Writer’s Note

The Trencherman grew out of a bizarre fact I've carried around since high school. I remember learning that there were people who actually ate physical objects, sometimes in extraordinary quantities, and had set records for consuming things that were never intended to be food. I couldn't believe anyone could do that, and I also couldn't believe nobody had made the ridiculous comedy I immediately imagined from it.

Years later, when I started writing screenplays, I finally did. I began with Jimmy Robinson, a naturally gifted competitive eater who works his way from local food challenges into the professional circuit. I wanted to treat his rise like an absurd sports movie. He gets the grizzled trainer, ridiculous training montages, road competitions, rivals, championships, endorsements, fame, and all the other machinery we expect from a story about an athlete reaching the top. Except Jimmy's sport is eating.

Then he gets bored with food. That's when the movie starts getting much stranger. Jimmy discovers that his appetite doesn't necessarily have to stop with things meant to be eaten. Bicycles, vending machines, and, eventually, a Boeing 747 all begin looking like possible challenges.

I wanted *The Trencherman* to be an unapologetically stupid comedy in the best possible sense. The movie takes competitive eating as seriously as *Rocky* takes boxing, and every time it seems like the premise has reached its logical limit, I wanted to push it somewhere even more ridiculous. But I also knew fairly early that pure absurdity wouldn't be enough to carry an entire movie. Jimmy needed a reason to keep consuming.

Underneath the spectacle, he's trying to fill something that has never really gone away. He carries old grief and guilt that he doesn't know what to do with, and eating gives him a strange sense of control. Being full feels better than being empty, so he keeps finding bigger ways to fill himself.

That opened the story up into a larger satire about consumption. We live in a culture constantly suggesting that whatever feels missing might be solved by buying something new, eating something, watching something, or upgrading something. Jimmy simply follows that logic much farther than anyone reasonably should. He starts with food, then moves on to records, fame, and increasingly ridiculous spectacles. Before long, a man trying to fill an emotional hole is attempting to eat an airplane while millions of people watch.

And everyone around him discovers there is money to be made from it. Jimmy's appetite becomes a brand. The more dangerous and ridiculous the stunt becomes, the more valuable it is to the people selling it.

I never wanted the satire to swallow the characters. *The Trencherman* is still about friendship, love, grief, and the people Jimmy keeps overlooking while chasing the next thing that might finally make him feel satisfied. The emotional lesson is fairly simple even if the movie delivering it involves a titanium spork and an airplane.

It’s simply a completely ridiculous comedy with enough heart underneath it that the audience actually cares whether this idiot survives trying to eat a Boeing 747.