver spoon.

CLAIRE
Why don't we just stay in? We can
watch movies.

JASON
Is that really what you want?

She looks down in the coffee as she stirs.

CLAIRE
Sure.

A moment passes.

JASON
I'm sorry.

CLAIRE
I'm fine as long as we're together.

She taps the spoon and looks at it. He looks down.

JASON
I have some interviews next week. I
just need a good solid break, and--

CLAIRE
It's okay.

She sets the spoon down. He goes back to the paper.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - MORNING - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Same positions. Dress is similar to before.

JASON
I think I'll change to that night
shift position.

CLAIRE
When will I see you?

JASON
It pays better.

CLAIRE
We're okay.

He ruffles the paper, looking for jobs.

JASON
If you say so.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - MORNING - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Same positions and similar dress, but he is wearing an outfit from a different retail store. He looks for jobs in the paper. She considers for a moment, then holds out her hand.

CLAIRE
Can I see the it?

He pulls back the paper.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I don't mind.

JASON
You've never worked in your life.

CLAIRE
Please? It would help.

JASON
Do you miss it all?

CLAIRE
Don't be silly. Now, come on.

He hands over the paper.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN - MORNING - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Same, but now Claire is dressed in a professional outfit. Jason is engrossed in the job section of the paper.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Jason?

He pays no attention and reads as she continues to look. A moment passes, and he looks up to see that she is upset.

JASON
Did you say something?

CLAIRE
No. Nothing.

He circles a job opportunity.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Jason stands at the sink, doing dishes in everyday clothes.

On the table sits a bill that says "LAST NOTICE." Claire's coffee mug sits in front of her spot on the kitchen table. It reads "DAVENPORT RESORTS."

He takes it to the sink and rinses it out. Then turns the mug over in his hands, looking at the title--

Then abruptly SHATTERS the mug on the floor.

JASON

Damn it!

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Are you okay?

JASON

Yeah, I'm fine.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

What happened?

JASON

Oh, I dropped your coffee mug. I'm sorry, sweetie.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

That's okay, honey. Be careful.

Jason picks up the pieces to throw them away.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Claire grooms before the mirror, dressed all in black.

She tries to put on a small hat with a veil. Once. Twice. Now over to the side. Nope. It doesn't seem to set on her head correctly.

Tense muscles, she tries yet again. She gives up, throwing the hat down.

Jason, also dressed in black, comes to her, puts his arms around her. She is still, emotionless.

JASON

We don't have to go.

CLAIRE
No, I'm fine.

JASON
I'll be there.

CLAIRE
I know.

JASON
Are you okay?

She turns to him, enters his embrace, puts her head on his shoulder and lets her emotions out, sobbing.

INT. LAW FIRM - OFFICE - DAY

A stuffy professional and posh inner office. Books on shelves are there to indicate right and wrong. One book very clearly explains "Trusts & Estates."

MARY (60s) and JANICE (30s) sit separate from Claire and Jason. The three women are dressed much nicer than Jason -- a class distinction.

MR. ROCKFORD, a middle aged lawyer, stands at his desk and speaks in his jowled voice, referring to a package.

MR. ROCKFORD
And now, sometimes--

JANICE
When do we get to Claire?

Mary clears her throat at Janice.

MR. ROCKFORD
Ah, yes. Actually, this does, in fact, concern Claire.

Mr. Rockford opens the package to remove the plain white figurine and set it on the end of his desk.

Jason's jaw drops open.

MR. ROCKFORD (CONT'D)
This is for Claire.

JANICE
That's it?

JASON
Oh, my God...

CLAIRE
It's okay, Janice.

JASON
Honey, that's great.

CLAIRE
What?

JASON
It's worth over \$50,000.

A slight moment, and then the other three begin laughing while trying to hold back with hands over mouths.

JASON (CONT'D)
It is.

Mary and Janice quiet their snickering response with difficulty. Claire holds her forehead in embarrassment.

JASON (CONT'D)
I'm sure of it.

CLAIRE
It was one of my play toys, dear.
It's only a sentimental item.

INT. CAR - LATER

Jason sits in the driver seat of an old car. He turns the figurine over in his hands. He shakes it and listens.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

A downtown street outside the Law Office. Jason sits in the car and waits for Claire.

Claire and Janice stand facing each other. They are quiet and do not speak for a moment. Claire touches her forehead.

CLAIRE
I think I have a migraine coming on.

JANICE
I still get them, too.

They smile together, slightly. A shared history.

Looking first to be sure that Jason does not see, Janice takes out a thickish envelope and extends it to Claire. A loose seal betrays the green of money inside it.

JANICE (CONT'D)
Look, Claire, I--

CLAIRE

Don't...

A moment passes. Claire does not take it.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm guessing that's not the birthday card from Mother and Father that never arrived?

JANICE

We'd like to help.

CLAIRE

Now? Now you do?

JANICE

I know. And you're right.

CLAIRE

You have no idea.

JANICE

You can call us whenever you like, and you don't have to worry about... about anything else, if you want to call, I mean. And you can always come home for a bit, or come stay with me... Please call me...

Claire tries again, holding out the envelope.

JANICE (CONT'D)

My new number is in this as well...

CLAIRE

Goodbye Janice.

Claire hugs Janice. She does not take the envelope.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Tell mom I need some time.

Janice nods. Claire turns to walk toward the car.

JANICE

Wait.

Claire turns back.

CLAIRE

Here.

Janice takes out a business card and hands it to Claire. Claire accepts and they smile briefly before separating.

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Claire opens the door and gets into the car. Jason is still holding the figurine.

JASON
Claire, you're not going to believe
this--

She puts up her hand between them.

CLAIRE
Hold it for a moment.

JASON
What? What did I--

She puts the other hand to her forehead.

CLAIRE
I need silence right now. Please.

JASON
But, Claire, I--

CLAIRE
I'm serious. Be quiet.

JASON
For how long? Is it--

CLAIRE
I don't know.

He leans to her and puts a hand on her shoulder.

JASON
Are you okay?

CLAIRE
I wish you'd quit asking how I feel.

Claire gives him a dirty look. He pulls his hand back.

JASON
Fine.

She closes her eyes, holds her head in her hands. He puts the figurine back in the box, then starts the car.

JASON (CONT'D)
But this thing he gave you is worth
a ton. I know I'm right about that.

He shifts into drive.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

They sit on the couch. The figurine is on the coffee table.

JASON
You're glad that's it?

Claire stares forward. Numb and blank. No response.

JASON (CONT'D)
Are you kidding me?

CLAIRE
Just let it go.

She stands, moving toward the hallway. He stands in the way.

JASON
That's your only response?

CLAIRE
Not right now, okay.

He moves to pick up the figurine.

JASON
You don't understand.

CLAIRE
What don't I understand?

He shakes it and it TINKLES. Claire winces.

JASON
There really is a diamond in it.

CLAIRE
I don't want to keep talking about
this tonight.

She turns to walk down the hallway again.

JASON
But your father said--

CLAIRE
(snapping back around)
I don't care what he said! I have
this one thing from him and I'm fine
with that. Okay? I don't care what
it's worth. I don't care about
anything right now.

JASON
But, Claire--

CLAIRE
You can explain the whole thing
tomorrow.

JASON
Tomorrow? Are you serious?

CLAIRE
Didn't your family teach you patience?
For once, can't you--
(Pause.)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry I said that.
I'm, today I'm, I'm just--

Jason exits past her down the hallway.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason and Claire are in bed.

Claire reaches over to touch his shoulder. She then runs her fingertips down his arm to the elbow.

Jason rolls over in the opposite direction, his back facing her.

After a moment, Claire also rolls over, facing away and turning off the bedside lamp.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Claire is asleep in bed alone.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jason listens to the radio while he sips coffee and reads his paper at the table. The announcer can be heard in the background, but then Jason hears something interesting and focuses. We then hear it clearly:

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
And how did your wife react when she
found out that you hit the numbers
this weekend.

RADIO VOICE 2 (V.O.)
Well, that's funny. She used to
give me hell every week when I'd buy
a ticket. She said it was just money
down the drain and she'd get so ticked
off. You wouldn't believe. But I
tell you, she sure doesn't mind now
that I won.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
I should say so. That's the way it works, isn't it?

RADIO VOICE 2
Sure is. First thing I did was buy her a car and take her out to get some stuff and eat at a nice place -- and she sure didn't complain. I've never seen her so happy.

RADIO VOICE
So, will you tell us about what you intend to do, now that...

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jason turns the figurine over in his hands.

He clears an area on the coffee table, pushing a stack of papers to one side. He sets the figurine down.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jason finds a hammer in the toolbox underneath the sink.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jason lays out a towel on the coffee table, then sets the hammer and the figurine on top. He sits on the couch in front of the coffee table, arms crossed.

BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Claire sleeps in the same position as before.

Jason peeks in to see her asleep, watching a moment.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jason has the hammer in his hand. He raises the hammer.

He reconsiders, lowering slightly, indecisive.

He pulls the hammer up, fully, ready to bring it down onto the figurine.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Good morning.

Claire enters and freezes at the entryway as Jason freezes with the hammer.

Jason jerks his head toward her with a look of shock, caught in the act.

Claire looks as though she were punched in the stomach. There is also a confused look of rising from sleep.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Jason holds up a conciliatory, apologetic hand.

JASON

I didn't want to trouble you.

She wipes her eyes and refocuses.

CLAIRE

What...? Why are you doing this?

JASON

It's what we were going to do anyway. Isn't it?

CLAIRE

I never said that.

JASON

You didn't want to talk about it.

CLAIRE

But I didn't say you could.

JASON

How can we not?

He shakes it. Hearing it, she snaps to attention. She rushes forward to take it.

CLAIRE

Give it to me.

JASON

Hold on.

He backs up and pulls it away.

CLAIRE

Jason, put it down and let me have it.

JASON

It's worth it to find out.

CLAIRE

To you.

JASON

To both of us.

They face each other on opposite sides of the coffee table.

CLAIRE
I don't want any of their money.

JASON
But this will solve all our problems,
don't you see?

CLAIRE
This won't solve anything.

He holds it in front of her so she can see it.

JASON
You just want to leave it sealed up
inside?

A moment. She gives him a wounded look and sits.

CLAIRE
You don't understand.

JASON
I don't?

CLAIRE
They were right.

JASON
Oh, and they understand?

She runs fingers through her hair in frustration.

CLAIRE
This is happening too fast. Just
give me some time, okay?

JASON
Oh, for God's sake. There's \$50,000
in this thing and you want to wait
and see how you feel about it?

Pause. She stands and moves away from the table.

CLAIRE
Okay. Fine. Go ahead.

JASON
Are you sure?

She watches from her stance near the hallway.

CLAIRE

Do what you want. You know how I
feel.

Jason looks to see her grim stare. He looks at the dove.

He brings the hammer down on the figurine, SMASHING it to
pieces.

He looks at the result, surprised at his own action. They
are both stunned.

Jason starts to sift through the pieces. Claire exits through
the hallway to the bedroom. After a moment, he looks up.

JASON

Claire?

When she doesn't respond, he hesitates for a split second
and then continues searching for the diamond.

He searches frantically through the pieces. Sifting.
Sorting. He begins to panic as he finds nothing.

He looks to the ground nearby. Back to the table, he sifts
and sorts some more.

After some time, he slows to a halt. There is nothing. He
puts his hands to the sides of his head.

BEDROOM - LATER

Claire lays on the bed, looking up, tears in her eyes. She
holds the card that Janice gave her. She grips it to her
chest.

The JIGGLE of the doorknob. Then KNOCKING on the door.

JASON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Honey? Is everything alright?

She doesn't react.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jason stands at the locked bedroom doorway.

JASON (CONT'D)

Will you open the door?

Moments pass.

JASON (CONT'D)

Will you answer me?

A moment.

JASON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... Can we talk, please?

A moment.

JASON (CONT'D)
I think everything is going to be okay now, honey. I'm going to run down to the store real quick to get some groceries and then I'll make you the greatest breakfast in bed. Okay? You can stay in there all day long if you like and I'll just make you anything you want. How about that?

No response.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jason walks with groceries in his arms.

As he passes a street vendor selling roses, he stops.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

An envelope marked "JASON" sits on the coffee table.

Jason opens the door, groceries in his arms and a rose in his mouth.

He exits toward the kitchen. A moment passes.

He enters with only the rose, then exits to the hallway. A moment passes.

He enters, still holding the rose, confused.

Then he sees the envelope on the coffee table.

It sits next to the funeral service program.

"William Frederick Davenport, 1942-2008"

FADE OUT