

Architecture of a Common Man

by Guillermo Laporta

SCENE 01: INTRODUCTION

**On screen:** Close-up of Samuel in his studio. He is sitting in a chair

SAMUEL

I'd never imagined my life would be of interest to anyone.

Hi, my name is Samuel C Greece,  
I am a photographer,

Born and raised in Queens, New York  
Photography has been my passion since high school.

I have been lucky enough to pursue my dreams as a  
creative mind, and make a living with this baby.  
(showing his camera)

SAMUEL

The New York Times, Washington Post, Time Out, and  
even National Geographic.

I have traveled around the world.

This was 1950, these kids were jumping to me like I  
was made of chocolate.

Yes, I can say it has been a nice journey.

But it has not been easy.

Fade to black

SAMUEL

Success? (pause) it's difficult to synthesize, but a  
pair of words come to my mind instantly, persistence  
+ luck.

The first one is all about yourself, keep working  
hard, try try try, and the second one... There is  
really nothing you can do about it.

Although, I think there are some mechanism to increase your odds, and hence consider you "lucky"

We see some details of his studio, nature photographs hanging on the wall, portraits of musicians, and politicians, covers of magazines, and awards.

Cut to his red developing room. There are photos being developed. Samuel shows the developing tools.

SAMUEL

Here is where the magic happens. I use digital but I've always worked with an analog camera for the more artistic stuff, both worlds have their limitations. It's like your clothes, all right? When it's cold you were a thick sweater.

Fade to black

SAMUEL

But on the other hand, you would never wear flips flop at an award ceremony right?

You define who you are!

FADE TO BLACK

## SCENE 02: THE CLOTHING RACK

**On Stage:** SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) and SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) are seated on a chair downstage looking upstage. In front of him is a rack of clothing with many different outfits.

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) slowly tries different outfits, sometimes without taking them out of the rack.

He tries a sleeve of a jacket, he puts on shoes. He hesitates about what to wear.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) begins singing while still facing the rack.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) (baritone)

(sung)

*Shoes speak louder than words  
Shoes transform your  
body language and  
attitude. They lift you  
physically and  
Emotionally.*

*The ways you dress  
The way you look  
The way you are*

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) (dancer) begins switching the outfits in a different order. He tries now another outfit.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

(sung)

*It is not who you are  
It's who you might become*

*When you look at the mirror  
You'll see only half of it.*

*The way you fell  
The way you behave*

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) (dancer) puts all the outfits on the ground and starts balancing the rack where the clothes were hanging.

### SCENE 03: BACK TO THE INTERVIEW

**On-screen:** Samuel is in the washroom looking in the mirror, getting ready for an interview, touching up his hair, and washing his hands.

SAMUEL

*Mumbling words to relax his facial muscles.*

Ok let's go

IN THE STUDIO Samuel seat in the same room as before but now we can see a few studio lights an INTERVIEWER and some other technicians. He

is being interviewed. Sam observes the monitor and the script and sits on the chair.

SAM

*(he seems very confident and very proud of himself)*

I see, So this is going to be the format?

INTERVIEWER

Yes the series is called "Architecture of Success"

SAMUEL

Oh, I see, (kidding around) And you think I am successful? This feels to me more like a therapy session

INTERVIEWER

Well, free of charge!

INTERVIEWER

*(taking to the intercom)*

Are we rolling?... And action!

INTERVIEWER

Let's go back to the day of the Ted Talk.

SAMUEL

Oh, yes, yes, I remember, my legs were like butter, I was about to give a motivational speech to a room full of the most talented kids in the industry, yes there are countless books about this, but that's not the point. I wanted to make sure they understand my story. Success is within themselves, you need to work hard to find what makes them exceptional. Waking up at 5 am, give you at least 2 extra hours of advantage.

Work hard...

**On-stage:** an office is being recreated

**On-screen:** the INTERVIEWER assists with her head.

INTERVIEWER

Was that your case?

SAMUEL

At least that's what I thought back then. My time at the National Geographic was the jungle. They deserve one of

the episodes for themselves. It was aggressive but needed if you wanted to make it to the top.

SCENE 04: THE WORKPLACE

**On stage:** Eight desks are placed on the stage perfectly aligned, and projections in the back amplify the set showing a large room full of desks with people working. Eight office workers (choir) are seated at the desks. One of the desks is empty and larger than the others

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) walks at a fast pace across the office.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) walks onto the stage and tries to sit on the large desk, but SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) doesn't allow it.

OFFICE WORKERS (CHOIR)

*(sung)*

*Eight hundred thirty-three*

*Eight hundred thirty-four*

*Eight hundred thirty-five*

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

*(sung)*

*I don't need to follow protocol*

*I can open the third door*

*and sneak into the place*

OFFICE WORKERS (CHOIR)

*(sung)*

*No! no!*

*Eight hundred thirty-three*

BOSS (FEMALE SINGER) walks into the office. Everybody looks at her suddenly.

OFFICE WORKERS (CHOIR)

*(sung)*

*Shh!*

THE OFFICE BOSS begins counting people and making notes in her notebook.

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) stops walking.

OFFICE BOSS (SOPRANO)

*(sung)*

*Three hundred sixty-two thousand eight hundred  
thirty-three*

*three hundred sixty-two billion one hundred  
eighty-three million thirteen thousand eight hundred  
thirty-three*

OFFICE WORKERS (choir)

*(sung)*

*three hundred sixty-two thousand eight hundred  
thirty-three*

OFFICE BOSS (SOPRANO)

*(sung)*

*five hundred sixty-three thousand  
eight hundred sixteen  
fifty-six million three hundred eighty-eight thousand  
nine hundred forty-seven*

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

*(sung)*

*What's my place here  
This is the path to make it  
I do not belong to this crowd*

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) begins running from one side to the other.

OFFICE BOSS (SOPRANO)

*(sung)*

*You are number sixty-three thousand  
Opportunities  
Status  
Money  
This is the line you must not cross*

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) run towards the center chair but the office boss stops him.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) (sung)

*(sung)*

*Opportunities  
Status  
Money  
I'll cross the line*

CHOIR

*(sung)*

*Our approval must stand  
Society benefit  
A better world*

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) finds finally a way to the large desk and begins exploring it.

A series of ropes descend on top of the large desk. The coworker begins to agitate and stand up from their desk and go to the big desk.

BOSS (SOPRANO)

*(sung)*

*You are number 62  
You are number 31  
You are number 7  
You are number 4  
You are number 3  
You are number 2  
You are number...*

The boss finally approves SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) position on the desk and everybody stops fighting for the desk and goes back to their original desk.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) takes printed photographs from a folder and begins hanging them on top of the big table. These ropes are connected to the other desks with a system of pulleys.

At the end of the music, the coworkers lift the photographs and everybody looks at them.

Blackout

#### SCENE 05: EDITING ROOM

**On-screen:** Back in the studio where SAMUEL is being interviewed. SAMUEL is looking at some paper while speaking on the phone. There is



no crew this time, he is alone in the room but all the gear is there. He looks at the different monitors that the crew has. He hesitates, makes sure that no one is around, and hits play.

Footage of the interviews is displayed across multiple monitors.

**On-stage:** The same set of the opening interview (on the screen) is replicated twice on the stage.

Two cameras are pointing to each of Sam's alter egos one on each side of th stage

**On-screen:** Now on the two monitors of the movie screen we see the live feed of the stage cameras.

Sam moves back and forth on the computer. He plays back some of the questions made by the interviewer.

INTERVIEWER

Was that your case?

**On-stage:** SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) dances with movements that show that he is hiding part of himself. Hiding an arm, a foot. He doesn't want to show his complete self and his fears control him. (his movements are being shown on the monitor within the screen via the live feed of the camera)

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) seated on the other set, copies some of the movements but only with his hands.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

*(sung)*

*I am  
the one  
I am  
someone*

**On-screen:** Samuel keeps looking at the monitors, he takes out his glasses, and squeezes his eyes.

SAMUEL (in the movie)

*(looking at the monitors)*

Who am I playing here?

Is this unique?

Am I unique?

My work is everything to me

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) (on stage)  
(sung)

*I am  
Unique  
I am  
The same  
I am  
My work*

SAMUEL plays back a forth some of the clips seem like editing his footage. After a while of editing, he finds himself immersed in a closed loop that cannot escape.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 06: A BEAUTY PERSPECTIVE

Sam goes for a walk in the streets of New York, he observes random people going on with their life. He has his camera but he doesn't take photos.

SAMUEL (OFF)

The are so many big myths and misunderstandings when we face the appreciation of great work.

I certainly have been under the misunderstanding all my life that if something is expensive it must be good quality, or if it is cheap, it must be nasty. And if the "Morning Herald", "The Daily Telegraph" or a local magazine says that a product, a place, or a restaurant is good it must be so.

Just think back to a time when you actually went online or to a source to review something and find out a recommendation. Of course, our generation is a generation of skeptics.

I know that there is beauty and art to be found in the most unexpected places, but am I ready to discover it for myself?

Sometimes we need rose-colored glasses, but hey I am totally cool with that because not everybody has such a deep imagination to find themselves immersed in beauty.

We see Samuel's pov through the viewfinder of the camera.

SAMUEL (OFF)

When I look through my camera, time seems to move at half speed. I can see how the image flips on my "camera obscura"

People are walking on the streets of New York. The image flips

SAMUEL (OFF)

Sometimes I can feel the light photons hitting the film. Our brains haven't yet figured out if light is a particle or a wave. But we have been able to open the quantum drawer and observe that our universe can be connected in magical ways.

People hug in front of a store.

SAMUEL (OFF)

We observe and define our reality in complex ways.

Quantum entanglement might be rationally explained if our entire existence has been already predefined since the very origin of existence.

Even the most terrific natural disaster on earth that wipe any creature larger than an insect can be beautiful when seen from enough distance.

#### SCENE 07: DINNER SCENE

We see the glass window of a coffee place. Sam enters the coffee place and meets a friend.

FRIEND

How is the interview going?

SAMUEL

Well, to be honest, it is a bit hard on me, this lady is asking serious questions. The whole thing caught me by surprise.

FRIEND

But do you believe what you say?

SAM

See that's the issue,  
I feel like an impostor. Half of what I said I don't believe in myself.

I keep going back and forth

FRIEND

Did you tell them about the New Yorker thing?

SAM

You know how I got here, I worked hard but the whole process was all a fucking joke. And you were also involved.

FRIEND

Hey, I don't wanna get involved here, all right? You know I steep out years ago, I have my thing going on

SAM

I guess everyone has the right to choose their one path.

FRIEND

I guess...

Hey! Buy you wanted to win! You wanted success!

Isn't that what it was all about?

SAM

Yes, but something is off here (points in his head) and special here (points his heart)

FRIEND

Please elaborate...

**ON THE STAGE:** We are in a small coffee shop. The choir is forming a line to get coffee

SAMUEL

It's like my ambition, my dreams, and my fears should just be quiet and have fun by themselves.

SAMUEL

Imagine all these people talking about you.

The choir recognizes SAMUEL and after getting their coffee to sit on chairs looking at the screen

SAMUEL

In my circle, that has been my life, I felt like everybody was constantly paying attention to me, to my work.

But they don't see the whole picture. I feel there is no room for more.

FRIEND

Who can see the whole picture? That's impossible, even in your most brilliant moment, they are going to give you a few seconds of their attention and they'll move on with their lives.

SAMUEL

I think I should quit, maybe move to a new apartment.

FRIEND

Forget about it right now. Focus on just listening to your inner voice. Quietly, take your fears, and embrace them. Make them your guess, your employee of the month! Whatever but keep the closer to you. There is nothing more valuable than being at peace with them. And the moment you imagine that your enemies, as your ally, your war will dissipate on the horizon.

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) and SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) dance a simple waltz together

CHOIR  
My life  
My doubts  
A wet blueprint  
a simple way

SCENE 08: BACK TO CLOSET

The stage switch to the clothing rack during the Walt

SAM'S ALTER EGOS are seated on a chair looking upstage. In front of him is the rack of clothing with many different outfits. (Same as before)

**On the screen:** Back to the interview.

SAMUEL

*(Now Samuel answering questions in a positive way but as an audience, we can feel that he is not 100% honest with himself)*

My morning routine? I am a 5 am person, I like to go for a walk before getting to work.

Interviewer

Do you feel pressure on social media?

SAMUEL

Back in the '90s, everything was different, more visceral. Now the irony is despite impacting way more people. I feel all the recognition is just virtual

I guess you cannot judge a person based only on their short-term aspirations.

**On the stage:** The interview gets muted gradually and the stage takes over.

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)  
(sung)

*Who am I?  
You can choose  
and there is no mistake  
No matter the path you take  
It will always lead you to the same place  
Fill your time with your own purposes*

*Unless...*

*Unless nature gives you a new purpose*

*Then you will embrace a new reality.*

*And that's part of the journey.*

Samuel dress sporty

SAMUEL

I guess you cannot judge a person based only on their short-term aspirations.

**SCENE 09: SPORT**

A kid appears on stage with a basketball on his hand

SAMUEL'S SON

Hi Daddy,  
Why is the rim that high?

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) is on a treadmill and ignores the kid.

SAMUEL

To make sure we clearly separate the winner and the loser.

SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) keeps exercising and hardly training in basketball hoops.

SAMUEL (off)

The mindset isn't about seeking a result—it's more about the process of getting to that result. It's about the journey and the approach. It's a way of life. I do think that it's important, in all endeavors, to have that mentality.

I have self-doubt. I have insecurity. I have fear of failure. I have nights when I show up at the arena and I'm like, 'My back hurts, my feet hurt, my knees hurt. I don't have it. I just want to chill.' We all have self-doubt. You don't deny it, but you also don't capitulate to it. You embrace it.

A lot of people say they want to be great, but they're not willing to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve greatness. They have other concerns, whether important or not, and they spread themselves out. That's totally fine. After all, greatness is not for everybody.

SAMUEL pushes too hard his body almost like he is going to have a heart attack.

#### SCENE 08 THE RED ROOM

**On the stage:** We are in a red photo development room

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone) SAM'S NEGATIVE ALTER EGO (dancer) (his ambition) AND SOPRANO are looking at SAMUEL (actor on STAGE)



SAMUEL (off)

Everybody is trying..

Nobody is achieving success and everybody is at the same time.

Society seems to pressure at every opportunity and every possible angle to be successful, to be rich.

We see now Samuel selecting photos of his family, selfies, and vacation photos and not selecting his creative work.

He begins hanging women's and children's clothes on the rack.

SCENE 09 TILE SCENE

We transition into a city-like scene

THE SOPRANO (his wife) stands up and begins adding illuminated tiles for the dancer to walk on.

SAMUEL (off)

The common man

Get's coffee in the morning

Eats when is hungry

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

(sung)

*Next*

*Next*

Rest of the cast keeps adding illuminated tiles and at the same time removing the tile already walked behind the dancer.

SAMUEL (off)

Sleeps when is tired

Suffer when is hurt

SAM'S POSITIVE ALTER EGO (baritone)

(sung)

*I want to be a common man*

SCENE 09 Documentary

**On the screen:** Back to the interview set up

INTERVIEWER

And cut!

I think we got it!

CREDITS

Architecture of a **common** man

Close-up of Samuel at his studio.

SAMUEL

Hi my name is Samuel C Greece,  
I am a photographer,

Born and rise in Queens New York