

A Soundly Defeated Man

Written by

Will Hines

Directed by Eva Anderson

Starring - Will Hines, Pam Murphy, Matt Newell

INT. LIMBO SPACE

TRASH CAN

TRACK 1: MARS INTRO PLAYS, DARKNESS, FADING UP TO 75% BLUE

We start in darkness. The lights slowly fade up but never get very bright.

The opening chords of the "Mars" symphony by Gustav Holst starts playing.

We see that there is a waste paper basket on stage.

WILL is standing there. He tries to throw a crumpled up wrapper into the basket. Misses. Picks it up, steps closer, tries again. Misses.

Then he gets it in, but a fan in the bottom of the basket blows the paper right back out.

Will slumps in defeat, then picks up the basket and walks off stage.

MUSIC OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL WASH

INT. PRINT SHOP

PRINT SHOP

PAM is working the desk of a print shop. Will enters.

PAM

Hello! How can I help you?

WILL

Hi! I was wondering if you guys could do a rush print job?

PAM

Depends. What are you looking for?

WILL

Business cards. About 200. By end of the day today?

PAM

Sure, we can do that. \$10 for the cards, and a five dollar rush fee.

Will unfolds a piece of paper to show it to Pam.

WILL

Great!

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

So I need it to say "This is to certify that I attended the 45th birthday party of Will Hines and found him to be charming and accessible."

PAM

I don't understand. Where's your phone number, or email?

WILL

Well these aren't actual business cards. I'm giving them out as favors at my birthday party tonight. It's a joke.

PAM

But it's not funny.

WILL

I'm sorry?

PAM

I don't get it. Walk me through how this is funny.

WILL

Hmm. Well, the guests will arrive, I'll hand them a business card that formerly tells them I'm charming and... I think that's funny.

PAM

If you gave this to me at a birthday party I wouldn't be able to make heads or tails of it.

WILL

Can you just print it anyway?

PAM

Maybe I'm missing something, let me ask my husband. He knows comedy. If this is funny, he'll know it. MATT!

WILL

That's not necessary...

MATT comes out.

MATT

Yeah?

PAM

Do you understand this, as a business card?

MATT looks.

MATT

That's a Steve Martin joke.

WILL

That's true, actually.

PAM

What?

MATT

Steve Martin supposedly has business cards that says something like "This proves that I met Steve Martin and liked him." This is a Steve Martin joke. You stole this.

PAM

Oh wow, you stole this idea?

WILL

It's not STEALING! I'm just USING it for my birthday party. It's funny!

PAM

For Steve Martin, it's funny but for you it's not funny at all.

MATT

We'd have to put a big copyright notice on them "COPYRIGHT: Steve Martin." I'm not getting sued over this!

WILL

You won't get sued. No one is going to care. Please just print me 200 copies for my birthday party.

MATT

TWO HUNDRED? You think you have two hundred people coming to your party? Hahahahaha. Who did you invite, everyone you've met in your whole life?

WILL

No, I just thought...

PAM
You need like 30 of these.

MATT
You'd be LUCKY to need 30! Try
five!

PAM
All you need is that one copy you
wrote up!

MATT
You're insane!

PAM
You are. You are insane!

Matt and Pam berate WILL a bit.

WILL
Okay! Never mind! Good bye!

Will hands them a business card and exits.

MATT
(reading)
"I met Will Hines and found him to
be utterly disappointing." Who the
fuck is Will Hines?

A beat.

PAM
You know, I'm never going to think
about this again.

TRACK 2: BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY 7.2, LIGHTS DEEP BLUE

INT. SCHOOL BOARD ROOM

OWL BULLETIN BOARD

Three teachers -- HARRIET, CHAD and Will -- are seated at a
meeting table.

MUSIC OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL WASH

HARRIET
Ok, nice job everyone -- I think
we're all set with how we're gonna
provide extra rides to the band
concert. Next on our agenda are
the autumn bulletin boards. Will,
how did the 4th graders do?

WILL sighs.

WILL

Well, ours had a lot of owls. They really like owls. One of the kids suggested owls and so we did that. And it was fine! Our bulletin board has owls and it's fine.

HARRIET

Something wrong, Will?

WILL

Yeah, well, Harriet, it's just that, you know, I'm not so into owls. It's cliché! It's a first-thought idea. I'll even make another suggestion. I'll say "how about leaves?" But then some kid says "owls", and they go apeshit for it, and I'm just not that into it as an idea.

CHAD

Will, who gives a rat's ass?

WILL

I do, Chad. It's about TASTE...

HARRIET

Chad, please. Will, maybe you could do something with the owls to make them more interesting to you?

WILL

Not a chance. It's cliché! A first-thought idea. I mean, I get it -- they're in 4th grade -- they don't know this is the same thing every 4th grade class thinks of. Ugh, it's so tedious. Chad, what do the third graders do?

CHAD

We did leaves.

WILL

They don't bring up owls?

CHAD

I mean, I don't really give them options.

WILL
That's so smart. You control their thoughts.

CHAD
Will, goddamn it, if they want to do owls, just do owls!

WILL
And give up on them being original thinkers...?

HARRIET
Chad. Okay, so you guys did owls, we'll let's move on...

Will stands up.

WILL
Can I just say --- and I don't want to belabor the point, and, yes we should totally move on, but: whatever happened to cornucopias? Right? Horns of Plenty? We used to have tons of bulletin boards with cornucopias! Not just that, but they were all over Thanksgiving: commercials, greeting cards, ads. They all used to have cornucopias and now they're gone! Isn't that strange? (pounds desk for emphasis)
Whatever happened to cornucopias?

HARRIET
You know, aluminum foil really helps to make a bulletin board pop.

WILL
What the fuck does that have to do with cornucopias? You sound crazy.

HARRIET
I'm just saying if you want to make your bulletin board more fun, I would suggest aluminum foil.

He sits back down.

WILL

Fuck foil, Harriet, I'm just saying that owls are a dumb idea for a bulletin board -- certainly a dumb idea to be so popular. I mean, owls aren't even autumnal! They're year-round! Oh wait, unless the kids know it's a harvest owl?

CHAD

WILL: these are kids are TEN! Do the owls! Or don't! You're 45 years old WILL HINES!

WILL stands up.

WILL

Look, I KNOW I'm bad at this! Okay? I KNOW I'm a bad teacher!

I didn't KNOW I was going to be doing this my whole life! I got a teaching certification just as a backup! My job was gonna be being in a SKA BAND!

But that didn't work out, and then I met a nice girl, and we wanted to settle down, and the job has good benefits and you get comfortable and the years fly by.

Is he done? No.

WILL

My old ska band becomes No Doubt... and they made like a billion dollars and got really famous and I'm stuck HERE!

He's up.

WILL

And every goddamn autumn, these 4th graders think they're the first people who ever like owls!

He sits.

WILL

Which is FINE! Which is FINE, okay?

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

But then when these kids say they love OWLS I can't bring myself to tell them that by suggesting that, they are committing themselves to being uninteresting people! And that life is going to be full of such disappointments!

He's up.

WILL

Like when you tell your friend Tony he should dump Gwen because he plays bass and he can do better than her, just because she's the lead singer -- she's not so great. And then he does it and later blames you and kicks you out of No Doubt so you don't get to be in best ska band that's ever been!

And I can't tell these kids that that's going to happen to every one of them! Or something just as bad! Owls are a bad idea! And it's just the beginning! Everything will get worse and worse! I'm not gonna be the one to tell them!

HARRIET

Will, if we haven't said it before. We're all really sorry about your divorce.

CHAD

You should quit this job.

WILL

I know.

TRACK 3: MOZART 40.4, lights to deep red.

INT. DINER

WHY DO I LIKE THIS FIGURE SKATING VIDEO

Will is sitting at a table. He's got a laptop open, and a coffee mug. Pam is seated behind him. A WAITER stands off to the side.

MUSIC OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL WASH

PAM

Excuse me, could I have the check?

WAITER starts to walk over to PAM.

WAITER

Got it right here.

WILL

Waiter? Sorry. Could you come here? One second?

WAITER spins back to WILL.

WAITER

Yeah?

WILL shows his laptop to the waiter.

WILL

I'm watching this figure skating video. 2012 Winter Olympics. And I tell you, I cannot take my eyes off of it. Why is that?

WAITER

Um, are you a fan of figure skating?

WILL

No! That's the thing!

WAITER

I really don't know. Excuse me.

WAITER turns to leave.

WILL

Stop! Don't.

(lower)

Guess.

(beat)

Don't leave me.

WAITER

I don't know, maybe you're attracted to the woman?

WILL

Bzzzzzt! Nope! I thought it might be that, but I checked within myself and I don't think that's what's going on. It's something else. Your thoughts.

PAM
Waiter, I need that check.

WAITER
Yes, one second.
(to WILL)
I'm sorry, do you KNOW the answer,
and you're seeing if I can guess
it?

WILL
No! I don't have any idea!

WAITER
And why would I know?

WILL
You have an outside eye! An
outside eye has perspective!

PAM
Excuse me? I'm kind of in a hurry.
I'm meeting my biological daughter
for the first time today.

WAITER turns to PAM.

WAITER
Right.
(to WILL)
Let me just get this to her...

WILL lunges and grabs WAITER and pulls his arm into him like a
rope.

WILL
Please! Please. Please.

PAM
Oh my God. What are you doing?

WILL
He's helping ME lady! News flash:
you're not the only person on the
planet. Ever heard of empathy?

WAITER
Okay! Okay! I'll help you. So what
made you watch this video at all?

WILL
Now we're talking. Okay, some guys
at work were talking about it.

WAITER

Ok. And what do you do?

WILL releases waiter, turns back to video.

WILL

I'm in the sweater business.

PAM

Sweater business? What IS that?

MATT

Yeah, what's the sweater business?

WILL

You know, I've never considered it. I work for a sweater company and I honestly have no idea how they survive. Importing and exporting sweaters, I suppose. We make them and sell them. I don't really know, I'm pretty low on the ladder. Only been there a few weeks. My God I am dying here and you two are rattling on about sweaters!

PAM

Maybe you just like figure skating!

WAITER

Yeah, I think you just like figure skating.

WILL

No! That is a COP-OUT answer! Think about it: YOU would be surprised, if you turned on an olympic figure skating video and after a lifetime of not caring about figure skating, suddenly loved it! You would be curious! Confused, even! And why should you be alone in that moment of confusion? When someone with an OUTSIDE EYE -- you -- might be able to help and explain! Help me.

WAITER

I'm trying to think. My wife really likes figure skating.

WILL

So did mine. The she left me, 3 months ago. And I had a meltdown and quit my job as a teacher in a huge rage.

PAM

Oh great, he's a mess.

WILL

But that is UNRELATED. My wife left, I quit my job and NOW I like this figure skating video. Why? Wait a minute -- am I GOING CRAZY?????

Will stands up, he's about to totally melt down. The waiter calms him.

WAITER

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on. YOU're okay. Look, maybe you don't need a big explanation for why you like figure skating. Because you know what? Figure skating is awesome, especially in the Olympics. Even for people who aren't normally fans!

PAM

Especially for people in the middle of a nervous breakdown like YOU.

WILL

Is she right? Am I having a nervous breakdown?

WAITER

No! No no no. I'm gonna have to ask you to sit down, sir. You are FINE and definitely NOT having a nervous breakdown! Look, I mean, figure skating is just... what is it.. it's dance! Right? Which is, you know, dance is a universal art, really. It's primal! It's just cool. And you're cool, my man! Figure skating is cool. And you are cool.

WILL

Yeah, okay. Okay. That gives me something. Thank you.

WAITER walks over to PAM and hands her the check. Then he returns

PAM

I was 16.

WAITER

What?

PAM

When I had my daughter and gave her up for adoption. She'll understand, right?

WAITER

Yeah, I think.. I mean...

(to WILL)

Do you want more coffee?

WILL

No, I'm good. And I actually can't pay for anything I ordered.

TRACK 4: MARS INTRO, LIGHTS TO DIM

TIE BIT

While the music continues, Matt and Pam clear the stage.

(OPTIONAL) Will grabs a tie to get ready for work. But it keeps sticking to his hand so he can't tie it. He eventually gives up and goes and sits down in his chair at work.

INT. OFFICE

PEER REVIEWS

Pam and Will sit in chairs.

MUSIC OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL WASH

They sit in chairs facing each other holding pieces of paper. MATT sits nearby at a desk, folding sweaters.

PAM

It's so silly they make us do these peer reviews.

WILL

I know. They're silly corporate procedural stuff.

PAM

I barely have anything about you.

WILL

Me too! It's so dumb. Okay, I'll just start.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

Ok, first thing on my review --
and this is just a suggestion --
but I think your weekly emails
that summarize what the group has
done -- could be shorter.

PAM

Really!

WILL

Yeah, a bit! It's just a
suggestion. Take it or leave it.

PAM

Okay, okay -- yeah I can see that.
All right, my turn. When you walk
around the office you always look
angry. And then when you talk you
always sound condescending every
time you say anything. Do you know
what I mean? Does that make sense?

WILL

Wow.

PAM

Just a suggestion! I mean, I don't
know.

WILL

What's the suggestion?

PAM

Just... don't do that.

WILL

Look angry and be condescending.

PAM

Yeah.

WILL

Okay, I'll try. To not be so...
angry and condescending. Okay, my
next one for you is that when it's
your turn to organize the status
meeting you should remember to
order decaf coffee as well as
regular coffee.

PAM takes a while to take this in without being hurt.

PAM

That's a good one. Let me take that in. Deep breath.

WILL

I didn't think of it as that big a deal.

PAM

It's okay! Thank you. Now, my next one is so small, I don't know if it's even worth saying.

WILL

Don't say it.

PAM

No I'll say it. I think you talk too glowingly about your sisters.

WILL

How... what do you mean that?

PAM

It's just kinda, you know, off-putting. It sounds like you're in love with them. I know you're not, I mean I assume you're not, whatever, but you're always like "Oh my God, my sister Cheryl could be a model," or whatever. Do you know what I mean? Does that make sense?

WILL

This is a workplace suggestion?

PAM

I mean, I don't know. I had to put something! Does it make sense?

WILL

I guess it does?

PAM

You're doing that thing where you look angry.

WILL

I know I am. I can't stop that at this moment.

PAM

I get that, it seems really ingrained.

WILL

Right. Well, I don't have any other suggestions to say about you so I guess we can stop....

PAM

I have a few more about you. Clothes hang weirdly on your body. Also, I have trouble even picturing you on a date with someone, and that bothers me. Do you know what I mean? Your stride -- like the steps you take when you walk? - are all kinda small and womanly. And.. in brightly lit rooms your pupils get really small, like more than they need to, I'm almost positive your pupils overdo it.

WILL

I see.

PAM

Does that all make sense?

WILL

Sure. Sure it does. We're supposed to also suggest a plan of action. For you I suggest setting a word limit for emails and ordering decaf coffee in advance.

PAM

Duly noted. For you.....I guess it's to undo a lot of your personality and consciously rebuild it so it's better! But who can do that? No one can. So I guess my plan of action for you is: nothing.

MATT

Guys, could you finish up soon? I need help processing these sweaters!

TRACK 5: MARS TRUMPETS LOUD, LIGHTS TO GREEN

I WAS LIKE "DAMN"

INT. SAME OFFICE

Will steps over to Matt's desk.

MUSIC OUT, LIGHTS UP TO FULL WASH

MATT

Hey Will, got a second? I need to go over a couple of things.

Will walks over to Matt's desk.

WILL

Oh that's right, I remember you'd left me a bunch of voice mails on Friday.

MATT

Yeah, were you out?

WILL

I was at Minneapolis. At the convention. Helen's flight was delayed so I got to man the booth for half an afternoon.

MATT

Oh! Nice. Was that tough?

WILL

Nope. Smooth sailing. I crushed it.

MATT

Oh great.

WILL

In fact, this cool thing happened with the hotel. We were at the Hampton Inn & Suites. And They accidentally gave my room away the last night. BUT to make it up to me they upgraded me to the presidential suite! This place was amazing. Two rooms, a kitchenette. I mean it was bigger than my apartment! AND: when you stay in it you get your own breakfast. I woke up and room service brought up this big table full of tons of food: eggs, ham, fruit, coffee.

I was like "damn."

WILL says "I was like 'damn'" in a just-a-bit-too-affected voice.

MATT
What was that last part?

WILL
What part?

MATT
The last part.

WILL
Presidential suite? Got upgraded?

MATT
Nope.

WILL
2 rooms, bigger than my apartment?

MATT
No, after that.

WILL
Got this big 'ol breakfast? I was like "damn?"

MATT
That's it.

WILL
That really stood out? When I said "I was like damn."

MATT
Yeah. Sounds weird.

WILL
That's what I was like, though! I was like "damn."

MATT
Well, still. You should probably... never... say that.

WILL
Then I'm never gonna tell that story! Because "i was like 'damn'" is the only way to describe how I felt!

MATT

Well, People don't need to hear that story.

WILL

It's just that I finally had a good story, you know? All my other stories are group experiences, and when I tell them there's someone else in the group who was also there, and the "I was like damn" story was all mine.

MATT

Can't you just change the last line?

WILL

NO! That's the best part. You don't have a story without that part.

MATT

It's just the way you're describing it. You could, you know, just pick a different phrase.

WILL

NO! It's FINE. I like something, but the universe thinks it's WEIRD and so I just won't do my thing my way! It's fine! I'll just not tell it! Forget it. It doesn't matter!

MATT

You don't need to get so worked up! But, oh, fine.

WILL

Why'd you call me over here, anyway?

MATT

Oh, right. You've been fired.

Matt hands Will an envelope. Will looks inside.

WILL

Daaaaaaaamn.

TRACK 6: MARS INTRO AGAIN, LIGHTS TO DIM.

PUTTING ON A JACKET - MUSIC, DIM LIGHT

As the music continues Will goes to the back and picks a jacket off a hook.

But there's a string attached to the sleeve and someone backstage keeps putting the sleeve away from him so he can't get the jacket on.

After a minute, he gives up and hangs the jacket over his shoulder. Music fades, lights come up into a spotlight.

EXT. OUTSIDE SOMEONE'S HOUSE

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SERENADE

WILL takes center stage.

MUSIC OUT, SPOTLIGHT ON WILL

WILL

Darla! Take me back!

I'm down here in your front yard.
It's 3am. Come to your window and
tell me you will take me back.

I know I screwed up in so many
ways.

The lying.
The drinking.
The cheating.

The emotional manipulation of our
children.
The emotional manipulation of
other people's children.

Quoting Django Unchained all the
time. Just the Leo lines. Just the
Leo lines where he says the n-
word. Just the n-word. I was just
saying the n-word.

Getting so drunk at your office
Christmas party that YOU got
fired.

Giving you bedbugs. And then
giving you bedbugs again.

Pretending like I had a sad
childhood even though you know
what? My childhood was awesome.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

Making you move to Boise even though that meant you being away from your family and then once we got there, just being like "This place sucks."

And, of course, being completely emotionally absent for huge stretches of time.

That's why I'm here to win you back by singing something from your favorite artist, Bruce Springsteen.

I still remember the night of our first kiss when this song played and you told me that Springsteen was not just the country's greatest lyricist, but the country's greatest poet.

So here's the's actual final 30 seconds of his 1985 hit song "I'm Goin' Down."

*But lately girl you get your kicks
from just a dropping me down down
down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down down down down
I'm goin down hey a boppa dee down
down
I'm goin down DOWN down, down
I'm goin down, hey a boppa dee
down down
I'm goin down DOWN down - yeah
I'm goin down down hey boppa hey
boppa ya cha
hmm hey jim dey bop um bop um
wella down
HEY hey hoom dey bop um bop i say
em down
hey hey hoom dey bop um bop um
wella down
hey hey hoom dey bop um bop - yeah
hey juney!
say it down down down down now!
say it down now!
turn it down down down down down!*

What do you say? Ohhh, I see. BIG no.

TRACK 7: BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY 7.2**INT. FRO-YO STORE**

FRO-YO

PAM is a cashier at a frozen yogurt place. WILL walks up.

WILL

One frozen yogurt, please.

PAM

I just refilled the machine, it'll take one second. Do you have a loyalty card? You know, one of those "buy 10, get one free" cards?

WILL

What are you doing? Don't offer me one of those! I don't come into this frozen yogurt shop enough to need a loyalty card! Cut that out!

PAM

Okay! Fine! Don't take one!

WILL

How often do you think I come in here, anyway?

PAM

How should I know? I've never seen you before!

WILL

Well THAT'S not true! I don't come in a LOT but I definitely have come in here before! You really don't recognize me at all?

PAM

I don't know.... are you Todd Barry?

WILL

No! Now I'll take a card! In fact I INSIST on having a buy 10, get one free card!

PAM shrugs and gives him a card. WILL looks at it, then gives it back.

WILL
I'm never going to use this, you
can keep it.

PAM
What is wrong with you?

WILL
Would you like to go out with me?

PAM
What?

WILL
Would you like to go out with me?
I was here last week, and we
chatted. And I was thinking I'd
come back and ask you out. Do you
remember? I said how hot it's
been? Do you remember that?

PAM
Oh. No, I don't. I'm sorry.

WILL
Well, I just... Oh, I don't know.
Would you like to go out with me?

BEAT. BLACKOUT. (seems like the show is over)

LIGHTS UP.

PAM
No.

BLACKOUT.

TRACK 8: I'M GOIN' DOWN