

'Goodnight, Papa' Treatment

Logline:

'Goodnight, Papa' explores the diverse life and loves of Alzheimer's patient Roberto Baresi – through vivid metaphor, the story bears witness to the intense grief of both his, and his family's loss.

Introduction:

'Goodnight Papa'

"We console ourselves with memories, embracing what has gone before. We cling to the old, embellished stories. We fear, but do not mention, what is to come." Inspired by a piece in *The Guardian* from a multi-award winning writer, 'Goodnight, Papa' depicts Alzheimer's patient Roberto Baresi's long farewell to his loved ones.

Key Characters:

Roberto Baresi, 70, Roberto is a father of three, in hospital with complications arising from Alzheimer's disease.

The quintessential self-made migrant, he worked in menial jobs while pursuing an education, then rose through the legal profession to become a successful barrister. Despite his intense passion for his work, his three children and wife (Maria) were the true loves of his life. Generous to a fault, he sought to give his children the opportunities he missed out on, growing up in post-war Italy. Now suffering the ravages of dementia, he struggles to hold onto the remnants of his past, and is confused by the reality that surrounds him. As a result, he increasingly retreats to his imagination.

Marco Baresi, 40, Marco is Roberto and Maria's eldest son. Growing up, he was both fascinated and intimidated by his father's intellect and fierce tenacity to pursue what was right. Since his father's diagnosis and decline, he has taken a hands-on role for the family, supporting his mother in caring for Roberto at home, then seeking outside help as the disease worsened. He has felt the progressive loss of his father acutely, and it has made him deeply nostalgic for their past, setting the scene for 'Goodnight, Papa.' Marco's first instincts – like Roberto - are to help others before himself. He is bereft at the loss of his father, but finds that offering constructive help and support to care for him (and his mother) is a way to avoid confronting the inevitable.

Our Vision:

Whilst most terminal diseases impact the body, Alzheimer's disease, a form of dementia, directly affects the brain. As a consequence the body shuts down slowly, and each bodily function has a varying rate of decay. While some may survive for many years, others progress more rapidly. Meanwhile, with advances in science and technology, we are finding cures and effective treatments for many diseases more quickly than ever before. It is hoped the film will raise public awareness of dementia, allowing more funding and research not only in search of a cure, but also in support of those living and caring for those with the disease. Most commonly associated with dementia is memory loss – often characterised by the peculiar tragedy of failing to recognise loved ones, and the devastation of losing a lifetime of memories. It is here we begin Roberto's story.

Treatment:

Beginning: Roberto Baresi is the quintessential family man, loved by all. A beloved husband, father and grandfather, he rose through the legal profession to become a successful barrister, winning some of the most high profile cases in legal history. In his retirement, he has become another statistic, falling victim to the ravages of Alzheimer's disease. Sitting in hospital, surrounded by his three sons and wife of fifty years, Roberto has a vivid dream. He walks along a hotel corridor entering into a room with each of the four walls lined with books. The room is bright with a light bulb that fizzes infrequently. In the middle of the room is a crossword puzzle, his favourite pastime, which he completes. He exits the room, savouring the memories and turns off the light, before closing the door.

Middle: Roberto enters a second room where the light in the room fizzes more frequently. Beautiful classical music plays as he dances with his wife. After sharing tender, loving glances and moving gracefully around the room, Roberto leaves the room, savouring the memories, before turning off the light and closing the door.

Roberto enters a third room. It is a mess of photographs and pictures of his family, scattered all over the floor and the walls. A 8mm film featuring significant family events plays on loop. The light bulb in the room fizzes constantly. As he watches, his facial expressions alternate between vagueness and familiarity. The more recent the event, the more vague Roberto's expressions become. He goes to exit the room, savours the memories one last time and turns off the light.

End: Roberto's family wait in a poorly lit room, under a constantly fizzing light bulb. They hear Roberto's footsteps approaching and his son, Marco (through voice over) reveals how the doctor first described his father's condition: "The brain is like a hotel with many rooms, each with connected functions. In one room the ability to problem-solve is kept. Adjoining this, our physical coordination. In another - surely the most untidy – our memories. As the dementia progresses, the light in each room is turned off." Roberto knocks on the door and looks at each of his family members, one by one. He says good night, turns off the light and closes the door. The voiceover continues: "But this is not an obituary. My father is happy, healthy and he is loved. So he must never be allowed to grieve for what is lost, or what is remembered ... that is left to us."