

Feature Film - Biography

- Treatment

At a sheik New York art gallery, the receptionist takes notes on visitors reaction to William Bernhearts work. She explains to the gallery director, Todd, that patrons like his work but are dismayed that they have not heard of him. "They want to know him, before they invest." Todd realizes he has indulged the artists puncheon for privacy too long. Over the artists objections he makes a deal with a friendly publisher. A crack professional biographer is assigned to discover the artist in a book. Brett is a career woman who earned her place as an ace in the professional writing world. Brett arrives at Williams house and lingers at the door overhearing a phone message by an irate mother threatening legal action "If he doesn't stay away from her daughter." She tiptoes back to her car, and slams the car door so he might hear her coming. Meantime she missed the following message where the woman apologizes profusely for dialing the wrong number. Brett re-arrives and meets William. Affected by what she overheard, when their preliminary introductions are over, she starts to snoop for a villain rather than discover a gifted artist. William spots her sifting his files and realizes she is not being straight with him.

The battel begins. William in cahoots with Joe, a close musician friend, who has a chip on his shoulder about corporate professionals, create evidence damming William as a dead-beat dad, philanderer, debtor, and forger. Will seeds his file cabinet with these documents. Joe's daughter also plays a scene for Brett's benefit. Posing as Will's daughter, she pleads for him to come visit mommy on her sick bed. Brett sees her job in conflict between truth and a greedy gallery directors ambitions. William sees his career in conflict between truth and a hack writer's ambitions for a dirt slinging expose.

This is a comedy of errors where vanities collide to undo the best of intentions. Eventually after numerous conflicts, Brett's editor confronts her about her notes on the project. In a meeting which includes the gallery director, Brett realizes she's been had. Todd, the director comments, "You really must have pissed him off." Her pride, his pride, rise to the surface in a confrontation where she denounces his trickery. He in turn denounces her will to slander and dishonesty.

Bruised and ashamed she suggests he write the biography, and storms out. Will decides that's a good idea. He begins to write the Un- Authorized Autobiography. Quickly William discovers he has no talent for writing. The ghost writer agrees to help Will with his book. Blake Darro, known as the Darth Vader of the New York literary circles, was always hungry for money. Brett was a new kid on the block and easy pray for Blake's charm. She dumped him over moral issues in writing. She described him as a whore hiding behind a string of fictitious names. Never daring to have a voice of his own. He relegated her to pimping her talent, plagiarizing herself and denigrating the only name she had.

He believed in an honest payday and no illusions about craft. His interviews with William got a bit rocky as his tact was nonexistent. He found the idea of beauty and artistic integrity completely boring. Blakes idea of an artist's biography was a spicy story, filled with upheaval, emotion, conflict, Blake wanted it to ROCK! Will decided Blake deserved a little education. After a few drinks and a talk about the fistfight they should have, William explained to the metaphorically bruised ghostwriter, how all of humanity depended on at least one truth surviving the wasteland. Blake decided Will was the real thing, and that he was not the man to write his story. Before heading for the door, Blake commented, "You speak well about the things you care about. Get a video camera and tell your story. Show your art while your at it." But this was not the end for Blake. He was a shark savvy to the smell of opportunity. He saw the drama between William and Brett, more clearly than either of them. So Blake after so many years, decides to write his own book. A behind the scenes tell all expose. William starts an odyssey with video camera, talking to his many artistic and exotic friends. To his dismay they are

disinterested in a biography, and use screen time to be rude, and self explanatory. He ends up talking to a Viet Nam vet who self medicates, and philosophizes as he plays his blues guitar. Joe's wife shames them at dinner for the tricks they played on "the biographer." Will leaves a conciliatory message on Brett's phone machine.

In the city Blake has dinner with Brett. He brings his best charm to re-ignite her affection. She is less confident of her own moral perfection, and ends up telling him all about the fiasco in the Burnhart biography. Blake soothes, coaxes, and gathers all the background he can for his book. Motivated by her editor and Williams message. Brett and William agree to make a new start. She brings her best intelligence and skillful interview to discover the artist and his work. As she discovers, it becomes a seduction. An unwilling seduction by equally stubborn independent people who find they both love truth. They resist as long as they can but fall for each other. She thinks the video interviews are a good idea and revisits his friends. With her skillful and ardent approach they all go to deep meaningful reflections on Will and his art. Tension erupts with Brett and Will's nude model. Brett's misgivings are increased by former girlfriends she interviews. The interviews are peppered with stories illustrating comic failures of artist's attempting to communicate with "an oblivious herd of normalcy" and art professionals. Blake keeps popping up at odd times taking pictures and getting interviews. Flashbacks revisit the brief romance he had with Brett.

Will made anti Viet Nam war art, Roger was a green beret. They both felt they were doing their part for America. The passion they both shared resolved into friendship. A few conversations which Brett was unable to access directly emerge in intimate moments protected by the love blossoming between Will & Brett. The thread of will's art and his explanations to Brett form a tide. Counterpoint and humor are interspersed by Brett's interviews which contradict Will's account and each other. Similarly her love for Will is threatened by his love of art. She starts to see him as a freight train on a track. She can either jump on board with out any idea of where it will take her, or wave good by and watch it disappear. She shares her misgivings with her room mate who is now dating Blake.

An art opening becomes a flash point. It is a group show including a few of Will's paintings. Brett's publisher feeling secure with the work already completed, "leaked" information about a groundbreaking book Permanent Exile, the life of an artist. Blake has a few paparazzi planted and invited a few unexpected visitors from Williams past. A Hollywood producer working with Blake brings an actress who is expected to be featured in the movie version of Blake's book Exposed Exile "The true story!" She disrobes and claims to be the secret lover, and model for one of his paintings. The paparazzi capture the insuring confrontations, denials, and counter allegations. Brett storms out feeling betrayed. Her publisher gets into a fist fight with Blake, William confronts the actress who eventually breaks into tears blaming the producer, who then Will demands to know "who put him up to this?"

Roger (the green beret) produces an M-16 demanding that "all of them" get back, "Will, you don't belong here. They are all Heelocks! Lets get out of here." Will & Roger disappear on his Harley. The stunned visitors leave with a flurry of cell phones calling, press, publicists, police and friends with the story. Todd, the gallery owner and his receptionist are left alone in the gallery. The following week, media pick up widely differing stories about the incident. Brett confronts her room-mate about Blake, her publisher insists she finish the book, Will attempts to reach Brett, Blake signs movie deals and gives press conferences confusing the issues, numerous women claim to be the model in the painting and mother of Will's "Love Child" and the bogus documents used to spoof Brett show up in tabloids as proof of scandal. Unable to reach Brett Will determines to tell his story by finishing his video "The Unauthorized Autobiography" Brett finishes Permanent Exile, Blake finishes EXPOSED!!

When Brett sees William's video and the tenderness he demonstrates in communicating her impact on his life she realizes he is a real partner in their love. Similarly when Will reads the advance copy of Permanent Exile he realizes Brett is the one person who has successfully entered -his world. They reunite at Brett's premier book

signing. The scene erupts into a partial replay of the art opening with the exception that Brett & Will make their getaway with the help of Roger & his new girlfriend who on twin Harleys drive them away with the clamoring mob disappearing behind them.

END

Along the way: Stories within stories depict the episodic adventures of the artists life. They jump to periods of time where events as well as his perceptions shape his life and work. These may be expanded or cut down as the production budget permits. The lens of discovery is the love between Brett and William. The obstacles they meet are their own vanities and pride masquerading as their own special truth.