

FAME FATALE

Written by

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FADE IN:

OPENING MONTAGE

The first thing you hear is the 80's pop music. Over it, a montage of home videos, old headshots, and old audition tapes of MICHAEL JAMES DALY from childhood to age 40. In case you ever wondered what actor glamour shots looked like in the 90s, naughts, and today, it's all here.

SCENE ONE

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

A phone alarm goes off on the bedside table - the alarm is a horror movie shriek on repeat. The phone also lights up with a Halloween themed lock screen.

A hand reaches out from the bed to silence the alarm. MICHAEL, now 40, jumps out of bed when he sees what time it is.

The other man in bed, TONY, groggily sits up and watches Michael pull on his jeans. Michael notices him watching.

MICHAEL

Hey, I gotta get going.

TONY

Yes, yes, I know. Your horror shindig thingy?

Michael pauses, half-dressed. The wall behind him is covered in horror movie posters and memorabilia.

MICHAEL

It's not a *thingy*. It's the Nights of the Notorious festival! They have tons of celebs from horror films there signing headshots and taking pics. It's my people.

TONY

Ahh. Right up your ally. Well, it'll be a good thing to keep your mind off that part you read for.

Michael resumes getting dressed, with a little less pep.

MICHAEL

Yeah. It's killing me. 3 callbacks -  
it's the closest I've come to  
booking a lead in 20 years. 20! 20!  
Oh god, 20....(laugh)

TONY

You'll get it. No one deserves it  
more than you.

Michael finishes getting dressed and approaches the bed to  
say goodbye and grab his keys from the bedside dish.

MICHAEL

Annnnd that's why when I become  
famous finally, you'll not only  
have the honor of being my  
boyfriend, but also the honor of  
being my personal assistant.

TONY

Yeah, ummmmm no.

MICHAEL

(sing songy)  
We shall see. I'll be back Sunday.

TONY

(also sing songy)  
It won't be meeeee.

SCENE TWO

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

A Jeep blasting 80s female rock music blows down the highway  
and gets off at an interstate exit.

The Jeep pulls into a gas station and parks in one of the  
parking spaces. The music stops.

INT. JEEP - AFTERNOON

As Michael gets ready to turn off his car, his phone rings,  
showing "AGENT!" Michael answers the phone with his car's  
bluetooth.

MICHAEL

Hey! Linda?! Please tell me you  
have good news.

LINDA

Hey Mike. So, I'm just going to tell you flat out that they went with the other guy.

MICHAEL

(devastated, not angry)  
Are you fucking kidding me...

LINDA

Honey, listen. The director called me personally because he wanted to let you know how amazing you are as an actor. But it came down to social media.

MICHAEL

Wait. What do you mean, social media?

LINDA

You and the other actor were so close in the casting that the executive producer went by the amount of followers you have. And the other actor had 3 or 4 times more than you.

MICHAEL

Well - I'm on Facebook, Twitter, and the...SnapChat! I have like 1000 friends and tweet tweet, just like Oprah says!

LINDA

Basically it came down to the actor being able to promote it better.

MICHAEL

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

LINDA

Well, unfortunately honey, it's a thing.

Michael just stares at his car radio.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Honey, listen. You came so close and the director called me personally! That rarely happens. He may use you in something in the future.

(MORE)

LINDA (CONT'D)

Remember, it's a numbers game and your number is so close to coming up. Are you there?

MICHAEL

You're right. You're right! Hey, something's gotta give right?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

The Jeep continues down the road, blasting an 80s sounding power ballad about not giving up. Michael stares out the window as he is driving. Old headshots, reel footage, and failed auditions roll by. Voices of tormentors from his past echo over the footage.

TEACHER (V.O.)

Your face is too fat and you will never make it into film!

AGENT (V.O.)

You took ballet? All I can think of is the fat hippo in Fantasia when I think of you in tights!

MOM (V.O.)

What's *wrong* with him?

SISTER (V.O.)

The reviewer called him a one dimensional actor.

Voices pile on top of each other and combine into one voice. The voice shouts - "YOU'RE TOO FAT! YOU'RE TOO THIN! TOO SHORT, TOO TALL, TERRIBLE, DON'T QUIT YOUR DAY JOB, ONE DIMENSIONAL ACTOR!"

Michael wails the high note of the power ballad.

SCENE THREE

INT. NIGHT OF THE NOTORIOUS FESTIVAL - LOBBY

The convention is lively, with dozens of folks already in costume. Celebrity and artist booths line the hallway.

Michael walks away from the registration table with a freshly minted 3-day pass.

He shoulders his way through a decent-sized crowd, getting bumped around a bit as he heads towards the main convention space.

MICHAEL

(muttering to self)

It's a numbers game, Mike. Bryce Dallas Howard says a working actor books 1 out of every 56 auditions. Granted, you're on number 127 and Ron Howard isn't your dad...

He stops, looking around the convention. People are happy. He takes a deep breath.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay. Cheer up. You are in your element with your people that accept you. Try and have fun.

Nearby, a C-list horror celebrity is set up with a booth, signing autographs. Current status: no line. The celebrity looks patiently at the crowd, as if waiting for someone to come and talk to her. Michael approaches her booth.

Before he can open his mouth, the celebrity's assistant holds out a hand.

ASSISTANT

That'll be \$20 for an autograph, sir.

Michael reaches into his pocket and hands her a \$20 bill. The celebrity gets to work on signing a headshot.

CELEBRITY

Hey. How are you...?

MICHAEL

...Michael!

The celebrity slowly scrawls out "To Michael" on a picture of herself from 25 years ago.

CELEBRITY

Ah. How are you, *Michael*?

MICHAEL

I'm great! I'm a huge fan and just adore you work in *Gruesome Gail 1* and *2*.

The celebrity looks up at him for the first time, probably glad that he isn't an autograph hawker trying to sell her picture on Ebay.

CELEBRITY

Yeah? Oh, well thank you so much.  
It was definitely great fun to  
make. And, here you go!

She hands him the autograph. Her Assistant waves at him.

ASSISTANT

Alright sir, move along please.  
Gotta keep the line moving.

Michael looks back to see no one behind him. He decides to ignore the pushy assistant and lean in a bit closer to the celebrity.

MICHAEL

Can I ask you a question?

CELEBRITY

Sure!

MICHAEL

I have to tell you...I'm an actor  
too, and it's just so great to be  
able to meet other actors who know  
the struggle.

CELEBRITY

Struggle? Oh, god. (sympathetic  
laugh) I didn't even want to be an  
actor. I just sort of fell into it.  
The director approached me at a  
theater where I was seeing my  
friend in a play. He asked me if I  
ever acted. I said no, but he asked  
if I'd be willing to read his  
script and try. Said I looked just  
right for the role of Gail. So, I  
got it even though I had no idea  
what I was doing.

Michael blinks once, then shuffles away without saying anything.

As he walks through the convention space, a little dazed, his thoughts echo in his head.

MICHAEL (V.O. OF HIS THOUGHTS)

She is just a very small  
percentage. That never happens.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (V.O. OF HIS THOUGHTS)

Maybe I just try too hard? Maybe if  
I just don't give a fuck it'll come  
to me? She seemed so cool and  
like...big whoop about it.

A FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER jumps into his path, interrupting his thoughts.

VOLUNTEER

Hey there! There's a great panel of  
indie filmmakers doing a Q and A in  
this room. Just about to start!  
Come check it out!

The volunteer skips off to herald more people into the panel room. Michael enters the panel room.

SCENE FOUR

INT. INDIE FILMMAKERS PANEL ROOM - DAY

Michael enters a large panel room set up to hold 150 people, with only about 10 people in the audience. It's almost too quiet inside, except one dude who randomly coughs.

He takes a seat next to a girl in some kind of cosplay, holding a spear.

MICHAEL

Hey, how are you? This should be  
pretty good, right? I'm an actor,  
so I'm sure these indie filmmakers  
are struggling just as much as I  
am, you know?

The cosplayer blinks, before turning away from him.

Before Michael can make things more awkward, the panel begins. Four directors take a seat on the stage, and a MODERATOR stands at the end with a microphone.

MODERATOR

Thank you everybody for coming!  
Who's having a blast at this year's  
Night of the Notorious Festival??!?

The sound of 10 unenthusiastic people clapping. The Moderator still acts like he's in Madison Square Garden.



MODERATOR (CONT'D)

Alright! Well, we got a great panel of directors for ya'll today. First we got Amber Sledging - our youngest first time filmmaker! Amber is the director of *Chick Filet'd!*

AMBER - a mid-twenties Goth girl with a corset so tight that she could probably rest her chin on her tits - waves cheerily at the crowd.

AMBER

Hey everyone! Girl power!

In the audience, Michael claps loudly and cheers, glancing at the cosplayer beside him, as if to say "yay women!" She glances at him once, then ignores him again.

MODERATOR

Next we got Jim Brosure! Jim's film *Grill Em Up Charlie* has won several awards at festivals and recently got distribution with HBO.

JIM is a hippie looking guy with a bit of an arrogant-looking smirk. The audience actually gives him a few cheers, as he's clearly the most well known director on the panel.

Michael claps supportively, even though he doesn't know Jim from Adam.

MICHAEL

Good for him.

The cosplayer beside him glances around her, as if looking for another place to sit.

MODERATOR

Third up, we have Bill Lockhart. Bill's movie is called *Gore Gods*.

BILL is a totally average, unassuming dude in his thirties who waves shyly at the audience.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

And finally, Slade Tanner. Slade's latest film is called *Transgressions*. It's also won several awards on the circuit and recently picked up a Netflix deal!

RANDOM AUDIENCE MEMBER

Right on, man!

SLADE - a total bro from his backwards baseball cap to his Salt Life shirt - leans forward to his mic. Of course, he has to move aside his BEST FEATURE Crimmy statue to get to it - which he proudly has displayed in front of him.

SLADE

Thanks, bro.

MICHAEL

(elbowing the cosplayer)

I'd like to Slade his Tanner, huh?

COSPLAYER

Ow.

MICHAEL

Oh! I'm so sorry!

MODERATOR

Alright, my first question to the panel is this - tell us all a little about your films and the process of making them. Let's start with Amber and go down the line.

AMBER

I think my biggest influence was the Blair Witch Project. I wanted to do a found footage movie, but about how women are just treated like objects and not taken seriously.

MICHAEL

(quietly)

Woo.

Jim leans into his mic next.

JIM

How's it goin' guys? I'm just really grateful to be here. You know how it goes with films. You think of something, you get it on paper, and get the distribution. That's how it goes. I remember just waiting to hear from HBO thinking it wasn't going to happen. Then I let it go, man! Once I did that, the phone call came in and we were on. I'm just so humbled, man.

Michael nods, almost to himself.

MICHAEL  
(whispering)  
Oh...like The Secret.

The cosplayer beside him looks to heaven.

Bill takes the mic next.

BILL  
Hey guys. I'm just really glad to be here too. I've been working on Gore Gods for 2 years now. It's been this great passion of mine. I'm influenced by all sorts of movies. Kinda hard to say which ones exactly. Just happy for the opportunity to finally have my work seen and I hope ya'll enjoy it.

Two polite claps from the audience.

MODERATOR  
On to Slade Tanner.

Slade slides up to the microphone.

SLADE  
Yo, what's up ya'll? So this is our 10th film with Rock It Out Productions. And we just won this award for Best Movie last weekend!

He holds up his statue, waiting for applause, which the audience gives him.

SLADE (CONT'D)  
This movie came to me when I was on set doing a film with Kane Hodder and Bruce Campbell. We were hanging out, waiting to be called onto set. As ya'll know, I'm an actor too and actually got cast in Eli Roth's new movie. Anyway, I was telling Kane a story about my first tour in Iraq and he was like "Bro!"  
(MORE)

SLADE (CONT'D)

That's a great idea for a horror!"  
Bruce agreed and offered to  
financially back it. And it's been  
a wild ride from there!

Michael nods, even though this panel is starting to grate on  
him a bit.

MODERATOR

Thanks guys! Okay, now do we have  
any questions from the audience?

Silence. Michael hesitates, waiting for someone else to stand  
up. When no one does, he takes a deep breath and raises his  
hand.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

You, sir!

MICHAEL

Hey ya'll! Thanks for coming out.  
I'm actually an actor and was  
wondering if you had any advice on  
how to get in touch with indie  
filmmakers like yourself to  
audition for roles in your movies?

SLADE

Wait a minute. You're an actor?  
Okay so, you can't just sit around  
bro, and expect things to come to  
you.

MICHAEL

I know that...I'm just ask-

SLADE

I mean, I'm an actor too. You can't  
just all of a sudden decide to be  
an actor and things start coming to  
you. You have to work for them.

MICHAEL

Y-yes, I know that, I'm just  
wondering...

JIM

This is a tough business, man. I'm  
gonna give it to you straight. It  
is pretty damn rare for you to make  
a career out of being an actor. The  
odds are up against you.

MICHAEL

Guys, yes, I know this. Thank you. I've been in the business for 20 years. I'm just trying to find out the best way to get in...

Bill opens his mouth to say something, probably something more supportive, but Amber takes the mic first.

AMBER

I mean...I don't mean to sound like a bitch, but...if you've been doing this for 20 years and not gotten anywhere, maybe you're doing something wrong.

Jim and Slade start to laugh. Followed by the Moderator. Followed by the audience. Michael looks around in disbelief. Bill just looks like he wants to crawl under the table and hide.

It's like the prom scene in Carrie. All Michael's old tormentors echo in his head again - ONE DIMENSIONAL ACTOR! TOO FAT! HIPPO IN FANTASIA! His eyes practically turn red as he quakes.

With a sudden movement, Michael grabs the cosplayer's spear and hurtles it towards Jim. The spear goes right through Jim's chest, pinning him to his chair. As he slumps, the crowd screams and scatters in panic.

The 80's synth pop kicks in again - a banger fit for a bloodbath. Slade grabs his Crimmy award and raises it like a knife, storming towards Michael. Before he reaches Michael, he trips on a chair and impales himself on the blade of the Crimmy.

Michael steps over Slade's body and chases Amber down. He plucks one of the thin knives sticking out the back of her hair bun and holds her down. He scalps her with her own hair accessory and proceeds to plop her bloodied blonde hair onto his own head like a wig.

Bill is still sitting on the panel, frozen in shock. Mike approaches him, and Bill shrinks in fear. Michael flashes a smile.

MICHAEL

Hey, good luck with your films! Can I give you my card?

BILL  
S-sure...!

Michael reaches into his pocket and hands over his business card. Bill watches, still frozen, as Michael exits the panel room.

SCENE FIVE

INT. NIGHT OF THE NOTORIOUS FESTIVAL - MAIN HALLWAY - DAY

Michael exits the panel room in slow motion, his blonde "wig" still soaked in blood. People are running chaotically in all directions, but he manages to walk in a straight line through all the madness.

As the 80's pop continues to blast, Michael flips the bloodied hair over his shoulder. A spray of blood hits the uptight Assistant from earlier in the face.

As Michael reaches the lobby, his phone starts ringing - "Agent!" He answers it.

MICHAEL  
Linda?

LINDA  
Mike! Great news! The other actor was offered another gig and backed out of this one! You got the part! You booked it!

Michael stares blankly ahead as police sirens are heard in the distance.

END.