

Waking Up the Neighbors

Original Screenplay
by
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Third Draft
Approx. 124pgs
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FADE IN:

An empty SEATING CHART for a wedding reception fills the frame as the Dixie Cups sing "Going to the Chapel." One by one the spaces are filled in with the cast members' names...

(Song carries us through the opening introductions...)

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION-DAY

A stretch limo pulls up to this glorious estate. The CHAUFFEUR zips around to the back, opening the door and unleashing the PARTY NOISE from inside.

ANTHONY "HARD" KNOX staggers out, draped in garland and sporting a Santa hat. He finishes off his cocktail before handing the Chauffeur the empty glass. Sounds of hollering WOMEN and MUSIC slash the calm morning air.

CHAUFFEUR

And you said I'd never get you back
by morning.

KNOX

From now on, if ever I doubt you,
feel free to cattle prod me right in
the nut basket, mmkay?

Knox stabs into his pocket and hands the driver a wad of cash.

KNOX (CONT'D)

What day is it, Gable?

CHAUFFEUR

Tuesday, sir.

KNOX

And that's a beautiful thing.

The Chauffeur, GABLE, closes the door, shutting off the noise. In a moment, the window rolls down and a WOMAN'S HAND reaches out and begins unzipping Knox's pants...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Could you excuse us, Gable?

GABLE

Of course.

Gable walks over to Knox's mailbox, snagging the heap of envelopes from inside. He starts handing Knox the mail, one piece at a time...

KNOX

(with each envelope)

Crap... crap... not a chance...
not paying it... go fuck yourself...

(stops on a fancy
envelope)

Stop the presses, Gable. I think we
got something here.

Knox hands the envelope for Gable to open as he enjoys his early morning BJ. Gable reads the card, then hands it back to Knox...

GABLE

From your friend, Jerry, back in
Ohio. He sounds serious.

Knox reads the WEDDING INVITATION. His mood is very suddenly shattered, and from below him we hear:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Uh, Knox...? I doing something wrong?

KNOX

(sighs)

Any of you girls wanna go to a
funeral?

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH BEACH-NIGHT

The ever popular Ocean Drive, adorned in holiday cheer. We *push in* on an open apartment window just above the strip...

INT. APARTMENT-CONTINUOUS

Steam from the shower pours into the bedroom where a CHUBBY YOUNG WOMAN lays nude beneath the sheets. The gratified look on her face says it all.

The shower turns off and VAL STRICKLAND stampers in, naked and refreshed. His momentary ebullience evaporates when he sees the woman still laying in his bed...

VAL

You still here?

Her happiness is gone in a flash. She watches as Val shuffles naked around his apartment - gathering her clothes off the floor, opening his door and dumping them in a heap outside in the hall. He turns back - leaving the door wide open - and goes to his desk, parking his bare ass in front of the laptop.

CHUBBY

Val...? What the fu--

VAL

Val's got a deadline, kitten. Play time's over. Take your carbohydrates and boogie.

She's speechless.

Paying her no more attention, Val stretches, takes a sip of some cold coffee and begins tapping on his keyboard.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY-MOMENT LATER

The Chubby Girl has dressed herself and storms through the lobby in tears. Not far behind her, Val strolls into the lobby - still NAKED. He offers his salutations to a few returning TENANTS as he keys into his mailbox and grabs a single fancy envelope from inside.

VAL

Christ. They found me.

He starts back inside, ripping carelessly into the envelope...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

The nudist gets back into his apartment and finds his chair again at the desk. He scans the wedding invitation, shaking his head...

VAL

Aw, Goddammit, Jerry.
(lights a joint)
Helluva way to spoil a Christmas.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLF COURSE-DAY

A gaggle of OLD TIMERS hit the links on a glorious afternoon in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

INT. PRO SHOP-CONTINUOUS

A sexy tomboy, RYAN SHARBO, runs the show here from her office. She's fielding phone calls, paperwork, faxes, and emails. Just when she has a quiet moment to herself, an EMPLOYEE steps into the office and drops a fancy envelope on the desk and steps out. (The envelope lands next to a framed PHOTO of an adorable 4-year-old boy.)

Ryan takes a deep breath and tears into the mail. She reads the invitation and clipped newspaper announcement bearing a color photo of the happy couple...

RYAN

Surprise, sur-fucking-prise. Well, boys, looks like I'm coming home for a bender.

Ryan drops the invite and reaches for the mouse beside her keyboard, clicking on a travel website and scanning for airfare. Just then, a GOLF BALL smacks the window behind the computer, startling her.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM-DAY

A junkyard of movie memorabilia, reels, scripts, posters and suitcases. Sitting on the floor in the middle of it all is a miserable heap of a man, JOHN DICKENS. He looks completely lost. Somehow, though, he retains his handsome features.

In a moment, his MOTHER enters. She stands in the doorway with a concerned look on her face that seems to have been there quite a while now. Dickens does not even acknowledge her.

MOTHER

How you doin', sweetie?

Dickens snaps out of his trance, rubs his face and *transforms* into Marlon Brando...

DICKENS

(as Brando)

You know, I really could've been somebody. I could'a had class. I could'a been a contender. Instead of a bum. Which is what I am.

Impressive.

She sighs, then steps into the middle of the room and holds out the fancy envelope for him...

MOTHER

This came for you today. It's from Jerry and Allison. I guess it's official now. Good for them.

Dickens takes the envelope, holds it a while, then drops it carelessly amongst the piles.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You should go. I bet all your old friends will be in town for it. Be good for you. Give you something to write about, I'm sure.

In a flash, Dickens changes gears - Hannibal Lecter:

DICKENS

(as Lecter)

You run along now, little Starling.
Fly, fly, fly... fly, fly, fly.

His Mother turns away and leaves.

Dickens sits in silence for a while. He finds the envelope and holds it to his temple, a la Johnny Carson's Carmac character...

DICKENS (CONT'D)

(as Carson)

You are cordially invited to attend
the marriage of Gerald Conrad Martin
and Allison Victoria Swaim.

Dickens follows through with Carson's patented envelope reveal and reads the invitation silently to himself.

Finally now, alone, he breaks character...

DICKENS (CONT'D)

Word for word. Jesus, Jerry, what
are you doing to yourself?

Dickens whips the invitation across the room and resumes his quiet self-loathing.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE-DAY

Across town, a fat ox of a man, TIP McMANNUS, emerges into the cold of winter in nothing more than fluffy slippers, an Ohio State t-shirt and boxer shorts. He waddles down the driveway toward the mailbox as his disapproving FATHER watches from the window.

Tip digs into the mailbox and finds the invitation among the stack of other holiday letters and cards. He opens it, scans over it, shakes his head...

TIP

I hope they can find a tux my size.

Tip sifts through the other mail to find this month's edition of *Playboy*. His sullen disposition vanishes and he raises the magazine over his head in victory--

TIP (CONT'D)

The new *Playboy* is here!

Tip's Father hides behind the curtain.

A NEIGHBOR shoveling his driveway stops to observe.

A car passing by slows down to catch a glimpse. Tip turns to them and waves the *Playboy* at their window--

TIP (CONT'D)
 Hurry home, Mr. Merriman! The new
 Playboy is here!

Tip races back to the house.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HOUSE-DAY

The bespectacled BRODY CARROLL stands before a handful of South American STUDENTS in this small, dank classroom. He is a nerdy, pale Irish-American who permeates intelligence. The STUDENTS repeat after him as Brody teaches them English - his version of "contemporary" English - all the while making ga-ga eyes at a Columbian bombshell sitting in the front row.

In a moment, a MESSENGER arrives and hands Brody a fancy envelope before taking a seat near the back. Brody motions for a moment to himself as he tears open the envelope and reads the invitation...

BRODY
 No fucking way.

The entire classroom REPEATS IT, garnering a smile from Brody. He turns the invite to the beauty in the front row and bounces his eyebrows at her...

BRODY (CONT'D)
 You ready to see America, sugar bush?

MIYALA - or "Sugar Bush" - bristles with excitement.

We *pull* away from the scene, out the window and into the lush rain forest outside...

(*"Going to the Chapel"* ends with the scene...)

CUT TO:

EXT. MARTIN'S CORNER DELI-DAY

This popular neighborhood deli stands alone on a busy street corner here in Waterfield, Ohio.

INT. DELI-CONTINUOUS

The place is hoppin' today - Waterfield TOWNSFOLK in every aisle, shopping and acting like locals.

At the front register is the proprietor and groom-to-be, JERRY MARTIN. He brandishes his trademark simper and Prom King good looks as he greets his customers and adoring public.

The next CUSTOMER steps forward with her basket full of small groceries and an all-too-eager smile...

CUSTOMER

When's the big day, Jerry?

JERRY

February twenty-fifth, Mrs. Dolan.
Just three weeks away.

MRS. DOLAN

Oh, I'm so excited for you two! And
what a catch!

JERRY

For me or her?

Mrs. Dolan LAUGHS and Jerry is good to play along. He starts
ringing up her items...

MRS. DOLAN

You two been together a long time
now. How many years?

JERRY

Twelve years. Since high school.

MRS. DOLAN

That's so wonderful. I wish every
couple in Waterfield could be so
lucky. God bless you!

Jerry hands her a receipt and ushers her on her way with that
prized smile. Mrs. Dolan bumps into a few new CUSTOMERS on her
way out as she is enraptured by Jerry's charm.

A passing LOCAL calls out--

LOCAL

When you gonna run for mayor, Jerry?

JERRY

Next term, Mr. Foley. Next term, I
promise.

LOCAL

You got my vote!

Others in the deli call out their support.

A high school boy, TOM, steps up behind Jerry in his green
"Martin's Corner" t-shirt...

TOM

Take a break, Mr. Martin.

JERRY

You're early, Tom.

TOM

Yeah, well, mom's going through
menopause and dad's back on the Wild
Turkey, so...

The awaiting line of CUSTOMERS pretend they didn't hear him.

JERRY

Too much information is not our
featured item today, Tom.
(to his customers)
Try the pepperoni bread, folks.
Special today, three-ninety-nine a
loaf.
(big smile, turns
back to Tom)
Leave it at home, Tommy Boy, mmkay?

Jerry steps out from behind the register, makes his way through
the crowd - all of whom want to shake his hand, congratulate him,
have his baby, etc. - and steals away to his office in the back...

INT. OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

Jerry closes the door behind him and collapses into his chair,
heaving a sigh of relief. The office phone starts to RING. Jerry
catches it before the second ring - lifting it off the cradle and
hanging it up immediately.

He opens a desk drawer and pulls out his honeymoon tickets and a
brochure of the Caribbean. He stares, longing...

JERRY

Three more weeks... Twenty-one more
days... Five-hundred-and-four more
hours...

Jerry tucks the brochure into a framed picture of his fiancée,
Allison. She is a beaming small town beauty.

CUT TO:

INT. . BRIDAL STORE-DAY

ALLISON SWAIM stands in front of three full-length mirrors adorned
in her wedding dress. She is flanked on each side by her MOTHER
(a sexy older version of Allison) and two bridesmaids, JEN and
MOLLY. The look on their faces is that of unrequited joy...
while Allison, on the other hand, stares at her reflection and
starts to CRY...

ALLISON

I'm a fucking moose!

All three ladies jump in to save her--8-8

MOTHER

No, honey, you're not. You look sensational.

JEN

Drop dead gorgeous.

MOLLY

Totally fuckable.

ALLISON

(sobbing)

No, no, I know you're all lying to me! Look at me! I'm bursting out of this dress!

All three girls follow Allison's focus and, indeed, she is rather snug in there. Still, they are quick with excuses--

MOLLY

Totally just menstrual, Alley. Be gone in a couple of hours.

JEN

Everyone puts on a couple of pounds after Christmas, Al. You're over-reacting and you're nervous, you need to relax and take a deep breath.

ALLISON

I haven't exhaled since they shoe-horned me into this thing! I take a deep breath and we'll be spending our wedding money replacing every window in the store!

MOTHER

Listen to your bridesmaids, dear. You're being irrational. You are, you're just nervous and menstrual. Let Mommy and the Captain offer you a helping hand...

Mom dives into her coat beside the mirror and pulls out a FLASK...

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Mother's little helper. If it weren't for Captain Morgan, I'd never have made it through your brother's wedding two years ago.

(takes a swig)

Drink up, Alley, I promise...

She presses the flask against Allison's lips--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Get a little Captain in you, you'll relax, and that big ol' fart will just let itself out in no time. You watch.

Jen and Molly listen in awe.

ALLISON

(calming)

It's not gas, Mother. It's not menstrual either. I've gained weight, that's all there is to it. Jerry's gonna have to stand up at the altar in front of all his old friends and family and marry a zeppelin.

JEN

Allison, stop--

ALLISON

"Hey, Jerry, where you going for your honeymoon?" "Well, boys, I'm going hoggin'!"

(crying again)

I can't do this!

Allison swipes the flask from her Mother and storms off. Jen and Molly run after her. Mom, meanwhile, finds a seat by her coat and unveils yet another FLASK. She takes a shot, shaking her head...

CUT TO:

EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Jerry pulls the Lexus SUV into his driveway and steps out into the cold with a McDonald's bag gripped tightly in his glove. He notices his next door neighbor, GIBBY, taking down his Christmas lights...

JERRY

Gibby, what's the good word?

GIBBY

Partial to 'fuck' these days. You?

JERRY

Big fan of pap-smear, myself. But I like yours better.

GIBBY

You should. Once you get married, you'll be throwing that word around like a lotto ball. How close 'til the wedding?

JERRY

Three weeks.

GIBBY

Jesus. Send me a post card from hell, will you?

JERRY

Will do, asshole. You be careful up there. Wouldn't want you to fall and crack that charming personality of yours.

GIBBY

Allison don't like me for my personality, Jerry. She likes me for the way I thrash her twat.

JERRY

She is a nasty fuck, ain't she?

Finally, they break from their routine and LAUGH...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Good night, Gibby.

GIBBY

See you tomorrow, Jerry.

INT. HOUSE-NIGHT

Jerry steps in, shimmies out of his coat and scarf and goes down the hallway with his McDonald's. He stops at the bathroom door and knocks...

JERRY

Allison, sweetheart...? We sold out of corned beef at the Corner, so I stopped by Mickey D's and grabbed you a sandwich--

The bathroom door swings open and Allison's stands there, crying--

ALLISON

I put on weight, Jerry! I have put on a lot of weight, and the last fucking thing I need is McDonald's! Are you trying to make me undesirable? Do you want to try mounting a zamboni on your wedding night?!

She snags the McDonald's bag and slams the door in his face. Jerry - the poster boy for bewildered men everywhere - stands there in shock.

In a moment, the door opens again and Allison throws the McDonald's bag at him - it bounces off his chest and hits the floor.

We can hear her SOBBING.

JERRY

Jesus, honey. You don't have to be a McBitch about it.

The door opens again and Allison throws a half-chewed Quarter Pounder in his face.

Jerry shakes it off and heads toward the bedroom...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Five-hundred-and-four more hours...

CUT TO:

EXT. TIP'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Jerry's SUV waits at the end of the driveway. Tip emerges from the home all bundled up in his winter gear and waddles out to meet Jerry.

From the window, Tip's FATHER glowers as they pull away.

INT. SUV(MOVING)-CONTINUOUS

Tip welcomes the heat as he settles his fat ass into the seat...

JERRY

I can't tell you how many things are wrong with you still living with your parents.

TIP

Can't say I see anything wrong with living rent free, no utilities, no chores--

JERRY

You're thirty-one-years-old, Tip! You're an accountant, you make great money - you should have your own fucking place.

TIP

--Not to mention, my mom still does my laundry. I love it there.

JERRY

You're lying.

TIP

I am lying. I need to get the hell outta there, Jerry. Whatta' you say I stay at your house while you and Alley are in the Caribbean?

JERRY

That's a fabulous idea!

TIP

You serious?

JERRY

Not a chance. You think I wanna come home to butter-coated furniture and a Busch Light pyramid in my living room again?

TIP

The pyramid was an engagement gift, Jerry.

JERRY

You didn't get our thank-you card?

TIP

Hardy har.

JERRY

Besides, you don't wanna be at my house right now. Allison has gone zoo over putting on, like, six pounds since Christmas. Not exactly a safe haven for me right now.

TIP

Hence the boy's night out?

JERRY

You got it.

TIP

Six pounds ain't so bad. I can do that at breakfast.

JERRY

Hey, have you talked to Dickens since he's been back? I hear he's not exactly the poster boy for sanity these days, but I'd really like to see him.

TIP

I heard "nervous breakdown," what'd you hear?

JERRY

Same. His mom came into the store last week and said he's pretty far out there. Trapped in his own little movie world.

TIP

Yeah, you gotta figure ten years in Hollywood... nobody comes home with all their marbles after that.

Jerry pops open the armrest between them to unveil a six-pack of beer packed in fresh snow. He hands one to Tip, then cracks one open for himself. They toast IN STEREO: "*To the Neighbors.*"

TIP (CONT'D)

Did you invite him to the wedding?

JERRY

Of course I did. Dickens is an old schooler. You and I have known him longer than any of the other cads we used to haunt the neighbors with.

TIP

This is true. Did he R.S.V.P.?

JERRY

No, not yet. Should we stop by his parents house, drag him out with us?

TIP

If I know Dickens, and I do know John Dickens...
(drinks)
He's one step ahead of us tonight.

JERRY

Where you thinking?

TIP

Is there anywhere else?

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRTY WORDS PUB-NIGHT

Snow falls outside this Waterfield speakeasy on a starry, starry night. The neon light boasting the pub's moniker shines proud above the door.

Jerry's SUV finds a space right up front.

INT. PUB-MOMENTS LATER

Jerry and Tip kick the snow off their shoes and hang up their coats. Across the bar a CROWD has gathered around someone at the *Touch Screen Trivia* monitor. It's John Dickens, and he's shattered every high score in the Movie Trivia round.

Jerry and Tip share a look and head up to the bar, where two tall drafts await them courtesy of the bartender, PHIL...

TIP
 (drinking)
 Ah, the soup of the day, every day.

PHIL
 Christ, Tip, where you been?

TIP
 It's winter time, Phil. I hibernate.

JERRY
 Horseshit. He's been grounded.

PHIL
 Still living at the McMannus Estate, huh? Waitin' for mommy and daddy to move out?

TIP
 Well, they're both finally retired. Death is the next step, right?
 (drinks)

JERRY
 Hey, Phil, how long's Dickens been here?

PHIL
 Couple hours now. You guys seen him since he came home?

Tip and Jerry shake their heads.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Fucker ain't the same. Got that look in his eye like he just got back from Nam or something. Been sucked into that damn trivia game ever since he came in here tonight.

JERRY
 He pretty faced by now?

PHIL
 He was faced when he got here.

JERRY
 Start me a tab, Phil.

PHIL
 Of course.

TIP
 Me too?

PHIL

Depends. You do my taxes this year
and you don't have a tab tonight--

TIP

Done.

Tip takes a business card from his wallet and hands it to Phil...

TIP (CONT'D)

My cell number's at the bottom there.
Don't call the house phone or my old
man will hang up on you.

PHIL

Noted.

Jerry motions to Tip and they take their beers across the bar to
watch Dickens, who has yet to notice his old friends amidst the
gathering.

More than just a tad drunk, Dickens remains impressive as he plays.
Still totally immersed, he reads his challenges aloud--

DICKENS

"What actor bared all for the 1973
film 'Last Tango in Paris'?"
(taps the screen)
A fuckin' joke.

The machine CHIMES with the correct answer: Marlon Brando. Dickens
turns to address his audience...

DICKENS (CONT'D)

Brando agreed to be in the movie
without even seeing a script.
Bertolucci showed Brando a painting
by Francis Bacon that showed "a man
in great despair" and, snap, Brando
said yes. He knew he'd re-write
most of the dialogue himself, or
improvise like always.

The crowd is impressed.

Dickens drains his cocktail and motions to Phil for another.
Jerry catches Phil's eye and quietly offers to pay for it.

Another question on the screen--

DICKENS (CONT'D)

"In what year did Charlie Chaplin
receive his Lifetime Achievement
Oscar?" Tuffy.
(taps the screen)

Another correct CHIME. The crowd ooh's and aah's.

DICKENS (CONT'D)

Chaplin hadn't stepped foot on American soil for over thirty years when he agreed to be honored. He got a five-minute standing ovation. Unprecedented for the Oscars, prior and since.

The screen flashes Dickens' paramount score just as Phil returns with his cocktail...

PHIL

Here you go, John. That one's on the future mayor behind you.

And just as Dickens goes to drink, he stops. He turns around and sees Jerry standing behind him...

JERRY

How the hell are you, John? You never R.S.V.P.'d, so... Figured I'd track you down and get an oral reply.

DICKENS

Well, well, well, Mr. Martin...
(raises his glass)
To the Neighbors.

CUT TO:

INT. PUB-LATER

Tip is a drunken mess on stage, doing a horrible karaoke rendition of Tom Jones' "Delila." The crowd humors him and sings along.

In a booth across the bar, Jerry and Dickens play catch-up over another round of tall boys...

JERRY

I'm glad you're home, Dickens. I don't think I've seen you in, what, five or six years?

DICKENS

Something like that.

JERRY

Your stay here in Waterfield indefinite?

DICKENS

I kind of let my parents take over for now. For the best. I, uh, really lost it there toward the end of my stay out west.

JERRY

So we've been hearing, sorry to say.
I'd rather get your side of the story.

DICKENS

My side, huh...?

(drinks)

I couldn't get a foot in the door
out there. Long story short. If
you're not a Jew or you're not the
one fetching Spielberg's latte, then
you stay off the radar. It's not
what you know out there, it's who
you blow.

JERRY

Yeah, but didn't you actually get a
script optioned by a major studio--

DICKENS

Not a major studio. More of an art
house. They cut me a fat check and
let my script sit on a shelf for
three years. Never saw the green
light. I got it back after that,
got to keep my money... that's that.

JERRY

Sorry to hear that.

DICKENS

(as Rain Man)

Yeah, definitely not my kind of town.
Definitely not.

Jerry forces a smile as Dickens hides behind his cocktail...

JERRY

Should you really be pounding the
sauce, considering... your fragile
condition?

DICKENS

Been seeing a therapist since I got
back. Thinks I need to start over,
fresh. Retrace my steps. Says being
back home again is the best way to
do just that. This...

(shakes his glass)

...This is just a way to keep warm.

JERRY

What do you think?

DICKENS

I think... I think I will go to your
wedding.

JERRY

(genuine smile)

You'll have a great time, I promise.
All the old schoolers are coming
back to town for the event. Be good
for you.

DICKENS

Sounds like a hoot. When's everyone
coming in?

JERRY

February twentieth. Knox is renting
the old Krayniak house on Lake Road.
The whole gang's staying there for a
week.

DICKENS

Shit. Hard Knox is even making the
trip home, eh?

JERRY

He better be. He's the best man.
They'll all be here, Johnny.

Across the bar, Tip brings the song to a rousing finish.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM-DAY

Allison steps out of the shower and right onto the scale...

INT. KITCHEN-SAME TIME

Jerry is enjoying his morning coffee while thumbing through the
newspaper when Allison's SCREAM shatters his morning serenity.
Coffee shoots across the kitchen from his mouth and he's running
down the hall in a flash--

Jerry bursts into the bathroom to find Allison cradling her knees
as she sits naked on the tile, sobbing. The scale is in several
pieces on the floor beside her...

JERRY

Jesus Christ, Alley! You okay?

ALLISON

I'm a blob, Jerry! I keep gaining
weight!

Jerry goes to kneel beside her...

JERRY

Baby, you have never looked better
in your entire life--

ALLISON

Oh, come down from there, Jerry!
The prom queen look has finally worn
off and I'm nothing more than a
domesticated rhino anymore!

JERRY

Well that's not dramatic at all,
sweetheart.

ALLISON

I'm serious! Everyone keeps saying
how amazing it is that we've lasted
since high school and how nothing
has really changed for us. You look
the same, God damn you, while I'm
harboring calories and turning into
my mother!

JERRY

That's not true, Alley. You're
freaking out 'cuz the wedding is
right around the corner and it's the
biggest day of our lives.

ALLISON

That doesn't mean that I'm supposed
to be the biggest I've ever been for
the occasion!

JERRY

You're not the biggest--

ALLISON

I keep gaining and I'll never fit
into my dress... they'll have to
paint it on...!

JERRY

And what's so bad about turning into
your mother? Joanie's a MILF. I
have a lot to look forward to.

Allison storms out of the bathroom. Jerry is right behind her,
trailing down the hallway and into their bedroom where she is
quick to yank the sheets off the bed and shield her body from
him...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Allison, you are officially being
ridiculous. You-look-fine. Better
than fine - you look amazing! I
wanna jump you right now! Stop
freaking out!

ALLISON

It's happening, Jerry, it's finally happening. I am becoming one of the Weighted Waterfield Wives--

JERRY

Allison, stop--

ALLISON

Only it's starting now, even before we're married! It's just a matter of time now before I'm clipping coupons, watching soaps all day and playing soccer with my tits! Oh, God...!

Jerry has given up. His head drops back and his eyes search the ceiling for an answer...

ALLISON (CONT'D)

This can't be what you really want, is it, Jerry? Some aging small town has-been with an expired shelf life?
(squeezes her blankets)
Where did I go?

JERRY

You're still right there in front of me, Allison, just as striking and sexy and beautiful as you were "back then." Come on, you gotta snap out of this and take another look. Allison Victoria Swaim... homecoming queen, prom queen, vice president of student council - I was president, should you have forgotten - college graduate and loving fiancée, soon to be all of those things still. Just as my wife. Allison 2.0. It's all about the upgrade, girl. You didn't go anywhere.

Allison's sobbing turns into happy tears and she drops her blankets to envelope Jerry in a bear hug embrace. It's a tender moment...

ALLISON

Stop looking at my fat ass in the mirror.

Busted.

CUT TO:

INT. HOPKINS AIRPORT-DAY

Jerry and Tip are belly-up at the bar, keeping an eye on a nearby gate...

TIP

He just landed.

(drinks)

I can't believe he's coming home.

JERRY

I'll believe it when I see it.

TIP

He know we're coming to get him?

JERRY

I told him. Never know with Val, though. Smokes so much hippy lettuce these days, it'll be a miracle if he even remembers the conversation.

TIP

What's wrong with that?

JERRY

You still smoke weed?

TIP

Every now and again, when my parents leave town for the weekend.

JERRY

Shit, there he is!

Val emerges from the jetway, wrapped in a scarf but sporting mirrored shades and camouflage shorts. He wheels his carry-on behind him, holding a steady path.

Jerry and Tip toss a few bucks down on the bar and race over to meet Val, who keeps on walking as they approach...

VAL

We couldn't do this in Florida, Jerry?

The boys have to hurry to keep up with him...

JERRY

Thanks for coming, Val. How was the flight?

VAL

Long, uncomfortable, smoke free.

TIP

Jesus, Val, you've really let yourself go. What are you, a hundred-and-seventy-pounds soaking wet?

VAL

You live in South Beach you live on
the South Beach diet. How far are
we from the car?

JERRY

Don't you have to go to baggage claim,
or are you still just keeping all
that on the inside?

Finally, Val stops.

Jerry and Tip brace themselves... But Val lets his guard down
and sighs, smiling--

VAL

Lord, how I've missed you.

He wraps Jerry in his arms, then reaches for Tip--

VAL (CONT'D)

Bring it in!

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION-LATER

Jerry stands out in the cold pumping gas into his SUV. Tip and
Val talk to him from inside the car as Val is kind enough to light
a joint. He takes a few starter puffs and passes it to Tip...

JERRY

Better get that shit taken care of
before we get back into Waterfield.
I get busted with dope in my car and
you'll be looking for a new mayor.

TIP

Relax. Be gone before you finish
pumping.

VAL

Hey, money bags, how much does it
cost to fill up this woolly mammoth?

JERRY

I can handle it, Val. Why, you
offering?

VAL

Don't be ridiculous.
(smokes)
I'm a guest here.

Val is nonchalantly ashing his joint out the window, inches from
Jerry's feet. Tip notices, but bottles his laughter.

JERRY

I hope you brought a suit, Val.

VAL

Don't you worry about me, Mr. Waterfield. I dress to impress. Always.

(smokes)

How's your fiancée. Still a hottie?

JERRY

Don't even bring that shit up.

Jerry hangs up the pump and goes inside to pay.

VAL

(calling out)

Hey, grab me a Clark Bar an somethin' fruity!

Val, again, ashes near the pumps.

CUT TO

INT. HOUSE-DAY

Allison - in her WEDDING DRESS - walks on the treadmill, watching "Grey's Anatomy." She goes for a swig of bottled water, stopping short to react to the drama unfolding on TV...

ALLISON

Oh, McDreamy, how could you?

CUT TO:

INT. SUV(MOVING)-MOMENTS LATER

Val is chomping into a Clark Bar and washing it down with Tahitian Treat. Tip rides shotgun with a mouthful of beef jerky. Jerry drives, cautious and sober.

JERRY

Am I dropping you off at home?

VAL

My mother's house.

JERRY

Right.

TIP

You talkin' to your dad yet?

Val is quiet. Jerry jumps in to change the subject--

JERRY

Hey, you all have to be at the church for the rehearsal on Friday - don't fucking forget.

VAL

Why do I have to be there? I'm not in the wedding.

JERRY

Extra set of hands. Pretty please.

VAL

For the bridesmaids you mean?

JERRY

You be a good boy, Valerie.

TIP

Allison's bridesmaids are hot! I'd turn 'em both into jungle gyms for an afternoon and swallow 'em whole.

VAL

Good to know.

JERRY

Get a hold of yourself, Tip. I need you alive for the wedding.

VAL

Knox in town yet?

JERRY

Tonight. I thought you guys still talked on a regular basis.

VAL

We talk, we don't share.

TIP

(mouth full)

Fucker's renting out a mansion on Lake Road. Lap of luxury all week for you assholes.

VAL

I'm gonna sway Ryan into sharing a room. Bunk up as lovers for a few days.

JERRY

I'm pretty sure you're not her type, Val. Never have been.

VAL

I'm every girl's type. Lean, mean, stiff and straight. Besides, when have we known the Queen of Casual Sex to say no?

JERRY

Alright. See for yourself.

TIP

Yeah, what do you want with Ryan? I thought you were into fat chicks now.

VAL

I'm into fat chicks all the time. Just thought it would be nice to treat myself while I'm on vacation.

JERRY

Good luck with that, rehab.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD HOUSE-LATER

The SUV stops at the end of the driveway. This is a big old house on the far side of town, long in need of some upkeep.

Val's eyes peek out the back window. He takes his time getting out...

JERRY

Listen, this doesn't work out for you--

VAL

I'll live.

JERRY

Knox gets in later on, I'm sure he won't mind if you need to get in the mansion earlier--

VAL

I'll live, Jerry.

Val stands at the end of the driveway with his carry-on. He stares at the house for a long while, casually tossing a piece of gum in his mouth.

JERRY

You need anything, Val, just call my cell--

Val starts up the driveway.

Jerry and Tip share a look. They watch Val a moment longer before Jerry pulls into gear and drives off.

INT. OLD HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Val enters, kicking snow from his shoes. The house is plain, drab, a woman's touch long in remission.

Val's mother, LILLY, 62, carries the Sunday paper and the weight of the world. She has not heard Val come in and is startled when she sees him in the doorway...

VAL

Mom.

LILLY

Oh, my goodness! Valerie!

She drops the paper and scurries over to hold him.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Did you just get in? How long have you been standing there?

VAL

Just now. Jerry and Tip met me at the airport.

Val's trademark acrimony has vanished here.

LILLY

Oh, how nice. Rumor is Jerry's gonna run for mayor next term. Just like his grandfather. How is he?

VAL

He's good, ma. The same. Born to win.

Lilly pulls Val's sunglasses off him and steps back to take him in...

LILLY

Valerie, you're too thin...

VAL

Dad isn't here, is he?

LILLY

(a beat)

He's coming by later. He knows you're in town, wants to see you.

VAL

Does he.

Val pretends to look around, hiding...

LILLY

You only brought one bag? You're not staying too long, are you?

VAL

Leaving after the wedding. Sunday.

LILLY

You have to get back so soon--

VAL

I got deadlines, ma. If I want to pay my rent next month, I gotta be there and do the work.

LILLY

I still don't know how you can survive down there on a journalist's salary--

VAL

I'm not a journalist, ma, I write advertising.

LILLY

Oh, yes, but... still so expensive in Florida.

Val wanders into the living room where a large high school picture of his younger brother, DREW, hangs above the mantle. Below it, an old picture of the family from years ago - Mom, Dad, Val and Drew. Happier times. Val takes the gum out of his mouth and presses the wad over his father's face in the photo. Pleased, he turns back to his mother...

VAL

Knox'll be in town tonight. He's renting a house on the lake for everybody. I'm gonna stay there.

LILLY

But you're staying here for tonight, right...? That's what you said--

VAL

Nah, I'm pretty sure he's got some kind of a reunion thing planned for everybody. Little party or whatever. But that's alright, I'm gonna hang out here with you a while.

Lilly fakes a smile... but it doesn't last long.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT-NIGHT

(The Gin Blossoms' "Lost Horizons" plays Knox's re-entry...)

Knox rides the escalator down, dressed GQ casual with a smirk that turns more than a few heads.

At the foot of the escalator is his chauffeur, Gable, waiting with a sign that reads "MR. KNOX."

Knox steps off at the ground and greets Gable with a hug that squashes the cardboard sign...

KNOX

You beat me here!

GABLE

I took an earlier flight. I wanted to make sure everything was in order here.

KNOX

You see, old friend, that's why I'd never travel without you. What the hell would I do without you, Gable?

GABLE

Drive drunk.

They start toward baggage claim...

GABLE (CONT'D)

Limo's outside, Mr. Knox. There's Heineken on ice, porn in the DVD player and snow on the ground.

KNOX

Figures. Nothing like coming home to the main reason I left.

(stops, holds Gable's shoulders)

Listen, Gable. We're both on vacation. This is by no means a business trip. All formalities are officially on hold. Call me Knox.

Gable is less than thrilled.

EXT. AIRPORT-MOMENTS LATER

Gable walks Knox out to the limo and opens the back door for him...

GABLE

Which bag did you bring?

KNOX

Two bags, the ugly gray ones.

GABLE

Back in a flash.

INT. LIMO-CONTINUOUS

Knox eases into the comforts of the luxury liner that lives up to Gable's hype. He cracks open a Heineken and heaves a contented sigh.

He MUTES the porno and reaches for his cell phone, dialing Jerry...

JERRY (O.S.)

Is this who I think it is?

KNOX

This is The University of Hard Knox,
Jerry, and class is now in session.

Knox clips his phone shut and gets back to his Heineken and porn.

(Song fades with scene...)

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS PUB-NIGHT

Jen, Molly and Tip huddle in a booth near the front of the bar. Empty bottles and tall boys litter the table. Tip is flanked on each side by the bridesmaids and is failing miserably in his attempts at seduction.

Jerry and Allison are at the jukebox arguing over song selections. Finally he lets her win and she punches in "*Tubthumping*." Allison starts to boogie as soon the song begins.

Just then, the pub door swings open and in struts Brody Carroll with the lovely Miyala by his side. Heads turn immediately. Jerry's jaw hits the floor and Allison is quick to help him shut it.

Brody knows he's the man and is all smiles when he meets his old team at the booth...

TIP

You gotta be fucking kidding me. Is
that what you get when you pass the
bar exam?

Jen and Molly have lost Tip's focus and are quick to make themselves visible again.

Jerry and Brody do the man-hug thing...

JERRY

Brody, you fucking genius! I love
you! Thank you so much for making
the trip. Wasn't easy tracking you
down.

BRODY
You gotta earn it, Jerry.

Brody turns and reels in Miyala--

BRODY (CONT'D)
Say hello to Miyala, boys and girls.

She flashes a nervous smile before presenting her newfound English...

MIYALA
What's up, my niggas?

Wide eyes and open mouths.

BRODY
Uh, sweetheart, let's use our formal English for the first hour, shall we?

MIYALA
Oh, yeah. Hello, new friends. I am Miyala.

BRODY
Much better. Sorry about that. Been working with her on "contemporary American nomenclature." She's head of the class right now.

JERRY
I bet.

Tip steps in, pushing Brody aside--

TIP
Aloha, senorita!

Miyala blushes at Tip's overt affections...

TIP (CONT'D)
(to Brody)
Please tell me this is an import that you're leaving here--

JERRY
Tip, contain yourself. Jesus. Miyala is obviously a wedding gift for Allison and myself. A honeymoon gift, rather.

Jerry very suddenly makes a funny, wounded face. As he backs away from Miyala we realize that Allison has reached under and grabbed him by the sack. Jerry relents.

BRODY

I can't believe we're actually here.
Same old bar, same old friends. And
you two kids are finally getting
hitched! Shots! Shots for all my
friends!

Behind the bar, Phil is quick to prepare.

Brody wraps Allison in a bear hug--

BRODY (CONT'D)

You still got the best guy in town.
After twelve years, still, you held
on to him. Good for you.

(pulls Jerry in)

I am so happy for you two! Let's
all drink!

Phil arrives with shots...

PHIL

Deja vu.

BRODY

I know, it's like we never left.
This fucking town hasn't changed a
bit.

JERRY

I'll change it. I plan on it.

BRODY

Still looking to follow in
Granddaddy's footsteps?

JERRY

Next term, my friend. I'm runnin'.
You should move back. I'll need a
good lawyer.

BRODY

You want my law degree? You can
have it.

MIYALA

Kill the lawyers!

BRODY

Sweetheart, formal English.

MIYALA

No fun.

BRODY

Just for the first hour, I promise.

Brody starts to hand out shots...

BRODY (CONT'D)
Come on, bridesmaids, you're in on
this too.

Brody makes sure all the shots are handed out before toasting...

BRODY (CONT'D)
So good to be home again amongst old
friends and with a new love...

MIYALA
Ballin'!

BRODY
Sweetheart!

MIYALA
Apologies.

BRODY
The first of many drinks this week,
no doubt. To our Neighbors.

They all touch glasses and drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE ROAD HOUSE-NIGHT

Across town, Ryan and her luggage are locked out of the Krayniak Mansion. She busies herself by practicing her golf swing in the driveway.

In a moment, Knox's limo pulls into the driveway. Ryan stops mid-swing. She races out to the driveway and meets Knox at the back door, SHRIEKING ecstatically..

RYAN
I can't believe it's really you!

KNOX
Well, well, well, if it isn't the
Queen of Casual Sex. Wow, look at
you! You haven't aged a single
fucking day! You're drop dead
gorgeous, Ryan. Well done.

RYAN
I take my vitamins.

They embrace again.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Enough small talk, asshole.
(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

You locked me out. You were supposed to be here forty-five minutes ago.

KNOX

So sorry, lovely. Gable and I had to stop for essentials.

Gable tips his hat to Ryan, then begins hauling cases of beer and liquor toward the house on a dolly. He keys into the front door and presses on.

RYAN

A fucking limo. I should've known.

KNOX

Only the best for my old friends. Wait till you see the house.

They walk arm-in-arm toward the front door...

INT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

Ryan drifts from Knox's arm as she steps into the mammoth foyer...

RYAN

Holy frog shit, Batman! This place is gi-gundus!

KNOX

Five bedrooms, three full bathrooms, hot tub, a full bar--

GABLE

(stocking the bar)
Workin' on it.

KNOX

And best of all...

Knox guides Ryan toward the back of the house to a pair of large French doors and whips them open, unveiling a resplendent panoramic view of Lake Erie under a starlit winter sky. Breathtaking.

Ryan steps out onto the balcony and watches her breath wisp out over the lake...

RYAN

I'm in love.

KNOX

I get that a lot.

RYAN

I lived in this boring fucking town the first eighteen years of my life
(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

and I swear it has never looked like this before, from any angle. It's amazing.

KNOX

Many a man travels the world looking for answers, only to come home again to find them.

RYAN

Is that part of the Hard Knox curriculum, professor?

KNOX

Elementary, my dear Watson. Saw it on the men's room wall in a bar somewhere in the Caribbean. My wisdom you'll have to pay for. Everybody else does.

RYAN

(turns to him)

Everybody else hasn't known you since kindergarten. Now go fix me a drink, peasant.

KNOX

As you wish. But you'll have to funnel it, 'cuz we gotta be at the pub to meet the other kids. They've been waiting.

RYAN

Bring it!

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS-LATER

Jen and Molly are singing "*I Love a Rainy Night*" on the karaoke stage. No one is paying attention. Still, they give it their all.

Tip and Brody are arm-wrestling in the booth. It's dead even. Tip casually reaches for his tall boy and takes a sip. Brody knows now he's being fucked with.

Allison has had a few by this point and Jerry is chasing her around the bar, insisting to her that she "*is not fat!*"

Miyala leans wide-eyed against the bar, trying to take it all in.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE ROAD-NIGHT

Across town, Dickens stands at a fence overlooking the lake.

In a moment, Knox's limo pulls over to the curb behind him. The back window rolls down...

KNOX

Don't jump, Dickens. Water's freezing. You're dick will disappear into your ass and you won't be able to sit down without fucking yourself silly.

Dickens turns... finally, he smiles.

Knox presents his patented smirk at the window. Ryan's ear-to-ear grin appears beside his.

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS-LATER

Tip has passed out in the corner booth. His dear friends have decorated him with coasters, napkins, straws and empty shot glasses.

Brody and Jerry are drinking up at the bar...

JERRY

That's quite a catch you've got there, sir. She a robot?

BRODY

Why does everybody keep asking me that?

JERRY

Way out of your league, Brody. Good for you.

BRODY

Not bad for a pasty Irishman with glasses.

They *clink* their tall boys together.

BRODY (CONT'D)

I tell you, Jerry... Ever since I passed the Bar and hit the road, I am a whole new man.

JERRY

I can see that. You're doing well?

BRODY

I stay alive. Not making shit at the moment, but us trust fund babies don't really worry about "The Now."

JERRY

Speak for yourself. I work long, hard hours for my dollars. After tomorrow, this will be the first time in three years I'll get a week off.

BRODY

Cry me a river, Mr. Mayor. You sleep-walked into the family business and saved yourself a seat at the top. Well played, certainly, but "work hard"...?

JERRY

Arrright, you got me.

BRODY

And what about Alley? What's she doin' these days?

JERRY

Freaking out, mostly. She's got a degree in business, wants to open her own place, run the show, but... Planning this wedding for the last year has cleared that schedule for a while. After the honeymoon, we'll see what she wants to do.

BRODY

Open her own place, huh? Good for her. Put your ass out of business.

JERRY

She could, too. Savvy, that girl.

BRODY

Savvy and sexy. She's still got it, I see.

(drinks)

You know, back in high school, we used call her "Allison Swaim - the Face That Launched a Thousand Wrists."

Jerry spits some of his beer. Phil sees this, shoots Jerry a look, and whips the bar towel at him. Jerry cleans his mess.

BRODY (CONT'D)

I'm serious.

(MORE)

BRODY (CONT'D)

I may have a sumptuous Columbian cuisine on my hands, but you scored the eternal hometown hottie. I'm serious, Jerry.

JERRY

Oh, I believe you. I don't know if she will. You should tell her that. Put a smile back on her face.

BRODY

Domesticated paranoia. Happens to all suburban woman on the brink of settling. This, too, shall pass.

Jerry swings around in his stool and calls out to Allison--

JERRY

Hey, honey! Brody thinks you're still a hot piece of ass!

From her station at the jukebox with her girls:

ALLISON

Hot to trot, maybe. Buy him a drink anyway.

Jerry turns back to Brody...

JERRY

See what I mean--

BRODY

You heard the woman. Sponsor me a cocktail!

Both front doors of the pub swing open and here comes Knox - his arms spread wide, lighting up the room with his smile and swagger...

KNOX

Show time!

PHIL

Look out, old Mackie's back!

JERRY

Legend!

Ryan races from around Knox to dive at her old friends. Even Dickens' somber disposition has alleviated for the occasion.

The newcomers make their rounds, grab a cocktail, get into the groove of the party...

Knox is fast to notice Miyala--

KNOX

Hel-lo there!

Brody attaches himself to Miyala's hip at this point--

BRODY

Can the charm, Knox. Miyala is here with me.

KNOX

You've never been a good liar, Brody.

BRODY

I'm serious, asshole. She's a student of mine in Columbia, and she just so happens to share my bed.

KNOX

Outstanding, sir!
(shakes Brody's hand)
Not bad for a pasty Irishman with glasses.

MIYALA

When we sex, we look like solar eclipse.

A beat.

KNOX

Now that I'd like to see.

Brody blushes a bit. Miyala smiles, unaffected.

Ryan and the Girls unite near the bar, bouncing...

ALLISON

Omigod, I haven't seen you in so long! How are you?!

RYAN

I'm fabulous! Omigod, you look amazing!

JEN

Doesn't she look amazing?!

MOLLY

Omigod, everyone still looks fucking amazing after ten years, but Alley's still the queen.

RYAN

And you're getting married!

More bouncing and high-pitched squeals...

The reunion has officially begun and the uproar amidst old friends adds a cozy element to this dingy pub.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD HOUSE-NIGHT

Upstairs, Val walks into Drew's bedroom to find everything still as it was. He takes a silent tour of his brother's brief life and pauses on an old PHOTO tucked into the mirror - he and Drew, arm-in-arm, both making a funny face. Priceless.

Val pockets the photo and steps out...

Downstairs, Lilly is falling asleep in front of the TV.

Val watches her from the shadows, waiting for the perfect moment. When it seems she is out cold, Val tip-toes to the front door with his carry-on bag behind him and slips out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION-LATER

The limo pulls into the driveway and the whole gang - save for Tip - unloads. They are a brood of drunken troublemakers by this point. Knox leads them in...

INT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

Ryan starts in as the overly enthusiastic, drunken tour guide...

RYAN

And just through here we have your newly remodeled kitchen with all new appliances and windows--

(burps)

And back through this way is your living room, great room and back office, where I'm sure we'll all be spending a few hours hard at work...

Knox and Jerry wander off on their own to find the bar. Gable is already there waiting with cocktails...

JERRY

I like this guy, Knox. Another one of your success stories?

KNOX

Gable, no. He found me, actually. The whole flashback is a blur, to be honest with you, but he's been my A-number-one ever since.

Gable nods his gratitude as he prepares *himself* a STIFF drink...

GABLE

I remember the story very well. Let me get a couple of these guys in my system and I'll be happy to share it with you.

Knox looks worried.

Jerry smiles and throws an arm around Knox, walking with him through the rest of the mansion...

JERRY

Man, I always wanted to know what the inside of this place looked like.

(drinks)

How'd you swing this?

KNOX

Old man Krayniak's son attended one of my seminars last year. The kid was a total lost cause - college drop-out, in debt up to his eyebrows, bilking his old man for a couple thousand dollars a month. Real fuckin' wad waste, this kid...

(drinks)

A week after my seminar, the kid applied for a loan, started his own business and hasn't had to ask big daddy for money ever since. Viola!

JERRY

God bless the University of Hard Knox. It really works then, huh?

KNOX

You gotta want it, Jerry. You really gotta want it.

(drinks)

Anyhoo, the Krayniak Estate is ours until Sunday. Warn the Neighbors.

They toast their glasses - clink! - Before stepping into the Hot Tub room...

And there's Val - stark naked, smoking a joint and drinking a highball - soaking in the hot tub and stoned beyond sound reason...

VAL

Heeeeeeey, ladies. Hope you don't mind I let myself in.

JERRY

So there you are.

KNOX

Please tell me you haven't pissed in there, Valerie...

VAL

You kidding? When I've got that beautiful balcony to shoot from...?! Pa-lease.

Knox smiles, drains his cocktail, then hands the glass to Jerry. He darts for the hot tub and jumps as high as he can--

KNOX

Jackknife!

--and SPLASH!!

The tidal wave empties nearly half the water and Val sits there, motionless, with a doused joint dangling from his lips. He takes a drink.

In a moment, the rest of the gang finds them and piles in one-by-one...

KNOX (CONT'D)

No clothes in the hot tub, kids!
House rules!

Allison stops beside Jerry just a few feet away from the tub. He pours half his drink into Knox's empty glass and hands it to her...

JERRY

Whatta' you say, lovely? You wanna get naked and play a little hot tub grab ass?

ALLISON

Absolutely. But one fat joke and I'm out.

They drain their cocktails. Allison is first to drop trough and hop in. Jerry likes what he sees...

JERRY

(to himself)
Well, I am studying to be a politician...

The clothes come off and the hot tub is rocking.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-LATER

The entire gang is wrapped in bathrobes and towels, laying comfortable around the main room of the mansion. Phish's "*Bouncing Around the Room*" plays on the stereo.

Cocktails abound and Val is rolling a monster joint for the occasion...

BRODY

Jesus, Val. You making a salad over there?

VAL

You're not the only one who brought a little something from Columbia, Brody...

(holds up his bag of weed)

Cha cha cha.

ALLISON

Hey, aren't we missing somebody?

Jen and Molly share an impish smile.

JERRY

Tip!

KNOX

Yeah, where is that fat bastard?

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS-SAME TIME

The bar is closed, lights out.

Back in the corner, Tip emerges from below the booth under a pile of coasters, straws and napkins. He is bewildered. He gets to his feet and looks around... empty.

He walks around, goes behind the bar, turns on the main light and takes in his situation. A smile devours his face...

TIP

Hallelujah!

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

Gable walks around, refilling everyone's cocktail.

BRODY

How could we forget the biggest guy in the state? You can fucking Google Map that kid.

KNOX

Gable, would you mind taking a trip back to the bar and seeing if that behemoth needs a ride, or a lawyer?

GABLE

I can do that. About time for another run to the candy store anyway.

RYAN

Did we drink all that booze arready?!

KNOX

Pretty damn close.

RYAN

We rock!

Gable grabs his keys and heads out.

ALLISON

He's awesome, Knox. You two always travel together?

KNOX

Always and everywhere.
(drinks)

JEN

Got anymore room in that lap of luxury, Knox?

MOLLY

I've got bigger tits.

Jen shoots Molly a look.

KNOX

Ladies, ladies... There's plenty of Hard Knox to go around.

MIYALA

Plenty?

BRODY

Honey, be still. Chillax.

JERRY

I must say, Brody, you're quite the instructor. Miyala's English is right on the money.

BRODY

Like I said, it's more "contemporary American" than English. If she wants to fit in here and be understood, better get it right.

MIYALA

America is funny talk. Everyone talks in colors and innuendos.

The entire gang is impressed.

MIYALA (CONT'D)

Brody teaches us this code. Americans talk sideways, never straight on.

BRODY

Well, this group is an exception to that rule, my love.

JERRY

Here, here!

They raise their glasses and drink.

Val puts the finishing touches on his masterpiece and holds it out...

VAL

(feigning tears)

It's beautiful. Let us begin.

He lights the whopper - it takes a minute - and gets it started. He passes to the left, where Molly is the first to receive...

MOLLY

Jesus, I haven't smoked weed since college. I hope I can remember how this works.

VAL

Oh, it's easy, Molly. What happens is you smoke it, pass it on to the left, meet me upstairs and we fuck. Self explanatory really.

MOLLY

You just saw me naked. Isn't that enough for you?

VAL

Let's call it a follow-up interview.

MOLLY

So I meet your weight limit prerequisite, izzat right, Val?

VAL

Absolutely not. You're a willow, a reed. I'm over fat chicks now. It's back to basics.

MOLLY

How flattering.

(smokes)

Jesus.

BRODY
Come on, Val, what's your heaviest?
Two-fifty, two-seventy-five...?

VAL
Keep climbing, slim.

BRODY
(stunned)
Three-hundred?

Val pumps his thumb upward as he takes a hefty swig...

BRODY (CONT'D)
Okay, I don't wanna play anymore.

VAL
Try three-fifteen.

DICKENS
(doing the gesture)
Tatunka.

ALLISON
Christ, is that even legal?

JEN
Does that qualify as a threesome?

MOLLY
Okay, yeah, you can retract your
offer. I can't compete with that.

Molly holds the smoke in as long as she can, then passes the doobie left, to Dickens...

DICKENS
Just what I need.

KNOX
Damn right it is. You've been way
too quiet over there.

VAL
Why ruin it now?

Dickens is an amateur with the joint - doing his best Woody Allen as he smokes...

DICKENS
(as Woody)
This is crazy. The last time I smoked
grass, Soon-Yi and I wound up naked
in Central Park, screaming "the Nazi's
are coming, the Nazi's are coming!"
Not pretty, I can assure you.

KNOX

Still living in the movies, eh, kid?

DICKENS

Beats Waterfield.

KNOX

You know, Dickens, you sent me a copy of one of your screenplays a few years ago... a revenge story... was pretty good... That's the one that sold, right?

DICKENS

(exhales)

Yep.

JERRY

Which one was that?

DICKENS

Called "Son of God."

KNOX

Yeah, right. What happened there?

DICKENS

Studio sat on it.

BRODY

Too many revenge stories out there at the time, or what?

DICKENS

Guess so.

ALLISON

Hey, Knox, you got some serious coin these days. Why don't you produce it?

KNOX

I don't know dick about making movies.

ALLISON

Dickens does. Knows more about movies than all of us combined. Probably more than some of the suits running the studios out there. Ain't that right, Johnny?

DICKENS

(as Sean Connery)

Of course you are, darling.

KNOX

Fair enough. Tell you what,
Dickens...

(smokes)

You let me take another look at that
script...

(exhales)

And I'll seriously think about it.

DICKENS

I got a stack of scripts back at the
house, Knox. Take your pick.

VAL

Hey, I got a great idea for a movie,
Knox. How 'bout throwing a little
fundage my way?

KNOX

Sorry, bestiality porn just isn't as
marketable as it used to be.

Everyone laughs. Except Val.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Besides, I already gave you money,
Val. You blow it already?

JERRY

Whoa, whoa. Why would ever give Val
any money?

KNOX

Val helped me ghost write my first
book. Natch, he got a percentage of
the gate.

JERRY

No shit?

Dickens looks wounded, but Knox is the only one to see it. It
blows over.

RYAN

I didn't know that. Jesus. And it
still managed to be a best seller?

Val spits some of his drink at her...

VAL

You're just pissed 'cuz there weren't
any pictures, you illiterate tree
monkey.

RYAN

Hard to find time to read when the rest of us are actually out working for a living, Val.

VAL

Hey, I work! I'm under contract with South Beach Magazine. I write ads for half the local business that fund that little rag. My schedule's always full, honey.

RYAN

Yeah, well so's my golf bag. I'll pay you double what you're getting from the neon queers in South Beach to haul my clubs every day, how 'bout that?

VAL

A caddy? Are you joking?

RYAN

You can drink and smoke weed on the course...

VAL

Keep talkin'.

RYAN

Plenty of heifers belong to the club, Val, you could do very well for yourself out there.

VAL

Do I get a company car?

RYAN

Golf cart. All yours.

VAL

We're gonna seriously continue this conversation, Ryan. You and me. I like where this is going.

She laughs, shaking her head as the joint finally makes it over to her...

JERRY

How the hell did you wind up running a golf course? Did teaching really pay that little down south?

RYAN

Nah. Just wasn't what I wanted to do anymore.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

(smokes)

Better hours, less stress, and the money's about the same.

JERRY

I thought you loved teaching.

RYAN

Yeah, well...

The gang is aware of a shift in Ryan's usual jocularly.

KNOX

You do any pro work, offer any kind of private lessons?

RYAN

Sorry, kids. I just run the show these days. Not a bad little gig.

Dickens is across the room where he has found Ryan's golf clubs...

DICKENS

You really brought your clubs to Ohio?

RYAN

(smokes)

Never leave home without 'em.

DICKENS

It's fucking February. In Ohio. Snow doesn't melt around here until June!

RYAN

Never know. Why don't you take 'em over to your folks place with you? Set up in the backyard, whack a few balls into a catch-net. Good way to get some aggression out.

DICKENS

(to himself)

A net?

RYAN

Great stress reliever.

KNOX

So is fucking in public.

RYAN

The country club's only restriction.

VAL

Well, I'm out then.

Dickens pulls the driver from Ryan's golf bag and sizes up...

KNOX

You break it, you buy it, Dickens.

Dickens is less than careful as he practices his swing, barely missing a few of the estate's most expensive decorations. No harm, no foul.

Jen gets hold of the joint and prepares for a hit--

MIYALA

Jen, do you know how to shotgun?

The whole gang is wide-eyed. They lean in...

JEN

Um, yeah, but...--

MIYALA

You smoke, then I smoke from you.

For once, Brody is in no hurry to silence her.

JEN

O-kay.

Miyala positions herself for the take just inches from Jen's face...

MIYALA

Fire away, sugar bush.

Jen is kind of nervous as all eyes in the room spotlight her...

JEN

Dear lord, I can't believe I'm doing this...

KNOX

We all believe, Jen. It's a group experience. Trust your gut. And everything below it.

Jen takes a long hit and holds it... she turns to Miyala, who waits with puckered enthusiasm... they lock lips... their mouths open...

Nobody blinks. Jerry has a firm grip on Allison's tits. Val tries to hold Molly's hand... she pulls away.

Miyala pulls back - we hear a collective "Aawww" from the boys - and blows Jen's smoke into the group. In a second, she is laughing hysterically. Jen, however, is in a daze. She liked it.

MIYALA
 Alright, Jen! A-plus!

Miyala HIGH FIVES Jen.

JERRY
 Brody, what are you teaching these
 kids down there in the rain forest?

BRODY
 (in awe)
 I thought I knew. But that, my dear
 friends, was clearly extra credit.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION-LATER

From the lake - the Krayniak Mansion glows under a snowy, starlit sky. The Dave Matthews Band blares from the house speakers with "*Lie In Our Graves*."

INT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

The gang has spread out all over the estate. For now we're stuck with Jerry, Brody and Ryan kicking back in the enclosed patio. They're all lined up side-by-side, drinking beer and watching the water...

RYAN
 You're really gettin' married, huh,
 Jerry?

JERRY
 I am. Jealous?

RYAN
 Hardly.

BRODY
 We're all really happy for you guys,
 Jerry. Any couple that can last as
 long as you and Alley... a miracle
 these days.

JERRY
 Thank you, guys. I'm really very
 happy about the whole thing.

BRODY
 You should be. You got it made in
 the shade, my friend. For the rest
 of your life you can just coast.

JERRY
 I don't know about that.
 (MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

We got some big plans for our future. Sittin' back and just watching it happen doesn't really seem like an option.

RYAN

Let me guess: kids, dog, tree house, yacht club membership, running for office--

BRODY

Another Lexus SUV, summer home, a mistress--

JERRY

Jesus, one adult step at a time. All that stuff is way down the road. Really, no pressure.

BRODY

May not feel like it now... but once that ring goes on her finger and the minister takes a step back... Landslide, Jerry. You'll be building that tree house the day you get back from your honeymoon.

RYAN

Don't ruin this time for him, Brody. This week is supposed to be the happiest of his entire life. Let him enjoy it.

JERRY

Thank you.

RYAN

He'll have the rest of his life to be miserable.

Across the house... Val finds a seat beside Dickens on the couch. They sit in silence, drinking their cocktails...

VAL

So... nervous breakdown, huh?

DICKENS

Yeah.

VAL

Bummer.

(drinks, a beat)

They got you on any good meds?

DICKENS

Nope. Sorry, Val.

VAL
Good seeing you.

Val gets up and leaves.

Allison is standing with Miyala on the balcony...

MIYALA
I did not know America was this
fucking cold.

ALLISON
Six months out of the year up here.

MIYALA
I cannot wear my g-string in this.

ALLISON
Good thing for us bulging brides.

MIYALA
Bulging? You are perfect, Allison.
Perfect for a white girl, I mean.

ALLISON
You really think so? Thank you!

Inside... Val sees Jen and Molly "shotgunning" a bong hit. His chances just went up. He goes over and sits between them. *

In the kitchen... Dickens is in the fridge rummaging for munchies and another beer. Knox appears behind him...

KNOX
Any chance old man Krayniak left us
a Honeybaked Ham in there?

DICKENS
Gable knows to stop off at 7-11 to
stock up on Doritos and Twizzlers,
right?

KNOX
He'll surprise us, I'm sure.

Dickens finds a beer way back in the fridge and settles for an old jar of banana peppers.

KNOX (CONT'D)
Listen, Johnny... I didn't mean to
poke at any scar tissue before in
there when I mentioned Val helping
me with my book...

DICKENS
No blood drawn, old friend. I totally
understand.

KNOX

You know I came to you first, right?
I would never put Val before you
when it comes to raw talent, Dickens,
you know that--

DICKENS

I know that--

KNOX

But when I flew out west to go over
the whole book idea with you... you
weren't doin' so hot. Kind of the
beginning of your...

DICKENS

Yeah. Sorry about that.

KNOX

You don't need to apologize to me,
man. I know you were going through
some shit right then, but I'm here
if you need me. We all are. And I
meant what I said about backing your
script.

DICKENS

I'll hold you to it.

KNOX

You better.

DICKENS

Rather see it done from the inside
than let a studio thrash it, gut it
and make something else out of it.

KNOX

We'll see what we can put together.
But you gotta hang in there, Dickens.
Everybody falls from grace. It's
the return flight that proves who
you are and what you truly have to
offer. You remember that.

DICKENS

It's in the vault. Thanks.

Knox turns to leave, then spins back...

KNOX

Don't eat too many of those peppers.
They'll ring around the Twizzlers
and you'll be shitting a chain-link
fence for the next week.

Dickens stops shy of eating another pepper as Knox walks out.

Back in the main room... Val and the girls still on the couch. They are good and cranked by this point...

VAL

I'm saying all three of us, one big bed, one great time. Tonight's the night. Both of you together makes one very fat chick. I totally see this happening. Who's with me?

JEN

Why, why, why the fat girl fetish? Seriously. I don't get it.

VAL

You don't have to, Jen. It's a me thing. It's all part of Val's vices. Hey, I like the sound of that.

JEN

I wanna know. Please. You tell me why and Molly and I will consider having a threesome with you--

VAL

Here's the thing, girls. Fat chicks... they never get any. And when they do... when gracious, compassionate rogues like myself come along and lay it down and those flabby mares put out like lightning! All those years of bottled up, unanswered mating calls just explode! It's like a Dairy Queen during an earthquake! They talk the dirtiest they've ever talked; they fuck the longest they've ever fucked; they scream, shout; they're willing to try any and every position in the book; they swallow - surprise, surprise; and when it's all over... when there's enough sweat to put out a forest fire and as many calories left smoking on the sheets... I am a God to them.

Jen and Molly are horrified by Val's impassioned testimony.

VAL (CONT'D)

Truly an event to behold.
(lights the bong,
takes a pull)
I've said too much.

In another room... Allison is talking incessantly about her upcoming nuptials, body mass, and future - to Miyala. Miyala sits across from Allison with the blankest of stares.

No habla Ingles. After Allison is out of personal current events, and out of breath, she sighs and offers Miyala the sincerest of smiles...

ALLISON

You're such a good friend, Miyala.
(stoned revelation)
You have to be in my wedding!

Gable returns through the front door with another dolly stacked high with booze. He knows his way to the bar.

Tip staggers in behind him. He looks like shit. Everyone turns to see him and they erupt in a round of APPLAUSE...

TIP

Did I miss the wedding?

CUT TO:

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE-DAY

Jerry and Knox are surfing the Web in the back office of the Deli. Knox uploads his personal website - "U-HardKnox.com" - for Jerry to behold. It's an elaborate page boasting Anthony "Hard" Knox's talents as a motivational speaker. Jerry is impressed...

JERRY

Holy shit, Knox. This is the real deal right here. How many teckies did you have to hire to put this together?

KNOX

One fucking guy, do you believe that? Paying his way through college building websites for anybody who'll let him.

Jerry is navigating through the site...

JERRY

This is incredible, Knox. You've really arrived. And people can book you right here through the website?

KNOX

Sure as shit. That's how ninety-percent of my shows are set up. I got a whole team of strangers monitor this site twenty-four-seven. They pencil me in, tell me when and where to be, I show up, "Be this, be that!", collect my handsome fee and move on.

JERRY

Incredible. Good for you, man.

KNOX

It's good for them, Jerry.

JERRY

You're off the clock, asshole. Save it for the next class.

The office door opens and Tip pours in. He looks awful.

KNOX

Jesus Christ.

TIP

Don't talk so loud, don't talk so loud...

JERRY

Hurtin'. Nice.

KNOX

Jesus, did you eat fireworks for breakfast?

TIP

Jerry... Advil?

JERRY

Aisle two. Half-way down. If you reach the tampons, you've gone too far.

KNOX

Actually, you might want to grab yourself a box of those. Does your husband drink?

Tip gives them THE FINGER as he leaves.

INT. DELI-CONTINUOUS

Tip is glacial as he hunts for the Advil. He passes Val who is surreptitiously filling his coat with munchies and condoms.

INT. OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

Jerry notices Val on the surveillance monitor next to his desk. He taps Knox and points at the screen...

JERRY

Twenty bucks says he goes for the Slim Jim's.

KNOX

You're on.

JERRY

Same old Val.

KNOX

How is he?

JERRY

You tell me. I thought you two stay pretty tight.

KNOX

E-mails and drunken text messages mostly. He stays off the radar.

JERRY

Guarded like a castle. Anybody needs to take one of your seminars...
(taps the screen)

KNOX

He seen his family since he got in?

JERRY

What's left of them, you mean?
Dropped him off at his mom's after we picked him up at the airport. I think he lasted three hours.

KNOX

They fell to pieces and he fell off the map. Shame. Have to catch him at the right time, have a heart to heart.

JERRY

Good luck finding a pulse there.

INT. DELI-CONTINUOUS

Just when Val thinks he's in the clear, he notices the SECURITY CAMERA aimed at him from the ceiling...

INT. OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

Jerry and Knox are watching Val on the monitor. He WAVES to them. They wave back.

INT. DELI-CONTINUOUS

Val turns away from the camera and steers out of the aisle - but not before pocketing a handful of Slim Jim's...

JERRY (O.S.)

Bam! Twenty bucks!

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFIELD HIGH SCHOOL-DAY

Dickens stands outside his old stomping grounds, taking in the memories. He goes inside...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL-MOMENTS LATER

He walks along the empty corridors until he finds the "Wall of Fame" high above a row of lockers. WHS graduates who went on to fame and fortune... Anthony "Hard" Knox has made the wall with the title "Renown Motivational Speaker" under his autographed photo.

Dickens can't bare the sight of his absence. He walks on...

The bell CHIMES and the classrooms empty... Dickens stands out in this sea of youngsters scrambling to find their lockers, lovers, friends and subsequent classes...

He approaches a classroom and peers inside... DIANE MANNIX, 45, the attractive WHS Drama teacher cleans up the mess of Shakespearean props left by the last class... she hears Dickens enter and turns, startled... then a belated smile...

MISS MANNIX

Well I must be having a flashback.
Is that who I think it is?

DICKENS

The one and homely.

MISS MANNIX

Hardly. John Dickens. Wow. I
figured the next time I saw your
face it would be on the silver screen.

DICKENS

That was the plan.

MISS MANNIX

What are you doing back here?

DICKENS

You want the long version or the
epic version?

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM-LATER

Dickens and Miss Mannix sit alone in the school auditorium, one seat empty between them. He has filled her in on his fruitless journey and its affects...

MISS MANNIX

And so now you're back...?

DICKENS

Trying to figure it out, see where I derailed.

MISS MANNIX

I don't think you derailed at all, John, I think you just... have more talent than most actors and writers your age, and it carries a heavier stress on you. You're an old soul, we all knew that, then and now. You have a gift - scratch that, you have many gifts - and I think you just need to find a new balance for your outlets. Trying to do it all at once for so many years... no wonder you broke down.

DICKENS

I don't get it. All I've ever been able to do well is act... and write... and imitate just about anybody. To entertain. How could moving out west to show anybody who would look, listen or read not be the right outlet for all of that?

MISS MANNIX

You tell me. You just spent ten years out there. You told me about all the auditions, the agents, the call-backs, the no-call-backs, the nepotism... The only thing you didn't mention is what you did get accomplished.

(a beat)

You did a couple commercials, right? I remember those.

DICKENS

Yeah--

MISS MANNIX

And you had writing jobs out there, you did theater. You filled in the blanks, John, it wasn't all just wasting time and talent--

DICKENS

But it was. When I left here, everybody had money on me moving out west and becoming the Next Big Thing. I had three screenplays finished before graduation. I had head shots ready to go, query letters, monologues that I'd written myself.

(MORE)

DICKENS (CONT'D)

I knew everything there was to know about movies and all the people who made them. Even you... you said my audition for--

MISS MANNIX

Your audition, John Dickens, is still the finest piece of acting I have ever seen on that stage by any student in all my eighteen years here. To this day. I tell all my students about it - how you totally inhabited another soul and left this entire auditorium silenced as we watched you. It was magic. I knew right then... you had it. We all knew it.

DICKENS

It's like you all kept it a secret that I wasn't allowed to pack up and take with me.

(tears start)

Big fish left the pond, I guess. That old story.

MISS MANNIX

If you think your story's done being written... then there's a few parts you left out...

She reaches across and holds his hand, squeezing. Dickens finds her through his tears and they look at one another... Her slight, hinting smile can only mean one thing...

Cue the first few chords of "*Mrs. Robinson*" over the soundtrack...

CUT TO:

EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE-DAY

Jerry's SUV pulls into the driveway. He and Allison, Brody and Miyala unload and make their way toward the house.

Gibby is shoveling his driveway next door...

GIBBY

Any chance of getting my snow-blower back before July, fuck stain?

JERRY

It's my snow-blower, Gibby. Go fuck yourself and your fat alcoholic wife.

GIBBY

Wish I could, but I'm still a little exhausted from boning your grandmother last night. She likes it in the ass, you now?

JERRY

That's necrophilia, Gibby. Still illegal in Waterfield. Skull fucking, on the other hand...

GIBBY

She didn't seem to mind.
(waves to Allison)
Hey, sweetie. Excited for the wedding?

Brody cannot believe his ears.

ALLISON

You kidding? I'll send you a postcard from Hell. See you later, needle cock

Gibby laughs, keeps shoveling - then notices Miyala and double-takes...

GIBBY

Helloooooo!

Miyala skips through the snow, offers Gibby a neighborly smile...

MIYALA

Hey, douchebag, you missed a spot.

Gibby's eyebrows hit the clouds. He's frozen.

Allison HIGH FIVES Miyala as they enter the house.

JERRY

Your star student, Brody.

BRODY

She's a keeper.

Jerry holds the door for Brody, then packs himself a snowball...

Gibby, still stunned by Miyala's remark, takes one in the face!

INT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Allison leads Miyala down the hallway...

ALLISON

Vamos, chica. We gotta get you measured up.

They disappear into a far room.

Jerry goes to fetch a couple of beers as Brody takes his first tour of the house...

BRODY

I'm sorry this is my first time seeing the place, Jerry.

JERRY

Not like you still live in the area.

BRODY

I know that, but this... all this... this is a big deal. Real grown up stuff here. How long you two kids been shackled up here?

JERRY

August was two years.

BRODY

And it's good?

JERRY

(hands him a beer)
Look around, brother.

BRODY

Yeah, I can see the materials. I mean you and Alley. Heaven on earth?

JERRY

I'd be a fool to complain about anything, really. She's wonderful. I mean, shit, I've had the last twelve years to catch on, right?

BRODY

Touche.
(drinks)
And what about all else? The store, the political hopes...?

JERRY

Same old song.

BRODY

You need some extra votes, I'll fly back for the election, just for you.

JERRY

No need, my good sir. Be a landslide.
(drinks)
Besides, you and the Columbian concubine will be married and moved back here by then, right?

Brody almost chokes on his beer--

BRODY

You bite your tongue, Jerry!

Jerry laughs...

JERRY

Still walking that yellow brick road,
eh, counselor?

BRODY

You mean by that?

JERRY

Us grown-ups know there's no place
like home.

BRODY

What the fuck are you talking about?
Time stands still here for you, I
know. You're still the most popular
guy in town; heir to the Martin Family
business; nailing the prom queen;
living in the dead center of
Waterfield...

JERRY

So how's that--

BRODY

You haven't exactly grown up. Aside
from your hairline, Jerry, what's
really changed for you? I'm serious,
I wanna know.

JERRY

Fuck, Brody, I dunno.

(goes to drink)

I'm not just nailing the prom queen
anymore - I'm gonna marry her. I
don't just work the register for my
old man anymore - I run the whole
damn show. And this isn't my parents'
huge house over on Avalon Drive -
it's my house, my mortgage.

Jerry is obviously defensive... Brody loves it...

JERRY (CONT'D)

What?

BRODY

I ruffled your feathers, didn't I?

JERRY

Nah, I just--

BRODY

Sure I did. I'm sorry.

JERRY

You didn't--

BRODY

Here I was trying to deflect your inquiries into my personal life by spotlighting yours and I--

JERRY

So what is it then, Brody? When are you gonna stop running and grow up?

Brody shakes his head, laughs, hides behind a sip of beer. He's defensive... Jerry loves it...

BRODY

You should've been the lawyer.

JERRY

Uh-huh. Keep stalling.

BRODY

Arrright, arrright. I'm... I'm still running because I don't want to miss out on the life that my father wanted, could've had, and never lived because he was trying to appease his father.

JERRY

(a beat)

Too Freudian. I'm not buying it.

BRODY

It's textbook, I know. But I mean it. When we were kids back here... you remember us every hanging out over at my place?

JERRY

Hell no. You're old man was a miserable sonof--

BRODY

Precisely.

Jerry nods, taking a sip.

BRODY (CONT'D)

The day after he finished law school he was in a fucking suit and tie, strapped to a desk, a briefcase and a phone for the rest of his life. A full-blown asshole lawyer at twenty-five.

(MORE)

BRODY (CONT'D)

And why...? To keep a smile on my grandfather's face by adding "And Son" to the firm's marquee outside. You were about to say it, Jerry - "a miserable sonofabitch." Never did anything for himself.

JERRY

So you bounce the globe a couple years at a time...

BRODY

Damn right I do. I've seen more in the last seven years than most people ever even read about. I love it.

JERRY

I know you do. I'm happy for you. And even a little jealous.

BRODY

Shit, you can afford to go anywhere you want--

JERRY

Not jealous of the traveling, Brody--

Jerry motions down the hall with his beer... Brody turns to see... Miyala is standing at the end of the hallway in her bra and underwear as Allison takes her measurements in front of the mirror.

Gibby is pressed to a nearby window outside, his jaw agape.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL-LATER

The stage of the auditorium is dressed for "*Little Shop of Horrors*." All is quiet as we *push in* the monster Venus Flytrap... the mouth OPENS and both Dickens and Mrs. Mannix emerge from inside - panting, sweating and very, very satisfied...

MISS MANNIX

I was wrong... That was your best performance on this stage - ever.

An unfamiliar smile marks Dickens' face as he fights to catch his breath...

DICKENS

You wanna be my date for Jerry Martin's wedding?

CUT TO

INT. RESTAURANT-DAY

Val and Lilly sit together for lunch. It's awkward. Lilly pokes at a salad. Val flags down the WAITRESS for a refill on the coffee...

WAITRESS

Be just a minute, sir. We're brewing you another pot.

She leaves to check on the coffee. Val has no more distractions.

A MAN walks into the restaurant and Val recognizes him immediately. He's pissed. He looks across to Lilly, who forces a smile...

LILLY

He knows you're in town. He just wants to say 'hello.'

VAL

He uses his checkbook for that.

LILLY

Val--

WADE STRICKLAND stops at their table. He never looks at Lilly. All eyes on Val, who tries his hardest to resist making eye contact...

WADE

Don't be mad at your mother, Valerie. She just wanted us all to have a little time together.
(a beat)
Been so long.

VAL

Well, fuck, have a seat then. Let's get all caught up. You're right. Been a long time since the three of us sat down together. Probably since... now let me think about this... probably since Drew died and you started cheating on mom--

LILLY

Val--

WADE

Let him say it, Lilly. He's got a right.

VAL

Oh, I could go on for days...

WADE

I'm gonna sit, Val.

VAL

Be my guest.

Wade takes a seat next to Val. He angles himself away from Lilly - so their eyes NEVER meet.

WADE

Look, I knew you were coming to town for your friend's wedding and I've been trying to track you down at your mother's house. I guess you're not staying there while you're home--

VAL

Not much of a home to stay in anymore, Dad. Fuckin' haunted, really.

WADE

Val, I cannot tell you--

The Waitress returns to fill Val's cup...

VAL

Sweetheart, you mind bringing me a couple shots of Jameson to go with this, Irish style? You know what, just bring the bottle. You're a doll.

She nods.

LILLY

Please try and relax, Val. You have to see the good in this.

WADE

Son, you've spurned all my attempts to contact you, you don't return my calls, my letters--

VAL

I get your checks.

WADE

I just want us to get past Drew's death together, but you left us--

VAL

You're wrong, asshole, you're wrong!

Heads turn...

VAL (CONT'D)

We were all coping just fine until you started fucking that skinny teeny bopper from Westlake--

WADE

You don't know what you're mother and I were going through, Valerie, you have no idea. Parents have a harder time healing together after burying one of their children. She wasn't the same after, and neither was I.

VAL

No, you certainly weren't. Nobody was. We lost Drew, dad, and it was something we had to deal with on our own and as a family. I did it. Mom did it. We were making out okay.

Wade tries to retaliate... he chews his lip.

VAL (CONT'D)

But you fucking crumbled. And now you wanna sit here, ten years later, and tell me that we need to get through this together...?!

WADE

Yes. Yes, I do.

VAL

When you make it through this... I'll be the guy standing on the other side with Drew, waving you in and still calling you an asshole.

Val stands to leave just as the Waitress returns with a bottle of Irish Whiskey. He takes it from her and points to his father...

VAL (CONT'D)

Have him write you a check for the damages, hon. He's good for it.

Val goes to leave, then turns back to the Waitress--

VAL (CONT'D)

And if you should ever gain fifty, sixty pounds... You look me up.

The Waitress stands mortified in the middle of the restaurant.

Val already has the cap off the bottle as he exits...

CUT TO

INT. MANSION-NIGHT

Ryan is on the phone in the back office. She talks quietly, yet affectionately to a little boy on the other line.

Knox walks by the office - cocktail in hand - and stops. He goes to knock, but realizes he is interrupting a private moment. He steps away from the door but listens in...

RYAN

Okay, baby, you let your Aunt Liz tuck you in and then she'll read to you from "The Giving Tree" again, okay? I will see you after I get back, I promise.

(listens)

Soon, baby, soon. Aunt Liz has you through next weekend and then you'll be back at our house for the whole week after that. Sound good?

(listens)

I know, baby, I wish it was like that, too. Now go let her tuck you in. Mommy loves you.

Ryan listens for a moment longer, then hangs up. If only the weight of the world were so easy to set down. She rubs her face, composes herself, and pushes away from the desk--

Knox takes his cue and bolts away from the door.

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS PUB-NIGHT

Most of the gang has returned for cocktails and reminiscing while "96 Tears" plays on the jukebox.

Val sits at the bar, sunglasses on, smoking. Several straws stick out of his glass and he uses them all to suck down his eleventh drink of the night.

In the corner booth, Jerry and Allison are trying to explain details of the rehearsal dinner to the parties involved...

ALLISON

Brody, you and Miyala come down. Then, Tip, you and Jen.

JERRY

And no funny stuff, Tip. Not at the church.

TIP

But afterwards anything goes, right?

Jen huddles close to Molly. Tip raises an eyebrow at her.

ALLISON

Then Knox and Molly, and then...

JERRY
We're forgetting something.

ALLISON
Music. We need someone to cue up
the music.

JERRY
Ryan? You game?

RYAN
At noon, right? I'll be too shit-
faced by then.

JERRY
How 'bout Val?

ALLISON
Are you serious?

JERRY
Yeah, he'll be fine.
(calls out)
Hey, Val!

Val doesn't flinch.

JERRY (CONT'D)
You're in charge of music tomorrow
at the rehearsal.

Val offers a THUMBS UP from across the bar.

JERRY (CONT'D)
There, done.

ALLISON
You sure he's okay?

JERRY
Valerie had a rough day today. Direct
quote.

KNOX
You better hope that kid's sober
enough by then. According to Phil,
he's been in here since Happy Hour
started.

TIP
They have a Happy Hour? Sonofabitch.

JERRY
He'll be arright.

BRODY

No suits and shit tomorrow, right?
Casual garb until curtain rises on
Saturday, correct?

ALLISON

Yes. And it's a good thing, too. I
need another day to slim down before
I try and squeeze back into my wedding
dress.

JERRY

Here we go...

KNOX

Allison, you're beautiful. Accept
it. We all have.

JEN

Are you still freaking out? You
look amazing.

MOLLY

Totally fuckable.

TIP

I agree.

ALLISON

You guys are so sweet.

KNOX

And speaking of fuckable... I didn't
come here to jerk off. S'cuse me.

Knox shimmies past the others, out of the booth...

MOLLY

You in heat, Knox?

KNOX

Gotta get some stank on my swing-
low. I've been dry since I got off
the plane.

MOLLY

Nice.

TIP

Split one with you?

KNOX

I can split 'em all by myself, Tip.
But thank you.

TIP

Can I watch.

KNOX

Don't just watch, my friend. Take notes.

TIP

Any of you girls have a hi-liter in your purse?

Knox starts doing stretches beside the booth...

JEN

Don't hurt yourself, Knox.

KNOX

Not me you should be worried about.
(one last stretch)
Good to go. Time to sniff out the pussy.

JEN

Jesus, do you have to use that word?

KNOX

It's not a word, Jen. It's a cuisine.

And with that, he's off. In a matter of milliseconds Knox has immersed himself in a crowd of YOUNG WOMEN across the bar.

The rest of the gang sits back and watches...

TIP

The Master.

CUT TO

INT. DIRTY WORDS-LATER

Knox has taken center stage for karaoke. He rips into Bryan Adams' "*There Will Never Be Another Tonight*." He's into it 110%. It's a mini-concert.

The crowd - especially the LADIES - cheer him on.

Across the bar... Brody and Miyala are engaged in a drunken English lesson...

BRODY

No, no, sweetheart. Listen to me, like this - "Ninety-nine problems and a bitch ain't one." Now you.

MIYALA

Ninety-nine problems...

Just down the bar, Val snaps out of his coma and flags down Phil...

VAL

'Nother cup of grease, Phil. I'm goin' hoggin'.

PHIL

You killed my last drop of Irish mouthwash, Val. How 'bout a beer?

VAL

Beer?! Beer is a marinade where I come from.

PHIL

(fills a beer mug)

So you can dip your meat in this. Fat chicks love it.

Phil swipes Val's empty highball in exchange for the beer...

PHIL (CONT'D)

Works the same, only slower.

VAL

I suppose I could afford a retardation at this point.

(notices a lady next to him)

Heeeey, chubby.

The slender LADY beside him cannot believe her ears.

Up on stage, Knox has attracted some FEMALE dancers. Fuel for the fire.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO-LATER

The hoopla continues. The gang is packed into the limo - a few new additions to the party on each side of Knox. Laughter, music, burping and hollering fills the car.

Knox is able to pull himself away from his new LADY friends to knock on Gable's window...

KNOX

Do me a favor, Gable--

GABLE

Isn't that all I do?

KNOX

You're hilarious. Swing by Dickens' place, will ya'? He missed out on tonight and I'll be damned if he doesn't join us for after hours.

GABLE
Will do, Knox.

CUT TO

EXT. DICKENS' HOUSE-LATER

Dickens stands in his driveway, teeing up for a drive with Ryan's golf clubs. A collection of empty beer cans are scattered behind him as he belts one long into the neighborhood. In a moment, we hear a loud CRASH.

INT. LIMO-SAME TIME

The gang parties hard. A faint THUD is heard. In a second, the music goes OFF - the passengers all "Boo!" - and Gable's window rolls down...

GABLE
Heads up, kids. I think we're under
fire.

SMACK! A golf ball bounces off the hood of the limo.

KNOX
The fuck...?

EXT. DICKENS' HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Dickens tees up another. Whack! Somewhere in the distance a cat SCREAMS.

Just as he cracks open another beer, the limo pulls up and stops at the foot of his driveway.

DICKENS
Izzat you, Mr. President?

Knox's face peers out from the back window...

KNOX
Mind if we play through?

DICKENS
Not at all. You're up.

The gang files out of the limo and crowds the driveway.

RYAN
Glad to see you're getting some use
out of my clubs, Dickens. I told
you.

DICKENS
I'm really getting a hold of the
ball tonight.

Jerry trips through the empty beer cans on his way to shake Dickens' hand--

JERRY

Been working hard all night, Johnny?

DICKENS

Had a mild breakthrough today.
Thought I'd crack a few to celebrate.

JERRY

I don't know if you remembered or not, but Allison and I thought about getting married on Saturday and we wanted to get everybody together to run through rehearsal--

DICKENS

Fuck, am I in the wedding?!

JERRY

Well, no, but we all agreed to meet at the pub tonight, remember?

DICKENS

Sorry, Mr. Mayor. Johnny got sidetracked.

(drinks)

Busy day.

Ryan has arranged a private golf lesson for her drunken peers. She tees up and whacks a doozy down the road. They CHEER.

Brody cannot resist...

BRODY

Arrright, you silly sonsabitches, step off. Let the drunken Irishman show you how it's done.

KNOX

Famous last words.

Brody takes the driver from Ryan and sets a golf ball on top of his beer can. He sizes up, sloppies into a stance, and reels back...

WHACK! The can flies out of the scene, but the golf ball drops at Brody's feet. He stares off in the distance, waiting for a sound...

BRODY

Anybody get a look at it?

They all cast a drunken eye into the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH-DAY

The MINISTER guides the wedding party through rehearsal.

In a pew near the back, Ryan and Val share a flask...

RYAN
Why are we here?

VAL
Free wine.

RYAN
Bonus.
(a beat)
You see your folks yet?

VAL
Thanks for bringing that up. I'd almost forgotten about the whole experience.

RYAN
We're all trying to forget a little, aren't we?

VAL
Yeah, something like that.

RYAN
Your dad still--

VAL
Saw them both yesterday. Supposed to be just me and mom for lunch... Dad walks in... I don't think I even let him say a word.

RYAN
How long's that been brewing.

VAL
Ten years sound about right?

RYAN
Long time being pissed off.

VAL
You don't know the whole story.

RYAN
Don't need to. You've been pissed off for a long time, Val. You're home now. You got it off your chest. Let it simmer, then make amends.

VAL

Not my amends to make, Queenie.

RYAN

Doesn't matter. Your dad may still be the asshole you remember him to be, but at least he's reaching out. Time to hold out your hand, don't you think?

Val turns to Ryan...

VAL

He walked out on us when we all needed a pillar. He walked out.

RYAN

And you followed. Hiding in Florida ever since.

Val looks away...

RYAN (CONT'D)

You lost a brother, Val. That's horrible. I can't even imagine what that's like, but I know I wouldn't wanna do it alone.

Jerry is motioning to Val...

VAL

That's my cue.

Ryan sits back and watches as Val stands and takes his sweet ass time getting up to the altar.

JERRY

On the minister's cue, Val.

VAL

Izzat how this works?

Val kneels beside a small CD player. When the wedding party is distracted, he takes a CD from his jacket pocket and places it in the system.

The wedding party lines up near the back. The Minister waves them forward and the procession begins...

Val presses 'play'... "*Highway to Hell*" blares from the speakers.

Jerry and Allison hide their faces.

VAL (CONT'D)

Whoopsie. My bad.

Val changes out the CD and cues up the "*Wedding March*."

Miyala quietly tugs on Brody's sleeve...

MIYALA
This is hilarious?

BRODY
(whispering)
Yes. This is very hilarious.

CUT TO:

INT. SWAIM HOUSE-LATER

All have gathered for the rehearsal dinner. Friends, neighbors and relatives congregate all over the house. "*Martin's Corner Deli Catering*" signs mark all the food stations.

Allison's mother furtively spikes the punch bowl from her flask.

Jerry confronts Val...

JERRY
Classy.

VAL
Slip of the wrist, Jer. I apologize.

JERRY
Yeah, I'll remember that at your wedding.

A beat.

They erupt in LAUGHTER.

Across the room, Dickens - dressed ultra casual in his Miramax t-shirt - has told his story to Tip and Brody. They are in awe...

BRODY
Right on stage?!

TIP
How was it?

DICKENS
It was... theatrical, really.

BRODY
Was this during school hours?

DICKENS
Yes.

BRODY
I need to completely re-structure my lesson planning.

TIP

High five, Dickens. Just what you needed.

DICKENS

Certainly cured my writer's block, I'll tell you that.

In the kitchen, Knox takes center stage. He is lecturing a group of 50-somethings on the powers of self-motivation...

KNOX

The first thing I say to my audience: "Go back to school. Finish up, get your degree." Because without that little stamped document, our society is going to enjoy making it hard for you to succeed. You may be able to rub elbows with somebody who knows somebody, play the name-drop game, or just cash in on some good old nepotism, but if you want to really establish yourself... if you want your name to resound in the ears of prospective employers and buyers... you should succumb to the second-rate education system of our American universities. If you absolutely cannot subject yourself to it - as I most certainly could not - then you get out your pen and paper, kids, 'cuz Hard Knox here is gonna show you how to get it done...

His audience is enraptured.

Val, Jen and Molly sneak out the back door...

Gibby stands with Allison by the spiked punch...

GIBBY

You ready to go through with this?

ALLISON

Been twelve years. I think so. I just hope my dress is ready for me.

GIBBY

You need a little help, an extra set of hands getting your sweet vanilla ass into that thing, you just holler, mmkay?

ALLISON

You're an angel, Gibby.

EXT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Val shares a joint with the bridesmaids on the side of the house. After a few passes, Miyala peeks her head around the corner - startling them all. She steps into their circle and Val hands her the joint...

MIYALA

No more, schwag, Senor Val. I bring you the real homegrown from Columbia.

And with that, Miyala unfurls a baggy with three tightly rolled JOINTS inside. Val looks as if he's just seen Christ.

JEN

Shotgun!

INT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Allison's Mother is sneaking up behind her guests and topping off their drinks with a dash of the Captain. *

Jerry and Allison hold hands as they do the meet-and-greet.

Dickens has found "*Glengarry Glen Ross*" on TV and is acting out all the roles for an attentive CROWD.

Val and Molly sneak back into the house. Jerry spots them coming in and shakes his head with a slight snicker. Val shrugs as he makes a bee-line for the hors d'oeuvre table.

EXT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Jen and Miyala are MAKING OUT on the side of the house. In a moment, they separate and Jen exhales Miyala's smoke. They LAUGH uproariously.

INT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Val is stuffing his face at the hors d'oeuvre table. When he finally takes a breather - a collection of horrified GUESTS look on...

VAL

No Slim Jim's at this soiree?

EXT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Ryan steps out for some air. Just as she makes it to the end of the driveway, Knox runs out of the house to catch her...

KNOX

Want some company?

RYAN

Only yours, Knox.

KNOX

Kind of getting crowded in there.

RYAN

Yeah, that, and I think someone spiked the punch a little too heavy. I needed to get some air after my last cup.

They start to walk along the sidewalk of this lovely suburban neighborhood. Naked trees and piles of snow line their path...

RYAN (CONT'D)

Big day tomorrow. Is the best man ready?

KNOX

Absolutely. Finished writing my speech on the plane ride in, actually. Gonna be a great day.

RYAN

It's hard not to be happy for them.

KNOX

You don't wanna be?

RYAN

Of course not. I guess that came out wrong. I just... jealous, I guess.

KNOX

You saying you're not happy?

RYAN

I'm happy. Just unfulfilled.

KNOX

Uh huh...

(a beat)

Listen, Ryan, I have to confess something to you.

RYAN

You're queer, I knew it!

KNOX

You wish. I was walking by the room the other night at the mansion when you were on the phone. Initially I just overheard the first part... after that I was just flat-out eavesdropping. I'm sorry I did that.

RYAN

Don't cry about it. Actually, you should've just walked in. I needed somebody to talk to after that.

KNOX

So you have a little boy?

RYAN

Jack. He's my son, yeah.

KNOX

Wow, Ryan. That's an awfully big secret. Who all knows about this?

RYAN

Just you, me and his Daddy for now.

KNOX

Your parents?

RYAN

Are you kidding? My mom is still teaching here and my dad's on the Waterfield charter. Word gets around that their only daughter had a child out of wedlock... They'll be exiled.

KNOX

Yeah, but Jack is their Grandson. Once you get past the initial blow of breaking them the news, you know how much joy that kid could bring them--

RYAN

From where, Knox? I live in Hilton Head, they live here in Ohio. I'm not moving back. I'm happy down there--

KNOX

A minute ago you just told me you were unfulfilled. What's missing?

RYAN

My moral compass, I guess. The Queen of Casual Sex, remember?

KNOX

Just a fuckin' bullshit nickname from old school. Your jealous prick guy friends - me included - just harpin' on you 'cuz none of us were lucky enough to wind up in your casual rotation.

Ryan cannot help but laugh...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Izzat what bothers you most? Your conscience?

RYAN

My conscience, what the fuck's that - God's surveillance camera?

KNOX

You said moral compass--

RYAN

My parents are the die hard Catholics, not me. I gave that shit up years ago. Some national best-seller about a magic Jew is not my guide to a guilt free life, sorry.

KNOX

Amen.

RYAN

I just... It's a shitty situation. And it's my fault. I don't lose sleep because of that fact, I just learn a little more about me every time I see my little boy.

KNOX

'Nuff said.

Knox drapes an arm around her as they walk on...

INT. HOUSE-LATER

Still a strong crowd. Allison's Mom is blitzed by this point and MR. SWAIM steps in, finally, to steer her away from annoyed guests.

Jerry and Allison share a love seat in the corner, watching the party from a distance. They both heave an exhausted sigh...

JERRY

So, you got plans tomorrow? We should catch a movie.

ALLISON

Can't. I gotta get up early and try to squeeze my tanky suburban ass into a wedding dress.

JERRY

Oh, that's right. Rain check?

ALLISON

Deal.

Val goes walking by - Jerry stops him, snags the beer from his hand and sends him on his way. Doesn't even faze Val as he finds an abandoned plate of food nearby.

JERRY

I hope everyone behaves tomorrow.
(drinks)

ALLISON

I hope I survive tomorrow.
(takes the beer)
One full year of planning, designing and ordering comes to a head all at once, all day tomorrow. I could care less about how everyone else behaves. Tomorrow is about me, myself and I.
(drinks)
And maybe even you. Maybe.

JERRY

Gonna be amazing, Al. Sad thing is, so much will be going on all day for the both of us... the whole thing will be over before we even know what hit us.
(drinks)
I told Jen and Molly - it's their responsibility to make sure you stop and take it all in every chance you get. It's your day tomorrow, chickie. I'm just the guy you're gonna take advantage of in the hotel suite tomorrow night.

ALLISON

Hell yeah, baby. Gonna be freaky, loud, explosive, dirty, jungle sex. You think you can handle this?

Nearby, Allison's Father hears this exchange and grimaces. He takes the cocktail out of his wife's hand and drains it.

Dickens is the only one left in front of the TV. He watches, transfixed, mouthing all the words to Pacino's final blow-out in "*Glengarry...*"

As we start to *pull back* to watch the gathering in full swing, we hear Allison's Mother over the noise...

MOTHER

You guys can't leave yet! You haven't tried the punch!

Her drunken tittering envelopes the room...

CUT TO:

INT. DICKENS' HOUSE-NIGHT

Dickens steps into his bedroom, which by now has turned into somewhat of a comfortable living space. His movie posters are hung up, his laptop plugged in, his DVD's organized, and his scripts stacked neatly in piles.

He grabs a bag out of his closet and begins filling it with his scripts. All of them.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE ROAD-LATER

Dickens' old Honda with California plates rolls over to the curb and stops. He runs around to the other door, grabs his bag and heads for the wooden fence that trims the edge of the road overlooking Lake Erie...

He takes a long moment to himself, watching the waves crest under the moonlight. Finally, he unzips his bag and grabs a handful of screenplays... and whips them over the side!

More scripts hit the freezing cold water. Dickens is on a mission, tossing over every piece of manufactured drama he's ever written. One last handful - and they're all gone.

But something down below catches his eye - a single script floating on the surface... the title page reads "*Son of God*."

Dickens cannot believe his eyes. The script never sinks... just floats away...

He smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION-DAY

Morning. The Big day has arrived as the sun crawls higher into the vault of blue sky.

INT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

Knox, coffee in hand, wipes the sleep from his eyes as he makes his way down the hall. He stops at a door, knocks, then lets himself inside...

Val is asleep in bed. Jen and Molly lay on each side of him.

Knox can't believe his eyes...

KNOX

Christ, am I the only one not getting
laid on this trip?!

The girls stir back into consciousness... they make eye contact...
the hangover delays their stupefied reactions.

Val wakes up, rolls onto his side... he sits up, book-ended by
the girls... he lifts the sheets and peers under...

VAL

Oh yeah, so that happened.

KNOX

Don't you girls have a wedding to
prepare for?

Jen and Molly tumble out of bed and begin scrambling for their
clothes.

VAL

Wait, don't go. We should get some
pictures, make an album.

As the girls dart for the door, Knox reaches into his pocket and
holds out his bottle of Advil. Jen swipes it on the way out and
the girls disappear.

Knox and Val share a big smile...

KNOX

Soooooo, how was that?

Val takes a moment to reflect... then smiles...

VAL

Like one big fat chick with two heads.
(sighs)
I'm cured.

CUT TO:

WEDDING PREPARATION MONTAGE:

("Mambo #5" plays throughout...)

1.) Allison plops down in front of a large mirror. Behind her, a
TEAM assembles to begin make-up, hair, nails, etc.

2.) Knox is shaving. Val sits on the toilet beside him, flipping
through a *Reader's Digest*.

3.) Allison, in her curlers and a bathrobe, knocks on a bathroom
door. Inside we can the SHOWER running...

ALLISON

Jen? Molly? You've been in there
for almost an hour! Hurry up!
(walking away)
How dirty could it have been?

4.) Jerry is all smiles as he lays out his tux. He sifts through his drawer for socks... he holds up the only clean pair - YELLOW.

5.) Dickens is at his laptop - typing like mad. He's possessed.

6.) Jen, Molly and Allison are lined up in front of the mirror - plucking, tweezing, waxing, concealing. Beside them is Miyala. She needs no preparation - a natural beauty. She scans herself in the mirror for a few seconds before skipping away.

7.) Brody and Knox are in their tuxes. Their efforts now focus on Tip as he is struggling to button his pants. Going to be a team effort here...

8.) Allison, too, is having a little difficulty squeezing into her dress. She has plenty of help.

9.) Jerry dresses in front of a mirror. The bow tie is in place and he steps back to admire his work. He's a stud. He lifts his pant legs, revealing his YELLOW socks for just a second.

10.) Dickens is dressing himself in front of his laptop, re-reading his work as he buttons up...

11.) Brody, Knox and Val are all in on the mission to squeeze Tip into his pants. Even Gable is in on the action. Just when it seems they have no chance of getting the pants buttoned - Ryan steps into the room in just her bra and panties, a towel wrapped around her head...

RYAN

What the hell is going on in here?

Tip sucks in his stomach and the boys seize their moment. Mission accomplished.

12.) Allison's entourage puts the finishing touches on her dress and hair. She is stunning. The entire room takes a step back to admire... They're in awe.

Allison, however, sees herself in the mirror and struggles to hold back her tears...

ALLISON

I look like a pregnant polar bear!

The girls all close in on her - an army of reinforcement.

13.) Jerry steps into the mansion and immediately starts into a faux modeling routine. Knox is there to put him in his place.

Brody and Val step in to offer handshakes and hugs. Tip wipes his sweaty brow before following suit.

(Song fades as the MONTAGE ends...)

INT. DRESSING ROOM-LATER

Allison sits ALONE in the dressing room, staring at her reflection.

There is a KNOCK at the door, then her MOTHER enters...

ALLISON

I can't believe I totally let myself go like this--

MOTHER

Alley, you need to look at this day beyond that damn mirror. You look beautiful - the best you've ever looked in your whole life - and there isn't a person out there that doesn't think the same.

ALLISON

Mom, it took eleven people to squeeze me into this dress! The first time I tried it on it was just you, me and the bitchy lady at the bridal store. How did this happen?

MOTHER

Honey, I'm going to give you something--

ALLISON

I don't need a drink, mother.

MOTHER

It's not a drink, relax. Mommy's saving the good stuff for the reception anyway--

ALLISON

Jesus.

Mom dips into her purse, removes an old PHOTO and hands it to Allison...

MOTHER

You recognize her?

Allison studies the picture - a faded shot of her Mother, then 28, barefoot in a wedding dress. The resemblance is uncanny.

ALLISON

Is that... you?

MOTHER

You bet your sweet ass it's me.

ALLISON

You look amazing, mom.

MOTHER

That was taken three hours before I married your father. I was twenty-eight-years-old, one-hundred-and-thirty pounds then. Same as you today.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

I gained six pounds before my wedding and swore up and down that I would never walk down that aisle looking the way I did. I see that picture now and I see you today...

Allison's teary eyes find her mother's...

MOTHER (CONT'D)

We all get older, my dear, but some of us are lucky enough to have it happen gracefully. You may not inherit a fortune from your father and I, Alley, but at least you got good genes.

ALLISON

You calling yourself a hottie, mom?

MOTHER

Oh, what are all the kids saying these days...? I'm a MILF!

Allison's tears are gone in an instant--

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You will be too when you get to be my age. And your husband won't be able to keep his hands off of you.

Allison stands up and bear hugs her mom...

ALLISON

Thank you, mom.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-DAY

Jerry and his friends stand at the bar as Knox prepares them all a pre-wedding shooter...

KNOX

A little something to take the edge
off the leading man, here.

Knox pours everyone a shot, hands them out...

KNOX (CONT'D)

I'll save the good speech for the
reception, but for now...

The gang huddles around Jerry...

KNOX (CONT'D)

To the most popular guy in town. To
Waterfield's future mayor. To a guy
we'd all give a kidney for.

BRODY

I'd give a nut.

RYAN

Here, here!

KNOX

To Allison's future husband. God
bless you guys. And please videotape
the honeymoon sex, Amen.

All IN STEREO: "Amen."

They drink.

Gable stands at the front door...

GABLE

Mr. Martin, your chariot awaits.

Jerry takes a deep breath, brushes off his tux, and does an about-
face toward the door...

JERRY

It is time, my friends.

He starts for the door as Tip and Val trumpet "*Taps*."

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH-DAY

The GUESTS are filing in. By act of sheer idiocy, Gibby has been
given an usher's job. He guides his subjects to their designated
pews with his trademark smile and delivery...

GIBBY

Good afternoon, thanks for being
here.

(MORE)

GIBBY (CONT'D)

Gonna be a helluva show, really.
I'm going to seat you guys right over
here in the Stand-Up-and-Protest
section, mmkay?

(next group)

Hey, folks, welcome. Right over
here...

(gestures)

Get comfy. Gonna be a looooong
ordeal. Hope you brought something
to throw.

(next group)

Right this way, kids. Front row
seats for the execution, right here...

Dickens pops his head out from the confessional booth near the
back. He looks around - coast is clear. He steps away from the
booth. In a moment, Miss Mannix steps out and follows after him.

In the front pew, Allison's Father stares at the altar, crying
softly. Her Mother is quick to console him - offering her flask.

INT. LIMO-SAME TIME

A bottle of Mad Dog 20/20 is being passed around. Spare no expense
for the big day.

Jerry is obviously nervous as the bottle comes to him...

JERRY

Big day, big day...

KNOX

You got it, Jerry. Walk in the park.

VAL

More like getting mugged in the park.

RYAN

Don't listen to that wad waste, Jerry.
Gonna be perfect. Best day of your
life.

JERRY

I know, I know... Just a case of
nerves, I guess.

TIP

Nothing for a case of nerves like a
case of beer.

BRODY

Where have I heard that before...?
Ah, yes - law school.

KNOX

One more big sip, my good man. We're almost there.

Jerry follows his doctor's orders.

RYAN

Are you wearing yellow socks?!

INT. CHURCH-SAME TIME

Dickens and Miss Mannix step up to Gibby for their seating assignment. Gibby is quick to notice Dickens' open fly...

GIBBY

Careful, stud. You're in God's House now. Put the little Philistine away, arrright?

Dickens corrects the problem as Miss Mannix pretends to busy her attention elsewhere...

GIBBY (CONT'D)

(recognizing her)

Hey, aren't you my kid's drama teacher?

EXT. CHURCH-SAME TIME

The limo pulls up. Just as it parks, the empty BOTTLE of Mad Dog goes soaring out from the sunroof.

INT. DRESSING ROOM-MOMENTS LATER

The door opens - Jen and Molly in full bridesmaid glory. They skip into the dressing room where Allison stands in front of the mirror...

JEN

They're here, they're here!

MOLLY

Almost time, honey!

Allison, looking more confident now than ever, takes one last look in the mirror before turning to her friends... But she's speechless - just the world's biggest smile.

Miyala peeks her head in...

MIYALA

It's show time, bitches.

ALLISON

Let's knock 'em dead, girls.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH-LATER

The pews are full, the stage is set. Jerry stands at the altar with Brody, Knox and Tip. Tip is a sweaty mess. The bridesmaids three stand across from them. All heads turn toward the back as Allison appears with her weepy Father on her arm. She is radiant.

Push in on Jerry - beaming.

Here comes the bride...

INT. CHURCH-LATER

The ceremony is long underway. Miss Mannix and Dickens watch, smiling. Val is struggling to stay awake. Gibby sits between them - appearing ever so anxious...

MINISTER

...And any of those who feel this couple should not be married here today, speak now or forever hold your peace...

Gibby goes to stand - but Val and Dickens are there to hold him down.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Then by the powers vested in me...

Blah blah blah...

Allison and Jerry gaze longingly at one another...

MINISTER (CONT'D)

...You may kiss your beautiful bride.

And so he does. It's a scorcher.

Their audience erupts in APPLAUSE--

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO-MOMENTS LATER

A cork POPS! Champagne spews everywhere as Allison takes cover. Jerry wrangles the suds and pours them both a flute. They laugh, toast and make-out like high schoolers. Knox takes over champagne duties...

CUT TO:

INT. YACHT CLUB RECEPTION HALL-LATER

Game on. Our boys have wasted no time getting into character...

Tip is a monster on the dance floor, careful not to spill a drop of his cocktail.

Dickens and Miss Mannix are getting freaky on the boards. Nearby, Gibby covers his son's eyes.

Val is chasing after Jen and Molly for a dance... they want nothing more to do with him.

Knox is regaling a parliament of older WOMEN up at the bar.

Ryan, Brody and Miyala are locked together in a three-way slow dance.

INT. RECEPTION HALL-LATER

The noise simmers in preparation for Knox's speech. Jerry braces himself, ready to take refuge somewhere under Allison's gown. Knox holds the microphone like a pro as he motions for silence...

KNOX

Friends, Romans, Countrymen - lend me your beers. This day has been a long time coming, without a doubt. These two kids have been in love with each other from as far back as most of us can remember and I, personally, would like to thank all of those who made the trip from near and far to be here to help them celebrate.

Val seethes at a far table...

VAL

(under his breath)

Yeah, like that's gonna pay for my plane fare.

Beside him, Ryan swings a heel under the table. Val winces and drinks away the pain.

KNOX

Now many of you know me for being the one to make my living on a stage, standing at a podium or lecturing at sold-out venues ten months out of the year...

Brody and Tip pretend to fall asleep at the dinner table, garnering a few LAUGHS.

KNOX (CONT'D)

But here today you see a man who's held center stage here in Waterfield pretty much his entire life. That's how I met him and that's how I'll always remember Jerry. The most popular guy in town. Not a single enemy anywhere in the world.

(MORE)

KNOX (CONT'D)

(turns to Jerry)

You wear the spotlight well, my friend. You've always known how to capture our attention, hold it as long as you need to and, of course, leave us all with a smile. This is why I must say 'Thank You.'

Jerry loosens his grip on Allison's dress...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Thank you for teaching me how to be the life of the party. You have been entertaining me for over two decades now and everything you have ever taught me I use in all my appearances and all my speeches to help more and more people see the kind of light you seem to emit so effortlessly. I may be the one who got famous for this personality and self motivation approach to life... but I have no problem being another one of your admirers whenever you take the stage or enter a room. I have long since considered my friendship with you as front row seats to the best show in town.

The entire room is blown away.

Jerry is tearing up...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Alley, I think you know exactly what you've got there and what you've had for years. I love you both. So raise 'em up high, kids...

The entire crowd raises a glass on Knox's cue...

KNOX (CONT'D)

To the beautiful couple on this beautiful day... And to the Neighbors, for never once calling the cops on us.

Only the wedding party, Val, Ryan and Dickens are in on the joke.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Boat drinks.

Knox toasts Jerry and Allison, and they drink.

In the crowd, Allison's Mother has two champagne flutes.

INT. RECEPTION-LATER

Jerry and Allison share their first dance to the Bare Naked Ladies' "*What a Good Boy*." All eyes on them.

JERRY
Any complaints?

ALLISON
No way. Everything's perfect. You're perfect.

JERRY
It's all going by so fast...

ALLISON
We knew it would. Good thing we have the rest of our lives to enjoy it.

She holds him close, looking over his shoulder to something in the crowd... her Father is all over her Mother - kissing her, hugging her, showing her off...

A smile of sheer contentment lights up Allison. She squeezes Jerry, whispering in his ear...

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I'll love you forever.

INT. RECEPTION HALL-LATER

The shenanigans resume...

Brody has muscled his way onto the stage - microphone in hand, tie wrapped around his head - singing "*Shameless*" in full-blown drunken revelry. Miyala is completely smitten as she watches him from the dance floor.

Knox and Dickens wait for drinks at the bar...

DICKENS
Great speech.

KNOX
Great guy. Made it easy.

DICKENS
Let me ask you something, Knox. You have writers arrange all your speeches and lectures, or is it all you?

KNOX
Mostly me, but to be honest... My shit's getting old. Sounds too rehearsed most of the time.

DICKENS

So that's where I come in, right?

KNOX

How do you mean?

DICKENS

You need a writer, Knox. A writer who is well versed in dialogue rhythms, speeches, compositions, characters... You need me.

KNOX

You might actually be on to something here, Dickens. When did you brew this up?

DICKENS

I started over, completely. Threw out all my old stuff and started fresh. I'm trying a lot of new angles. Doctor's orders.

KNOX

Alright, so let me ask you something.

DICKENS

Shoot.

KNOX

That script you sent me - the revenge story...? Why not make it a comedy?

DICKENS

A comedy, why?

KNOX

I don't know if you realize this, John, but you're a pretty funny guy.

DICKENS

I am?

KNOX

Sure as shit.

DICKENS

But I just spent ten years in Hollywood with nothing to show for it. I sold one screenplay - a drama - that sat on a producer's shelf for three years before I got it back. Now no one wants it. I suffered a nervous breakdown two months ago and had to move back in with my parents.

(MORE)

DICKENS (CONT'D)

I spent last night dumping a decade's worth of work into Lake Erie and I don't have a single thing to show for all that time I spent out west. I'm a complete zero.

KNOX

I know. It's hilarious.

Dickens registers a look that conveys revelation.

KNOX (CONT'D)

I told you I'd take another look at your script once you'd spent some time re-writing it. But for fuck's sake, Dickens, don't waste my time with cry baby crap. Make me laugh. Everybody tries to get their foot in the door out there with a five-hankie weeper that reeks of Oscar buzz, but you can break through with something better, something original. Nothing's funnier than revenge, come on. How could all those Nerds at Adams College be wrong? Try again. I know you got it in you.

Dickens' face beams with his newfound aura...

DICKENS

I knew I should've read your book years ago.

The bartender returns with their drinks. Dickens get a couple of fruity cocktails while Knox is presented with a 32-ounce Screwdriver. It draws a crowd...

KNOX

Big drinkie. Best Man privilege.

EXT. YACHT CLUB RECEPTION HALL-LATER

Val stands next to a bench outside the hall, puffing on a joint. Discretion need not apply. He watches the covered boats and icy water, his breath coming out in white plumes like comic strip balloons.

Ryan steps out into the cold and finds Val. He barely acknowledges her. She waits for him to speak... he says nothing, keeps puffing.

RYAN

Hey, Val, what's the capital of Thailand?

Val starts to think -- WHACK! Ryan tags him in the balls...

RYAN (CONT'D)

Bangkok.

Val falls slowly onto the bench behind him. Ryan plucks the joint from his fingers and takes a seat beside him...

RYAN (CONT'D)

Good, I've got your attention.

(smokes)

I wanted to pick up where you and I left off the other day in the church. Figured you'd play hard to get after that.

VAL

(straining)

You got me.

Ryan holds the joint in her lips as she digs into a pocket to unveil her wallet. She folds out a picture of her son, Jack - a smaller version of the framed photo on her desk - and hands it to Val...

RYAN

That's my son. Jack. He's four.

The surge of pain in Val's groin is suddenly sidetracked...

RYAN (CONT'D)

The reason I'm not a teacher in Charleston anymore is because I had an affair with the father of one of my students. Jack was the beautiful result of a very ugly ordeal. The guy was married, had three other kids and offered me a bribe to keep my mouth shut after I refused an abortion. I couldn't hide the belly, but the truth got tucked away under a hefty monthly fee that covers that little guy's expenses.

Val holds the photo in his hand now...

VAL

Cute kid. You sure he's yours?

RYAN

(smiling)

Besides Knox, you're the only other person that knows. I hope it stays that way.

VAL

Okay. But why tell me--

RYAN

Because he's my family now. His father is a philandering asshole who pays me off every month.

Val gets the connection...

RYAN (CONT'D)

He makes arrangements to come out and see us. He's not the best father in the world, clearly, but he is trying.

(smokes)

Not a perfect family by any means, but... whose is?

Ryan hands back the joint and stands up...

RYAN (CONT'D)

You come back inside, save me a dance.

She takes her picture and replaces it in her wallet before heading back inside...

VAL

Ryan...?

She stops at the door and turns back... Val tries but can't muster his gratitude in words... he nods... Ryan smiles...

RYAN

You're welcome.

(gestures to his crotch)

You gonna live?

VAL

Kiss it, make it better?

RYAN

So sorry, old friend. The Queen is dead.

She turns away and walks inside.

Val laughs to himself, forgetting the joint still pinched in his fingers. It burns down and sears his knuckles - causing a hilarious reaction. Karma.

INT. RECEPTION HALL-LATER

The garter toss. Jerry works his suave stud magic - a little drunk by this point - as Deana Crater's "*Did I Shave My Legs for This?*" plays over the speakers...

All the bachelors in the room form a squad and wait as Jerry pulls back and flings the garter over his shoulder... the boys part like the Red Sea and only Brody is left in the middle - too drunk

to play along. The garter lands in his drink. Oblivious, he takes a sip.

Later... More lunacy on the dance floor. Tip draws a crowd with his fat-guy-with-crazy-moves routine. Dickens has his hands full of Miss Mannix. A trio of GIRLS fight over Knox. Jen and Molly bust out the Travolta. Allison leads a massive conga line.

Back at the bar, Dickens and Miss Mannix wait for drinks. The Bartender returns with two SMALL cocktails. Dickens ain't happy...

DICKENS

Come on, chief. Where's the booze?

BARTENDER

Chief? I haven't worn that headdress in years.

DICKENS

How 'bout upgrading us to a larger model, huh?

MISS MANNIX

It's okay, John. I should probably slow down anyway. I've gotta do my lesson plans early tomorrow--

DICKENS

It's open bar, right?

BARTENDER

That is correct. But those are the glasses regulated by the Yacht Club--

Dickens is starting to boil - but it's all a show. We can start to see the Jack Nicholson ("*Last Detail*") brewing inside him...

DICKENS

Don't horseshit me, fella. You been slinging drinks in all portions and sizes all night long. What's the big deal?

Miss Mannix is clearly getting turned on...

BARTENDER

Don't give me any shit, buddy, and just enjoy the drinks I gave you. I don't wanna have to call the cops at your buddy's wedding--

DICKENS

(full-blown Nicholson)

I am the motherfucking shore patrol, motherfucker! I am the motherfucking shore patrol!

Bravo. Miss Mannix is wetter than a porpoise by this point. She pulls Dickens away from the bar, huffing and puffing... The Bartender stands back, completely baffled... Dickens breaks free of her grasp to charge back and snag their mini cocktails.

Across the hall, Tip and Brody are on stage singing "*Endless Love*," complete with suggestive hand gestures and body motions. Allison and Jerry watch from afar, mortified.

INT. RECEPTION HALL-LATER

Jerry and Allison pose for pictures as they cut the cake. Unbeknownst to them, Val and Ryan stand on the other side - concealed behind the tiers - swiping frosting from the bottom. The munchies have kicked in.

Miyala takes her turn on stage. She sings "*Fergilicious*" and it turns more than a few heads. Her accent tweaks the lyrics a bit, but her Fergie-like interpretive dancing could rouse even the castrated.

Dickens pops his head out from beneath the long tablecloth covering the dais. Coast is clear - he rolls out and gets back to the dance floor. Miss Mannix is soon to follow. Her hair is an awful mess.

Val and Ryan share a slow dance.

Brody, Dickens and Miss Mannix stand at a high-top amidst the crowd. They are all very drunk by this point as Brody lays into Miss Mannix - her hair still askew - about high school...

BRODY

I think you owe me an apology.

MISS MANNIX

Brody, that was twelve, thirteen years ago. I can't believe you're still not over it yet.

BRODY

How can someone get a D+ in drama?! In all your years teaching, have you ever failed a drama student?!

MISS MANNIX

I did not fail you!

DICKENS

Brody, let it fucking go already.

BRODY

No, no, no, I wanna know why she gave me such a shitty grade.

(MORE)

BRODY (CONT'D)

I've been a four-point student my whole life and that fucking blemish almost hindered my chances of getting into Penn!

MISS MANNIX

If I remember correctly, Brody, you just weren't that convincing in your--

BRODY

Convincing?! Honey, I have spent my entire life pretending to be someone else, and I've been pretty damn successful at it!

(goes to drink, stops)

You honestly think that Columbian bombshell over there would be here with me if she knew I was America's poster child for Lost Horizons?! All do respect to your "expert" opinion, Miss Mannix, but go shovel that crap elsewhere!

(drinks)

MISS MANNIX

Please, call me Diane.

Brody seethes for a moment...

BRODY

Spelled with a capital D+, right?

Across the hall...

Val and Ryan on the dance floor. A tender moment. As they turn, however, we see her hands fastened to his ass.

EXT. YACHT CLUB-LATER

Jerry and Allison stumble into the limo as an adoring crowd cheers them on. They both appear through the sunroof and drunkenly blow kisses as the limo pulls away.

Pull back to reveal the reception hall under a bright winter moon, spotlighting the ruckus below...

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-LATER

Gable pushes the door open and in walks Ryan with Val - barely conscious - slung over her shoulder. She looks around...

RYAN

Is there a lady's room in this joint we can dump this pansy off?

GABLE

Hand him over. I got lots of
experience with this sort of thing.

KNOX

(stepping in)
I heard that, asshole.

Ryan rolls Val onto Gable's shoulder and he carries him off to a
back bedroom...

After them, Tip and Miyala shuffle in - turning their entrance
into a mock ninja fight that carries on all over the house.

Brody and Miss Mannix enter, still debating his D+. Dickens walks
in behind them, taking a pull off a bottle of Cognac he lifted
from the bar.

They all manage to meet back at the bar where Ryan is preparing
cocktails...

RYAN

(calling out)
Gable, you drinkin' yet?

GABLE (O.S.)

Damn right I am!

BRODY

He probably shouldn't. He still has
to drive Tip home.

TIP

Fuck that. I'm staying here tonight.

KNOX

Oh, won't your parents be worried if
you don't come home?

TIP

Are you kidding me, Knox? When they
wake up and see that I'm not home...
There will be dancing.

MISS MANNIX

Still living with Mr. and Mrs.
McMannus? How cute.

DICKENS

Still breast feeding, too, I think.

Gable emerges from the back bedroom...

GABLE

That kid's still got a little life
left in him. Don't count him out
yet.

Ryan sets up seven glasses and pours out shots from a shaker. She divvies them out, holds up her glass, and they all follow suit... IN STEREO: "*To the Neighbors.*"

GABLE (CONT'D)

Can I ask now where that came from?

RYAN

You don't know?

GABLE

Not a clue, but I hear Knox say it all the time, and tonight at the reception--

KNOX

Old school.

BRODY

Goin' back many, many moons.

MIYALA

To the Neighbors! Yes, I hear this a lot. Why?

KNOX

You virgins really wanna see where that came from?

Gable and Miyala both nod, anxious.

All eyes turn to Dickens...

DICKENS

Say when.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD LAKE ROAD-NIGHT

It's a quiet street lined with big old houses, all resting in the darkness.

The limo rolls to a stop in the middle of the street. As the back door opens, we hear the boozy ruffraff inside. Dickens steps out into the night and takes a quick survey of the neighborhood.

From inside the limo his friends peek out...

TIP

Brings back memories, eh, Johnny?

DICKENS

Been a long time.

MISS MANNIX

I have students that live on this street!

KNOX

We all used to live on this street.

RYAN

Gable, you taking notes?

Gable peeks out from the passenger side window...

KNOX

Curtain rise, Dickens. Show time.

It gets quiet. Dickens turns away from the limo and steps closer to the sidewalk, aligning himself with the old houses. He embraces the silence and channels his character...

The gang waits behind him with bated breath...

Dickens looks up - he *is* Marlon Brando. He staggers forward, ripping off his jacket and tearing his shirt... He holds his head, looks up toward the bedrooms...

DICKENS

Hey Steeeeeelllllllllaaaaaaa!!!!

A dog starts BARKING.

DICKENS (CONT'D)

Steeeeelllllllaaaaaaa!!!

The gang in the limo is rolling in their seats. Miss Mannix, however, has never been more turned on.

Dickens belts out another.

INT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

In a bedroom of one of these homes, a MAN sits up in bed...

MAN

Holy shit, it's back!

(shaking his wife)

Honey, wake up, wake up! After twelve years of silence - it's come back!

EXT. STREET-CONTINUOUS

Dickens is screaming himself hoarse. LIGHTS are turning on up and down the street.

INT. HONEYMOON SUITE-CONTINUOUS

Jerry and Allison are in the middle of wedding night sex. They both stop when they hear Dickens' whaling in the distance...

JERRY
Go get 'em, Johnny!

EXT. STREET-CONTINUOUS

Dickens is on his knees, winded...

Miss Mannix can't hold back. In full Stella Kowalski character, she flows out of the limo and helps Dickens finish the scene. They fold together in an embrace there on the sidewalk. The gang in the limo erupts in APPLAUSE.

SIRENS ring out in the distance.

Dickens and Miss Mannix break character and dive into the limo. Gable pulls into gear and tears off down the street and out of sight.

Bedroom windows glow throughout the neighborhood as dogs BARK and CAR ALARMS blare.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-MORNING

Bodies are strewn everywhere. Remnants of a bender spray the rooms like shrapnel. Sunlight starts to peer through the windows and the kids stir about in their comas, finally coming to...

INT. HONEYMOON SUITE-SAME TIME

Across town, Allison wakes up in Jerry's arms and smiles...

JERRY
Good morning, Mrs. Martin.

ALLISON
Good morning, Mr. Martin.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATERFIELD-DAY

The snow is melting and the TOWNIES are out embracing the sunshine.

INT. MANSION-LATER

Ryan and Knox sit in the kitchen nursing their hangovers. Tip waddles in, goes straight for the fridge and helps himself to a 40-ounce Busch Light...

TIP
Time for my noon feeding.

He cracks the top off the beer and leaves.

KNOX

You heading back today?

RYAN

Tonight. Jack and his Aunt Liz are picking me up at the airport when I get back.

KNOX

Bet you're excited.

RYAN

I miss my little guy.

KNOX

Come to any conclusions about that?

Ryan takes a moment, sips her coffee...

RYAN

My mom gets a week off for spring break. She and my dad are coming down to Hilton Head for Easter. I'm thinking that will be the moment of truth.

KNOX

I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by their reactions. I know my parents weren't too thrilled about my brother having kids out of wedlock, but... they light up like Christmas trees when those kids are around now.

RYAN

You gonna add any grand kids to that roster?

KNOX

You're hilarious.

INT. BEDROOM-SAME TIME

Upstairs. Miyala is piling her things into a suitcase. Brody stands at the window with his gaze fixed on the lake. Miyala stops packing and goes over to him, sliding her arms around his chest...

MIYALA

Penny for your thoughts, do you say?

BRODY

That's what we say, yeah.

MIYALA

Spot me a penny?

BRODY

It's coming out of your allowance.

She smiles, but feels that Brody's mind is truly elsewhere...

MIYALA

Donde, Senor Brody? Where are you?

BRODY

I think I've finally come home.

CUT TO:

EXT. DICKENS' CAR-DAY

Dickens and Miss Mannix sit parked outside her house. They are tired, hungover and both covered with HICKIES and SCRATCHES.

DICKENS

Long day of lesson planning today?

MISS MANNIX

I'm gonna try. Hard to argue with two Advil and a long nap, though. Hangovers at my age are like surgical recovery days. You'll see.

DICKENS

I'm really glad you came with me, Miss Mannix. I had a great time.

MISS MANNIX

Me too. We should do it again some time. I'm free pretty much every day after 4pm.

DICKENS

Thank you for listening. For always listening and for letting me be me.

MISS MANNIX

You do it better than anyone I know, John. Keep at it. Like I said - your story's still being written. You need a place to dip your pen... You know where to find me.

She presses a finger to her lips, then passes it to his.

MISS MANNIX (CONT'D)

Here's looking at you, kid.

She gets out and finds her way up the driveway. Her back is covered in SCRATCHES and BITE MARKS.

Dickens smiles to himself as he watches her key into her house and disappear. He drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO-DAY

Val is polishing off a joint in the back of Knox's limo. He is alone, no music, no view of the outside world.

Gable rolls down the dividing window...

GABLE

Whatta' you say, Val? You want me to drive around again, or am I stopping this time?

Val pinches out the end of the joint and tucks it away in his wallet...

VAL

No. No, you can stop.
(pops a piece of gum)
I'm good.

EXT. CEMETERY-CONTINUOUS

The limo slows to a stop along the narrow road. It seems like forever before Val actually steps out. He lumbers through the maze of tombstones - like a zombie in search of his own grave - until he finds it...

Val wipes the snow from his brother's tombstone. He stands there a while, still too cold on the inside to feel the outdoor winter chill. He shakes his head...

VAL

Long time no see, little brother. Sorry about that. And I'm sorry it was you instead of me. But I guess this is still the way it's gotta be, huh? Sucks for you, I know, but... sucks for us a whole lot more. Not exactly the model family for coping, but I hear Extreme Home Makeover is seriously considering mom's audition tape.

Val is trying to make himself laugh. He keeps pushing for even the slightest titter... no dice.

VAL (CONT'D)

How 'bout you just come back for an hour?

(MORE)

VAL (CONT'D)

One quick afternoon, be like it was
for just a little while and we can
put mom and dad and me back together.
Nice sit-down brunch, bagels and
coffee and dad's smells-like-French-
Toast-but-tastes-like-Amish-Death
breakfast--

(tears start)

We can cover all the old bases, Drew.
Sneak a couple beers out back and
hit up Jerry's old man for some free
Slim Jim's at the Deli--

He's too choked up to carry on, muffling the whimpers in his
gloves. He turns away and starts back for the limo... he stops.
Val reaches into his pocket and pulls out the old PHOTO. He
marches back to the headstone... taking the gum out of his mouth,
Val smears it on the back of the photo and presses it to the
headstone - where it sticks in frozen bubble gum adhesion.

Pleased, he returns to the limo...

INT. LIMO-CONTINUOUS

Gable's eyes appear in the rearview mirror...

GABLE

Am I taking you to the airport?

Val is quiet, composing himself.

A beat.

VAL

No. No, I'm going home.

CUT TO:

EXT. JERRY'S HOUSE-DAY

Knox strolls along the sidewalk leading toward the newlyweds'
house. Next door, Gibby is stabbing a "*Martin for Mayor*" sign in
his lawn...

KNOX

You really gonna vote for that
asshole?

GIBBY

He lets me steal beer from his store
and his wife has an ass like a fortune
cookie. Why not?

KNOX

It'll be a landslide.

GIBBY
Harrumph, harrumph!

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Knox lets himself in. Allison is in the kitchen reading wedding cards...

ALLISON
Hey, pervert. Jerry's taking a dump,
he'll be down in about an hour.

KNOX
So marriage hasn't really changed
him at all?

ALLISON
Sorry to say. D'you walk here?
Where's Gable?

KNOX
Apparently his services were retained
by Val for the afternoon.

ALLISON
So Gable shouldn't be expecting a
tip, izzat what you're saying?

KNOX
I got him on salary.

A FLUSH is heard down the hall...

ALLISON
Ah, the sweet sound of wedding bells.

KNOX
Get used to it, honey.

Jerry steps into the kitchen...

JERRY
There's the best man!

KNOX
Your first dump as a married man.
How'd it feel?

JERRY
Al's mom insisted on a rum cake.
Gonna be feeling that one for the
rest of the afternoon.

ALLISON
Lovely.

KNOX
When're you kids shipping out?

JERRY
Tomorrow morning. Can't wait.

Knox helps himself in the fridge...

KNOX
Listen, I think everybody's taking
off later. I know I am. But I wanted
to let you know... the mansion...
I didn't rent it. I bought it.

Allison and Jerry stop what they're doing...

KNOX (CONT'D)
Yeah, funny story. I figure, Dickens
is gonna start working for me, Tip
is still wasting away at the parent
trap, and should we ever decide to
all get together like this again...

JERRY
So the University of Hard Knox finally
gets a frat house. Nice.

KNOX
Couple extra rooms, you know, if you
kids should ever squabble--

ALLISON
Can you put a bed in the hot tub
room?

KNOX
Workers come on Tuesday.

ALLISON
Then I foresee our first fight
happening right about the time we
get back from our honeymoon.

Knox's cell phone RINGS. He flips it open...

KNOX
Brody, if you're calling for a limo
ride to the airport, you're shit
outta luck--
(listens)
You're kidding? And when did you
decide to do that?

Jerry has gone over to help sort through some cards with Allison...

JERRY

Let me guess - now he wants to move to Bangladesh and save the cows, right?

KNOX

Arrright, stay put. We'll be there in ten.

Knox clips his phone shut, shakes his head...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Okay, so no more vacancies at the mansion.

Allison loses count halfway through a wad of cash and Jerry stops short of taking a drink...

CUT TO:

EXT. LILLY'S HOUSE-DAY

The limo rolls to a stop at the end of the driveway...

INT. LIMO-CONTINUOUS

Gable talks to Val through the dividing window...

GABLE

You sure this is what you want?

VAL

No, but... haven't been too sure of anything for a while.

GABLE

You got my cell number if you need me to come back--

VAL

I'll live.

Val stares out the window at his Mom's house...

VAL (CONT'D)

You say bye to the rest of the clan for me, will you, Gable?

GABLE

No problem.

(a beat)

You'll need a ride to the airport?

VAL

Nah. I got one.

Val is out the door. He pulls his carry-on behind him as he heads up the driveway.

Gable watches him a moment before driving off.

INT. HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Val walks in. He sees his mother sitting at the kitchen table and she is clearly surprised to see him. Across from her, just out of sight, we hear a chair pushing away from the table...

Wade steps into frame and stops when he sees Val at the door. They stare at one another for what seems like an eternity.

Wade reaches behind him and pulls a chair out from the table.

A beat.

Val steps away from the door, toward the kitchen...

CUT TO:

INT. DIRTY WORDS PUB-DAY

The jukebox rocks steady with Springsteen's "*Bobby Jean*." Brody shares a booth and a pitcher of beer with Ryan. He is drunk already.

Knox and Jerry enter, finding them near the back. Phil brings two more glasses as the boys sit down...

PHIL

Have to play catch up now, boys.
They're way ahead of you.

KNOX

Better bring us a pitcher of our own
then, Phil.

JERRY

And two straws.

Phil leaves to fetch their request.

KNOX

Arrright, Brody let's have it.

JERRY

Where's Miyala?

BRODY

She go bye-bye. Hasta luego.
(drinks)
I couldn't do it anymore. Stopped
fooling myself.

Ryan refills his glass...

RYAN

He ain't kidding, fellas. Burned his passport this morning. I watched him do it.

KNOX

Not a bad thing.

JERRY

Gonna hang around here a while, Brody?

BRODY

I think so. I took one long look around this morning and... started to like what I saw. No place like home, Jerry. You were right.

(drinks)

Anyone wanna go suit shopping with me tomorrow?

This grabs a laugh as we *pull back* to let these old friends talk it out...

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-DAY

Dickens is setting up his room in the mansion - hanging posters, plugging in his laptop, sorting his memorabilia, etc.

INT. TIP'S HOUSE-SAME TIME

Tip is loading up suitcases and boxes in his bedroom.

...We *pull back*, moving down the hallway into the kitchen where Tip's PARENTS excitedly uncork a bottle of Champagne.

INT. AIRPORT-SAME TIME

Val stands at the gate, his Mother and Father there. We watch from a distance as he hugs them both, turns away and pulls his carry-on into the jetway...

INT. JERRY'S HOUSE-SAME TIME

Jerry and Allison playfully pack their things for the honeymoon. It gets a little too playful after a while and they fall onto the bed together, tearing each other's clothes off...

EXT. MANISON-SAME TIME

Gable is loading Ryan's suitcases into the trunk.

Knox and Ryan stand at the back of the limo...

KNOX

Gonna be a good thing, Ryan. I promise.

RYAN

I know it will.

KNOX

You keep us posted.

RYAN

Will do. Love you.

KNOX

Love you, kid.

They embrace. Knox opens the door for her and Ryan slips in.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Straight to the airport, then you get your ass back here, Gable. No funny stuff.

He gives Knox a half-assed salute before dropping into the driver's seat.

Ryan's window rolls down...

RYAN

Don't get too famous now, arright?

KNOX

I'll leave that up to my adoring public.

RYAN

You do that.

She smiles and the limo pulls away.

EXT. LAW OFFICE-SAME TIME

Brody stands outside his father's law office. The sign on the marquee outside reads "*Carroll and Son, Attorneys at Law since 1961.*"

Brody heaves a cold sigh into the air, takes his hands out of his pockets and walks inside...

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION-LATER

Brody, Tip and Dickens kick back in the main room, drinking beer around a crackling fireplace.

Knox steps in with his suitcases...

KNOX

Alright, my faithful tenants. I'm outta here.

(a beat)

Don't you all have anything better to do? Dickens...? Shouldn't you be composing some of that solid gold speech writing you sold me on? And Tip...? Isn't it tax season? Brody--

BRODY

Quarter life crises require drinking, Knox. And I can't do it alone.

KNOX

Very well. I'll be back in a month, fellas. Dickens, you and I have a conference call next Tuesday, bright and early.

DICKENS

(as Sean Connery)

Prepare to be stunned, my friend.

Knox zips his jacket, wraps his scarf...

KNOX

Arrright, you all know the rules.

TIP

Rules?

KNOX

Yes. I left a posted, typed-out list of laws for this particular estate which I expect you all to live by if you want to exist here.

They all share a dumbfounded look.

KNOX (CONT'D)

Boys...?

DICKENS

No idea what you're talking about, Knox.

TIP

Not a clue.

BRODY

Was it a legal document? Because I would have noticed something like that.

Knox knows they're up to something. The fireplace catches his eye - there is something burning atop the logs... a piece of paper.

KNOX

You fuckers.

The boys try to conceal their laughter.

Knox grabs his suitcases and starts for the door...

KNOX (CONT'D)

Have it your way. Try not to burn the place down, mmkay? Not too much to ask.

TIP

Now that we can do.

An EMBER from the fire cracks and spits out onto the rug. The boys share a wide-eyed look of horror. Brody DIVES on it.

Knox turns back at the door - but they boys cover well. He leaves them with a suspicious glare as he steps out...

KNOX

Fuckers.

EXT. MANSION-CONTINUOUS

Gable meets Knox at the door and trades him a Heineken for one of his suitcases. Together they load them into the trunk of the limo...

KNOX

This be your third trip to the airport today, Gable?

GABLE

Second, actually. I dropped Val off at his mother's.

KNOX

No shit?

GABLE

None.

KNOX

Wow. Looks like this vacation wasn't such a bad idea after all, huh?

GABLE

You thought it would be?

As Gable opens the backdoor, Knox pauses to reflect. He smiles...

KNOX

Well... I wasn't the one looking for answers, so yes, I did.

GABLE

But you wound up finding some?

KNOX

(drinks)

Many men travel the world looking for answers, only to come home again to find them.

Knox dips into the limo and sits...

GABLE

Now I know that's way too profound to be from one of your own mantras.

Knox's smile disappears--

KNOX

I read it on the wall of a men's room somewhere in the Caribbean--

GABLE

I know, I was there. I helped carry you out after they cut you off.

KNOX

I don't pay you to remember, Gab--

Gable shuts the door, cutting Knox off.

GABLE

But I cash the checks so I'll forget.

Gable shimmies around to the driver's side, takes one last look around Waterfield...

GABLE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Vacation my ass.

He opens his door - we can still hear Knox sounding off in the back - and gets behind the wheel.

Gable HONKS as they start to pull away and Knox rolls down his window to catch a final glimpse...

Tip, Brody and Dickens at the mansion's front door - MOONING him.

Knox holds his beer out the window in a toasting fashion...

KNOX

To the Neighbors!

The boys hold their poses - an OLDER COUPLE across the street is horrified - long until the limo's out of sight.

Close in on a snow bank piled high on the side of the road until - A FULL SCREEN OF WHITE FLUFFY SNOW...

The rim of a MARGARITA GLASS is dipped in a heaping pile of PURE WHITE SALT...

EXT. CABANA BAR-SUNSET

...*Pull back* to reveal Allison waiting anxiously for the BARTENDER to finish making her Margarita. He hands it over and she walks out to the beach to meet Jerry - where he sits watching the sunset...

ALLISON

(sipping)

I've been waiting so long for this.

JERRY

You know, you look like your mother with that thing.

Allison pauses for the Kodak moment - the huge glass of booze right at her lips.

Jerry laughs, holds out his fruity foo-foo drink and they toast...

ALLISON

To the Neighbors--

JERRY

Nah, nah, nah - to Us. It's our honeymoon, Alley. No more family, no more friends, out-of-town visitors, no neighbors at all. This one's to Us. Just you and me--

ALLISON

And baby makes three.

Jerry stops shy of his drink...

JERRY

Exsqueeze me?

ALLISON

You heard me, Mr. Mayor.

JERRY

Baby...?

Allison is glowing...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Izzat a virgin Margarita then?

ALLISON

Maybe...

JERRY

You crafty vixen. Are you sure?

ALLISON

Positive.

JERRY

Well... that was fast.

ALLISON

Story of our sex life.

Jerry is too stunned to retaliate...

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Jerry...? You okay?

JERRY

It's Gibby's, isn't it?

Her jaw hits the sand - but she's LAUGHING in an instant. Now Jerry smiles, just as Allison dumps her drink in his face! The chase is on...

These two SILHOUETTES play cat and mouse on the shoreline as Jimmy Buffett's "*Love and Luck*" plays over the closing credits.

FADE OUT: