

Synopsis

American jazz musician, John Garrett is in the final days of his life. An ex-patriot living in Sweden since the 1960s, he has enjoyed a unique position as a beloved musician, both locally and internationally. His many years on the road as a younger man came at a cost to his family. Married twice, he fathered a son and two daughters. Now, as adults, each child struggles with John's pending death.

The audience is carried along in a series of flashbacks that build and reveal the story's complex conflicts and psychological unfolding. We also witness the highly contrasting differences between Sweden and America in this multi-cultural family with regard to perceptions of wealth, prestige, talent and self-image. At the same time, we share the individual emotional strain that the family members face – each in their own distinct way – as John rapidly fades, leaving them desperate for closure.

The use of internal dialogs and shifting time frames make it possible to dive deeply into these personalities. A gripping psychological tale emerges to reveal the emotionally hungry child hidden within each adult.

Overview (Story flow – Treatment)

Act I

Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6	Scene 7	Scene 8
<p>Doctor's office</p> <p>John Garrett and his daughter Åsa visit the office of John's oncologist for an update on John's prognosis following his diagnosis for lung cancer. The doctor discloses that John has a very short time left to live.</p> <p>Cut between doctor's office and flashbacks of John playing a club.</p> <p>Åsa contacts her siblings to let them know that it's time for them to gather around their father.</p>	<p>Lawyer's office</p> <p>John goes into Stockholm to meet his lawyer. They discuss how to organize his will and decide what to do with the house that John lives in with Åsa, her American husband Robert and their two children. John is concerned about his differing relationships with each of his children and how distribute his assets in a fair manner.</p>	<p>Train/Cafe/Family home</p> <p>The siblings get ready to gather around their father. John's younger daughter, Astrid, is on a train heading back to Stockholm. His son, Björn, is in a cafe with his Italian girlfriend discussing concerns about the family property. Åsa and Robert are at home preparing dinner. Robert presses Åsa about making plans to cut a deal on the house with her siblings so that they can stay there after John's death. Åsa tells him she doesn't want to push too hard. John is now bedridden, and Åsa leaves the dinner table to go into John's bedroom to spend time with him.</p>	<p>Train</p> <p>Astrid meets a German woman on the train to Stockholm and they become fast friends. They discuss Swedish culture in relation to the rest of the world, and Astrid's family situation. Astrid confides her concerns about her father's condition.</p>	<p>Home</p> <p>Åsa and Robert have invited Björn and his girlfriend Gabriella to the house for a Friday evening dinner. When they arrive they all go into John's room to say hello and share some champagne with him. Björn has not seen his father for many months, so he asks for some time alone with his father. They discuss their life together and shared concerns about their father-son relationship. He joins the others for dinner and an extensive discussion ensues over the cultural differences between Sweden and other countries, particularly the USA.</p>	<p>Kina's apartment</p> <p>Astrid arrives in Stockholm and she goes to her mother, Kina's, apartment. They relax and catch up, while discussing John's condition and the visit they will make to him in the morning with the family's oldest friend, Anders Jönsson, a prior bandmate in John's jazz ensemble.</p>	<p>Home</p> <p>Kina and Astrid drive to pick up Anders and travel to the house where they are welcomed by Åsa and Robert. They sit with John and Anders plays a piano piece for his old friend. Björn arrives as Kina and Anders depart, and now the siblings are all under the same roof for the first time in several years. Björn and Astrid go for a walk and talk about unresolved family concerns.</p>	<p>Home</p> <p>Åsa suggests they all stay for dinner. During the meal Robert teases Björn about his new job diving for golf balls at a driving range. The good-natured exchange shifts to discussion about the family's future. Robert and Åsa float their idea to buy the house for themselves after John's death. Neither Björn nor Astrid want to discuss any deals while John is still alive. Robert becomes aggressive and insulting. As the argument reaches a fever pitch, little Lisa enters saying that John is having trouble breathing. They all rush into the bedroom only to find that John has died while the family was arguing.</p>

Overview (Story flow – Treatment)

Act II

Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
<p>Åsa's office/bridge/ Kina'a apartment/ Konserthuset/</p> <p>A series of vignettes showing each family member going about their business: Åsa returns to work and breaks down when she sees a huge bouquet of flowers on her desk; Astrid walks up Västerbron and stands at the top to scan over the city; Kina goes through her desk and reads some old love letters from John, as well as a deed to the house; Anders enters Stockholm's Konserthuset to go to his office and stops to study a signed poster showing himself and John after a concert 20 years earlier.</p>	<p>Robert's office</p> <p>Robert is in his office feeling terrible after John's death and the argument with Björn. His boss enters and offers his condolences and reminds Robert that the entire office is going out to celebrate the company's biggest deal ever, in which Robert was a key player.</p>	<p>Restaurant</p> <p>Robert reluctantly joins his workmates at a restaurant for the celebrations. He calls Björn to try to apologize, but Björn rejects his entreaties and tears him apart with a total and concise description of all the problems he sees in Robert and his egotism with regard to the family. Robert is totally devastated by Björn's scathing criticism. He drinks too much at the party and leaves early to get home.</p>	<p>Street/subway</p> <p>Out on the street, he tries to hail a taxi but none are available. He enters the subway only to discover that the trains to his part of town are not running. He crosses the platform and teeters by the edge of the tracks as other trains pass through the station. His actions appear suicidal and a young woman of near-eastern descent comes to his aid and guides him back up to the street.</p>	<p>Park</p> <p>Increasingly confused and intoxicated, Robert wanders into Vasaparken and calls Åsa to come get him. She's very worried but says she can't leave the children in the middle of the night. Robert passes out on a park bench as they're speaking. Now frantic, Åsa calls Björn and implores him to go to the park and find Robert before he's robbed or beaten. After much convincing, Björn agrees to go look for Robert in the park.</p>	<p>Park</p> <p>Björn looks through the park and tries to call the police. Finally he finds Robert passed out on the bench. When Robert wakes to see Björn helping him he breakdowns completely and begs for forgiveness for his arrogance and selfishness. Björn takes Robert back to his apartment.</p>

Overview (Story flow – Treatment)

Act III

Scene 1

Lawyer's Office

The family gathers in the office of John's lawyer to go over the terms of the will.

The siblings are surprised to learn that Kina is the de-facto owner of the house, having rescued the family finances after the death of John's first wife, Ulla, many years earlier. Still traumatized by their recent turmoil with Robert the siblings choose to put away their emotions and accept the terms of the will without additional dispute. Robert, in his contrition, says openly that he doesn't feel he should interject in their affairs.

Scene 2

Graveside

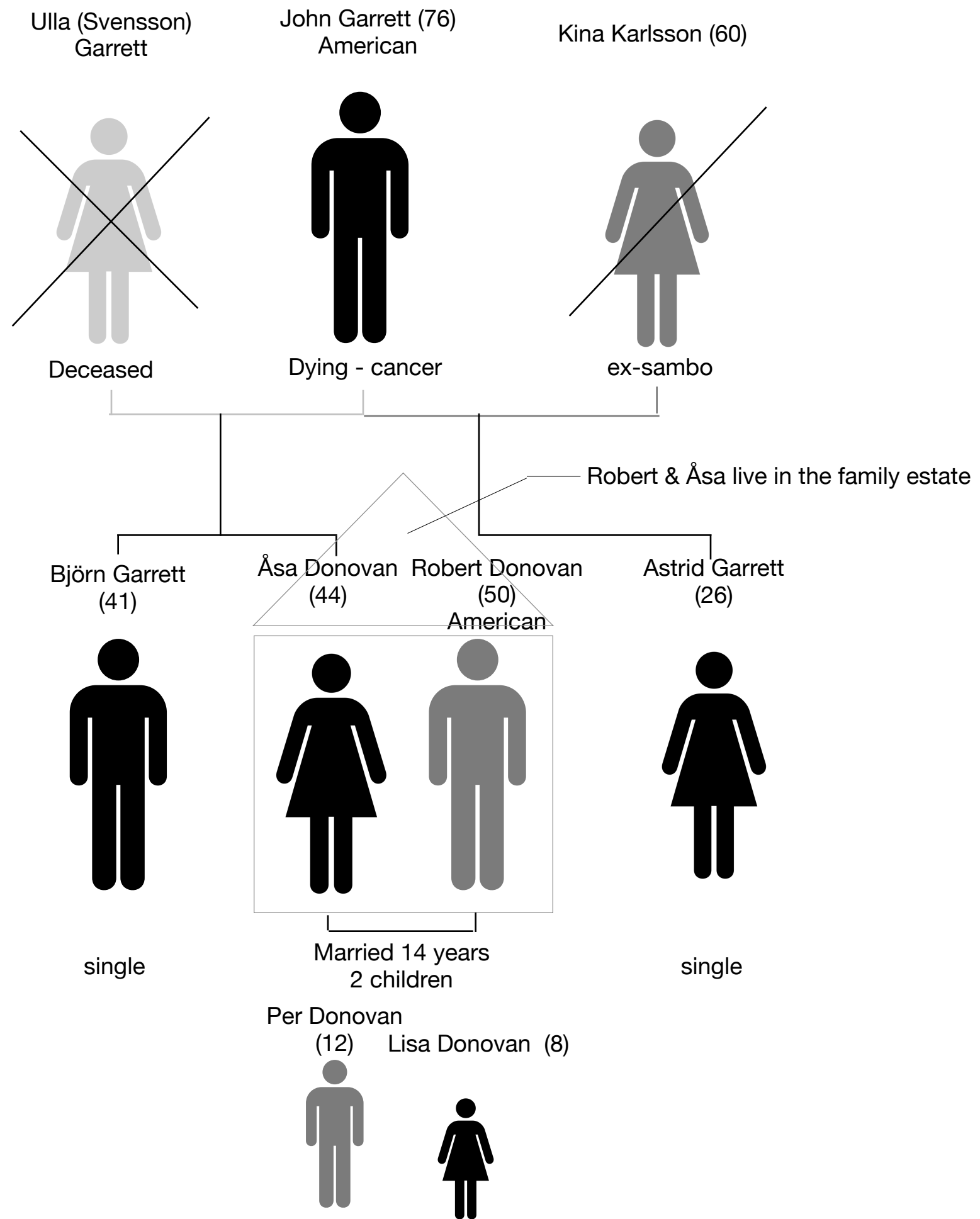
John's friends and family gather for his funeral service.

Eulogies are read by Astrid, Björn, Robert and Anders Jansson. The eulogy from Robert is a confession and apology to the family. Anders's eulogy is comprised of the whole text of all his reminiscences that have been occurring as a Voice Overs throughout the film. As the ceremony ends the family, now feeling strong and reunited, gathers in a circle in a collective embrace as the camera ascends into the heavens above them. All to the music of the gospel song "Down in the River to Pray".

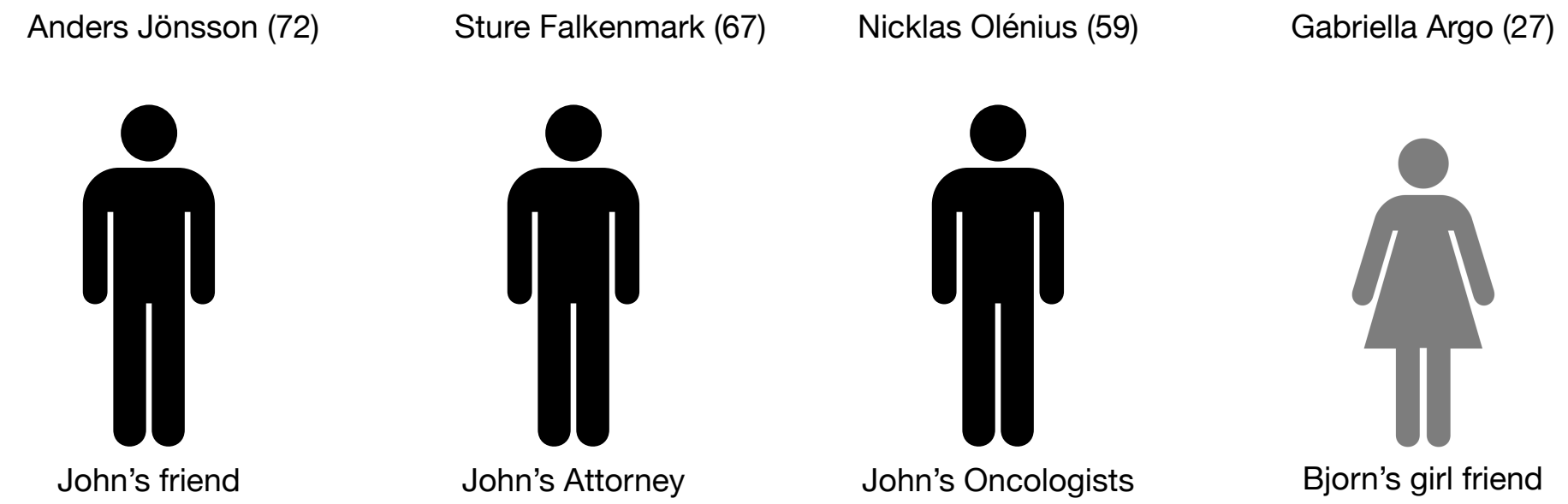
DEAD END

Story structure - for new screenplay + Time-line

Family Tree



Associated Characters



Cast

John Garrett (76). American, internationally renowned jazz bassist. Moved to Stockholm to take part in the European jazz scene during the political unrest of the 1960s. Married his first wife, Ulla, shortly after his arrival in Sweden. They were married for 20 years and produced two children, Åsa and Björn, before Ulla died in a car crash in the mid 1980s. Later John falls in love with a family friend, Kina Karlsson and shortly after they have a daughter, Astrid. John and Kina were together for 11 years but they drifted apart for reasons that are unclear to the children. Throughout his career, John was on the A-list of bassists and played with all the greats. Conservatory trained, he could have done anything in music. Loved and respected for his contributions to Swedish jazz, he eased into retirement, playing locally and teaching. John is now on his deathbed with lung cancer and has chosen not to receive any palliative treatment. After years of being on the road and focusing on his music, he is finally struggling to make amends and affirm his commitment to his family – to the best of his ability.

Åsa Garrett-Donovan (44). Fashionable, conservative and attractive, Åsa has a mild, almost shy exterior but possesses enormous inner strength, ambition and stubbornness. Successful at work, she is nonetheless burdened by the absurd demands of her corporate job as ‘Process Manager of Process Control’ at a pharmaceutical company. Privately, she is typical of a certain type of Stockholm woman, with very set desires, standards and demands, as determined by her perceived social standing. In fact, John sees Åsa as a young version of her deceased mother, Ulla. Åsa loves her husband, Robert, and is a good parent to their two children. However, her insecurities often make her somewhat inflexible and controlling. She loves her father deeply and sees herself as the ascendant matriarch in the family’s future. She also believes in holding on to the house and property as a means of preserving the family’s heritage, and the home that she and her husband have made there for their children.

Robert Donovan (50). American, employed as a high-level commercial realtor. Likes being known as a ‘deal-maker’ yet he and his family have lived for years in his father-in-law’s large home. Robert is of Irish-American stock and has worked himself up from his tough, blue-collar origins in South Boston. To the outside world, Robert is seen as cocky, dapper and witty, but he can be bullying and sarcastic both privately and at work. Totally pragmatic and business-minded, he shares with his wife an unsentimental air of entitlement. Despite his character flaws, he is an excellent father and is infatuated with his beautiful wife.

Björn Garrett (41). A sensitive child of the Swedish welfare state, Björn is a golden boy who was never challenged to rise to his full potential. He has always cruised with his carefree continental lifestyle, confident that someday he will inherit his share of the family estate. Now, as an adult, he is an aspiring writer with talents that are worthy of development, yet still has not amounted to much. He is handsome and charming but privately suffers from poor self-esteem and yearns for acknowledgement from his talented and adored father. Robert and Åsa are quick to peg him as a loser, while Astrid is more empathetic and believes in his abilities. Of all the siblings, he is

the least sentimental about the need to keep the family home. A bit of a lounge-lizard and dilettante, he has been writing a novel for the last 10 years. He is presently floundering in his relationship with his smart, strong Italian girlfriend who he met on the Mediterranean coast during one of his many trips to the Continent.

Astrid Garrett (26). On her mother Kina’s side Astrid comes from privilege. As such, she has the luxury of being able to take it for granted, to the envy of her older half-sister Åsa. Attractive and vital, Astrid is still playing the role of the charismatic bohemian rebel child. She has a Master of Fine Arts degree in Art History from the University of California, Berkley and has since settled in San Francisco where she feels all the restraints and requirements of Swedish life can be held at the greatest distance. Sensitive and empathetic to a fault, she is simultaneously strong and vulnerable, which is reflected in her occasionally manic swings in temperament. She loves her father more than anything, and as the only child of her father’s second relationship, she has always been a Daddy’s girl. Though she can seem aloof and even tough, she is warm-hearted and kind, with an innate sense of fairness.

Kina Karlsson (61). Self-sufficient, privileged and compassionate, Kina moved in with John to become his common-law wife/sambo after the death of John’s first wife Ulla. Shortly afterwards, Kina gave birth to her only child, Astrid. As a descendant of genuine Swedish aristocracy dating to the Middle Ages, Kina is infused with natural confidence, yet has the intellectual integrity to understand that she is nobody’s superior. She enjoys life-in-the-moment and tolerates no whining. Her laser-like intellect is an equal source of humor and terror for those upon whom she sets her focus.

Ulla Garrett (deceased). John’s first wife and the mother of Åsa and Björn. Ulla and John married within a year of his arrival in Sweden in the 1960s. Their relationship was impacted negatively by his time on the road as a musician, and all the attendant pressures of that lifestyle. She would have preferred that he stopped touring and settled down like their life-long friend Anders Jönsson. Ulla was a classic product of the Swedish Folkhem: assiduous in her tasks as a wife and mother, and most happy in all things that ensure security, consensus and non-confrontation. Ulla dies in a car accident shortly after they ended a 20 year marriage.

Anders Jönsson (72). John’s oldest and best friend in Sweden. In his younger years, Anders played keyboards with John on numerous jazz gigs in Sweden and internationally. Unlike John, he opted for a quieter lifestyle and landed a position as orchestral pianist for the Stockholm Symphony in his late thirties. Several years prior to retirement he then became a key administrator for the symphony and even helped bring John’s talents to the symphony stage as his compositions continued to influence the evolution of contemporary Swedish symphonic music. A true family man, Anders has done everything right in keeping his marriage together and remaining on good terms with his children. He is one person who is trusted by everyone in the Garrett family.

Gabriella Argo (27). Björn’s on-again, off-again Italian girlfriend for the past two years. Sensuous, smart and compassionate, Gabriella believes more in Björn than anyone else but has difficulty in helping him see his own abilities. Her solid family background and clear-headed lack of personal confusion are characteristics that are as challenging to Björn as they are helpful.

Sture Falkenmark (67). John’s lawyer. Sture is a stuffy, old-fashioned Stockholmer with upper-class pretensions. Despite this snobbery he is excellent at his vocation and understands John’s difficulties navigating the judicial hazards of Sweden’s socially engineered system and culture.

Nicklas Olénus (59). John’s doctor, also a friend and admirer of John and his artistry. Warm and caring, Nicklas is a successful physician in mid-career. With a genuine bedside manner he is an exception among the majority of Swedish physicians who tend to see each new patient as a faceless number. Instead, he always makes an extra effort for every individual. Swedish educated, he is well travelled and fully understands the pluses and minuses of the national healthcare plan.

Per and Lisa Donovan (12 and 8). Robert and Åsa’s children. Per and Lisa are John’s only grandchildren. Both are full of life and fun, which they love to share with their grandfather who is quick to shower them with the affection he now realizes he denied his first two children, Björn and Åsa.

Fricka Kaiser (30 something). A German tourist who meets Astrid on her train trip back to Stockholm.

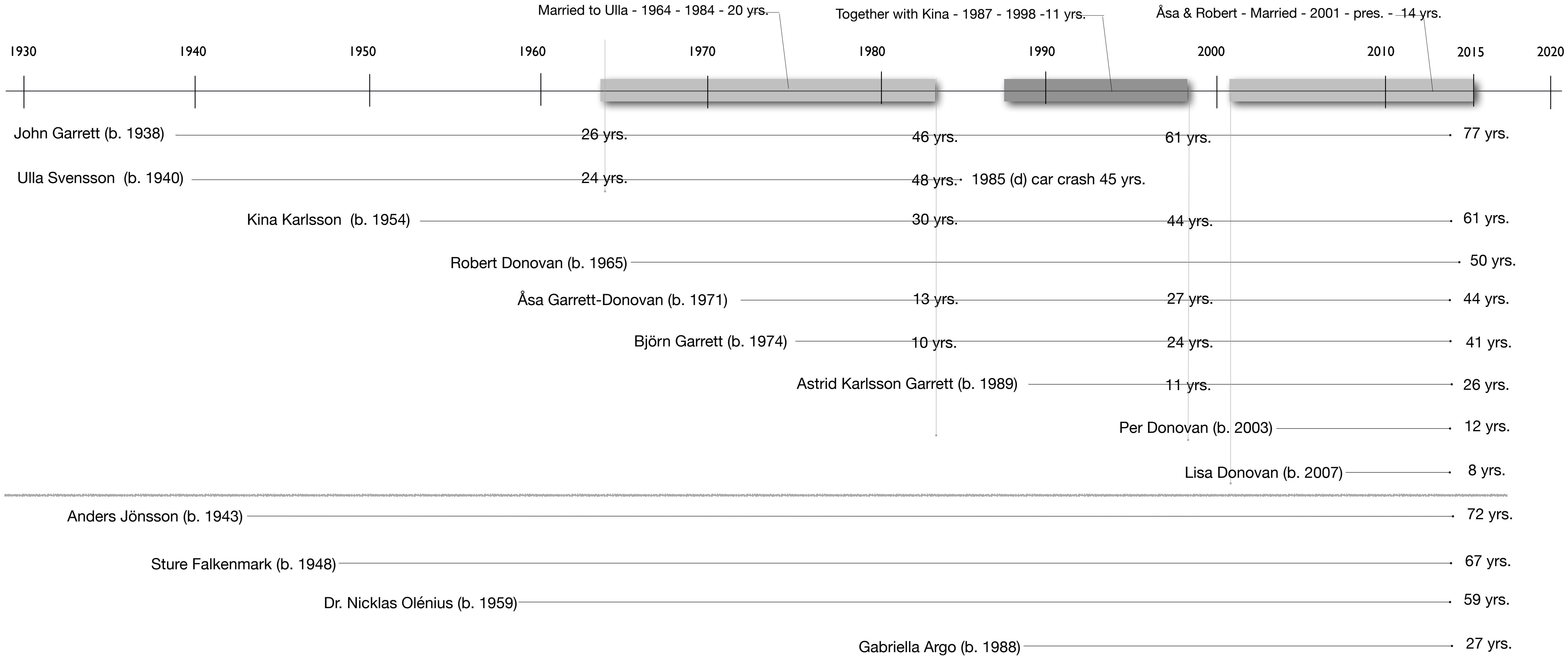
Additional actors

B & O sales person
 Sture's Receptionist
 The Boss – Robert’s Swedish boss
 Tobbe – Robert’s Swedish co-worker
 Clive – Robert’s British co-worker
 Waiters / servers / customers / co-workers in restaurant
 Delivery truck driver (for John’s home-care furnishings and items)
 Young near-eastern woman (in Subway)
 Swedish couple (in park)
 Young Swedish man (in park)
 Priest – (Funeral)
 Undertaker (Funeral Director)

Ghost Musicians

Bass
 Piano
 Sax or guitar

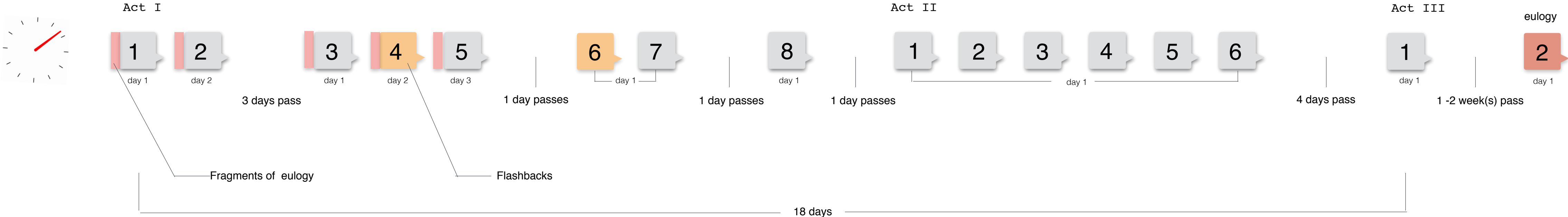
Relational Timeline



DEAD END

Story structure - for new screenplay + Time-line

Time span of the film



DEAD END

Story structure - for new screenplay + Time-line

Locations

Doctors office

B & O store

Attorneys office (2)

Åsa's office

Family Home - Various rooms

Kina's Home

On Train

Jazz Club

Restaurant

Robert's office

Subway station

Park

Cafe

Björn's Apartment

Cemetery Skogskyrkogården (Forest Church Cemetery)

Reflections on the music for "Dead End"

Today, we expect that a great film will have an outstanding soundtrack. Clearly, in a film about a jazz musician, the soundtrack has to function on a deep level. Conventional background music would be neither acceptable nor effective.

Historically, Bernard Hermann broke new ground during the 1950s in his work with Alfred Hitchcock. Then Stanley Kubrick lifted music into the cinematic forefront. His cooperation with noted avant garde composers created a new benchmark that still influences us today.

Now we see a growing trend in the use of short, popular musical works, placed to capture the feeling of a given moment on the screen. Often these tunes work on the strength of the viewer's prior association, which enables and enhances the relationship they share with the character. These musical choices can be effective, but they also risk being cliché or even exclusory for those who miss the cultural point of reference.

In "Dead End" we are developing a soundtrack that draws on a wide variety of musical types. The purpose is to evoke the full spectrum of emotion via an intuitive sense of initial association, not prior recognition. Apart from well-known jazz standards, many of the works are relatively obscure. They include: raucous zydeco; a cappella medieval poetry; vibrant electronica; blue-grass gospel; stark minimalism; and new symphonic works, among other styles. To most people in the audience each of these tunes will be entirely new. Yet each is chosen for its ability to reinforce the psychological current in the character and scene of the moment.

We include a short trailer-track for your review. In the script, each piece can be found by searching on "music".

Songs samples...

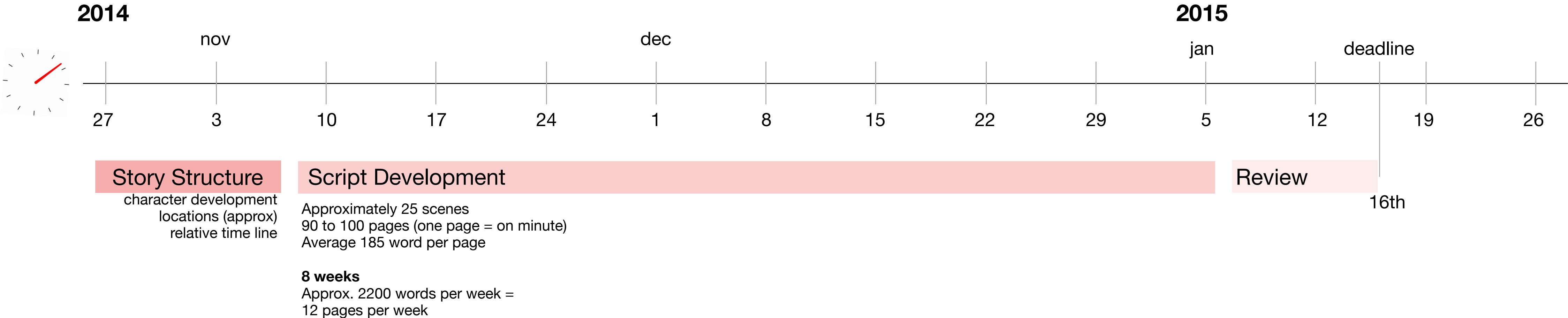
- "Frevo" with Charlie Haden and Egberto Gismonti in Montreal.
- "Muoyaiyoum" Ambient choral a cappella builds to a climax Anders Hillborg,
- "Opening" Philip Glass – from Glassworks.
- "A Change is Gonna Come" Sam Cooke.
- "Green Dolphin Street" Paul Chambers
- "My Hand is Cramped with Penwork" Traditional ballad with text from 11th century monks, sung by Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, with Helen Davies on harp. Album: 'Songs of the Scribe'
- "Zydeco Cha Cha" as played by Aldous Mouton; "A Cajun Waltz", see youtube Smithsonian Folkways: Dewey Balfa recalls the lyrics to a Cajun Waltz. Probably traditional. Waltzes by Balfa include, "Family Waltz", "Le Misere De La Balfa", "Drunkard's Sorrow" and "Balfa Waltz".
- "Alone Together", ballad from LP Always Say Goodbye.
- "Space Captain"
- "Silence", Charlie Haden and Egberto Gismonti In Montreal (Bass & piano). Also Brian Eno, "Prophesy Theme" from the film Dune.
- "Exquisite Corpse" by Anders Hillborg (string part towards the end of piece.).
- "Down to the River to Pray". Traditional gospel choral.
- "Speak Low" Charlie Haden playing over the old recording by Berthold Brecht. From Album September Songs.

Attached you find a sample track of songs listed above. Time 00:02:57:00

DEAD END

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Script Schedule (first draft)



DEAD END

Story structure - for new screenplay + Time-line

Thank you