

HENRY'S DAUGHTERS

by
Paul Martin

Great Projects Film Company
594 9th Avenue, 2cd Floor
New York NY 10036
212 581 1700

1 MONTAGE OF PHOTOS 1

2 EXT. HENRY'S BOAT'S BRIDGE, DAY

2

NARRATOR #2

This is Henry. He's done well for himself - first as a professional engineer and now as a semi-retired lobbyist for a select group of transportation companies. He lost his wife, the mother of his two daughters, to a heart attack when she was just fifty-five.

3 INT. STATE DOT, DAY

3

NARRATOR #2

This is his elder daughter Laura. She's close to her dad. She's an engineer, with her professional engineer's license, for the state department of transportation. The gossip at the DOT is that her quick rise has had more to do with her father's connections than her skills.

4 INT. TEST GARAGE, DAY

4

NARRATOR #2

This is Julie. She is eleven years younger than her sister. Henry tends to coddle her. Following the family into engineering by recently completing her degree, Julie has accepted a year-long contract with OUTOCAR. She's going to be living with her sister while working at her first job.

5 EXT. HENRY'S BOAT, DAY

5

NARRATOR #2

This, then, is the story of Henry and his daughters and the complications that arise as they all work - at different levels, on different tasks, and for different people - on the same project.

6 EXT. HENRY'S BOAT'S BRIDGE, SUNSET

6

BOB

Okay, guys. You've wine'd me and dine'd me. We've gone fishing. Now, tell me about this half-baked pipe dream of yours.

HENRY

Take a look. Let's say you're cruising the Caribbean and you want to go to St. Croix. You click here. You go to bed and the boat will take you there while you sleep.

BOB

That's it? What about other boats? Bad weather? Places to avoid?

JEFF

The boat has bow and stern, port and starboard sensors, depth sensor, wind sensors, GPS, and two different kinds of weather radar all hooked into a sophisticated, redundant computer system.

BOB

This boat can do all that? Right now.

HENRY

Oh, yes. This is the GUIDEME da Gama oh two.

JEFF

Instead of water, it's roads. Instead of boats, it's autonomous cars, trucks, and buses.

HENRY

No more driving. No more traffic jams.

JEFF

We're calling it SANSHANDS. Flow will be adjusted to weather and volume. No more accidents; no more deaths.

HENRY

It's a quantum productivity boost for the entire economy. Progress with a capital "P" my friend.

BOB

Wow. Hey guys, I'm a lowly state senator; what can I do to make this happen?

JEFF

Well, Senator, we could use your help with appropriations; carving off a piece of the federal pie that you've got coming to the state DOT to fund a R&D competition.

BOB

A competition? Why a competition?

JEFF

To funnel the project to Henry's client, GUIDEME.

BOB

Well, if it's not a real competition, what's in it for me? I mean, it seems like the fix is in.

HENRY

It's a non-zero sum game; everybody benefits. It's a win-win-win. Bob, the transportation industry needs a shot in the arm. It needs a champion. We're ready to back a champion.

JEFF

The DOT gets involved in some ground-breaking stuff, and there's some sexy futuristic video for your campaign commercials when it comes time to run...

HENRY

...for Governor.

BOB (voice over)

I'm sure I speak for every member of this senate ethics commission when I express my deep admiration for the testimony that you're about to offer.

7 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

7

LAURA

Well, that's very kind of you, Senator, but I'm just doing what's expected of me by my profession. One of the things that makes it a profession is that there is a code we engineers are expected to follow. Kind of like the oath you take when you assume office.

BOB

(Ahem). This senate ethics commission has been formed to investigate the SANSHANDS project for ethical misconduct and possible criminal violations. You're here to offer your testimony.

LAURA

I'll do my best, that was four years ago.

BOB

For the record, I would like to state that you have been offered and accepted immunity from prosecution. Is that the case?

LAURA

Yes. Offered, not requested.

BOB

These allegations have been raised by OUTOCAR. You've heard of them.

LAURA

Of course. Yes.

8 INT. STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, PRESS ROOM

8

BOB (voice over)

It has been alleged by OUTOCAR executives that the project you oversaw has been rife with corruption from its very inception.

JEFF

There will be a time that we look back at the act of driving ourselves as dangerous, perhaps needlessly reckless, and as old-fashioned as riding a horse. So today, the SANSHANDS Project is awarding two, one-year, four-million dollar development grants for the creation of the initial specifications for the automated roads of the future. Now these winners, who have been chosen from over twenty applicants, will be working with a DOT team of engineers spearheading the initiative. The two companies we announce today will be competing for a twenty five million dollar contract to implement their initial designs. And, in about a year, the winner will be chosen by the DOT's internal review. Now, the two organizations being awarded SANSHANDS development grants are: GUIDEME, an internationally renowned technology company specializing in transportation infrastructure. And, we are proud and excited to say, OUTOCAR, a local start-up company recently founded by engineers from the state university in partnership with the University's Business Incubator.

9 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

9

BOB

Would you please describe for the commission the process by which the two companies, GUIDEME and OUTOCAR, came to be selected?

LAURA

That occurred before my involvement. Both companies were selected before me and my team were brought on board. You actually may know a little more about that than I.

WARREN

I hate these things...

MARTY

You are a dinosaur.

WARREN

You can never get it to fit...

MARTY

Look at the...what....are those your hands? Look at the size...what are you the missing link?

WARREN

Hey, easy.

MARTY

Okay, Sasquatch...we've only got one of these, huh?

WARREN

Just put up the right slide.

JEFF

Okay, so who are these people? And why am I here?

LAURA

Well, that's Barry. He's the project lead for OUTOCAR - the one you were so impressed with. And we're here to download time lines, and specifications, budgets....

JEFF

I don't need to be here.

LAURA

Well, you were here for GUIDE-...you're not going to give these people a chance, are you? That's why you put Warren and Marty on the OUTOCAR team and Vik and Cho on my GUIDEME team. This is already a done deal.

JEFF

What do you want me to say? Trust me, the less you know the better.

LAURA

Just tell me you're not wasting my time, their time, and the state's money.

JEFF

Look, I'm not wasting anybody's time or money. Everybody is getting paid for their ideas.

LAURA

Yeah, but you're giving them the impression that they're in competition for the bigger prize.

JEFF

Look, it's not just about the specs, it's who can take those specs to the next level. It's about a full design.

LAURA

Would you at least come meet my little sister, Julie? Dad pulled some strings getting her on the OUTOCAR team.

JEFF

Yes. Your father is a master puppeteer. So you are Laura's sister?

JULIE

Oh, yes sir.

JEFF

Your father has told me so much about you. And I must say that you are prettier than your pictures!

LAURA

Julie, this is Jeff, my boss, so watch what you say. He's the chief engineer at the DOT and Dad's fishing buddy.

JEFF

Your dad, one heckuva guy.

JULIE

I often hear that. I'd like to ...

LAURA

Oh, uh, this is Barry...

JEFF

Barry, let me tell you something. If this young woman right here is half as good as her older sister, well you've got yourself one heckuva engineer. Put her to work. Hey guys, keep up the good work.

BOB (voice over)

There have been allegations that the contest was rigged from the very beginning.

11 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

11

LAURA

Not in my mind, no.

BOB

No conversations to that effect?

LAURA

I raised concerns that there wasn't necessarily a level playing field. That GUIDEME had significantly more resources. That it wasn't necessarily a fair competition.

BOB

Did you ever stop to think that maybe “I shouldn’t be doing this”? Not necessarily because you were going to be here today, but because it’s wrong?

LAURA

No, because I didn’t do anything wrong. Nor did any of the people working for me.

BOB

But in the end...

LAURA

In the end, I kept an open mind and made an informed decision based on the facts. The facts influenced my decision... nothing else.

BOB

Oh, the fact that your father might gain financially if GUIDEME was selected.

LAURA

As did you.

BOB

I’m sorry I didn’t hear that response.

LAURA

My decision was based on the facts. Period.

12 INT. TEST GARAGE, DAY 12

MARTY

Warren....Warren...Warren, this cable is crimped.

WARREN

Yeah, but the book says...

MARTY

The book...the book. Will you just use your eyes and what brain evolution gave you?

BARRY

I could help...

MARTY

It is our duty as DOT engineers to install all test monitoring equipment.

BARRY

I know the car pretty well.

MARTY

And when we’re done, so will we.

BARRY

If there is anything left...

MARTY

Let me at it.

BARRY

These two guys are truly unique.

JULIE

I don't know what it says about my sister, but she told me that the people that they put on "special projects" are the ones that nobody else wants, but they can't get rid of them.

WARREN

Make sure the polarity is correct before you insert the plug or you'll...short out the power supply!

MARTY

This connector needs upgrading.

BARRY

These are military grade, the same ones they use in Black Hawk helicopters.

MARTY

Well, that may be, but I'd still be afraid to go up in one, huh? Hey, if you force it and it breaks it needed fixing anyway. Murphy's Law.

WARREN

That's not engineering, that's a saying.

13 INT. BOB'S SENATE OFFICE, DAY

13

BOB (reading to himself)

"Bob, wanted you to know how much my colleagues in the transportation industry appreciate your support. Keep up the good work...Henry." Well, well, well.

BOB

Your father has lots of connections.

14 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

14

LAURA

He knows a lot of people. He has a lot of friends. He would say you're one of them.

BOB

That's very kind, but wouldn't you agree that he gets people to do things for him?

LAURA

He's known for doing favors for others, too. Check your campaign donors list.

BOB

Like getting kids into expensive colleges on free rides.

LAURA

Until recently, I didn't know anything about that.

15 INT. SUNNY HALLWAY OUTSIDE JEFF'S OFFICE, DAY

15

JEFF

Look, Henry, when I asked you to talk with the dean of the engineering school, all I was hoping for is that you'd give my son a good recommendation.

16 INT. BOAT, DAY

16

HENRY

Hey, what's the point of having contacts in important places if you are not going to use them? I graduated with the Dean. He respects my opinion.

17 INT. SUNNY HALLWAY OUTSIDE JEFF'S OFFICE, DAY

17

JEFF

It's a full ride at a private university.

18 INT. BOAT, DAY

18

HENRY

Say, Jeff, might be a good idea for us to keep this between you and me. You know we don't want prying eyes and ears making something out of nothing. Say, still good for Saturday? You know I have that GUIDEME luxury sky suite at the ball game. Good. Oh, and bring the kid along too, I'd like to meet him.

19 INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

19

LAURA

Hey, you're home late.

JULIE

Oh, the outer beltway was jammed. Tonight would have been the perfect night for an autonomous car system.

LAURA

Yeah, there was a pig truck that overturned; pigs were running all over the highway.

JULIE

I'll talk to Barry tomorrow and see if we can develop a "farm animal running wild" sensor. What are you working on?

LAURA

Oh, the GUIDEME folks gave us this computer program that models traffic flow. It is way cool. Here, check it out. You can actually change the model based on different levels, like speed, weather, traffic flow, pig truck accidents...

JULIE

Ah. Of course, it demonstrates how their central server system is better than our autonomous car.

LAURA

Ew, perhaps I shouldn't have shown you.

JULIE

Oh, it doesn't matter. We're working on something very similar. I... we just haven't worked out all the bugs yet.

LAURA

Mmm. .kind of like your connectors?

JULIE

Who told you?

LAURA

Marty. He said it snapped in his hand.

JULIE

He had a giant pair of pliers! If he'd spent paid less time ogling me and...

LAURA

Say what?

JULIE

When I got out from underneath the car, I see Barry and Marty standing there clearly checking out my tattoo.

LAURA

Oh, no no no, no no no no. I will put a stop to that.

JULIE

No, don't say anything. Look, Marty's a jerk and I don't want to start any problems. I'll just start dressing like my dowdy older sister.

20 INT. STATE DOT CONFERENCE ROOM, DAY

20

LAURA

Fellas. I, uh, understand there's been a little bit of an ogling situation. Yeah, that should not have happened. Let's try and show a little more respect, huh? Thank you.

MARTY

Hey, I was just trying to see what it was a tattoo of. Why would she have a tattoo if she didn't want anybody to look at it, huh?

21 INT. MONTAGE CAR SCENES, DAY

21

22 INT. TEST GARAGE, DAY

22

BARRY

What are you working on?

JULIE

Oh, about a month ago, Laura showed me a multivariable dynamical system model that GUIDEME did, and I've been trying to find the time to do something similar.

BARRY

Do you know what you're doing?

JULIE

Yeah, definitely.

BARRY

This is a team. You don't have to try to solve problems yourself.

JULIE

I know.

BARRY

I could stay and help. Or we could grab some dinner and, um, you could tell me your idea.

JULIE

Isn't your wife out of town?

BARRY

Yeah, that's why I offered.

JULIE

I won't be much longer. I just want to get these parameters laid out. Then you can decide in your team meeting if you want to forward it on to the programmers.

BARRY

Call me if you want company.

24 EXT. BOAT DOCK, DAY

24

JEFF

It's looking really good. Vik and Cho have completed their report on GUIDEME. It looks solid.

HENRY

How is, uh....how is Julie doing? Have you heard?

JEFF

Well, Laura mentioned the other day that she'd been real integral to actually writing the specifications. But it's funny.

HENRY

Funny--how so?

JEFF

Well, you know how yours is all tied up and submitted? Well, those guys are treating it like it's a college project - working three shifts, coming in every morning with new modifications.

HENRY

Uh, I uh...spoke to the-powers-that-be at GUIDEME about you.

JEFF

Oh?

HENRY

Yeah, you know once we get into the actual design contract, we're gonna need somebody to be our national technical liaison.

JEFF

That's perfect timing -- I'll be able to retire with full benefits and pension and go to work for GUIDEME. Yeah. Thanks Henry.

25 INT. MONTAGE CAR SCENES, DAY

25

JEFF

We'll get it to you, all right? Thanks for coming by.

LAURA

Who was that?

JEFF

Captain, State Police.

LAURA

What did he want? Can you tell me?

JEFF

Something about you being a fugitive. No, he was interested in the biometrics and other data we get out of GUIDEME.

LAURA

Oh, like for accident reconstruction?

JEFF

That's a good idea, but no. No, more for tracking people, you know - child abductions, listening in on conversations in the car. Law enforcement stuff like that.

LAURA

Oh.

JEFF

I told him to contact you for more details. He said he had your number.

LAURA

Very funny.

JEFF

No, really.

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

JULIE

Hello. You're home early. You sick?

LAURA

No just disgusted.

JULIE

Me too. Why? What happened?

LAURA

Uh, uh..you first. Yum. This is what the doctor ordered.

JULIE

You know that program we gave you that models the variables using our OUTOCAR system -- like the GUIDEME one?

LAURA

Oh yeah, it works well.

JULIE

Well, after I saw theirs I took it upon myself to work that up.

LAURA

I thought you said you already had one in the works.

JULIE

Well, we didn't. So I set up the parameters and Barry gave it to programming team.

LAURA

And?

JULIE

Today, I found out that Barry, that married snake, submitted it as his as part of his thesis for his PhD. And, of course, my contribution was completely unmentioned.

LAURA

When I met with him today so that he could submit the plan that you put together, he actually asked me to recommend him to Dad for a job on GUIDEME.

JULIE

Are you going to?

LAURA

You know, I've gotta tell you the submission was topnotch. You guys did excellent work. But, uh, no.

JULIE

Good. Yum, this cake tastes even better with revenge sprinkled on top.

LAURA

The Barry is toast.

JULIE

So what was your day like?

LAURA

Oh. Jeff had a meeting with a captain of the state police.

JULIE

About?

LAURA

About how the GUIDEME system can be used to track people, spy on them, and listen to their conversations without their knowledge.

26 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

26

BOB

Part of the allegations against DOT and GUIDEME was that intellectual property was not being adequately protected.

LAURA

I don't know about that. I had a team of four engineers. Two were devoted to each project, GUIDEME and OUTOCAR, to ensure that no proprietary information was being breached during the development process. But once it came time for the final analysis, we put it all on the table.

BOB

Oh, so there was a point in the process when the firewall between the two systems – OUTOCAR and GUIDEME - was breached. And the proprietary property was exposed.

LAURA

Everyone was being paid for their ideas. Okay, we were tasked with reviewing both systems and deciding which one was the best, between the one or the other, and who should design the final system -- with whatever improvements and enhancements we discovered along the way.

27 INT. STATE DOT CONFERENCE ROOM, DAY

27

WARREN

Reliability and safety: they are both pretty close. Maybe OUTOCAR has a slight edge because of their simplicity. That last month they came up with some very impressive advances and modifications.

LAURA

All right. So, do we recommend an affordable system that meets our specifications – which is OUTOCAR -- or do we go with a system that provides for future, as yet, undefined improvements at a significantly greater cost – which is GUIDEME?

MARTY

Seems to me, you want to recommend as much functionality as you can to avoid it being obsolete before it's ever used.

LAURA

The risk is: the perfect system that we can't afford is no system at all. I mean, a limited system that we can afford is a step forward.

JEFF

Folks, political realities rule. We might as well recommend what the senate wants -GUIDEME - rather than disappointing them - by recommending OUTOCAR – which would then make them go through the whole process once again. So why stand in their way?

LAURA

Because many other states have other political financial realities.

JEFF

That is their issue.

WARREN

I kind of disagree. I think it's all of our issue. I mean, not having access to game-changing technology doesn't just inconvenience people... it puts them at a serious disadvantage.

MARTY

So does inferior technology. Now the future is getting closer all the time and by the time this thing passes through all the regulatory hoops, OUTOCAR will be so antiquated as to not be worth installing.

WARREN

That is a dangerous attitude. And one that you don't have any evidence to support.

30 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

30

BOB

So, are you close with your father?

LAURA

With all due respect, sir, that's a stupid question. Yes, I am close to my father.

BOB

So you knew he worked for GUIDEME?

LAURA

I knew GUIDEME was a client of his. One of many. An important one.

BOB

Did you ever share any inside information about the competition with him?

LAURA

No sir.

BOB

Turn to him for advice?

LAURA

I don't believe I ever discussed SANSHANDS with him until my recommendation was formalized and submitted.

31 INT. BOAT, DAY

31

LAURA

I don't know how much I can say, Dad. We analyzed everything, okay? Initial infrastructure, consumer outlay, maintenance, reliability, sustainability, life-cycle costs. I summarized my findings, I gave them to Jeff earlier in the week, and now he needs to meet with the commissioner to prepare a report for the senate.

HENRY

Well, if you're really that far along, there's nothing I can do to influence the decision.

LAURA

Oh, contraire, Father dear, there is always time and opportunity for you to influence decision-makers, especially Jeff.

JULIE

Come on Laura, Daddy's right. It's out of your hands now. We'll keep it in the family until it's announced.

LAURA

My recommendation was that we go with the OUTOCAR system.

JULIE

Yes!

LAURA

Because I felt an affordable, open architecture system would be the best way to move the technology forward. It wasn't just about the engineering. We had to take everything into account, including the financial...too expensive of a system just makes it too difficult for other states to adopt.

JULIE

OUTOCAR has projected lower maintenance, sustainability, and life cycle costs too.

HENRY

But what about performance though?

LAURA

OUTOCAR meets or exceeds, based on the computer models, all of our benchmarks.

HENRY

Maybe you're setting the bar too low. GUIDEME is significantly better than OUTOCAR on each benchmark.

LAURA

I don't know how you know that. Yeah, everything except safety. We actually rated OUTOCAR slightly safer, although there was some questioning of the data.

JULIE

Well, and then there's the big brothers issue.

HENRY

The what?

JULIE

You know from that book... When I'm 64.

HENRY

What...what...what...what is she talking about?

LAURA

She means Orwell's 1984. And it's Big Brother not Brothers.

HENRY

Sweetie, I guess Tech's English lit department isn't what it once was.

JULIE

Hey!

LAURA

The iconic figure of governmental authority that Orwell created, even in the minds of people who haven't read the book, is actually translating into a very real fear for people. People have significant concerns about their privacy, their civil liberties. With GUIDEME that was an issue.

HENRY

Almost every new technology has the potential for that kind of misuse.

JULIE

But GUIDEME's bandwidth will allow for two-way voice communication, and will give the government the ability to track people wherever they go, and listen to their private conversations.

HENRY

Oh, and just how do you know that?

JULIE

She told me.

HENRY

That's proprietary information, ya know. Don't you go spreading that around young lady. Anyway, it's not the technology, it's the people who regulate it set limits.

JULIE

That's exactly what we're afraid of. Wait, then who did write "When I'm 64?"

32 INT. JEFF'S OFFICE, DAY

32

LAURA

And you were going to tell me when?

JEFF

What?

LAURA

That the commissioner selected GUIDEME over our recommendation of OUTOCAR.

JEFF

It's a political world, Laura. And the commissioner is a political player. Look, not all decisions are based on engineering factors.

LAURA

I know that.

JEFF

Well then, I don't understand what you're so upset about. You've had your recommendations rejected before. It's part of your job.

LAURA

So what was the trump card?

JEFF

The law enforcement aspects.

LAURA

Father! So it really was rigged all along.

JEFF

Don't ask questions that you really don't want to know the answers to. Laura, don't rock the boat on this one. It's far too political. There's a directorship opening up next year in highway construction. It might be a good move for you.

LAURA

Well, if that's anything like this one, I don't think I have what it takes for that job.

JEFF

Look, nobody questions your ability, but to move out of Special Projects, you need to be one of the guys, someone who is willing to get along. Easy on the door.

33 EXT. HENRY'S BOAT DOCK, DAY

33

HENRY

Laura, what a nice surprise!

LAURA

Daddy, you used me.

HENRY

What?

LAURA

Not only was it not nice, it was callous. It was unethical, it was quite possibly illegal. You put me in a very bad position.

HENRY

Laura, come aboard and we'll talk.

LAURA

No, SANSHANDS was rigged from the very beginning. You wasted a year of my life and I don't know how much money on...

HENRY

Laura! Laura, honey, it's just normal business.

LAURA

No. It's not. It's corrupt. And you should know better.

HENRY

Laura, let me....

BOB (voice over)

Why do you think the contract was awarded to GUIDEME to design SANSHANDS if your recommendation was the opposite?

34 INT. STATE SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

34

LAURA

Frankly, Senator, GUIDEME was selected because the system is corrupt and lobbyist money and influence are to blame.

BOB

Those are some very harsh accusations. Might you have something to back it up?

LAURA

Actually, I do. I would like to tender to the commission a copy of my father's journal detailing all conversations and expenditures relating to the GUIDEME and SANSHANDS project. He recently gave it to me after a long and heated discussion about the ethical responsibilities all engineers share. I think you'll find it very interesting reading Senator, as your name appears in it quite frequently. I've already tendered the original to the State Attorney General for her review.

35 INT. CORRIDOR, SENATE MEETING ROOM, DAY

35

LAURA

You're up.

HENRY

Laura, honey. Your Dad's going to pay a heavy price for just doing normal business.

LAURA

I don't think I would try to make that my defense, Dad, now that the journal has been entered into evidence. Look, if you don't tell the truth, you're only gonna make it worse.

HENRY

Daughter. I realize that what got me into this situation is nothing you did. What got me here is what I did. But I am going to lose a lot: even my engineering license... and the boat.

JULIE

Better to lose your third daughter than the respect of your first two.

36 CREDITS:

36

NARRATOR #2

Henry was indicted by the Attorney General on various charges; bribery of a state official being the worst. He pleaded no contest and was given a two-year suspended sentence and his engineering license was revoked, and he was fined \$200,000.

NARRATOR #2

Laura left the State Department of Transportation and attempted to continue working in the transportation field. Later she took courses in engineering and professional ethics and started a management consulting firm that specializes in ethics audits for state and local governments.

NARRATOR #2

Julie left OUTOCAR for an entry level position in a large engineering corporation that has a project to develop autopilot systems for air, ground and marine transportation. She also enrolled in a graduate degree program in systems engineering.