

Malibu Jackson 3: Boldest Move Yet

A Study of Screenwriting, Parody, and Mullet-Clad Action Heroes

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Abstract

This project is a parody short film script, targeting blockbuster action films of the 1980s. It is written in accordance with the traditional three-act structure of screenplays, which plays an important role in the writing arena of the film industry. It is a comedy, the theory of which is discussed in this paper, and more specifically parody. Like most short films and their scripts, it does not seek to be profitable, but rather serves the purpose of demonstrating skill and achievement on behalf of the screenwriter and filmmaker. This paper also includes a brief synopsis of the project.

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Introduction

Screenwriting Structure

Malibu Jackson 3 is, when reduced to its very essence, the cinematic equivalent of a backhanded compliment; that is, a parody of 1980s action film tropes, but designed for an audience who appreciates said films, while acknowledging their weaknesses – namely, their undeniable “cheese” factor. The irony of creating a film that mocks other films is that in many ways, all films are the same. Screenwriting form dictates a three-act structure, which has long been the backbone of the art and business of penning a script. The three-act structure is ultimately a form of the most basic principle of story-telling: beginning, middle, and end. This concept’s origin, and transitively the three-act structure’s origin, is often attributed to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, though Aristotle’s work is subject to various interpretations, and offers much deeper insight than mere story structure (Brenes, 2014). The three-act story structure certainly is important, and though seemingly very basic, it is critical to screenwriting and can be found in nearly every modern, published script.

Act One sets up the “who.” Who is the protagonist? What is his daily routine? What does he value? What does he hate? Act Two is the meat of the story, or the “what.” What happens to the protagonist? What is his goal? What obstacles does he encounter in an effort to accomplish his goal? Act Three is the “how” – the resolution. How does the protagonist succeed (or fail)? How is the main tension, along with any subplots,

resolved? Typically, Act One constitutes a fourth of the screenplay, Act Two about half the script, and Act Three the remaining quarter.

However, there is more to traditional screenwriting structure than that. There are other elements present in nearly every professional screenplay written in the last fifty years. There is an inciting incident in Act One – usually something that places the protagonist outside of their comfort zone. This is followed by the “lock-in,” or the moment at which the hero cannot turn back. At this point, Act Two has begun, and the hero has a clear goal. Although a good story crafts characters which will develop and grow through emotional growth or deterioration, a good script also has a more literal, and often physical goal for the protagonist. So although the character’s inner goal may be to gain courage, find love, or learn wisdom, they should have a goal in the story, such as arresting the bad guy, rescuing their kidnapped loved one, or journeying to a specific destination. Act Two is about the hero achieving this goal, and this act’s main job is to provide conflict that works against the hero along his or her way.

A well-written story is a series of increasingly intense conflict, most of which takes place during Act Two. Typically, Act Two has a midpoint (as the name suggests, this happens in the middle of the film) that mirrors the story’s ending. For instance, a story in which the hero is victorious in the end will probably have a midpoint that involves a victory for the hero. Of course, this victory is immediately followed by increased conflict. Conversely, if the story ends tragically for the hero, the midpoint will be a low point for him or her. Another common occurrence is a passive-active shift in the actions of the protagonist. In many scripts, the hero is *reactive* for the first half of Act Two. The hero’s actions are a result of the forces against him or her. For example, the

hero is trying to survive an alien invasion. After the midpoint, however, the hero becomes *proactive*. Our example hero might then attempt to infiltrate and destroy the alien mothership.

The end of Act Two usually is marked by the most intense conflict the protagonist has yet faced, and it is usually seemingly insurmountable. This is often referred to as the “dark night,” and is a moment of hopelessness for the hero, in which all seems lost. (If the hero ultimately fails, and both the midpoint and conclusion are tragic, then this point will actually be a high one). This sequence sets up Act Three, which serves to resolve the tension of the story and tie up loose ends (probably).

The third act is usually accompanied by a twist. The term “twist” often conjures thoughts of an extreme revelation, like the famous twist in Shyamalan’s *Sixth Sense* (1996), in which Bruce Willis’ character is revealed to have been dead, and a ghost, the entire film. But in the context of a film’s third act, a twist could be something much simpler, like Bruce Willis’ character, John McClane, having a gun secretly taped to his back at the end of McTeirnan’s 1988 action film *Die Hard*. Most third acts have a twist of some sort that makes the conclusion more interesting to the audience, and adds tension. In the example of *Die Hard*, the added tension is drawn from the audience’s initial belief that Willis’ character is unarmed. In the film’s final climax, McClane approaches the villain empty-handed. The villain absolutely has his victory secured. He is armed, has two armed men backing him up, and has McClane’s wife hostage. The audience is left wondering how McClane could possibly escape his certain doom, and how he could ever manage to rescue his wife. The audience does not find out until partway through the scene, when it is strategically revealed by the filmmakers, that

McClane has secretly attached a gun to his bare back with packing tape. At this point, the tension built up for the audience has an exciting payoff.

Of course, there is no mysterious entity punishing screenwriters and enforcing these rigid rules. Yet, nearly all American films fit into this mold, with very, very few true exceptions. MacDonald (2004) describes a screenplay as “the subject of industrial norms and conventions.” This is true not only film, but nearly all visual media – short films, television episodes, internet video sketches, etc. Of course, as is the case with any mold, there are negative effects of giving way to the tight grip of a conventional writing structure. Unoriginal, spectacle-driven scripts are easily typed out and packaged for production, the assumption being that since the plot hit all of the necessary points in the structure chart, the story must work (Tretyakov, 2012). It is difficult to point to only one specific reason for this, but ultimately, it is the way stories are best told, according to ultimate judge of entertainment: the audience. Whether it is because they are accustomed to it, or because it is inherently a more appealing storytelling mode, the fact is that the people – audiences – largely prefer movies with the traditional three-act structure. Despite the number of tickets Hollywood sells with flashy visual effects and big name stars, story will always remain the most important aspect of a good, memorable film to the audience as a whole. Story is, without a doubt, the most important part of screenwriting (Cordaiy, Hunter, 2002). This sounds idiotically simple, yes, but there is a difference between plot and story that not everyone instinctively grasps. The three-act structure often aids in forming a good story out of a plot.

In accordance with this principle, *Malibu Jackson 3* utilizes these three acts. In Act One, Malibu is seen in self-imposed exile, content shooting down criminals in the

deserts of Mexico. In Act Two, Malibu returns to America to save the country from his old nemesis, Edge Phoenix. The bulk of the story occurs during this act, in which Malibu fights Edge and fakes his own death. In Act Three, Malibu finally defeats Edge and saves the day. And if done well, it is funny, at least to those familiar with the campy action flick of yesteryear.

Adherence to the traditional three-act structure accomplishes three key purposes for a parody short film like *Malibu Jackson 3*. First, it aids in efficiency. The short film format is one that necessitates appropriate haste in telling the story – not a rushed pace, but a prudent focus on the heart of the story, and those critical elements which shape it. There is little room to meander and explore for the writer of a short film. The three-act structure provides direction that aids in this process. Second, it is an effective story-telling format that is agreed upon by writers and audiences both, whether consciously or subconsciously, in much the same way that a currency is agreed upon by both vendor and consumer. Audiences find films based on the three-act structure to be more palatable and enjoyable. Though this is a generalization, it is an accurate one. Of course, there are those who claim the rigid structure demanded of scripts threatens to strangle their writers' creativity (Rodman, 2006). They may very well be right. But in regards to this project, the third merit of the three-act structure, and perhaps the most important, is that the films that are being spoofed all followed the formula. Mimicking their structure is an essential element of parodying the target works. Without following this model, *Malibu Jackson 3* would miss a crucial piece of its comedy.

Comedy and Parody Technique

Comedy is a facet of entertainment that is easily appreciated, but difficult to truly understand. When studied, it quickly reveals itself to be a very slippery beast, due to its inherent subjectivity. Many filmmakers will concede that the interpretation of a film is ultimately up to the audience, and may not match the author or director's intentions (Tewkesbury, 1978, p.25). Comedy is no exception, and can even be thought of on a bigger scale than in film alone. Theoretically, one has the right to declare that they find nothing at all to be funny, but one could just as justifiably find the entire world comedic (Pye 2006). So one must assign a certain standard to comedy, and act as though being funny is a matter of right and wrong. One must decide it is not enough for the author to find his or her own work humorous. The audience must find it so as well, or it has failed. Otherwise, no comedy is bad. And if that is the case, then no comedy is good. However, any given person will tell you that there is, in fact, good comedy and bad comedy. Therefore, there must be a right way of writing comedy, and a wrong way. Consequently, the art of comedy must have established technique, and many principles of modern comedy have been in existence and developing for a long, long time. A century ago, Charlie Chaplin. Three centuries before that, Shakespeare. More than two millennia before him, Greek theatre. There are countless varieties of comedy, and screenwriters and filmmakers have explored many of them. They are sometimes divided into two general classifications: high comedy and low comedy (Symons, 2013). High comedy often involves dialogue, references, or wealthier subjects, and often requires some manner of intelligence of the audience. Low comedy is typically physical humor, and requires little to no thought or examination to understand or find humorous. However, comic analysts of today typically categorize types of comedy into three broad categories, which in turn

can be broken down into subcategories (Fink, 2013, p.46). These three categories are commonly titled incongruity, superiority, and relief. Incongruity is the comedy of new or unusual things. Comedy in accordance with the superiority theory usually derives its humor from the audience's conscious or subconscious belief that they are superior to the subject. Relief theory subscribes to the idea that laughter occurs as a result of a release of nervousness or tension.

The comedy of parody, in the context of entertainment, and specifically comedy, finds its foundation in imitation. The imitation often exaggerates or makes light of certain aspects of the source work. It is an ironic imitation, typically done not out of admiration, but at the expense of the imitated. It should be noted, however, that esteem for a certain entity and parody of that same entity are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, an adage that is not entirely fitting in this circumstance, but is not altogether inapplicable either. An author may parody a work out of animosity, but he or she may also parody a work out of adoration, as a sort of homage.

Analysis of Style

Malibu Jackson 3 is such a parody, created to illustrate the lovable, but hilarious, tropes of the nineteen eighties action film. The eighties were a decade in which the qualities "awesome" and "cheesy" were combined in the ultimate way, and committed to celluloid film to be remembered forever. But just in case people have forgotten, *Malibu Jackson 3* is there to remind them. It is not a parody of any one specific film or franchise, though Malibu's character is certainly reminiscent of *Escape From New York's* Snake Plissken. Rather, it finds those common elements that compose those campy movie moments one watches in this millennium and wonders how they were ever taken

seriously, and yet, enjoys them thoroughly. In addition to exaggerating and imitating, the work pairs the imitation with unexpected events. For example, when Malibu is hit by a bus as he rides off into the sunset.

Much of this parody's comedy is also derived from not only the mere imitation of the source, but from the juxtaposition of serious character doing ridiculous things in ridiculous situations. Regardless of how bizarre, convenient, or implausible their actions, or the actions of those around them, may be, the characters in *Malibu Jackson 3* never once recognize the absurdity surrounding them. They take everything with the utmost seriousness, and approach every situation and conversation as though it is of grave importance.

Marketability

Short films do not make money. Anyone in the industry will tell you that. It is not really true, of course. A short film might make ad revenue online, or win a contest cash prize, or be purchased after screening at film festival. But what industry professionals mean when they say that is one should not write or shoot a short film with intention to make a profit. This may leave one wondering why people shoot short films at all. Naturally, there is the "passion" factor. As is the case with any form of art, there are multitudes of people who simply love making films. They will pour their blood, sweat, tears, and hard-earned money into creating the movie they see in their minds, just so other people can see it too. They will spend weeks, months, or even years planning, preparing, shooting, and editing their baby. They will ask others to invest their time, skills, and money in the project. They will pour everything they have into every aspect of the piece. And in the end, they won't make a cent.

Despite all this, short films do not lack market and business value (and they are not always quite the exhausting endeavor as outlined above). Although they are not typically profitable productions, short films serve other purposes in the professional realm. One primary purpose of short films is to provide experience. No one will hire an inexperienced director, but the inexperienced director can direct his own short film. He now has experience. The same principle applies to every job on and off set, including the writer. Short film scripts do not sell. There is little to no existent demand to buy short film screenplays. However, if one's short film is produced, one has now written a produced film. Short films also stand as a testament to said experience. One's experience can be more than just a line on a résumé – it is a real, watchable film. The writer can say, “I wrote this,” and point not to a mere script, but to a film, short though it may be, and continue, “and it was produced.” The product will speak for itself (for better or for worse). Naturally, the product no longer solely belongs to the writer, but to the director as well, and might be attributed to one or the other, depending on who's talking (Horne, 1992). This proof of ability will speak volumes and prove an invaluable tool in securing a job or persuading investors.

But the short film's ultimate destination, its Promised Land, is admission to a film festival. Some film festivals, such as Sundance or Cannes, are practically household names. Screening, and especially winning an award, at one of these festivals is a prestigious accomplishment, and will often reap career-advancing rewards. But there are thousands of festivals in the United States alone, ranging from world-renowned to local high school events. *Malibu Jackson 3*'s prequel, *Malibu Jackson*, shot in the fall of 2014,

will be submitted to festivals this year. If it is accepted, and subsequently well received, it will be wise to have more material written, and potentially in production or produced.

Summary of the Project

The film opens inside a prison, where a prisoner is discovered to have made his escape. Police Chief Stanley Larusso arrives and shakes the hand of Warden Gordon Warren. They speak enigmatically about the escapee, as well as the one man who can catch him.

Desert. Hot sun. It's Mexico. Malibu Jackson, quintessential renegade-cop-turned-action-hero, kills a drug dealer, spouting a cheesy quip about justice, of which there will be many more to come. A bald eagle arrives and Malibu gathers from its squawks that he's needed again in America. Donning an eyepatch, Malibu hops on his motorcycle.

The escaped prisoner sneaks into the White House as a pizza delivery man, and is revealed to be Edge Phoenix, Malibu's nemesis from the prequel. He takes the president hostage, intent on making him sign a document that somehow grants him ownership of the entire country. Malibu rides his motorcycle right into the White House. He chases Edge, who still has the president, to the roof, where they have an epic showdown, and Malibu is shot.

Malibu's funeral is juxtaposed with the swift establishment of Edge's reign over the United States. But Malibu is alive (saved by a small picture of Theodore Roosevelt in his breast pocket) and disguised as a cameraman at Edge's big taking-over-the-country speech. After the speech, Malibu and Edge have an epic final duel, which Malibu almost

loses, but totally wins. Malibu says some cool final words to his chief, and then rides his motorcycle off into the sunset.

Conclusion

The goal of this project is to demonstrate screenwriting ability, specifically in the realm of comedy, to potential clients and employers. This project will also be submitted into screenwriting festivals, and may be produced as a short film, which will in turn be submitted into festivals and distributed online. The subject material is a sort of throwback, but the ideas of nostalgia and vintage films and clothing are very popular today, which makes the comedy relevant and topical. The project may also be developed into a feature-length screenplay in the future.

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By

Caleb Nelson

INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK – NIGHT

A PRISON GUARD saunters down the hall. He drags his baton across the bars on the cells as he walks. CLINK. CLINK. CLINK.

He reaches a certain cell and stops.

PRISON GUARD
Warden wants to see you.

Inside the cell, a FIGURE lies motionless and silent on his bunk, facing the wall.

BANG! The guard hits the bars.

PRISON GUARD
Hey! Get up!

The prisoner remains still and quiet. The guard angrily opens the door and storms over to the prisoner. Grabbing him by his shoulder, he yanks him around to face him.

The prisoner is a mannequin in a prison uniform. DRAMATIC CHORD.

The guard is confused for a moment, and then rage sets in. He quickly assesses the room, and notices a Ramones poster on the wall.

He tears it down, revealing a huge stash of tools. DRAMATIC CHORD.

Next to it is another poster. He tears it down, revealing a small closet labeled “Mannequins and uniforms.” DRAMATIC CHORD.

Next to that is another poster. He tears it down. DRAMATIC CH—The music stops mid-chord. There is nothing on the wall.

The guard turns the poster around. On the back is a cartoonish map labeled “Escape Plan.” DRAMATIC CHORD.

EXT. PRISON – NIGHT

Rain pours down. ALARMS sound. Dogs BARK. The prison is a scene of organized chaos as officers search the grounds and secure the exits. Search parties are heading out the gates.

In the midst of all this, a car pulls up.

Out steps a small, but intensely moustachioed man with determined eyes. He is CHIEF

OF POLICE STANLEY LARUSSO (50).

He approaches the gates and another man, sporting a suit, trench coat, and hat, and escorted by a team of uniformed guards, meets him in the front of the prison. He is WARDEN GARAWITZ (40).

They shake hands, but exchange no pleasantries.

CHIEF
Was it him?

The Warden nods. The Chief bows his head.

WARDEN
What do we do?

CHIEF
Do? There's nothing we can do now.

WARDEN
Surely your men can stop him?

CHIEF
There's only one man who can save
us now.

WARDEN
Well where is he?

EXT. DESERT – DAY

SUPER: Mexico

The sun beats down on a black SUV and a motorcycle parked in the desert. There is nothing else for miles.

Two men stand facing each other.

One is a MAN IN A SUIT, standing next to the SUV. He holds a briefcase.

The OTHER MAN is clearly out of place. He has a large, black, bushy moustache. A poncho is draped over his shoulders. His large, colorful sombrero hides his eyes.

The Man in the Suit sets the briefcase down.

MAN IN SUIT

It's all there.

The Sombrero Man just stares.

MAN IN SUIT

Well, do you have the product?

SOMBRERO MAN

The only product I carry... is
justice.

The Sombrero Man whips the sombrero off his head. It's MALIBU JACKSON. His stubble and deliberately messed up hair speak volumes about how awesome he is.

Malibu waits for a reaction.

The Man in the Suit does nothing.

Malibu rips off his bushy, black moustache, showing his real moustache underneath.

MAN IN SUIT

Malibu Jackson!?

The Man in the Suit's eyes widen and he pulls a pistol out of his jacket. But before he can even aim, a bullet hits his chest.

He stops, drops to his knees, and falls face-down on the ground.

Malibu holds a revolver that's spouting an absurd amount of smoke from the barrel. He spins it and re-holsters it in a smooth, expert motion.

MALIBU

Adios.

Malibu starts walking back toward his motorcycle.

Suddenly, the CRY OF AN EAGLE pierces the desert air.

Malibu stops. A bald eagle lands on his motorcycle handlebars. It SQUAWKS at Malibu.

MALIBU

I knew this day would come
eventually. I just don't know if I
can go back. Not after... what
happened...

The eagle SQUAWKS at him some more.

MALIBU

You're right. My country needs me.

Malibu hops on his bike and starts it up.

BRIEF GEARING UP MONTAGE

Cool leather jacket!

Left cool leather glove!

Right cool leather glove!

Another leather jacket!

Eyepatch!

END MONTAGE

Malibu straddles his bike, the sun behind him and the eagle mounted on his shoulder. He looks significantly cooler and edgier with his eyepatch.

Malibu takes off, spraying dust behind him. The eagle falls off his shoulder and lands in the dirt.

He speeds away into the desert.

The black SUV EXPLODES.

INT. POLICE STATION – DAY

The station is alive and bubbling with activity. Phones ring, people rush, papers are handed off. The Chief navigates his way through the sea of chaos.

CHIEF

Morgan! Get me those reports!
O'Riley, any word from the black
and whites? Conway! Get dispatch on
the phone immediately!

The Chief makes it to his office door. DETECTIVE SMITH, 30, is walking past him.

CHIEF

Smith! Do we have any leads on
where HE... might be heading?

SMITH

No, sorry sir.

The Chief turns, and looks down and away.

CHIEF

I have a feeling he has something
big planned this time.

SMITH

Huh? What'd you say?

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE – DAY

DING DONG. A doorbell rings.

The doorbell belongs to the White House.

A PIZZA MAN stands at the door, his face obscured. A SECRET SERVICE AGENT
opens the door.

PIZZA MAN

Pizza for the president.

AGENT

The president never called for
pizza.

PIZZA MAN

Um, uh, he ordered online.

AGENT

Hmm... Okay. I'll take it for him.

PIZZA MAN

The president specifically
requested we deliver it to his
desk.

AGENT

Yeah, I don't know about that. I
mean we're really not supposed to—

PIZZA MAN

Aw man, would you look at that? I
accidentally brought this extra box
of cheesy twists.

INT. OVAL OFFICE – DAY

THE PRESIDENT, 50, works on a computer at his desk.

His SECRETARY, 30, enters.

SECRETARY

Pizza delivery for you, Mr.
President.

The President looks up, clearly puzzled.

THE PRESIDENT

That's weird, I didn't...

The President looks over at a brown paper sack on his desk labeled "Tuna Sandwich" in sharpie.

THE PRESIDENT

(horribly fake)

I mean, yum! I definitely ordered
pizza. Show him in.

The Secretary waves toward the door and takes her leave as the pizza man enters. His face is still not visible.

He sets the pizza down on The President's desk. The President opens it up and furrows his brow. There is only pizza crust. The rest is missing.

THE PRESIDENT
Hey! How come the middle of the
pizza's missing? What kind of—

The President looks up to find a gun in his face. And the gunman: EDGE PHOENIX!

EDGE PHOENIX
Because the best part... is the
Edge.

THE PRESIDENT
What?

EDGE PHOENIX
The edge.

THE PRESIDENT
I don't get it.

Edge becomes more casual, and exasperated.

EDGE PHOENIX
Cause... cause my name is Edge
Phoenix. So it's like, it's a
thing.

THE PRESIDENT
Ohhh...

Edge pulls the gun back up.

EDGE PHOENIX
Now down to business. I have
something I need you to sign.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. STREET – DAY

Tourists walk, cars honk. All is ordinary.

Suddenly, a revving motorcycle rounds the corner, bearing the one and only Malibu Jackson.

A PEDESTRIAN sees him and cries out.

PEDESTRIAN

Look, it's Malibu Jackson!

Malibu turns his head and gives him a cocky salute. While he does, his motorcycle goes over a bump, followed immediately by SCREAMS.

GUY IN ROAD

Ahhh! My legs! I can't feel my legs!

Malibu doesn't notice.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE – DAY

Malibu comes to a halt in front of the White House. The bike rumbles. Malibu's unpatched eye squints in determination and focus.

He rides forward, smashing through the gates and right up to the front door.

INT. WHITE HOUSE FRONT HALL – DAY

The front door simply falls down on the floor as Malibu rides right over it.

Down the hall, Edge pokes his head out of the Oval Office, looking for the source of commotion.

Malibu rides right up to him and brakes, spinning the bike to face Edge.

MALIBU

Hope you don't mind if I let myself
in.

EDGE

Bold move, Malibu. Didn't expect to
see you back in action after...
what happened.

Malibu sheds a single tear. He quickly wipes it away.

MALIBU

Well I am back in action. And
you're under arrest.

EDGE

You're too late. Once the president signs this document giving me ownership of the country, you'll be powerless to stop me. Besides, you underestimate me. I have henchman now.

Three HENCHMEN suddenly appear, one of them tackling Malibu from his motorcycle.

Malibu fights them and wins comically easily.

He looks around. Edge is gone.

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

Edge pushes the button for the elevator. He has the President with him, held at gunpoint.

The elevator doors open and they get on. The doors start closing.

Edge sees Malibu running down the hall, toward the elevator.

The doors are almost closed.

Malibu is almost there!

CLUNK! The doors shut, trapping Malibu outside them. Frantically, Malibu hits the elevator button.

He waits.

Waits.

Glances over and sees a set of stairs.

He contemplates his two options for a moment, then runs to the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL – DAY

Malibu wheezes, gasping for breath. He is halfway up the stairs, trying to drag himself the rest of the way.

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

Malibu is waiting for the elevator, now soaked with sweat.

DING! The doors open.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE ROOF – DAY

Malibu charges out in time to see Edge and his presidential hostage hopping into a hovering helicopter.

Edge shoots at Malibu. Ducking behind an exhaust vent for cover, Malibu draws his revolver and shoots back.

THUNDER CLAPS. Raindrops begin to fall.

The helicopter begins lifting off as Edge and Malibu continue to exchange gunfire.

Suddenly, Malibu's revolver clicks, indicating he's out of ammo. He closes his eyes, gathering his courage.

The helicopter is a good distance from the roof.

Malibu emerges from cover and runs toward the copter. The rain is pouring.
DRAMATIC MUSIC strikes up.

MALIBU
I won't let you do this!

EDGE
Bold move. Too bold.

(Slow motion) Edge fires a single shot.

The bullet strikes Malibu's heart. His shoulder recoils and he stops. He falls to his knees, his mouth open. Rain runs down his face.

Edge retreats safely inside the helicopter as it flies away.

THUNDER CLAPS – CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY – DAY

A dark, gloomy, rainy day. A funeral party gathers around a grave.

INT. CHURCH – DAY

The same funeral party listens as The Chief delivers a eulogy.

THE CHIEF
Malibu Jackson was a good man.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING – DAY

The doors burst open and Edge enters dramatically, secret service agents following him.

THE CHIEF (V.O.)
He was a true servant of the
people.

Edge walks to the front of the room and slaps a paper down on the desk. At the bottom of the paper is The President's signature.

THE CHIEF (V.O.)
He fought for liberty.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE – DAY

Giant banners snappily unfurl, displaying pictures of Edge's face over the front of the White House.

THE CHIEF (V.O.)
And for justice.

INT. OVAL OFFICE – DAY

The President's nameplate is switched out for one reading "Overlord Phoenix".

INT. CHURCH – DAY

The Chief looks down, choking up. He looks back up at the people before him.

THE CHIEF
Bold move, Malibu. (Sobs). Bold
move.

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE – DAY

The Chief is filling out paperwork.

He looks up and a picture on his desk catches his eye. He picks it up. It's a picture of himself and Malibu in a frame that says "Best Friends 4 Ever".

The door opens abruptly. A COP pokes his head in.

COP

Chief, you gotta see this.

INT. POLICE STATION – DAY

Everyone is gathered around a TV in the corner of the room.

The Chief makes his way to the front of the small crowd.

On the TV, Edge Phoenix is addressing the press from his presidential podium.

EDGE

Yes, it's true. I now own the
country. And I'm going to be making
a few changes. First off, let's
talk holidays. I mean, Arbor Day?
Really, people? Really?

Detective Smith turns to The Chief.

SMITH

What do we do now?

CHIEF

There's nothing to be done. It's
over.

The Chief walks back toward his office. Smith yells after him.

SMITH

But Chief!

The Chief stops and turns around slowly.

CHIEF
I'm not your chief anymore. I'm
done.

SMITH
Chief.

CHIEF
What is it, Smith?

SMITH
Can I have your parking spot?

INT. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS ROOM – DAY

Edge continues to address the large press conference.

EDGE
And finally, and I know this goes
without saying, but I'd like to see
myself on all the money by the end
of the week.

Behind one of the cameras, the CAMERAMAN peeks his head out. He's wearing a giant fake moustache, a trucker hat, a fake mullet, and sunglasses.

EDGE
And, uh, oh! If we could all start
saying the United States of Edge
Phoenix, that'd be good. ... Welp,
that's all.

Edge walks away from the podium amid a spattering of applause.

INT. HALLWAY – DAY

Edge walks alone, the noise of the press conference fading.

CAMERAMAN (O.S.)
Edge Phoenix.

Edge stops and turns around. The Cameraman stands at the end of the hall.

EDGE
Yes? What do you want?

CAMERAMAN
I was wondering if I could get an
exclusive interview.

EDGE
Uhh... What's it for?

The Cameraman rips off his trucker hat, sunglasses, and mullet disguise. It's Malibu Jackson!

MALIBU
America.

EDGE
I don't think I'm familiar with
that publication. Is it a magazine,
or...

Malibu rips off his fake moustache.

Edge's eyes widen.

EDGE
Malibu Jackson!? But you're
supposed to be dead!

MALIBU
Justice never dies. And neither
does Malibu Jackson.

Edge walks with purpose toward Malibu.

EDGE
I killed you myself!

MALIBU
You tried. But the bullet was
stopped by this tiny picture of
Theodore Roosevelt that I always
carry. Next to my heart.

Malibu pulls a wallet-sized picture of Theodore Roosevelt out of his breast pocket.

EDGE

Well, what now? Didn't bring a gun?

Malibu pulls his revolver out, dangling it non-threateningly.

MALIBU

Let's fight this out like men.

Malibu tosses his revolver aside. It hits the ground and FIRES.

Both men freak out, YELLING IN SHOCK.

MALIBU

Sorry! Sorry! Okay! Okay. Let's
fight this out like men.

Malibu puts up his fists.

Edge puts up his fists. And then runs away as fast as he can.

Edge rounds the corner into a different hallway.

He finds a glass case mounted to the wall, with a gun inside. It's labeled "Break In Case of Emergency".

Edge smashes the glass and grabs the gun as Malibu rounds the corner, revolver in hand.

(Slow motion) They shoot fearlessly at each other, unloading their weapons with solemn fury. (End slow motion)

CLICK. Malibu's gun is empty.

Edge smiles. He points his gun at Malibu.

EDGE

This time, I'm going to be DEAD
certain you're not coming back.

Hahaha.

Malibu slowly puts his hands up to his head in surrender.

MALIBU

I'm sorry it had to come to this. I
wish we could've just... patched
things up.

(Slow motion) Malibu nimbly flips his eyepatch up. A bullet falls out.

He flips his revolver cylinder open. The bullet falls right into the chamber. (End slow motion)

CLINK. CLUNK. WHOOSH. Within the passing of one second, Malibu flips the cylinder shut, cocks it, and shoots.

The bullet sends Edge flying. He CRASHES through the wall and into the next room. The room EXPLODES.

Malibu turns around as the room is exploding behind him.

(Slow motion) As the fire rages, Malibu takes his eyepatch off and puts on his signature aviator sunglasses. (End slow motion)

CHIEF (O.S.)
Leaving already?

The Chief stands behind Malibu.

MALIBU
I'll be back when this country
needs—

CHIEF
You're a bold man, Malibu Jackson.

Malibu turns and looks at The Chief. He salutes him. The Chief salutes back. Malibu hops on his motorcycle, which is suddenly somehow in the hallway. He starts it up.

A bald eagle lands on Malibu's shoulders. It shakes dust from its feathers.

The room that was on fire is now burned down, revealing a beautiful sunset outside.

Malibu rides his motorcycle off into the sunset, the eagle mounted on his shoulder.

As he reaches the street, a bus hits him at full speed.

THE END