

"The Long While"

the script for
a Bryan Tap film

3/27/10

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INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - AMBIGUOUS

A BOUQUET OF WHITE ROSES is being wheeled on a room-service cart. We dolly with the cart for several beats as the walls of the HOTEL pass in the b.g.

Continue dollying as the VOICE-OVER of a MAN begins.

MAN

(v.o.)

There's people and then there's the people in the people. But the cycle is arduous and long. The spectrum of a whole life has to come into focus --

We pan away from the ROSES and dolly in on MONROE, a young lady with ragged, sleep-deprived complexion. As she continues walking down the hall, we LEAD her, and the room-service cart pushes on into the out-of-focus b.g.

MAN

(v.o. cont'd)

-- before we can really see what's going on inside. There's folklore. There's stories from widows, widowers, bereaved family members. People just aren't what you make of them...

Monroe finds her room.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monroe enters and immediately spreads herself out loosely on her cheap twin-bed, staring straight up at the cork ceiling.

MAN

(v.o. cont'd)

There are always disappointments. People every day fall short of what's expected of them. And yet most folks don't waste time getting up in the morning. Someone somewhere else will admire them...

Monroe turns away from the perforation holes in her hotel room ceiling, onto her stomach and SCREAMS bloody-mary into her pillow. She turns back over, veins now protruding in her forehead and eyes watering from the force.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

(v.o. cont'd)

That's the horizon, anyway. That's the soothing illusion. Keeps people plugging. Keeps them at ease. So long as they don't ask any more big questions. So long as they continue to think things will get better, even though they never have before. And until then, what is there to go on? People are still people. Cruel, humble...

Monroe continues laying, mentally talking herself out of something she already knows she's going to do.

MAN

(v.o. cont'd)

And sometimes they just have to sift through the firmament and see what's what...

Monroe's eyelids slide down with a simultaneous sigh as she gently shovels her hand down the crotch of her sweatpants.

We pan away to a small PICTURE WINDOW in the hotel room that sees a city-bridge in the distance, and the morning commute blanketed in a thin fog.

MAN

(v.o. cont'd)

...see that there isn't anything left for them there.

CUT TO

INT. MINIVAN - MOVING - DUSK

Monroe sits in the passenger seat of this vehicle, watching wilderness pass her window. A car pulls up in the lane next to her, inside which is an OLD COUPLE; Grandpa drives as Grandma snoozes in the passenger seat, her visor down.

Monroe makes special note of this as we RACK FOCUS to the driver of our minivan - a middle-aged bald man named MONTY.

CUT TO

EXT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Monty and Monroe unload some belongings from the MINIVAN and set them in Monroe's small but winding asphalt driveway. The two exchange brief inaudible dialogue, a hug and a smooch.

Monroe lingers outside to see Monty off.

Once he's out of sight, she goes straight to her garage and gets in her tiny, nondescript CAR. She turns the ignition and leaves, her LUGGAGE still resting in her driveway.

CUT TO

EXT. ADLAI'S HOME - SHORTLY AFTER - ESTABLISHING SHOT

From across the street, we see Monroe's car is parked in the driveway of this slightly eroded lower-to-middle class home.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Monroe is sitting poised at the counter, opposite a man more her age and type, ADLAI. They both have glasses of water in front of them, which they occasionally sip. There's an immodest quiet between the two - the kind that is only correlated to the realization of a futile situation.

ADLAI

How was the funeral?

MONROE

Oh, you heard.

ADLAI

Paper...

MONROE

Well - as far as funerals go...

ADLAI

How was the turnout?

MONROE

Just the family. Me and Monty.

ADLAI

Monty, how's he?

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

He's okay, I think. I think he's doing okay.

ADLAI

I'll send some flowers.

Beat.

MONROE

I need some help.

ADLAI

Well? Monroe? Would you like to tell me about why you're here in my kitchen at this hour? On a school night?

MONROE

I thought you ought to know something. I went this whole weekend, I was supposed to be mending other fences, you know?

ADLAI

What do you mean?

MONROE

I mean, all this... You still have a spell on me, or something, I guess. A friend dies, I have to go out of town, but I'm not grieving, I'm thinking about you.

ADLAI

For what it's worth, it was not my intention to hurt you. Or confuse you. Or anything.

MONROE

I don't know man. Everything was going so well, you and I...were so good together and then it seems like two weeks time, I turn around and you're not behind me anymore. What's that about?

ADLAI

I don't have these answers.

MONROE

Wouldn't it just be so nice if we could still fuck the problems away?

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

Monroe...

MONROE

No, no, no, no, I'm just saying.

ADLAI

We can't let that happen. If you came here plotting to sleep with me or something... We can't let that happen anymore.

MONROE

Hey, do you think I could have a glass of milk?

Slight silence.

ADLAI

Help yourself.

Monroe empties her still-very-full glass of water into the sink and goes to the refrigerator to help herself to some milk.

ADLAI

I don't keep skim anymore.

MONROE

This is fine.

ADLAI

So I don't know about this... I'm sorry you haven't been able to move on or whatever.

MONROE

Look. There are clear barriers between us. I'm not being able to say my things, and you're pretending like you don't have anything.

ADLAI

I don't know how to feel when you turn up at my door at strange hours demanding resolution. There's my thing. That's my main thing.

MONROE

So you haven't at all been in pain?

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

Oh, come on.

MONROE

But you want to act like it.

ADLAI

I don't want to mislead you and make you think there's still hope here, because there isn't. Yes, this thing shook me too. But I was the one that wanted it over, remember? So, naturally, it pinched you more than it pinched me. Big deal. We still get up, we get in our cars. Life doesn't slow down for us because of a few setbacks.

MONROE

I can't...believe what I'm hearing.

ADLAI

I'm just now finding the road out of this thing. Please don't... I mean, I need to do this thing on my own. With solitude. To heal things up. This was such a big mistake coming here tonight.

Monroe wanders aimlessly around the kitchen, stalling, studying its set-up.

ADLAI

So? Monroe? What is this?

Monroe dilly-dallies her way into the LIVING ROOM.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Monroe enters in, Adlai trailing behind. She makes herself comfortable on the LOVE SEAT, he on the adjacent SOFA.

ADLAI

Do not do this.

MONROE

We're just talking. I used to live here, I have certain entitlements.

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

Okay, so fine, stay and talk, let's talk, whatever, fuck.

MONROE

Tell me why...

ADLAI

I began to feel...hollow.

MONROE

Hollow?

ADLAI

Yes, I began to feel hollow and I began feeling small. And even now, you're sitting here in the place where I live and telling me you want things back the way they were, and I feel like you really could care less.

MONROE

Well, then. There's not much I can do about that, is there?

ADLAI

You can actually once in a while mention I mean a little bit of something to you. Would you be nice to me?

MONROE

Adlai, I can't make you feel... large and in charge, or something like that... that's your job. That's your job to figure that out.

ADLAI

You could be kind to me and not shoot me down all the time...
(small beat)
Wait, how did this happen? You come in, you ask for a glass of water, and now you're on my couch and we're negotiating.

MONROE

I need to know we're hearing each other.

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

It's no use.

MONROE

Adlai, I will make things better.

Monroe removes her jacket; Adlai's eyes droop slightly at this. A long gaze with an equally long silence.

ADLAI

(quietly, defeated)

C'mon man. Don't do this.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. ADLAI'S HOME - NEXT MORNING - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The sky is painted an early orange. Monroe exits Adlai's house, approaches and gets in her tiny, nondescript CAR.

CUT TO

EXT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Monroe parks her car in the driveway, where her LUGGAGE has collected some morning dew. She picks up the belongings and heads inside.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - BATHROOM - SHORTLY AFTER

Monroe's naked body is obscured through the smoked-glass sliding door of the shower. She washes herself accordingly.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - HEALTH CLASSROOM - DAY

Monroe scoots a chair up next to RORY, a student around 15 or 16. While appearing completely healthy and average on sight, Rory requires the assistance of an AID (the reasons for which will reveal themselves later on). Monroe is that aid, and Rory is visibly degraded by her company.

On the WHITEBOARD, the word "DEPRESSION" is written with several telling bullets directly beneath it; one says "family", another says "boyfriend", etc.

(CONTINUED)

Offsides, the HEALTH TEACHER sits in a chair, waiting for another volunteer to come contribute to the list. There is a special irony in the fact that the lesson of the day is depression, seeing as this man appears to suffer clinically from it. His beard and receding hairline quite clearly dyed, he slouches shrunken in the throes of a great abstruse meltdown.

Monroe nudges Rory with her elbow and then gestures to the board. He hesitates for a moment and then briskly walks up.

He sloppily jots the word, "bullies", on a new bullet and then scurries back to his desk.

As he sits, Rory's eyes periodically dart to the left and then realign themselves as if trying to catch a clandestine glimpse of something.

That something is PLUTO TRESLEY, the thin and lovely young ginger stationed next to him.

CUT TO

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LATER THAT DAY

There is EXPLOSIVE LAUGHTER from three of the four faculty members sitting around the circular table in the middle of the lounge. They are BILL, CRAIG and PRUDENCE. They all smoke, drink coffee, swear, have their shirts untucked, etc.

Monroe is the outsider, the only one not exercising their lounge liberties.

CRAIG

So: Maritime? Tonight? Anyone?
Everyone?

Bill and Prudence are quick to second the motion.

CRAIG

What about you, Monroe?

MONROE

(snapped from a daze)
What about me what?

CRAIG

Wanna come to Maritime tonight,
have a drink?

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Oh sure. Yeah, what time?

CRAIG

Probably right after school.

MONROE

I have to change...

CRAIG

That's fine. Meet you there? You know how to get there, right?

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - LATER THAT EVENING

From the SALOON-STYLE DOORS at the entrance of the bar, Monroe emerges. She's dressed casually but respectably. Her eyes scan the bar for her party but the friends are nowhere to be found.

She takes an empty seat at the BAR AREA, appearing quite vulnerable to any potential bar-hawk. After a beat, a MAN enters and plants himself next to her.

He is EMMETT MURPHY, someone who wears the same thing every time we see him: a suit made entirely out of PLAYING CARDS. The cards intertwine collectively to make a unified piece. His voice is curiously identical to the OPENING NARRATOR.

Emmett and Monroe share some silence, then...

MONROE

...please don't hit on me.

MURPHY

Hm?

MONROE

Just please don't hit on me or try to buy me a drink or anything like that. You're sitting next to me, that's gotta mean something. So please just don't try and seduce me or get me liquored up or go back to your house or something like that. I'm not a barfly. I'm here because I'm waiting for some of my friends, if that's okay...

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

MURPHY
Alright.

MONROE
Alright. What's your name?

MURPHY
Murphy.

MONROE
First or last?

MURPHY
Last.

MONROE
What's your first?

MURPHY
Emmett.

MONROE
Those are nice names.

MURPHY
Thank you. What's your name?

MONROE
Monroe.

MURPHY
And that's a nice name.

MONROE
Thank *you*.

Silence.

MURPHY
Well. I guess now we're acquainted.

MONROE
How do you do?

MURPHY
Well as ever, I suppose.

MONROE
First time here?

MURPHY
I own this place.

MONROE

Guess not then, huh?

MURPHY

This is *your* first time here.

MONROE

No, I've actually been here quite a few times.

MURPHY

No, I *know* this is your first time. I see all sorts of faces pour in and out of here, I absolutely would have remembered something as... bright and vibrant as yours.

Beat.

MURPHY

But let's get you drinking. A soda pop perhaps?

MONROE

On the house?

MURPHY

Well naturally, yeah.

MONROE

I wonder why not.

MURPHY

Are you going to consider this "buying you a drink?"

MONROE

You own the place...

MURPHY

Yes, but I'm still trying to hit on you.

MONROE

You better hang onto that coke then.

The COLLEAGUES enter through the saloon doors.

MONROE

That's them.

(CONTINUED)

Monroe gets up to greet The Big Three: Bill, Craig and Prudence. All four of them walk through the bar to get to the LOUNGE in the other room. As they turn the corner, Monroe looks back over at Emmett Murphy...

He is toasting Monroe with the soda pop that she rejected.

The wall at the corner begins to fill the FRAME as we dolly with the group out of the BAR AREA. Less and less of Murphy's cheers appears, until the screen becomes completely BLACK -- music building...

MAIN TITLE CARD:	<u>The Long While</u>	(HOLD)
ANOTHER PRECEDES:	<u>Act I</u>	(HOLD)

CUT TO

INT. PRUDENCE'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING

Prudence drives and Monroe rides shotgun. From body language, we can tell that these are two people who don't have an awful lot to say to each other. After a moment, the car pulls into a DRIVEWAY, slows to a halt and parks.

Prudence runs her fingers through her hair to kill time. Eventually, a BACKDOOR opens and CRAIG enters, buckles up.

PRUDENCE

Here we go.

Prudence switches to reverse.

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Craig throws a strike; Prudence and Monroe sit idly by.

CUT TO

INT. CRAIG'S PLACE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Craig and Prudence do a LINE OF COCAINE off Craig's coffee table; Monroe sits idly by.

CUT TO

INT. ANONYMOUS COFFEE SHOP - LITTLE WHILE LATER

Monroe, Craig and Prudence are at a table in the middle of the coffee house - Craig and Prudence are panting doggedly from the COCAINE; Monroe sits idly by.

CUT TO

INT. MONTY'S BEDROOM - MUCH LATER

Monroe lies next to Monty in his bed. They too now pant doggedly. They wear raggedy old t-shirts and a blanket that just barely prevents us from seeing below their waists. Their breathing slows. They've just had sex.

CUT TO

INT. MONTY'S DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Monty and Monroe play YAHTZEE. When they aren't rolling, they've got their fist to their cheeks contemplatively.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - DAY

BILL is mid-geometry-lecture at the front of the room, talking of hierarchies, isosceles trapezoids, so on...

MONROE quietly does paperwork next to RORY, who actively ignores the lesson at hand. Monroe pulls away from the paperwork, looks over to Rory, nudges him, leans in.

MONROE
(whispered)
Are you getting this?

RORY
(whispered)
Yeah, I'm fine.

MONROE
(whispered)
You don't have any of this written down.

RORY
(whispered)
I'm fine. Take my word for it.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE
(whispered)
Please just write some of this
down. Do it for me.

RORY
(whispered)
Okay.

Rory picks up his pencil, poised to start writing.

CUT TO

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LATER THAT DAY

Bill and Monroe linger around the COFFEE MAKER as they talk.

MONROE
But still, will you please just
talk to him? Just talk to him about
this class. Ask him if he's getting
it.

BILL
I mean that really is Craig's job.
That's what he's there for. And his
grades are holding up well enough,
considering...

MONROE
I know. I know that. But I mean. He
is behaving strangely, right? He's
just quiet now.

BILL
I understand. I think I might know
how to help him. Can I see him
tomorrow?

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

RORY holds his head low like a wounded puppy, his eyes wet
with evidence of harsh reprimand. BILL'S face is strained
and aversive, his fists planted on the face of Rory's desk.

BILL
(pulling away, under breath)
Goddamn, you are impenetrable.

Rory stays to himself for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

How can I satisfy you?

(beat)

If there's anything that I can do.

I can get you anything you want.

I'll get you anything you want.

Bill's forehead wrinkles as he contemplates. He pinches the bridge of his nose, eyes a-squint. Finally, he reaches an executive decision on how best to approach this Rory Situation.

BILL

What did it feel like when those kids did that thing to you?

RORY

Sir?

BILL

When those kids, when they took the golf club to ya, what'd it feel like, I'd like to know.

RORY

Please don't ask me about this.

BILL

What'd they use, a wedge?

RORY

No sir.

BILL

3-iron. PUTTER?

RORY

Driver, they used a driver.

BILL

What was the damage?

RORY

Sir, come on.

BILL

Still got some bruises then, do ya?

RORY

What do you care? What are you - why are you doing such intrusive questions?

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Let me see.

RORY

No sir...

BILL

Lift up your shirt, I want to see them.

RORY

Sir, please. Don't make me.

BILL

(firmly)

Pull Up Your Goddamn Shirt.

Rory, bullied, shakes his head weakly one more time.

Bill reaches across the desk and literally TEARS Rory's shirt off his chest.

RORY

Sir!

Rory collapses into his own upper-half, trying to cover LONG BLACK BRUISES and BLEMISHES on his torso but not knowing where to start. Frustrated, humiliated, Rory drops his head onto his desk, into his folded arms and begins to sob mercilessly.

BILL'S FACE shines bright with the whole spectrum of human emotion.

Rory briefly lifts his head, his eyes swollen shut. He quickly extends his arm and tries to snatch his shirt back from Bill but, just as fast, Bill retracts the shirt.

He dangles the shirt in front of Rory once more, like a matador taunting his bull. By now, Rory is so lost in his tears that he doesn't even attempt to get the shirt back.

Bill walks back to his own desk and coldly tosses the shirt into a tiny trash-can resting beside it. He takes a seat, opens a book and begins reading it, still clearly distracted by the exchange.

His face remains a mess of undecodable sentiment; it contorts, pulsates, swarms with feeling. His eyes dart, he breathes heavily out his nose while Rory continues to whimper off-screen.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - TWO WEEKS LATER (CAPTION)

High and wide, we see the FAIRLY LARGE GYM AREA. PRUDENCE is buffering the floor while a small group of people decorate the walls with lights, streamers, confetti, balloons, etc. A disk-jockey sets up his sound equipment.

In the b.g., a large BANNER hanging over the bathrooms advertises Kurring High's "Third Annual Just-Because Dance".

From a pulley, a DISCO BALL is lowered into the center of the gym.

CUT TO

INT. PLUTO TRESLEY'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

PLUTO opens her front door to a finely clad RORY at her doorstep, draped in black with a blood-red dress shirt.

He SMILES.

Pluto, beautiful as ever, greets him with a SMILE in return (her ghost-white dress agrees with her paleness).

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S CAR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Rory drives, Pluto loafs in the passenger seat. There is silence as usual. Finally, Pluto takes an initiative...

PLUTO

You look very handsome tonight,
Rory.

RORY

Oh, thanks. Thank you.

Pluto leans in and kisses Rory on the cheek.

RORY

Oh thanks! Thank you for that!
That's nice.

PLUTO

(smiling bashfully)
Welcome.

Beat, hold.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

We follow behind Rory and Pluto as they walk down the hall of the school, track for a while until they meet the gym doors. Rory opens the door and holds it for Pluto; CAMERA snaps into RORY'S POV and enters behind her.

Once we enter into the gym, we abandon Pluto and immediately gravitate to the WALL, GLIDE down it. CAMERA slides down all four walls of the gym, still in the same shot.

In the course of these four walls, we drift out of conversations just as quickly as we drift into them and become acquainted with the Just-Because Dance, which is now in full swing.

We conclude gliding down the final wall and meet Pluto again, who is just outside a small group of kids, listening to their conversation.

She looks DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA -- RORY'S POV -- and SMILES.

Pluto gently offers her hand to Rory and we SLOW to 40 FPS on her open palm. Rory accepts and they leave FRAME.

[I'M NOT IN LOVE - 10CC]

CAMERA (hand-held) follows Pluto and Rory into the center of the dancing crowd.

We PIVOT around the two as they dance, sweetly and slowly, and build into a dizzying WIDE-ANGLE 360 around them. The end of each revolution brings us a little bit closer, making the next one faster, like a tornado. Closer, faster, closer, faster, closer, faster -- until the CAMERA SNAPS OFF into the crowd. PAN back over to Rory and Pluto but continue sliding back as if by their momentum.

Pluto and Rory steal the show. THE BLUE FLUORESCENT SPOTLIGHT is hung over them while the rest of the dancers are bleakly dressed, lit, behaved.

CAMERA PIVOTS some more and loops one last full 360 around them as their dancing ends and they remain in each other's arms.

We hold on a VERY TIGHT CLOSE-UP of them for a few moments and then ZOOM OUT ever so slowly. Once zoomed out in full, we see that, even though the TWO KIDS have stopped dancing, THE BACKGROUND STILL SPINS in a super-imposed 8mm film projection - pertinent scratch marks and smudges included.

Rory slides his head from Pluto's shoulder up to her face and, for the first time, they KISS.

(CONTINUED)

The catharsis of this kiss brings the world back into perspective and slows the SPINNING BACKGROUND to a halt. The print pauses with a jittery crackle, the song has ended, and the kids exit FRAME.

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - THAT NIGHT

Craig throws some nastiness down the lane; A SHARP-GREEN BOWLING BALL that has the speed and hook of which most pro's can only dream. Consequently, all but one pins go crashing down. Once his ball is sent back to him, he returns to his formal bowling stance and picks up the spare. He could do this in his sleep.

Prudence is, once again, sitting idly in the background, but from the way she smokes and ponders, we might guess that her exclusion isn't affecting her in the least.

Both of these people could be doing what they're doing just as affectively if they were all by themselves.

Prudence excuses herself...

CUT TO

EXT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - PHONE BOOTH - A MOMENT LATER

Prudence holds the telephone receiver, still smoking;

PRUDENCE

Claire? Prudence. I was just wondering if my dad was done yet...

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Bill and Craig are sitting at the table behind their lane.

CRAIG

If I tell you this, you can't tell Monroe.

BILL

Prudence?

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
Or Prudence.

BILL
Might have to tell Monroe.

CRAIG
No, don't tell anybody.

BILL
Depends on what it is. Might have
to tell Monroe, all I'm saying.

CRAIG
-- I got her pregnant.

PRUDENCE enters the bowling alley, now appearing more distraught than before she was on the phone. Dissuaded when she comes to the lane and sees Bill and Craig talking, she wanders over to the BILLIARDS AREA.

She approaches a random pool table where two black young things are knocking some balls around. They are MATCH and BAUMGARTEN, both in their early twenties.

PRUDENCE
This table wouldn't happen to have
room for another cue, would it?

The two girls stare at each other for a moment, puzzled by her presence and even more by her question.

PRUDENCE
I'm sorry, nevermind. That was out
of line. I'll leave you two alone,
I'm sorry--

MATCH
No, no, no. You can play for me. I
was about to use the bathroom
anyways.

The two pool-girls bicker using only eye-contact as Match hands her cue off to Prudence and exits FRAME. Prudence and Baumgarten are alone now, sharing healthy silence at first.

PRUDENCE
I'm Prudence.

BAUMGARTEN
I'm Baumgarten.

They shake hands, acknowledge each other.

PRUDENCE
So...stripes or solids?

CUT TO

INT. BOWLING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Craig and Bill sit on the step behind their lane.

BILL
Who all knows?

CRAIG
No one. Just us three now.

BILL
You seriously did this.

CRAIG
I don't know what to do. I can't be
a dad to a baby.

BILL
Why did you tell me this?

CRAIG
I was thinking of ways you might be
able to help.

BILL
And what did you come up with?

CRAIG
I was thinking maybe you could...
might, I don't know --

BILL
What is it?

CRAIG
Your brother.

CUT TO

INT. BILLIARDS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Match returns to the pool table.

MATCH
Excuse me, I need a conference with
my friend here.

(CONTINUED)

Match grabs Baumgarten's wrist and pulls her away from the table. They discuss something inaudibly, occasionally looking back at Prudence. They come to an agreement and then walk back to the table.

MATCH

So. We're meeting a few friends at the West Foster house and, if you were interested, we would be interested in extending the invitation to you.

PRUDENCE

Oh, well I already have kind of a commitment with some friends of my own here.

MATCH

You can't break one little plan?

BAUMGARTEN

Come on. Just to the West Foster.

Meanwhile, the white-dressed girl PLUTO TRESLEY enters the alley and heads to the front desk. In passing, she makes fleeting eye contact with Prudence who is leaving the alley with her two new friends.

CUT TO

INT. BOWLING AREA - CONTINUOUS

CRAIG

I understand.

BILL

It's just I'm not even on good terms with my brother right now.

CRAIG

I understand, Bill.

BILL

Why'd you tell me? Really. I mean. It's not like I've... is this my reputation now? I listen to people confess heinous things. That's me? I'm the go-to guy for that?

CRAIG

Bill, you're my friend. I told you because I want to hear what you have to say.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

I think you got someone pregnant
that you don't care about and that
you hardly even know. And I think I
can't condone that.

CRAIG

Please. I never would have--

BILL

(getting up)

I don't even talk to my brother.

Bill leaves.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S CAR - PARKED - A MOMENT LATER

Rory watches Bill make his way through the parking lot to
find his car, which is coincidentally the one directly to
the left of Rory's. Though Bill doesn't even notice him,
Rory still shrivels up and sighs, annihilated.

After a few moments, Pluto enters and situates herself.

PLUTO

10 bucks for three games.

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - THAT MOMENT

Craig returns his streaky-neon bowling shoes to the front
desk. He heads towards the exit.

CUT TO

EXT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

We follow behind Craig as he walks through the parking lot
to find Bill's car. He approximates where the car should be,
and then the CAMERA MOVES OVER HIS RIGHT SHOULDER to reveal
that the parking spot is vacant. Bill has left him. Next to
the empty spot, Rory's car is parked. The lights of the
parking lot illuminate Pluto and Rory's bodies in the front.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S CAR - PARKED - CONTINUOUS

Rory and Pluto watch Craig throw a contained mini-tantrum that Bill has deserted him. They laugh and watch him walk back into the bowling alley.

RORY

Let's just stay in here for a while if that's okay... I just don't want to have one of those run-in's with the whole hey-how-are-you thing, y'know? I just hate they had to be here.

PLUTO

Okay. Sure.

Rory turns a knob on the dash and the sound of the HEATER kicks in. Rory takes Pluto's hand from her lap and clinches it tight;

RORY

Thank you so much. For everything.

HOLD on them for a long kiss.

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Craig turns the bowling alley upside down looking for Prudence. First, he starts at the BILLIARDS AREA. His eyes scan, but the place is empty. Then, he goes to the BAR AREA. His eyes scan, but there are only a few lazing drunkards. Then, he moves onto the ARCADE AREA. Every machine is off, and there's not a single soul in sight.

CUT TO

EXT. WEST FOSTER PICTUREHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Prudence, Match & Baumgarten walk in a tight pack as it appears to have gotten colder. The wind has increased.

As they enter into the old run-down movie house, CAMERA TILTS UP to show a man on a ladder changing the marquee. Above the marquee, reads "West Foster Pictures & Plays".

CUT TO

EXT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - THAT MOMENT

Craig is walking away from the CAMERA, beginning a trek home with his arms wrapped tightly around himself. The wind blows violently now with a serration in its chill. He becomes smaller in the distance until he disappears into the night.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S CAR - PARKED - THAT MOMENT

Rory and Pluto are soundly asleep in the backseat. Their clothes are undone, comforted by each other's arms. The heater kicks off as the car runs out of gas. Dead silence...

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - MORNING

Monroe watches TV on her couch with her morning coffee in hand. She is naked except for her blue jeans. Hold on her.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

CAMERA moves through Adlai's house (cut with dissolves) to get to his bedroom door, which is open a crack. CAMERA pushes timidly through the door, showing Adlai's bed and the sexual activity under its sheets. No lights on, just the morning sun peeking through the very thin curtains on Adlai's windows.

More thrusting, and then Adlai pulls the sheet off his head revealing a BARE-CHESTED LASS underneath him. As the sex continues, Adlai sneaks his hand over to the nightstand, pulls the drawer out and reaches his hand into a small black bag buried there. Adlai takes his hand out and smears a handful of POKER CHIPS onto the lass's bare chest.

CUT TO

EXT. ADLAI'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The Lass is now redressed and backing out of Adlai's driveway in her tiny gray car. Adlai, in his robe, salutes her and then heads back inside.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adlai enters, takes off his robe and hangs it over the love seat. Now completely naked, he takes a seat on the chair beside the couch, brings over an OLD ROTARY-STYLE PHONE and sits it in his lap. He turns on the TV, daytime-talk-show bullshit sounds off-screen. He picks up the receiver.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Monroe still sits on the couch with her coffee as the television glazes over her. Then the phone rings. Monroe gets up to answer it, we HOLD on the vacant couch.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

Adlai is still naked in his chair with the base of the phone covering his groin.

ADLAI
(softly)
Hi...

MONROE
Hi? Adlai?

ADLAI
Yeah.

MONROE
How are you?

ADLAI
Good, good. You've been well?

MONROE
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

Good, good.

MONROE

So... what's festering you enough
to ever want to talk to me again?

ADLAI

Oh, no, I just thought I'd call
and... 'cause we haven't really
spoken since... How's everything
since...?

MONROE

...It's been okay... It's a bit
early for this, don't you think?

ADLAI

Oh no, I woke you?

MONROE

No, no. I mean...soon.

ADLAI

Oh, oh, I see. Well, I guess if you
think it is...

MONROE

Well, I mean...

ADLAI

I thought it'd be worth finding
out, y'know?

MONROE

Yeah well I don't think I'm ready
to talk about things yet.

ADLAI

Okay well... just thought I'd see.
I've been really lonely.

MONROE

I'm sorry. I mean, I'd still love
to keep in touch with you and talk.
That's all great, but we don't
really need to confront *that*, do
we?

ADLAI

I think we do, but...

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Well, why don't you tell me how
you're feeling and then... we'll
see about me.

ADLAI

I got laid this morning.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT EXACT MOMENT

Monroe slams the phone down on the counter in the
out-of-focus b.g., while her vacant couch still fills the
f.g.

INTERCUT

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

CAMERA begins pushing in on Adlai in his chair.

ADLAI

Hello? Monroe, hello? Hello?

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

We're now with Monroe as she paces in the kitchen, gathering
herself after this blow. She finally musters enough will to
pick the phone back up;

MONROE

I'm sorry. I just was not expecting
that.

ADLAI

You asked me. I told you.

MONROE

(breaking a bit)
So I'm sorry. I was a bit shocked.

ADLAI

I know, I felt guilty, I had to
tell you.

MONROE

Don't tell me in the future.

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

I didn't want to tell you this time. But I really had to.

MONROE

Okay... I understand.

ADLAI

I really wanted it to be you this time. I mean, I know I've been guilty of it before, wanting to wake up next to you, but it was really bad this time. One of our morning fucks. God... I really want to be near you right now.

MONROE

I don't...want to meet you.

ADLAI

No?

MONROE

Not after you did that. I need to give it some time, let it sit. I mean, I still have feelings, Adlai. You can still hurt me.

Beat, long pause.

ADLAI

There's no window left for me, is there?

MONROE

I wouldn't rule anything out, but...

ADLAI

Oh, the "but". There's the "but".

MONROE

Adlai, you know how precious you are to me. You went and did this and that's kind of despicable.

ADLAI

I feel awful about this. I still do. I did the second I pulled out.

MONROE

During?

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

What?

MONROE

During?

ADLAI

During what?

MONROE

When you were inside her?

ADLAI

...No, not during. Only before and after. You know that drill, Monroe. I got what I needed and now I feel awful. You know that drill.

MONROE

Why did you make yourself do it?

ADLAI

I don't...know. But I had to tell you. I thought there was something admirable in that.

MONROE

I guess...

Beat.

ADLAI

I'm precious to you?

MONROE

Was she better?

ADLAI

Better at fucking: yes. Better at making love: no. I fucked her. It was my primal instinct. I had to have her. She was one of those supposedly unattainable girls. That was the main thing. That's why I wanted her and that's why I had her.

MONROE

I am too.

ADLAI

Yeah, well, I'd be having sex with you too right now if I found out

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI (cont'd)
you were interested... Wait, you're
jealous?

MONROE
Of course I am, I'll always be
jealous when this happens. Our
desperations keep crossing paths at
the wrong times. I just have a
stronger will than you, that's
all...

ADLAI
If we were talking about this in
person, you'd already have your
shirt off by now.

MONROE
(indeed without shirt)
...yyyyyyeah.

ADLAI
I just miss the way I fit inside
you. Everybody else is... I don't
know, they don't wrap around me the
way you did.

MONROE
...I'm going to hang up now, Adlai.

ADLAI
No, no, wait. Wait, wait, wait.
You...

MONROE
(agitated)
What, Adlai?

ADLAI
You aren't weirded out by this, are
you?

MONROE
Weirded by what?

ADLAI
Just talking about this shit
explicitly. This is a new low for
us if this is uncomfortable for you
right now...

MONROE

What are you talking about ?

ADLAI

Fucking you. Your vagina on my dick. If that's weird, then you and I are actually done. And that's scary.

MONROE

I'm sorry if your terminologies aren't putting me in the mood.

ADLAI

In the mood is one thing, but if it's making you uncomfortable...

MONROE

I don't know -- shit! No, I'm not comfortable with this and yes, that's okay.

ADLAI

Nononono no it's not, you see, because there was a time when I could talk about putting it inside you as nonchalantly as "what's the weather like" and you wouldn't think three times about it. But this is making you tense, I can hear it in your voice. We swore that we would still be direct with each other. That would not be affected. But it has. What's going on with you?

MONROE

Christ, man...idontknow...you call me, it's been a while now since... I mean it's been a long time! The pallet gets clean after this long.

ADLAI

That might be true, but you are skirting the fact that I'm trying to stay the same for you and you clearly aren't doing the same for me.

MONROE

No, that's one of the perks. I don't have to reserve myself.

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI

I'm not mad, you know?

MONROE

Okay. Okay.

ADLAI

I'm not mad about this, I'm just kind of sad, you know? This is official now.

MONROE

Shit.

ADLAI

I never saw this coming.

MONROE

See what coming?! This is so fucked up and blown out of proportion --

ADLAI

No, Monroe. This means something.

MONROE

Well I'm not going to tell you that it doesn't. You can think things. But to me, it means nothing.

ADLAI

Yeah, but that's because you're talking to someone who was exactly the same as he was the last time you talked to him. I don't have that luxury. Picture me, I don't know, with a mohawk or something. Would you be able to look at me straight?

MONROE

Jesus fucking Christ, Adlai. Jesus fucking Christ.

ADLAI

Look, I'm sorry I lashed out at you. But have a little perspective here. Please.

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

Hold on Adlai in the chair.

MONROE

Here, okay? How's this: Adlai, oh Adlai, won't you jerk out that thick dick of yours and spread your head on me? Oh god, my pants are so oily on the inside, Adlai! Oh my god, Adlai! Oh! Oh! Oh! Just put your fuel inside me, start me on up, Adlai! My twat, Adlai! My pussy melts for you.

The base of the telephone begins to rise on Adlai's lap, masking his erection.

ADLAI

I'll shove my shit in until you're numb, honey.

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Monroe stands dead-still at the counter.

Beat, long silence.

ADLAI

Be my skin-slicker. I wanna wear you inside-out until you're bleeding.

Adlai's voice becomes totally indistinctive phone-talk. As his inaudible smut continues, Monroe becomes visibly excited. She swallows deeply, breathes laboredly.

CUE CLASSIC ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

Monroe returns to the empty couch. She turns the TV off and unzips her jeans; a tuft of pubic hair spills out. She slides her idle hand into her pocket, while the other hand holds the phone to her ear.

MONROE

(quietly)

Oh baby, go around the back door for me. Shave yourself and send your swimmers into me. I want it so hard that I can taste them on the other end. Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me! P-E-E-I-N-M-E.

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

From floor-level We push in on the back of Adlai's chair as he talks.

ADLAI
(quietly)
I'm ready to slide it in. I'm gonna
slide it right in you. I'm gonna
bend you over and I'm just going to
attack you.

Adlai drops the base of the rotary-style telephone into
FRAME on the floor. Hold on the close-up.

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Monroe speaks off-screen as we slide down the counter,
towards the FAUCET on her sink, which occasionally drips.
The SCREEN slides/divides into a SPLIT-SCREEN of the two
images: the base of Adlai's phone & the faucet on Monroe's
sink. Both their voices are distorted as spoken through a
phone now. Classical music intensifying...

MONROE
I'll suck it anytime, anywhere,
baby. You just name the time or day
and I'll welcome you to the gates
of Head Heaven.

ADLAI
Oh yeah!

MONROE
Oh yeah, oh yeah oh yeah. Baby, I'm
getting so hungry for you.

Moans & groans, moans & groans, moans & groans.

ADLAI
Am I in you? Am I in yet? Am I in?

Moans & groans, moans & groans, moans & groans. They both
climax like a pair of pathetic monkeys. Their breathing
slows, recomposing themselves. Relief.

ADLAI
I'm so proud of you.

(CONTINUED)

Monroe hangs up and the faucet-half of the SPLIT-SCREEN abruptly disappears, leaving the FRAME all to Adlai's phone. The infamous dial tone rings resoundingly. Adlai's labored breathing still on the line. It fades away as he pulls the phone from his face. His hand hangs the phone up.

END CLASSICAL MUSIC.

IN BLACK;

ONE WEEK LATER

CUT TO

INT. WEST FOSTER PICTUREHOUSE - PROJECTION ROOM - NIGHT

ADLAI, clad in a red West Foster employee vest, snaps a reel of film into the projector and gives it a whirl. Once the film is safely up and running, Adlai rests his feet on a nearby table and begins reading a magazine.

As seen from Adlai's projection balcony, there are only two people in the theatre: one in the back and to the far right, and one towards the front and in the middle.

Almost as if the POV of the movie screen, we look at the audience head-on but the blinding projection light spitting straight at the CAMERA obscures our vision. The main theme of the anonymous film begins pounding.

MONROE is the figure towards the front. She contently watches the movie.

MAURY ADULTZ is the figure in the back row. This man is clearly not as interested with what's happening on screen. His eyes periodically dart from the screen to Monroe's figure at the front.

ADLAI continues reading his magazine in the projection booth.

As seen from Adlai's projection balcony in a series of time-lapse DISSOLVES, Maury snakes his way through several rows of seats and ends two chairs to Monroe's left. After the final DISSOLVE, the CAMERA tilts up to the screen:

"Fin"

Last climactic notes on the soundtrack play and the screen goes black. Projection ceases. The house lights come up over Monroe. Maury stares at her two seats down, begging to be acknowledged.

(CONTINUED)

Meanwhile, ADLAI exits the projection room with his vest slung over his forearm.

Down below, Maury continues staring at Monroe innocently if not persistently.

MAURY
Interesting film...

Monroe smiles politely, leaves. Maury swiftly catches up.

CUT TO

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Monroe walks and Maury follows suit.

MAURY
I'm Maury.

MONROE
...Hi...

MAURY
You're supposed to say your name now. Unless you're not an... etiquette-type gal.

MONROE
I'm...Sherry Green.

MAURY
Glad we met.

Maury extends his hand and Monroe obliges him.

MAURY
Funny it was just us in there, huh?

MONROE
Yeah. Funny.

Maury forces a laugh.

MAURY
So where you headed?

MONROE
Um... well, I was going to get home, actually.

(CONTINUED)

MAURY

You don't have friends... a
boyfriend you'd rather spend time
with?

MONROE

No.

MAURY

Well, I'd like to change that. I
was wondering if you'd like to grab
a quick drink...

MONROE

...Ah, no. I really should get to
sleep.

MAURY

I see. It is a school night, after
all.

MONROE

I work at a school...

MAURY

Oh.

MONROE

What.

MAURY

What?

MONROE

You sound disheartened.

MAURY

Me? No.

MONROE

...Sure?

MAURY

No, no, no.

MONROE

...Okay.

MAURY

So about that drink...

(CONTINUED)

MONROE
Didn't I say no?

MAURY
Oh, I thought that was just a line.

MONROE
No, I really have to be up... I
work at a school, remember? A high
school.

MAURY
Oh, well, I understand.

Beat.

MONROE
Just coffee, okay?

MAURY
Sure

At that moment, ADLAI AND MONROE run into each other, sharing very awkward eye-contact and sealing an unspoken agreement that they are to be strangers to each other when in public. We bathe in a gloriously uncomfortable moment before Adlai continues on his way and Monroe leaves his Maury, leaving the hallway empty.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. KURRING HIGHSCHOOL - TEACHERS LOUNGE - DAY

Monroe licks an envelope, seals it shut and then sits it on the table. She takes a pen and scribbles "ADLAI" on it.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. BILL'S MATH CLASS - A WHILE LATER

Bill reads a book at his desk while the class works studiously from their text. There is intermittent chit-chat.

Monroe continues on some paperwork while Rory struggles with his math. Upon recognizing Rory's stress, Monroe leans in.

MONROE
Hey champ, how we doing?

Rory's paper has hardly anything written on it, and what's there is clearly incorrect.

(CONTINUED)

RORY
Oh, me? I'm fine.

Rory covers his work with his sleeve.

MONROE
...Are you sure?

RORY
Oh, yeah. I got this. I got this
down.

Beat.

MONROE
Hey, look at me.

Rory looks at Monroe.

MONROE
If you're having trouble with
this--

RORY
No really. I'm okay.

MONROE
It's okay to ask for help. You know
that, right?

RORY
No, I think I'm really getting the
hang of this. Seriously.

MONROE
Rory, I saw your work. You don't
have to lie to me. I'm your friend.
There's no shame in having a hard
time, this is tough stuff.

RORY
I know. I think I have it though...

MONROE
Nonsense -- Bill?

Bill breaks away from his book and looks at Monroe.

MONROE
Could you come here for a second,
we need some help.

BILL

Oh. Certainly.

Bill comes over. Rory quickly becomes embarrassed and palpably nervous.

MONROE

See? Piece of cake.

SOUND DROPS OUT as Rory's discomfort with Bill overcomes anything else. We briefly change to 40 frames on Rory's face, and then change back. All that can be heard of Bill's explanation:

BILL

See? You got this, sport.

Bill smiles, winks at Rory, backs away. Rory smiles back out of politeness, but there's an irreplaceable scar underneath. Monroe continues explaining a few things to Rory. Bill returns to his desk.

SOUND DROPS ONCE MORE;

Bill stares at Rory with a definitive ice in his glare, like Jack Torrance staring into the winter from his writing room at the Overlook Hotel.

TITLE CARD:

ACT II

(HOLD)

IN BLACK, THERE ARE GUNSHOTS - LOUD. PIERCING. NEARBY.

CUT TO

EXT. VAST OPEN HUNTING FIELD - DAY - SOME TIME LATER

First, we see an ESTABLISHING SHOT of the reserve. The sun is high in the sky, it's about noon. We see a flock of birds fly off in the distance, scared by the gunshots. We dolly away now, better indicating the panorama of this gorgeous hunting scape. Continue dollying until the barrel of a 20-GAUGE SHOTGUN, drawn and aimed, comes into frame.

Wider, then, to show that the gun belongs to BILL. He aims ardently towards the sky, waiting for a decent bird to come his way. After a moment of agonizing concentration, he FIRES.

In a different area of the hunting field, we see CRAIG loading shells into his 20-GAUGE.

(CONTINUED)

In yet another area, we see MONTY and MAURY ADULTZ (now more visible as a petite 20-year-old who is dressed like an upper-class Englishman). Monty holds his gun with apathetic limpness. Maury has both hands in his pockets, the barrel of his gun pinched between his left arm and his torso.

MONTY

So. How are things working out?

MAURY

With Monroe?

MONTY

Yes.

MAURY

Um...

MONTY

I've got an obligation to tell you, because I respect you, I've got an obligation to be loyal to Monroe. You and me, we get along great, that's great. As far as I'm concerned, there isn't another person as deserving of what she has to offer. But my friendship with you is pretty weak compared to my friendship with her. Especially since the funeral, and I've kind of had to fill that gap she left. And I have an appreciation for her recent track-record. Getting walked all over, again and again and again. Hurts like hell to watch her get hurt like that. I've had this talk with all the men except for the last one, and look how that turned out. I had a good feeling about him. Can't do that again. Needless to say, it's a requirement now. Part of the curriculum. So, I need to know, and I need you to know that I'm going to relay my information to Monroe down to the letter, the nuance, the hesitation, all that stuff. I need to know: how do you assess the situation so far?

MAURY

No pressure?

(CONTINUED)

MONTY

I didn't say that. I don't like to say that. I owe you more than that. I owed the men more than that. I don't like to be the bodyguard but the position has fallen in my lap. And who would I be to step out on a flyball? It's not in my nature. Neither of the things.

MAURY

But is it true that you're closer with me than you were with the others?

MONTY

Of course, but I've still gotta be firm here.

MAURY

I respect that. I respect that enough to tell you that I think I love her.

MONTY

Good. You made the right decision in telling me that.

MAURY

Do you know how she feels about me?

MONTY

I do.

MAURY

Yeah?

MONTY

Yeah.

Beat.

Craig and Bill walk towards Monty and Maury, each toting their gun in one hand and a DEAD PHEASANT in the other. The sun bleaches out the b.g.

CRAIG

Any luck?

MAURY

Afraid not.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

You pansies.

Craig and Bill are now standing with Monty and Maury. There's still a visible tension between Craig and Bill, like a rekindled flame that was once deeply asunder.

MONTY

When are we going back? I've been on my legs for six hours straight.

CRAIG

When you get a little blood on your hands, that's when we'll head back.

MONTY

No, no. I told you, the one condition. I told you I would come only if I wasn't forced to kill anything. If I gave it my all, you said, if I gave it everything, we could leave at a reasonable hour.

CRAIG

Come on, did you even fire at anything?

MONTY

Yeah. I did.

Craig questions Monty.

MONTY

No, really, I did.

Craig grabs the barrel of Monty's gun and sniffs it point blank for the scent of gunpowder...

The gun goes off and shoots Craig in the face.

Monty and Maury instinctively catch his limp body as it topples over. Struggling to use proper logic, the men try to stand Craig up straight. Instead, he obviously collapses again.

The three men standing slowly come around and struggle to rationalize what has happened, meanwhile breathing heavily. After a moment, they begin to snicker out of total confusion and shock.

(CONTINUED)

BILL
Uhhhhhhh...

MONTY
Oh my god.

MAURY
Wow. Uhh. What should we -- Wow.

Then, the sincerity of the situation takes hold.

BILL
Okay. Okay. Okay. Okayokayokay.
Somebody... okay, somebody... one
of us has to check his pulse. I
mean. Right?

MAURY
Shit. Is this really real?

Bill is tongue-tied. Maury is trembling. Monty is white as a sheet. We dolly from Craig's FEET up to his TORSO. Ever-so-subtly: Craig's belly moves up and down.

ALL
He's still breathing!

BILL
Maury, you go back to the lodge and tell the woman exactly what happened - tell her the whole truth. Monty, you go call an ambulance. I'll stay here with him. No lying, guys. We'll be alright if we just stick to the truth.

MONTY
Hang on a sec here now, Bill. I don't think I can do this.

BILL
Monty, you have my word, everything will be fine if you just, tell, the truth.

MONTY
But what if everything's not fine?

BILL
MONTY! We don't have time for this shit! Go now, take responsibility for this.

The group disbands timidly. HOLD ON CRAIG'S FEET ONCE MORE.

(CONTINUED)

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

INT. NEW JAMES HOSPITAL - ROOM - THAT NIGHT

CRAIG is comatose in his hospital bed with a large white bandage covering his freshly sutured skull. The heart monitor beeps and occasionally the respirator hisses.

Bill sobs silently with his head in his hands next to Craig's hospital bed. Hold.

Maury and MONROE glumly stand in the doorway of the room.

MONROE

Bill, we're going to head home.

Bill turns to them. He wants to say "oh, okay" but is lost in his quiet weeping. He gets up and goes over to Maury and Monroe. He shakes Maury's hand and then hugs him. Then, he embraces Monroe long and tenderly. They cry on each other's shoulders. He kisses her on the cheek. He smiles to them warmly.

BILL

(gesturing to Craig)

Back to work.

Final salutations, then Maury and Monroe leave. Bill turns back and continues tending to Craig.

CUT TO

INT. POLICE STATION - INVESTIGATION ROOM - THAT MOMENT

MONTY stares blankly at the face of a table where he's been seated. He clutches his gut with a queasiness, he furrows his brow with an aimless anger. Then he tilts up to the TWO-WAY MIRROR directly in front of him.

CUT TO

EXT. NEW JAMES HOSPITAL - THAT MOMENT

Maury's arm is wrapped tightly around Monroe as they exit the hospital, as seen from a distant establishing shot.

CUT TO BLACK

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - NIGHT

Still black, we hear the door unlock, the knob turn, and then the streetlights outside illuminate Maury and Monroe's entrance into the home.

Maury flips some lights on. On the linoleum floor, Monroe sees an envelope that has "Monroe" inscribed on it and frantically stuffs it into her coat pocket. She exits with the coat slung over her forearm.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Overhead, we see Maury and Monroe both fast asleep in bed and snoring rabidly.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Identically overhead, early sunlight pours in through the blinds. Maury is no longer in bed and Monroe is curled up tightly in the fetal position with her comforter as a cocoon. She shivers.

CUT TO

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maury fills two coffee mugs with foamy french roast. He carries the cups and sets them on the placemats of the dining room table.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maury enters and addresses Monroe.

MAURY

Made coffee. You should get up.

MONROE

Feel my head.

Maury enters further and takes a seat on their bed, where Monroe is nestled. He feels her head.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Am I warm?

MAURY

A little.

MONROE

I feel like complete shit.

MAURY

So you can stay home with me.

Beat.

MONROE

Maybe -- yeah -- maybe some coffee.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Bill speaks in the exact middle of the room to the class, with a fatigue and heartbreak throbbing in his voice.

BILL

So. I don't have a whole heckuva lot planned for you kids today. Long weekend short, I'm just not in the right mind frame to be a good instructor right now. So today: study hall. We'll pick back up Monday, I would guess... I don't even know why I'm here right now... but-so-yeah, find something. Something to work on quietly. You've got the remainder of the hour. I'm not taking any questions or putting up corrections. Today is yours. Monday, we'll hop back on track. Sound good? Oh and uh... leave me alone. I'm kind of going through some shit, so... this hour is yours. Yours. For a reason. I don't want to answer to any of you today. Just talk quietly amongst yourselves and...

CUT TO

EXT. STREET - THAT MOMENT

Maury walks on the sidewalk down this densely populated city street. He walks for a while before entering Blind Merchant's Convenience Store.

CUT TO

INT. BLIND MERCHANT'S CONVENIENCE - CONTINUOUS

Maury enters and heads to the back corner of the very small and tidy convenience store. He reaches into one of the freezers, pulls out a CARTON OF EGGS.

He selects some DONUTS from a large glass container and drops them into a little paper bag.

CUT TO

EXT. BLIND MERCHANT'S CONVENIENCE - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Maury begins walking home on the same sidewalk as before, with his plastic shopping bag of Blind Merchant goods. He continues walking when out of nowhere, something from the sky hits Maury square on the head.

BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. STREET - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

As seen from Maury's POV, everything is a blur and then we gradually focus. The street is flipped vertically because Maury is laying on his side. He comes to from the blow to the head, and slowly reorients himself upright.

Bystanders have made a circle around him. They are clearly shocked by something in particular...

Maury looks more confused. He squints as the sun blinds him. He holds his hand to his head as if hung over, groans from the ache...

MAURY
What's happened?

MALE BYSTANDER #1
It appears you've been struck on
the old noggin.

(CONTINUED)

MAURY

By what?

MALE BYSTANDER #1

By, uh... that.

The man gestures to an area of the pavement where there is A SET OF UPPER-TEETH DENTURES. HOLD. Maury picks it up.

MAURY

(flailing the teeth)

This? I was hit by this? How did this hit me on the head?

MALE BYSTANDER #2

What explanation could possibly make you happy?

FEMALE BYSTANDER

Are you alright?

MAURY

I think I might have a concussion.

Maury brings himself to his feet; he wobbles. The people in the circle help to steady him.

MAURY

I think I just need to walk around a bit, maybe.

One man in particular steps in to help Maury regain his balance. He is MALANKINE and he is significantly older than Maury, with thinning white hair.

DR. MALANKINE

Are you sure you're alright? Let me offer you a ride home. Have you got a car?

MAURY

I took the bus.

DR. MALANKINE

Let me offer you a ride.

MAURY

Okay. Thank you.

They leave the street bystanders baffled.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. MALANKINE'S CAR - MOVING - A BIT LATER

Maury sits in the front seat, grasping his shopping bag for dear life in his lap. Malankine is driving. The DENTURES rest on the dashboard.

DR. MALANKINE
You realize that I'm a doctor.

MAURY
Oh?

DR. MALANKINE
Perhaps let me have a look at you when we get to your place, yeah?

MAURY
Uh... sure.

DR. MALANKINE
Still dizzy? Woozy?

MAURY
The whole gamut.

DR. MALANKINE
Your head's not open, is it?

MAURY
I think it might be.

DR. MALANKINE
We'll have a peak at that too, then.

MAURY
Sure.

DR. MALANKINE
Make sure you don't drive tonight. Anywhere. Maybe even the better part of tomorrow.

MAURY
I don't even have a car.

DR. MALANKINE
No? How do you get from A to B?

MAURY
I told you, I take the bus.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MALANKINE

You said you *took* the bus. That hardly means you take it wherever you go.

MAURY

You think I keep a pocket-sized bus with me at all times?

DR. MALANKINE

What? No. I don't mean "take" like that. I mean *take*. As in, use.

MAURY

So you mean the bus is en route in my pocket? Full of little itty-bitty mini bus-taking citizens?

DR. MALANKINE

What are you talking about?

MAURY

What are you talking about?

DR. MALANKINE

I'm asking you what you're talking about.

MAURY

I'm talking about what you're talking about: little people.

DR. MALANKINE

But I'm not talking about little people.

MAURY

What are you talking about then?

DR. MALANKINE

Taking the bus.

MAURY

Exactly. Little people.

DR. MALANKINE

Where do you get 'little people' out of 'taking the bus'?

MAURY

You said you meant take, like use.

(CONTINUED)

DR. MALANKINE
That's what I did mean.

MAURY
So if the bus is being used then
there are little people inside it.

DR. MALANKINE
Not necessarily.

MAURY
In a transportationally ideal
world, little people are in the
fucking bus, okay?

DR. MALANKINE
Look, all I'm saying is you told me
you *took* the bus to get wherever
you just were. But that doesn't
mean that you use the bus to get
wherever you need to go all the
time.

MAURY
Well why didn't you just say that
to begin with?

DR. MALANKINE
Hey. Look.

MAURY
What?

DR. MALANKINE
No, I mean look. Up.

Maury strains his neck to peer out the windshield.
Centralized in a stretch of rainclouds, we see a SKYDIVER
slowly floating back down to earth, parachute out.

Maury and Malankine look at each other.

The skydiver continues to fall.

Maury looks at DENTURES on the dashboard (SLOW ZOOM IN).

QUICK FADE OUT

QUICK FADE IN

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - BEDROOM - A WHILE LATER

Overhead again, Maury and Monroe sleep like babies. Monroe still looks violently ill and the top of Maury's head is bandaged up, thanks to Dr. Malankine.

Quiet knocking on the front door becomes audible, but Maury and Monroe snooze through it. A pause, and then the knocking becomes more intrusive. This finally stirs Maury. He lifts an eyelid so as to verify what he's heard. The knocking continues and Maury staggers out of bed.

CUT TO

INT. ENTRY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Maury steps in and answers the door, where stands IMELDA THE MAIL LADY.

IMELDA

Hello.

MAURY

Oh. Morning. Morning, Imelda.

IMELDA

This didn't fit in your slot.

Imelda hands Maury a SQUARE PACKAGE.

MAURY

Oh, okay. Thank you.

IMELDA

Have yourself a good one.

As she turns to leave, we notice that Imelda is pregnant.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maury comes in and walks over to Monroe's side of the bed, settling right next to her. He feels her forehead with the backs of his lanky fingers. She wakes slowly. As they talk, Maury strokes her face gently with his thumb.

MONROE

(re: Maury's bandage)

Oh my god. What happened?

(CONTINUED)

MAURY

I went out to get some stuff and something fell from the sky.

MONROE

Are you alright?

MAURY

This doctor that gave me a ride home thought I might have a concussion. Told me just to take it easy.

There's a small silence in which Maury continues thumbing Monroe's forehead. He kisses it softly.

MAURY

You're still just so warm.

MONROE

I'm burning up.

MAURY

Does anything hurt? Any aches?

MONROE

No. I don't think so.

Beat.

MAURY

Well, let's at least get this comforter off you...

Maury peels the bedding off Monroe. He notices a smooth STEEL PEN on the nightstand which he runs along Monroe's face in hopes of cooling her down. It works.

MONROE

Any word?

MAURY

No, not yet.

MONROE

Should I call?

MAURY

I'll call. In a bit.

MONROE

What do you think, Maury?

(CONTINUED)

MAURY

He's a strong man. He's got a fight in him.

MONROE

It's been the only thing on my mind. When I'm conscious.

MAURY

He's in the care of good doctors. And he's got Bill there now.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Bill is at his desk but for once isn't dignifying himself with the pastime of reading. He looks as if he's about to start sobbing right here and now. The ruckus of the kids' chatter is audible.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Maury is still at Monroe's bedside, caressing her face with the steel pen. She drifts off in a fevered sleep. Maury puts the pen down and leaves quietly so as not to wake her.

CUT TO

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maury enters intending to fix breakfast for the two of them, but notices the PACKAGE on the kitchen counter. He takes an exact-o knife, cuts and pries the box open. He sifts through some packaging peanuts, reaches his hand deep into the box and pulls out a LITTLE BLUE CASE, opens it.

After Maury recognizes what's in the case, he timidly closes it and sets it back on the counter. He goes rummaging through the box once more, dumps the rest of the peanuts onto the linoleum floor.

Maury drops the box on the floor and leaves the kitchen in a huff after noticing something at the bottom the package...

ANGLE on the inside of the box. There's a tiny pink slip stapled to the bottom. It reads:

"WITH LOVE, ADLAI"

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Bill is at his desk while the rest of the class chits and chats. Rory works studiously. The bell rings and the students begin packing up.

BILL
Everybody have a good night --
Rory, I need a word with you.

The class empties and Rory lingers behind. He apprehensively approaches Bill's desk.

BILL
Close the door please.

Rory goes back, closes the door and then sluggishly returns.

BILL
Have a seat.

RORY
Where?

BILL
Anywhere.

RORY
I don't wanna do that.

BILL
Please. Have a seat.

RORY
I'd rather stand, sir.

Beat.

BILL
How them bruises?

Rory exhales disparaged and then finds a seat.

BILL
You healing up pretty nicely, then?

RORY
Sir.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Anyway... you were at the dance with Pluto Tresley, yes? The Just Because.

RORY

Yes sir I was.

BILL

You subsequently went bowling at Drubs, did you not?

RORY

Not quite, sir. We were there, we were in the parking lot, but we never ended up bowling, just ended up talking in the car.

BILL

But you were near the balls and pins.

RORY

Yes, sir.

BILL

I was also there. I was there and you were there. We were there, and you didn't think to say hello to a teacher.

RORY

I would have thought to say hello if I had seen you.

BILL

Oh but you did! You did see me! You so saw me, in fact, that I saw you see me.

RORY

...oh?

BILL

I don't know who you think you're fooling.

RORY

I'm not fooling anyone. You saw me and you didn't acknowledge me either, so I frankly find no ground for you to stand in this argument.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

This is not an argument.

RORY

Debate.

BILL

This isn't a debate. This is not a feud, a clash, a fight or a discussion.

RORY

I think this is at least a discussion, Bill.

BILL

No no no, you see. A discussion has two sides. And both of the two sides are inherently even-handed. I've got quite the question for you, young Rory.

RORY

And what is that, sir?

BILL

When I asked you to close the door behind you, who did you really think had the upper hand?

RORY

So you're saying that... since I closed the door because you told me to, I'm defenseless now? Is that it?

BILL

Well, I think a little bit of our history together came into play as well, but that's a different penny for a different dollar. I am on top now. You are beneath. And you can go ahead and call it a discussion, or whatever you need to to make it alright in your little head there, but at least be aware of what that word means. Know it by heart, hold it dear. Don't go around with this cockamamie notion that you have some sort of worth in this little meeting here. If you lose sight of that, you get a bit too zealous, next thing you know you got a real mess on your hands.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

In which case, I will not be able to defend myself.

BILL

You will not, no.

RORY

I have a quick question before the onslaught, sir...

BILL

What's that?

RORY

Why do you think that this is alright of you?

BILL

Not only is it right of me, it's decent of me. In fact, it's damn-near demanded of me. People like you -- and feel proud that I consider you a person -- they're a weight on the heels of people like myself. Like your counselor Craig. We belong to a monarchy looking over the sea of inbreds, where there you are. Alpha : epsilon, Cougar : alley cat. So when you ask questions like why... it just comes off as pretty damn rhetorical, doesn't it?

RORY

You know, I had this dream last night. Strangest fucking dream. No context type-a-thing. It was just this one simple thing. I dreamt that I was waking from a dream. And when I looked out the window by my bed, it was a perfect 7:00 AM sunrise. And you know how in dreams, things blend into each other. So the next thing I realize, I'm in my driveway staring down at the street. All around me was the orange. There was something. It was chaste. Accounted for. And I remember thinking: If this sunrise were in real life, it wouldn't be as remarkable. It would be like any sunrise. There was something about

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RORY (cont'd)

this goddamn dream. I couldn't stop thinking. Jesus, has the sun always been this pretty? Have I just never looked up, or what. But then I realized the sun wasn't anywhere in the sky. It was just the glow I found attractive. It was the glow I'd never seen before. It was the idea that the sun was just outside the trees and houses that lined my street. And I've got a pretty nice driveway, y'know, photogenic. Good for the autumn months, for when the leaves dust the stretch of it. Long and narrow. But so there I am. Completely naked like a wolf in the woods, just... my proclivity. I just wanted that goddamn sun. And in a flash, I'm on all fours and I'm just darting to the end of that driveway. Just a dog in this moment, I swear. I reach the street, I look out and see the commute trucking closer and so I scurry back down my driveway, but this time I glide. I just fucking glide. I never felt anything quite so heedless. Even in dreams. No exhaustion, no dehydration, no pain in the joints. Just free. And I woke up knowing other parts of the dream, y'know, the stuff with so-called narrative, they were much starker. They weren't as pure. Other episodes. But somehow that... oh, that was so real. That primal force of nature. It was all I could place clearly. It made sense. And it wasn't such a dream. It's what I am. A simple person. With a fondness for simple things, like a sunrise. But it's that exact fondness that has me charging at the street with every muscle strained. And you sit there and you glaze over and you call me an alleycat...

BILL

-- and you sit there and puff up your chest and spray out your ass and fan out your tail. Fucking pathetic.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

Come on now. Let's be fair. It's not like I go around going "hey, did you hear Bill's best friend got shot in the face?"

In the bat of an eye, Bill stands up, takes off his belt and WHIPS Rory across the face with it. Rory puts his face in his hands, totally agonized. When his hands slide back down, there's a large red welt under Rory's left eye on his cheekbone from where the belt-buckle hit. His face strains to fight off a flood of tears but eventually the levees break. Underneath the tears, a gleam reflecting pure and whole hatred is suspended in both Rory's eyes.

Bill calms down, puts his belt back on, walks over to Rory and comforts him, rubbing his shoulders.

BILL

(softly & sweetly)

Woah, woah, woah, buddy.

RORY

WHAT THE FUCK?!

BILL

God, I am so sorry. I just thought it would be funny if--

Rory sobs and sobs.

BILL

Oh, Jesus. Hey -- look, don't cry. Please don't cry. I'm so sorry. What can I do? Can I get you anything?

RORY

WHAT THE FUCK WERE YOU THINKING?!

BILL

Please let's keep your voice down.

RORY

...WHY THE FUCK WOULD I KEEP MY VOICE DOWN, YOU CRAZY ASSHOLE?! YOU JUST HIT ME IN THE FACE WITH YOUR GODDAMN BELT. MY FACE IS BLEEDING!

BILL

I'm sorry, pal. I know, I fly off the handle sometimes. But we don't talk about my friends like that,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (cont'd)
okay? You didn't seem to have a
problem with this the last time.

RORY
I didn't think you would hit me,
you fucking lunatic.

Rory tries to get out of his desk so he can leave.

BILL
(grabbing Rory)
Heyheyheyhey -- uh -- you're not in
any condition to be walking around.
Just, uh, take a seat, and really.
Let's keep that voice down.

RORY
Nonononononononononononononononono.
You're not going to get away with
it this time, you sad psychopath.

Rory jerks himself out of Bill's grip and heads for the
door.

BILL
You know, there's ways around this.

RORY
How's this for a way: if you ever
lay another hand on me, I'll have
your goddamn throat cut.

Rory is nearly out the door, when...

BILL
\$500!

RORY
(halts)
...say again?

BILL
500?

RORY
Keep climbing, friend.

BILL
\$700. \$800, you name it.

RORY
1500.

BILL
Jesus. Be reasonable.

RORY
That's my number. If you can't oblige, you're going to have a very rough few months ahead of you.

BILL
Trust me, son. The months will be rough either way. Is a check alright?

Rory calms himself down, wipes his eyes and heads back. Bill gracefully ushers him back to his desk, conjuring his best performance as The Good Guy.

BILL
Here. Let me get you an icepack.

CUT TO

INT. HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Bill leaves his room and scurries frantically down the hallway.

CUT TO

INT. MAIN OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Bill enters, walks past the main desk and into ORVILLE's office. Orville (51 or 52) is the principal of Kurring High.

BILL
Um, I have a bit of a situation.

ORVILLE
What's up?

BILL
I've just been on the receiving end of a fairly serious threat from one of our students.

CUT TO

INT. BILL'S ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Orville is now seated across from Rory, Bill nowhere to be found.

ORVILLE

This is quite a serious problem here.

RORY

...oh?

ORVILLE

Serious enough, in fact, that your teacher is afraid to even be in the same room with you at the moment.

RORY

.....oh

ORVILLE

You know, I've considered myself to be someone who understands that each pupil-instructor relationship has distinction to some extent. But why you threatened to have your teacher's throat cut... well, I don't see that as justifiable.

Rory stares for a moment, then bursts into boisterous laughter. While he laughs and laughs and laughs, Orville holds a puzzled and unimpressed expression. The veins in Rory's forehead protrude as his cackle becomes so extreme that it's silent. He clutches his gut, writhing, struggling to catch his breath.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Monroe drags herself out of bed and into the kitchen where she finds the packaging peanuts spilled all over the counter and floor.

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - THAT MOMENT

MAURY is at the bar and has just completed drinking his fourth vodka gimlet. The unoccupied seat to Maury's left is not unoccupied for long. None other than EMMETT MURPHY enters, in all his playing-card glory.

MURPHY

Howdy...

MAURY

Hi.

MURPHY

What do you say?

MAURY

Not too great.

MURPHY

Quite a raspberry you got there.

MAURY

Mm.

MURPHY

I'll bet that smarts.

MAURY

Yeah.

MURPHY

What happened, if I'm not imposing?

MAURY

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

MURPHY

Try me.

MAURY

I'd rather not.

MURPHY

And why is that?

MAURY

Because, if I'm frank, you are imposing, and because you're a motherfuckin' weirdo.

(CONTINUED)

MURPHY

Thank you.

MAURY

Sorry. I'm a bit drunk as you can tell. That was rash.

MURPHY

Was it?

MAURY

Wasn't it?

MURPHY

So tell me what happened. Then we're even.

MAURY

Just nevermind.

MURPHY

I'll buy your next round if you tell me.

MAURY

I'll believe that when I see it.

Murphy hops across the bar and begins fixing another vodka gimlet.

MAURY

Well, shit, I could'a done that...

Once the drink's made, Maury downs it without the hesitation of a second's time. He retrieves a few bucks from his billfold, hands it to Murphy.

MAURY

(pointing to his ailment)

This is because of teeth.

Maury exits the pub, leaving Murphy thoroughly unfulfilled.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - AMBIGUOUS

We see the BOUQUET OF WHITE ROSES gliding down the halls of the hotel again. They roll and roll and roll...

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RORY'S HOME - DAY

An establishing shot of this positively VAST MANSION.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. RORY'S HOME - BASEMENT - MOVIE THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Rory is sprawled out across several seats of his home movie theatre with a stringy, frayed afghan wrapped around him. An OLD MOVIE plays off-screen, in which a loud noise on the soundtrack stirs Rory awake. Rory sits up, regains his consciousness. He looks at his wrist-watch;

TITLE CARD: 12:02 PM

Rory staggers off, walks to and opens the sliding doors in the back of the theatre. Sunlight pours in. Rory exits the theatre, leaving the doors open, the movie still playing.

We follow Rory upstairs into the central part of the mansion.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rory enters, walks to the refrigerator. He opens the refrigerator door into the CAMERA, where we see a note written on a small magnetized white board:

"Rory,
Went to vote,
Will be back shortly,
DO NOT leave the house.
-Mom"

Rory takes a BEER and closes the door. He cracks the beer and chugs it down with ferocity. Shortly thereafter, the can is empty and Rory jumps up and down, hyping himself up like a prize fighter. He exits the kitchen.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGHSCHOOL - GYM - SILENT - FLASHBACK

Pluto smiles into the CAMERA at the JUST-BECAUSE DANCE.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGHSCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - NOW

Bill reads at his desk while the rest of the class works studiously. He is in pure hell.

CUT TO

EXT. VAST OPEN HUNTING FIELD - SILENT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Craig is unconscious on the ground after the gunshot, BLOOD collects in a pool around his head.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGHSCHOOL - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

HAND-HELD CAMERA tracks behind Rory, who moves through the halls of the school with a determined stride. He enters BILL'S ROOM.

Rory walks to Bill's desk steadfastly. Bill pulls from his book to look at Rory.

Rory punches Bill square in the face.

Bill slides off his chair, his nose bleeding suitably. Rory drags Bill to the front of the room for all the class to see. He sits on Bill's chest and continues to pummel his face, over and over and over and over again. Brutal contact. Bill's face becomes less recognizable. The class gasps.

After Rory thinks the job is done, he gets off Bill's chest and starts for the door. Bill squeals, staggers and tackles Rory; now it's his turn. Bill punches Rory in the gut repeatedly. Rory groans accordingly. Something has gone off in Bill's head. He takes a brief recess, then comes back at Rory with everything he has, pounding him in the face a good three or four more times. Rory is able to sneak in a couple good jabs from below, but not much else.

Then, Rory, with abnormal strength, throws Bill off of him and stomps his face once, knocking him out cold.

Rory rips Bill's shirt straight off his chest, wipes his own face with it and then tosses it back on Bill's limp body.

The class wretches collectively once more. Rory exits.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

Maury enters, looks at the kitchen floor, notices all the packaging peanuts have been cleaned up. The box is gone too.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maury peeks his head through the door and sees Monroe sitting upright in her bed, as if she's been awaiting him.

MONROE

Hi.

MAURY

Hi...

MONROE

Where've you been?

MAURY

Out.

MONROE

Doing what?

MAURY

Clearing my head.

MONROE

Of?

MAURY

Come on.

MONROE

Please, please. Edify me.

MAURY

I don't think that would be necessary.

MONROE

Why do you say that?

MAURY

Because I'm confident you already know.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

And if it just so happens that I do know, would you think that would be an excuse to be out all night?

MAURY

I'd think that was a damn good excuse.

MONROE

I may have done some stupid things. And that mooncalf may have done some stupid things. But if you can spend one night away from home, you can spend all nights away from home.

MAURY

So, what, you're throwing me out in the cold now, is that what this is?

MONROE

If you're going to be venturing the streets for days at a time, maybe the time has come for you to reevaluate some things.

MAURY

Monroe, you're not the old ball and chain yet. As much as you'd probably like to be.

MONROE

That's very hurtful, Maury.

MAURY

Yeah.

MONROE

I thought maybe you'd be a bit more...responsive to my disposition right now.

MAURY

Empathy is a tall order at this hour.

MONROE

This could've all worked out. I can't wait for the day to come that you stop trying to curb the accusations you amass and just embrace your white hot evil. This

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MONROE (cont'd)
could've all worked out. I thought
this could've worked.

MAURY
It might still can.

MONROE
Then why are looking at me this
way?

MAURY
What way is that, Sherry Green?

MONROE
This disdain.

MAURY
Acquit my lack of enthusiasm. It
was just yesterday I was mailed
your diaphragm in a cardboard box.

MONROE
Why can't you let me win?

MAURY
What are we fighting over?

MONROE
I wouldn't even know what am I
fighting for.

MAURY
You're fighting for a fight, that's
what you're fighting for.

MONROE
Must be this boring little life
made me so masochistic.

MAURY
So then give a little!

MONROE
I'm sick at the sight of you. Every
once in a cold while, I look at you
and I kind of...

MAURY
--...oh great here it comes.

MONROE

It seems like every time I fuck you, a piece of me goes missing that I can't get back again. The way that I look at you. Just like this toy of mine. But I look around, and who are you replacing? I want to wretch.

MAURY

Why the fuck do you do this?

MONROE

Truth is, every time I wake up and I wish a different person were lying next to me. And I fight like hell the memory of the night before, but it still comes back. In a flood. I am still so in love with the idea of you. I can't live without the idea of you. But ideas can be synthesized. Sometimes more convincing than people.

MAURY

So, what then? Back to living like a cave troll? The [suite] life?

Monroe's eyes fill with fire.

CUT TO

INT. WEST FOSTER PICTUREHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

PRUDENCE is seated dead-center of the movie theatre. A film is being screened as if just for her. The off-screen movie flickers with lighting cues that illuminate what Prudence is really doing: sobbing and masturbating. She bites her lip, trying to contain the sound of her melancholy even though she knows damn well there is no one there to hear her.

CRANE UP to the light flickering against the screen.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO

INT. PROJECTION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sound of the film rolling overbears just about any other noise there might be. CAMERA moves past the 35mm FILM PROJECTOR over to ADLAI, who's at the counter at the front of the room. The projector becomes quieter once we move beyond it.

(CONTINUED)

Adlai's head dips down, drags horizontally across the counter in concert with a loud SNORTING sound. His head picks back up, he snuffles.

Closer. Adlai's eyes are sunken in; it may have been days since he last slept. We hear rapid clicks against the counter top and then Adlai's head dips down once more, succeeded by another loud SNORTING. It becomes clear what has been keeping Adlai awake.

At that moment, a single frame gets stuck in the projector. The projector clicks twice in rhythmic procession, then (as seen on the movie screen in the theatre): the filmstock burns and quickly disintegrates.

Prudence reacts hectically.

Adlai panics and immediately tries to stop the projection.

Prudence, in an alarmed state, does her pants back up and wipes her face with her sleeve.

Adlai, a veritable deer in the headlights, is still tinkering with the projector, when THE MANAGER (60's) enters.

Adlai -- Projector -- Cocaine on the counter.

CUT TO

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Prudence barrels down the hall of the movie theatre in embarrassment and distress. Then, Adlai is literally thrown in front of her.

The Manager closes in on Adlai, carrying his KILO.

THE MANAGER

I'LL BE DAMNED IF I LET YOUR LITTLE
CUNTPRICK OF AN ASS DO THAT IN MY
PROJECTION ROOM! DO I LOOK LIKE I
WANT TO GO OUT OF BUSINESS? DO I
LOOK LIKE I CAN AFFORD TO GO OUT OF
BUSINESS? HUH? DO I LOOK LIKE I
WANT JAIL TIME?! Do I look like the
kind of guy that lets a goddman
prickass put him out of business?

He throws the kilo at Adlai and, at once, it bursts. The Manger pulls Adlai by the coke-soaked hair and forces very direct eye-contact.

(CONTINUED)

THE MANAGER

I keep a gun on the premises at all times. Learn those words well. At all times.

The Manager throws Adlai back and walks away. It's just Adlai and Prudence now. They look at each other, recognizing their identities but too embarrassed to say anything friendly. Then, Prudence finally comes around.

PRUDENCE

Hi, Adlai!

ADLAI

Hello...

PRUDENCE

Prudence. Monroe's friend.

ADLAI

I know who you are, just... hello.

PRUDENCE

How've you been?

ADLAI

I -- um -- well?

PRUDENCE

Hm? You've been well?

ADLAI

Look, I saw what you were doing. You know what I was doing, let's not bullshit each other. I'm covered in cocaine.

PRUDENCE

...you saw what I was doing?

ADLAI

Don't take it so bad. You'd be surprised how many people I see doing that in there. Christ. I'm high as fuck.

PRUDENCE

So you're not going to tell Monroe?

ADLAI

Would it really matter if I did? She'd probably be glad to know of someone that shares her lifestyle.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADLAI (cont'd)
I haven't seen her in ages,
however.

PRUDENCE
You broke up?

ADLAI
Of course.

Adlai sniffs.

ADLAI
Where've you been?

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

Maury is now standing a bit closer to Monroe on the bed.

MAURY
What is this leading to?

MONROE
Huh?

MAURY
I mean, where are you going with
this? What are you after? Is there
some kind of result that you strive
for when you act this way? It's
happening more and more frequently.
You get frustrated about one small
thing and say a bunch of shit you
don't mean, and never even felt. So
what's in it for you?

MONROE
I have to wonder what kind of
happiness you can still bring
around. I'm not even caring at what
cost, just... what is there left
that you have to offer me? Because
the TRUTH, Maury, is that I've been
having a real tough time lately.
And you've been a damn good sport.
A truly independent human being.
And you could be out screwing a
cooz right now. For all I know, you
already have. But you came home. To
your rightful owner. Well, I'm a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MONROE (cont'd)
cooz too. Not a cooz worth
collecting, but a cooz
nevertheless. And it's becoming
evident, right here, right now, on
this bed, in this lighting, just
how...committed you are. How bad I
treat you, how reluctant I am, it's
all trivial. Because here you are.
And there you were. One minute to
the next. What kind of life do you
live that you prefer convenience
over true happiness?

MAURY
I love you just the way you are.
End quote.

MONROE
This is serious shit. Take my
serious shit seriously.

MAURY
I'm *taking* you seriously, but come
on... what do you want from me? You
sit there and you just make such
a... I get uncomfortable. Sorry.

MONROE
Look. It boils down to this: You
have to change or I have to change,
and I'm not gonna change, so you're
gonna hafta change.

MAURY
The only way I'll change is if you
change with me.

MONROE
But I thought we just established
that I'm not going to change.

MAURY
So don't change!

MONROE
Okay, so I won't. But you still
have to.

MAURY
I'm not going to change.

MONROE

Why not?!

MAURY

Because you're not!

MONROE

Because why?

MAURY

Because changing is tough shit.

MONROE

But you'll have to sooner or later.

MAURY

So will you.

MONROE

But I don't want to change. I just said that.

MAURY

It doesn't matter what you want.
THAT'S what's trivial. You want me
to change and I'm not doing that,
am I?

MONROE

Jesus Christ!

A crescendo of hysterical laughter takes over Monroe, and then Maury in a domino effect. Laughter builds and carries over the following...

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S HOME - MOVIE THEATRE - THAT MOMENT

Rory laughs neurotically at the movie he screens for himself. BILL'S BLOOD splashes his face, like a clump of islands on an out-of-date map of the world. Hold on his face as the laughing intensifies. Carry over...

CUT TO

INT. NEW JAMES HOSPITAL - CRAIG'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Rory's laughter is the soundtrack to this single shot of a sleeping Bill being wheeled in on a hospital bed next to still comatose Craig. His face is bruised and black. A curtain divides them.

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - THAT MOMENT

Adlai and Prudence sit at a booth/table, laughing with drinks in front of them. Cocaine is caked into Adlai's hair, powders his face. Their laughter overcomes and cuts off Rory's laugh.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

As seen from overhead, Adlai and Prudence lay in bed together. Adlai's eyes are shut. Prudence talks...

PRUDENCE

It's one of the moments. You just do things, like you're watching somebody else do it. An outta body thing. Your head doesn't even seem to matter, it isn't registering anything. You can't even formulate a clear memory of it later on. A next-thing-you-know kind of thing. So I can't have regrets. You can't regret these things...

CUT TO

INT. WEST FOSTER PICTUREHOUSE - FLASHBACK

CAMERA zoomed in on Prudence's face as she watches an old movie screening in the dying, if not dead, picture house.

Zoom out to show Match and Baumgarten to her left.

Prudence watches for a moment, then leans in and whispers something to Match;

PRUDENCE

(whispered)

Where are your friends?

(CONTINUED)

MATCH
(whispered)
Don't worry about them.

PRUDENCE
(whispered)
...I've got to go to the bathroom.

Prudence leaves hastily. Once she's gone, Baumgarten nudges Match and whispers something inaudible into her ear. Compliant, Match gets up and leaves as well.

CUT TO

INT. LADIES ROOM - STALL - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence sits on the toilet in her stall, staring at the floor, contemplating what she should do.

Prudence's POV: CAMERA slowly pans from the shitty and cracked tile floor up to the middle of the stall-door...

There is a golf-ball sized GLORY HOLE carved out.

At that moment, the shrill and intrusive sound of the bathroom door opening. Footsteps approach, Prudence struggles to identify the person.

Through the HOLE, we see the BLUE-FLANNELED-TORSO OF A MAN come up to the stall door. The man just stands there.

Prudence freezes.

The bathroom door opens once more, we see a pair of FEET enter and walk over to Prudence's stall. The voice belonging to the FEET is Match's.

MATCH
Hey, young nameless.

PRUDENCE
Mhm?

MATCH
I got a proposition for you.

PRUDENCE
What is it?

MATCH
Well, actually. It ain't much of a proposition at all. It's just
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MATCH (cont'd)
what's gonna happen. But there is light at the end of the tunnel. Just know that you stand a profit the same as anybody at the end of this. Now you're not going to like what you hear... but I've got you pretty well cornered, so... well, hell, I'll just let you find out for yourself.

THE TORSO throws a crumpled up wad of paper through the HOLE, which lands on the stall-floor.

The paper uncrumples itself... an old, worn-down \$50 bill.

THE TORSO begins adjusting something on his person, accompanied by some jingling and jangling. It's his belt.

Prudence still frozen.

Then: THE TORSO slides his penis through the GLORY HOLE.

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S BEDROOM - PRESENT

Prudence and Adlai, laying in bed. Reflecting upon this ugly past, Prudence weeps silently into her arm so as not to wake Adlai, who tactlessly went out cold somewhere in the middle of her story. She cries...

FADE TO BLACK

CUT TO

INT. SAN TILES JAIL - VISITATION ROOM - NEXT MORNING

MONTY, degradedly clad in the notorious orange jumpsuit, is separated from MONROE by a sheet of glass. They communicate through telephones;

MONROE
...Is there anything I can bring you? Anything they'd let you have?

MONTY
Don't worry about me now, you look tired and ill.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Yeah I've had a fever.

MONTY

How are you feeling now?

MONROE

Better. Should be at work.
(bashful smile)
Maury wants me home so he can take
care of me.

MONTY

You know you've got somebody there,
right?

MONROE

Yeah. He's a special one...

MONTY

He loves you.

MONROE

Yeah...

Silence.

MONTY

So. Is he...

MONROE

Still comatose.

MONTY

I guess we just wait now, right?

MONROE

And keep our chins up.

MONTY

...Monroe?

MONROE

What?

MONTY

Do I feel guilty?

MONROE

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

MONTY

I mean, this is my fault. I know that. And Craig might not make it because of that. But should I feel guilt? Things happen, right?

MONROE

This couldn't have been avoided, Monty. The circumstances were too perfect. And you can't be blamed.

MONTY

I know, but... I keep thinking these things.

MONROE

It was a freak accident, honey.

MONTY

But I know but will he forgive me? I don't want to feel guilty if he's not going to forgive me.

MONROE

(definitively)

He's going to forgive you.

Monty is given pause by Monroe's boldness.

MONROE

When he wakes up, you might have a thing or two to sort out but anybody can see... it's just a run of bad luck.

MONTY

I feel like the walls are closing in. I feel the air here is stale... already breathed on.

MONROE

Have you been sleeping?

MONTY

Some. On and off. First night I did, remarkably.

MONROE

What are the people like?

MONTY

Agreeable. Most times I look one way, they look the other. I can't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MONTY (cont'd)
handle the physical pressure of
this place though.

MONROE
This isn't prison.

Long silence.

MONTY
...why would you say that to me?

MONROE
I'm sorry. I didn't think. Sorry.
It's just things could be worse so
at least be grateful.

MONTY
You are full of bullshit sometimes,
you know that?

MONROE
I'm not full of bullshit, it's just
important to recognize what we have
when we have it, that's all. Like
right now. I'm thank ful I'm
getting to talk to you in this
moment. I don't know what I'd do.

Silence. Monroe fails to cover her tracks.

MONTY
(noticing guards)
Look, um... these things are few
and far between. Like every two
weeks. So if you want to save my
life, you'll change the subject
next time.

TWO GUARDS come in and escort Monty out. Monroe gets
misty-eyed, blows him a kiss through the glass as he's
walked out.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

We see a mini-montage of Maury packing Monroe's clothes and
belongings up in a suitcase and a few cardboard boxes, one
of them being the very same that shipped her diaphragm. A
few other rooms, gathering a few other things...

CUT TO

INT. MAURY'S CAR - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Maury drives with determination, the boxes packed tightly in the backseat.

CUT TO

EXT. SALVATION ARMY - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

TWO MALE EMPLOYEES thoroughly hollow out Monty's memory-addled automobile of the boxes and belongings.

CUT TO

EXT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Monroe steps out of her car and heads inside.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

Monroe enters throws her keys on the counter where Maury leans, reading his newspaper.

OVER MAURY'S SHOULDER (HAND-HELD) Monroe lets a legitimate grin; the kind you'd give to a friend you've been expecting; the kind of relying smile. She walks over and gives him a nice long hug. After the hug, a kiss.

After the kiss;

MONROE

Let's not ever let last night
happen again.

Maury is speechless.

MONROE

I think today, I've turned a new
leaf, I think. I really think it
happened. I was in a position where
I was forced to step outside
myself. I can feel a seismic shift.
I think. This is a big one, I
think.

They kiss again, long and drawn. Maury is still quasi-stunned after the kiss is broken, but he manages;

(CONTINUED)

MAURY

This is really nice. I'm so happy
this is really nice. This is how I
will remember you.

MONROE

What?

MAURY

I'll know you're being honest after
you hear what I have to tell you.

MONROE

What's going on?

MAURY

Because if you've really turned a
new leaf and stepped up to the
plate, all that, none of this will
matter. And then we can be
together, so happy. But I'm going
to be realistic. You can give
yourself the benefit of the doubt.

MONROE

What's going on?

MAURY

I threw out all your shit. Donated
it to charity. Every last piece.

MONROE

You're not being serious...

MAURY

No, I'm being perfectly serious.
And it doesn't seem so rational
anymore. But take it or leave it,
that's what I did. Now let's make
up.

MONROE

I'm not going to have those
brooding thoughts anymore, you
fucking idiot.

MAURY

Kiss me again. Tell me the truth.

Monroe grabs Maury by the face and kisses him with honest,
hungry passion. She shoves him up onto the counter, breaking
some glasses. She climbs up and straddles him. Their kiss
breaks;

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Everything will work out in the
end.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - AMBIGUOUS

We see the BOUQUET OF WHITE ROSES gliding down the halls of
the hotel once again. They roll and roll and roll...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - THE NEXT MORNING

CAMERA moves swiftly through the halls of the school (POV).

CUT TO

INT. BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

The pupils once again work silently and diligently. There is
a stray SUBSTITUTE TEACHER somewhere near the front, of whom
we make no mention or acknowledgment. He or she is
presumably the reserved, bare-minimum type.

We see Bill's vacant desk. We see Rory's vacant seat.

MONROE opens the door.

The class collectively gasps, masking a kind of timid
excitement that could have flourished into something great
had they only felt more comfortable expressing themselves
once in a while.

CUT TO

INT. PLUTO TRESLEY'S HOME - CLOSET - THAT MOMENT

Pluto is fashioning a NOOSE.

CUT TO

INT. NEW JAMES HOSPITAL - BILL/CRAIG'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Close on Craig as his face strains. His forehead crinkles. His eyelids flutter, then finally pry themselves open. Craig is comatose no more.

His pupils dilated, he's enormously disoriented. He dizzingly swivels himself out of his bed and turns to the curtain that divides the room. At once, he peels the curtain back and becomes flabbergasted by the damaged old friend in front of him, Black & Blue Bill.

His eyes fill...

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - BEDROOM - THAT MOMENT

As seen from overhead, Adlai and Prudence lie in bed. Prudence sleeps soundly, Adlai begins stirring. He looks over and realizes who's next to him. A contained wave of panic and stupefaction takes him over, and then he pieces some memory together.

Adlai, naked, sneaks as quietly as his lumbering body will allow out of the bed, moving around to Prudence. At her bedside, there is the NIGHTSTAND. He pulls out a drawer, reaches in and retrieves a tiny hand bag. He reaches into the drawer and pulls a handful of something and eyes it in his palm...

POKER CHIPS.

He chuckles quietly to himself.

CUT TO

INT. PLUTO TRESLEY'S HOME - CLOSET - THAT MOMENT

Pluto's noose now hangs from the doorway of the closet. Pluto eyes the noose as it sways with small strides, back and forth, rhythmically.

Pluto steps onto a chair and begins to fumble with the noose, preparing to lace her neck through. Just when her head crowns...

a DISTANT PHONE rings.

HOLD as Pluto looks away, debates answering it...

CUT TO

INT. PLUTO'S KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

From the FAUCET on the sink, we RACK FOCUS to an old ROTARY-STYLE TELEPHONE on the counter in the b.g. It continues to ring.

Pluto enters and answers.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S HOME - DINING ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Rory sits at the dinner table, holding the phone to his ear.

RORY

Hi, you!

PLUTO

(off-screen)

Hi. Rory?

RORY

Yeah.

PLUTO

(off-screen)

Hi.

RORY

Hi. What's wrong?

PLUTO

(off-screen)

Oh, nothing's the matter.

RORY

Now, now. Why so glum, plum?

PLUTO

(off-screen)

Nothing. Things, I guess.

RORY

Things?

PLUTO

Stupid girl issues.

RORY

You're very special to me, you know that?

(CONTINUED)

PLUTO
(off-screen)
I do know that.

RORY
I wouldn't let anything bad happen
to you, you know that?

PLUTO
(off-screen)
I do know that.

RORY
I'm very much in love with you,
don't you know that?

PLUTO
(off-screen)
I do...

RORY
I'll see you soon, tiny darling.
Don't go killing yourself.

PLUTO
(off-screen, sighs)
Okay.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Monroe is standing near the front of the room, talking to
the Stray Substitute.

MONROE
(whispered)
Where's Bill?

S.S.
(whispered)
I don't know. I asked some bitches
in the office and they kept their
trap shut.

MONROE
(whispered)
They wouldn't tell you?

S.S.
(whispered)
No. The motherfucker's in Honolulu
for all I know.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE
(whispered)
Do you know anything about that
empty chair over there?

INSERT: RORY'S VACANT SEAT

S.S.
(whispered)
What don't I know about it?

MONROE
(whispered)
What's the story? Where's the kid?

S.S.
(whispered)
...how the fuck should I know?!

MONROE
(whispered)
I thought perhaps the kids informed
you -- do you really think you
should be talking like this in a
class room?

S.S.
(whispered)
I am extremely aggravated -- pissed
off -- that I'm here without any
frame of reference -- that those
cuntpunchers in the office are
withholding information. And these
students aren't giving me much to
work with -- they're a bunch of
Helen Keller nitwit freaks.

Monroe turns to the class;

MONROE
Alright guys, what's the story?

GIRL #1
What do you mean?

MONROE
Come on guys, where is he?

GIRL #2
Where is who?

(CONTINUED)

MONROE
Where is Rory?

BOY #1
He's not here.

MONROE
Yeah, I gathered that much. I was wondering if you guys could tell me where he is. I know you guys know.

BOY #2
Who's Rory?

BOY #1
(to Boy #2)
He's not here.

MONROE
Alright you guys, seriously, where the fuck is he?

S.S.
(in the b.g.)
See what I mean?

BOY #3
They're not letting him back.

MONROE
Letting him back...

BOY #3
Yeah...

MONROE
Letting him back from what.

BOY #4
Suspension.

MONROE
Suspended for what?

BOY #5
You didn't hear about this?

BOY #6
He kicked the crap out of the teacher.

Long silence.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

...I'm sorry, you're going to have to come again.

BOY #7

That's what she said.

S.S.

(in the b.g.)

See what I mean?

MONROE

He got into a fight with Bill?

GIRL #2

Yes. Right in front of us, right in the middle of class.

MONROE

Did he win?

GIRL #1

By all measures.

MONROE

Do any of you know more that you aren't sharing?

Long silence.

BOY #8

I do...

MONROE

Spit it. No one has to know, you can tell me, you're safe.

Boy #8 stands, as if presenting before the class.

BOY #8

From what I've heard and understand, they had been going at it for some time before it all blew up.

MONROE

...Go on...

BOY #8

There's no way to verify what I've heard. What I've heard is what I've heard...

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

Go. On.

BOY #8

I'll just state this as a fact and
save us a little time...

MONROE

Were you going to tell me or not?

BOY #8

Bill is abusing Rory.

TITLE CARD:

ACT III

(HOLD)

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - MIDDAY - BAR AREA

A man, pushing sixty, occupies the lonesome bar area. He shows signs of male pattern baldness and glasses with noticeably thick lenses. He's dressed in work-formal. He's nearing the bottom of a stiff scotch. He is KERMIT KIMBALL. Kermit stares at the oak of the bar, appearing either somber, melancholy or just plain old hiding his drunk. Hang on him for a moment.

EMMETT MURPHY stares at Kermit on the opposite side of the bar. His eyes periodically shift from Kermit to Kermit's glass. A bottle of good scotch sits on the bar next to them. After a few moments of staring, Murphy replenishes Kermit's drink. Unflinching, Kermit drinks from the glass as if no one had touched it - a sign of his present mental state. He continues to drink...

KERMIT

I mean. What do you say to
something like that? What can you
say?

MURPHY

I don't know, Kerm.

KERMIT

Oh, and then? Guess what happened.

MURPHY

I give up, Kerm.

KERMIT

As I'm pulling out of the carwash,
I'm shifting from neutral to drive,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KERMIT (cont'd)
right, and this boy, this little Leave-it-to-Beaver type faggot comes wheeling by on a bicycle, and just before he crosses the exit, he decides to stop... the motherfucker sneezes on the hood of my car. And was it just a mist? No. It was an oil gusher. Fucking kid looked like Budd Dwyer, only instead of blood it was... and it was sickly. This kid had been sick. I mean, goddamn! What's wrong with the little mutant bastard that he can't think of anywhere else to sneeze! I'm pulling out of a CARWASH! We don't sneeze in our hands anymore, like good little Americans?

MURPHY
Kids, Kerm.

KERMIT
Kids.

Kermit takes a few deep swigs of his scotch.

KERMIT
And I was too polite to seem agitated. If I had been closer to that boy, if I didn't have that seatbelt holding me back, I would have made the little prick eat some dirt. And this kid looked me straight in the eye. In one swift motion. It went; sneeze -- glare. Sneeze *into* glare. What a fuck. But did I have the gumption to look pissed off? Of course not. Instead, I gave him that dopey damn wave. Like "don't worry. you're fine". Murph, do you know how awkward that is? When you realize the other person isn't feeling remorse for what they've done? There's no recovery. You've made a really bold presumption, and they've shat on it. They've said "no thanks! I really am the asshole you took me for!" I mean, you're giving them the benefit of the doubt. You'd think maybe he'd give me some wounded puppy eyes, or whatever the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

KERMIT (cont'd)
fuck the kids do now. No. Nothing.
And he kept staring me down, even
as he rode off. He was egging me
on, looking for a fight... cute
little training wheels turning in
the midday sun. Things like these,
Murph... I tell you, this is the
generation of apathy.

MURPHY
Things like these, Kerm.

Murphy replenishes Kermit's glass once more. Struck by the
time on his wrist, he chokes the last scotch down, digs up a
few bills and tosses them on the bar.

KERMIT
Same time tomorrow, eh?

Kermit excuses himself and then leaves.

CUT TO

EXT. MARITIME PUB - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Kermit strolls down the sidewalk with a most modest stagger.
It has taken him precious years of practice to master the
art of not looking drunk. He walks for a while until he
enters an OFFICE BUILDING.

CUT TO

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - KERMIT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kermit goes over to a small closet in his personal office.
He pulls out a WHITE LAB COAT and puts it on. He reaches
back, deeper into the closet and pulls out a STETHOSCOPE. He
drapes it around his neck. Last but not least, he reaches
into the closet and pulls out some MOUTH WASH. He takes a
hit off it, swishes it around and then spits out into a
small trashcan beside his desk. On this desk is a name
placard, reading: "Dr. Kermit Kimball, M.D."

CUT TO

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kermit opens the door to one of the rooms and reveals MONROE waiting for him in a WHITE PATIENT GOWN. She smiles warmly; Kermit is transfixed, becoming briefly tongue-tied by the lady in his presence.

MONROE
Hello, Dr. Kimball...

KERMIT
(slightly slurred)
Hello. Monroe, you must be...

MONROE
Monroe, I am.

KERMIT
How are we feeling this afternoon?

MONROE
Well, I've just gotten off a three
day fever-binge. Aches, chills,
mood swings, the whole bit.

KERMIT
Vomiting?

MONROE
No.

KERMIT
Lack of appetite?

MONROE
Yes, very much so.

KERMIT
But you're okay now.

MONROE
Yes...

Brief beat. They laugh.

MONROE
I guess I'm just making sure.

KERMIT
Very well. Your money. Your
insurance. Let's have a look-see.

(CONTINUED)

He pats the examining bench, draped in the infamous white paper. Monroe places herself on the bench and Kermit begins examining her. Glands, eyes, ears, etc. Once Kermit is done with the basics, he pauses a moment.

MONROE

Need me to...

Monroe gestures to her gown.

KERMIT

Yeah, let's go ahead and do that.

Monroe removes the gown, exposing her breasts. Kermit uncoils the stethoscope from around his neck.

KERMIT

Alright, this'll be a liiiiiittle cold.

He places the amplifier to Monroe's bare chest, which does indeed give her a small chill. He listens in on her accelerated heartbeat.

KERMIT

...Are you a little nervous today, Monroe?

MONROE

No.

KERMIT

Have you had any stimulants today? Caffeine? Nicotine? Cocaine?

MONROE

No. Caffeine, maybe, but not the other two.

KERMIT

Your heart is beating abnormally fast.

Monroe blushes. Kermit notices.

KERMIT

Do you have an inclination as to why this is?

MONROE

...No.

KERMIT

Monroe, if there's a reason you don't feel comfortable sharing, that's fine. But tell me if there is so I don't go worrying about you.

MONROE

...Maybe I am just a bit nervous.

Brief beat.

KERMIT

Good enough. Let's have you lay down, get a look at the rest of you.

Monroe stretches herself out on the bench. Kermit begins examining her torso, pushes on her abdomen. Monroe stares with masked enchantment as Kermit works on her. A SLOW ZOOM IN on her face helps to enlighten exactly why her heart was beating so rampantly.

KERMIT

Okay. You can go ahead and get yourself situated again --

Monroe redresses herself.

KERMIT

Quick and painless, right?

Monroe gives Kermit a courtesy smile.

KERMIT

Welp. You look absolutely fine to me. Sounds like you had a bad bout of the flu, but you appear fine now, so my guess is that you've already had the worst of it. You feel okay, you look okay. I'd say you're okay. We got your urine sample, we'll look at that over the weekend. Standard operating procedure. Other than that, looks like you're in the clear.

MONROE

Okay, and you'll just call if you find something in the urine?

(CONTINUED)

KERMIT

Well actually, my policy, generally, is that no news is good news. So if you don't get a call from us, you can assume everything is AOK.

MONROE

Thank you very much, Dr. Kimball.

CUT TO

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Monroe has an enraptured and embarrassed grin on her face. She walks for a while until she finds her TINY NONDESCRIPT CAR. She gets inside, turns the ignition, pulls into the street and drives away, becoming tiny in the distance of this urban stretch.

CUT TO

INT. RORY'S HOME - KITCHEN - THAT MOMENT

Rory removes the BACKPACK from his shoulders and sits it on the counter in front of him, where there are THREE BOTTLES OF WATER. He takes one bottle, cracks the seal, empties it down the sink. Once it's empty, he grabs another, cracks the seal, empties it down the drain. Once that one's empty, he grabs the final bottle, cracks the seal, begins pouring --

Rory's MOTHER enters in her robe. Panicked, Rory drinks from the bottle of water so as not to look suspicious. His mother goes to the fridge, retrieves a food item, pats him on the back and then leaves again, presumably back to bed.

Once she's gone, Rory dumps the rest of the final water bottle down the sink. Then, he lines the three empty bottles up in a row on the counter. He opens the FREEZER, digs deep and manages to extract TWO BOTTLES OF 80-PROOF VODKA. He cracks the seal on one of them and pours some into the first empty water bottle. Once that's full, he moves on and does the same to the second empty water bottle. He gets about halfway through filling the third empty water bottle before he has to crack open the second bottle of vodka and fill the rest of the way. He buries what's left of the vodka in the freezer. He puts the respective caps back on all the water bottles, unzips his backpack and packs them in.

CUT TO

EXT. RORY'S HOME - WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Rory hurls the one empty vodka bottle into the woods.

CUT TO

INT. KERMIT'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

Kermit bids farewell to a patient, guides them out of his office. He pulls a drawer out of the examining bench, where he keeps a FLASK. He takes a few desperate swigs.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - HEALTH CLASS - LATER

THE HEALTH TEACHER is preaching at the front of the room, now with the gleam of a soul in his eyes; the dye in his hair is fading; he's rebounded from his meltdown.

Rory has the facade of an attention-payer but the spaced-out vacancy of a daydreamer. Conspicuously and ambivalently, he brings the first bottle out of his backpack and begins drinking from it.

CUT TO

INT. BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

PLUTO struggles to maintain her own facade. Her shoulders, as well as her eyes, have sunken in.

BLACK & BLUE BILL is back in action. His face is still bandaged and a little purple, but he now appears to be springy and chipper.

CUT TO

INT. PROUST CREMATORIUM - THAT MOMENT

PRUDENCE enters the office area and approaches the front desk, where CLAIRE THE RECEPTIONIST is stationed.

PRUDENCE

Hey, Claire.

RECEPTIONIST

(sympathetic)

Hi, Prudence. How are we doing today?

(CONTINUED)

PRUDENCE

Fine, fine. Just came to see if the old man was done yet.

RECEPTIONIST

I called you a little earlier, I guess you were out.

PRUDENCE

I was probably heading here.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, good news. Your father's all done. We have him here, ready to take home whenever you are. You know, none of the people here would ever admit they made a mistake, but let me just say, on behalf of everybody here, we are so sorry that everything happened the way it did. This was a crazy time for us. But no one can make excuses for our lack of professionalism. So, personally, I'm sorry and on behalf of everybody here, too.

PRUDENCE

Well, thank you Claire, that's very sweet of you. I'm going to be honest, you're the only one I like here.

They both laugh. Prudence goes digging through her purse;

PRUDENCE

Should I make it out to Proust?

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, we've covered everything for you. It's the least we could do. We felt just awful.

PRUDENCE

Oh my goodness. No you did not.

RECEPTIONIST

We absolutely did. So you can worry no more. Everything is just fine.

PRUDENCE

I feel like I might start crying.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST

Well, let me just get your dad for you and you can be on your way and never have to worry about any of this again.

PRUDENCE

Okay, thank you very much.

CUT TO

EXT. PROUST CREMATORIUM - SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Prudence begins her walk home holding a DARK RED URN; her father.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - BILL'S ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Pluto sits still dead-eyed in the middle of one of Bill's math lectures. In the midst of this, her attention wanders over to the window pane right beside the door, where she sees Rory in the hall gesturing her to go out there.

Pluto very casually raises her hand.

BILL

Yes, Pluto?

PLUTO

May I please go to the bathroom?

BILL

Yes, make it snappy.

CUT TO

INT. HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Pluto exits Bill's room. A now-slightly-belligerent Rory comes around the corner and surprise kisses her.

RORY

Just wanted to say hey.

PLUTO

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

RORY
HEY! Look what I got!

Rory pulls out one of his bottles.

PLUTO
Great. Just hang onto it for me.
I'll get mine after school.

Attempting to convince him, Pluto takes a sip from the bottle but struggles to keep it down.

CUT TO

INT. MONROE'S CONDO/HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Monroe enters the house. She sniffs around for Maury and winds up at the BATHROOM DOOR, where she hears the shower running and Maury singing with glee.

Monroe sneaks her way back to the KITCHEN. She opens the PANTRY DOOR and pulls down a COFFEE CAN.

She heads back to the BATHROOM bearing the coffee can. Once she's there, she peels the lid off, reaches in the can and scatters what's there strategically in front of the bathroom door. Maury continues singing.

Monroe pauses for a moment, breathing heavily. She exits.

CAMERA dollies in on the BATHROOM DOOR, slowly booms down...

Guarding the door is a SPREAD OF LETTERS, all signed...

"With Love, Adlai"

CUT TO

INT. ADLAI'S HOME - THAT MOMENT

Prudence enters, walks through the DINING ROOM, where Adlai is doing a line of COKE off the counter. She gives him a quick peck on the forehead. She walks into the LIVING ROOM and places the URN on the coffee table, right alongside Adlai's old rotary-style telephone, a look of contentment on her face.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - CRAIG'S OFFICE - LATER

CRAIG enters his office to find Pluto waiting for him. Craig now has a slight speech impediment.

CRAIG
Pluto! How long have you been waiting?

PLUTO
Oh, not long.

CRAIG
I didn't think there were any appointments.

PLUTO
Oh, there weren't. I just got here. I didn't make an appointment.

CRAIG
(now taking seat)
Okay. Well. What seems to be on your mind this morning?

PLUTO
Rory brought liquor with him to school today.

CRAIG
Rory brought liquor with him to school today?

PLUTO
Yes.

CRAIG
What kind of liquor?

PLUTO
Vodka.

CRAIG
How much?

PLUTO
Three bottles.

CRAIG
How do you know it was vodka?

(CONTINUED)

PLUTO

I took a sip of it, I thought it was water.

Beat.

CRAIG

Okay. We'll, uh, we'll certainly look into it.

PLUTO

Um, what's going to happen to him?

CRAIG

He'll be suspended for even longer than before, most likely. If what you say is correct. He ought to have been expelled, if we're being honest here. Hell, he ought to be in juvenile hall for assault. That kid knows how to work his loopholes. But if what you say is correct, then he'll be suspended and potentially expelled.

PLUTO

And uh... this is uncomfortable for me to ask, but what kind of compensation is it that you offer for bringing you this kind of information?

CRAIG

Depends on how many people, the volume of the substance. In this case, three bottles. That'll getcha a good \$75, maybe even \$100. If what you say is correct.

PLUTO

And that can be...arranged?

CRAIG

Well, now, Pluto, we have to go and confirm that Rory really is drinking on school grounds before we can give you any cash, but since you know him buckets better than anybody else around here, I take your word for it.

(CONTINUED)

PLUTO

So you could spot me the cash?

CRAIG

No, that I couldn't do, Pluto.
There's got to be physical evidence
on my desk.

PLUTO

I can get it for you. I can have it
here, whenever you need it.

Beat, silence.

CRAIG

Do you need some money, Pluto?

PLUTO

I kind of do.

CRAIG

And a hundred dollars would
suffice.

PLUTO

Well. It's a start.

CRAIG

Pluto. Have you gotten yourself
into some kind of trouble?

PLUTO

(starting to tear up)

No.

CRAIG

We can be honest here. That's what
guidance counselors are for.

PLUTO

No. I -- I just need the money.

CRAIG

Okay, Pluto. I won't push you any
further. After school, I want you
to come back to my office and we'll
see how much money we can get for
you. Okay?

Craig offers Pluto a tissue; she accepts and then gets up to
leave. Before she's out the door, she turns back to Craig...

(CONTINUED)

PLUTO

You know it's a miracle what
happened to you.

And with that, she's out the door.

CAMERA tilts up to the clock on Craig's wall. In a time-lapse, we watch the hour hand advance a few times, then the CAMERA tilts back down...

There are now three water-bottles lined up on Craig's desk, and a drunk and heartbroken Rory across from him.

CAMERA tilts up to the clock again, we watch another couple hours march by, the last bell of the day rings, CAMERA tilts back down to a \$100 bill folded in half on the table and a slightly relieved Pluto across from him.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. PLUTO TRESLEY'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Pluto enters, drops her book bag hard on the floor, takes her shoes off, stretches her legs out on the sofa. She flips on the TV, making herself as comfortable as someone can be in her situation. The long day is about to get longer.

Outside, we hear a MOTORCYCLE pull into the driveway.

A few seconds later, an overfed warthog on his hind legs enters; Pluto's father GUS. A second of silence, Pluto tries to keep her cool, both eyes on the television. Gus will have none of it...

GUS THE WARTHOG

You got somethin' fer me?

Pluto takes the \$100 out of her pocket and hands it to her father, the same way that she would ward off a grizzly bear with a honeycomb.

PLUTO

...I'm sorry, daddy.

GUS THE WARTHOG

Well. You know what this means.

PLUTO

Daddy, I don't think I can do this anymore. These men are making me sick.

(CONTINUED)

GUS THE WARTHOG

I'm sorry, darlin'. We got to do
what we have to do.

PLUTO

Dad, I can feel it ruining my life.

FADE OUT

HOLD IN BLACK

CUT TO

EXT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT/DUSK

THE FOOTBALL ARENA is packed as a big game is about to be underway. The bleachers are loaded with people wearing the Kurring High colors, PURPLE and ORANGE.

Amid the stream of patriotic Kurring High students, RORY works his way up the bleachers in search of a spot to sit.

In the crowd is a pretty, young, blonde UPPERCLASSMAN named BLANCHE HOWARDLY who makes eyes with Rory through the hectic crowd. She waves him over with a warm smile on her face. She scooches down and pats the empty space next to her. Rory fights his way to the middle where Blanche is seated. He sits.

CAMERA pushes in a TWO-SHOT while the crowd begins to go crazy around them.

The Kurring High K's take the field, in vibrant purple and orange.

With the first punt, the crowd is rowdier than ever. Blanche, aggravated, nudges Rory to say something but we can't hear her through the chaos.

BLANCHE

(subtitled)

Wanna go someplace?

Rory agrees. They get up, squirm through the crowd.

CUT TO

INT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Nothing but moonlight pours in through the windows of the gym where Rory and Blanche are walking laps -- the same gym that marked Rory's first kiss with Pluto Tresley.

RORY

I haven't seen you in a while...

BLANCHE

Yeah, it's been a while.

RORY

How are you getting on?

BLANCHE

Fine.

RORY

Any thoughts for the fall?

BLANCHE

Probably do a couple years of community college. I should get a job.

RORY

What do you want to be?

BLANCHE

Maybe a florist. I don't know.

RORY

Really. Are you thinking about going to -- oh, what's it called...

BLANCHE

Horticulture school?

RORY

Yeah.

BLANCHE

I don't know. I...don't know.

RORY

Is that the kind of job you could get without a degree, do you think?

BLANCHE

Oh, easily. But I just want to grow flowers. I don't think I need thousands of dollars of debt in unpaid loans in order to do that.

(CONTINUED)

RORY

So you want to open your own flower shop?

BLANCHE

Maybe. Yeah, maybe.

RORY

I'm gonna buy your first bushel.

BLANCHE

I'll grow one up real special for you, Rory. What's your favorite flower?

RORY

Lilac.

BLANCHE

Find me in fifteen years when my shop's finally open, I'll give you the biggest fullest prettiest bushel of lilacs you've ever seen.

RORY

Alright. It's a deal then.

Silence.

RORY

So. I've never really known you...that well. You know?

BLANCHE

Yeah, it's too bad I'm leaving next year, you could've become one of my friendly faces.

RORY

It's funny you should say that. I have a proposition for you.

BLANCHE

Okay. What is it?

RORY

Do you know who Pluto Tresley is?

BLANCHE

Yeah, she's in your grade isn't she?

(CONTINUED)

RORY

That she is. Do you know anything about her and I?

BLANCHE

Sort of. I see you guys in the hall every once in a while.

RORY

Well, Blanche Howardly, from what I understand, you've just been in a bit of a painful place yourself, haven't you?

BLANCHE

Like you mean with a guy?

RORY

Yes.

BLANCHE

This is true.

RORY

Well, look. I'm in pure hell right now with this Pluto Tresley. And you've just been jilted too. So, what I'm saying is, maybe we should come together and unjilt ourselves.

Brief silence.

RORY

Just a good honest proposition.

Brief silence.

BLANCHE

I guess I don't really understand.

RORY

I *really* need someone to like me right now, and it kind of seems like you do too. So what if we just liked each other?

BLANCHE

...Keep talking.

RORY

Just a little contact is all. Your needs, my needs. See what I'm saying?

(CONTINUED)

There's a very long silence wherein Blanche and Rory stop walking. Blanche looks at Rory long and hard.

BLANCHE

Let's do it.

Rory immediately attacks Blanche with a kiss.

CUT TO

EXT. KURRING HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

The clock is running out on the scoreboard in the fourth quarter. HOME is being trampled by GUEST.

The Kurring High K's use remaining 10 seconds to no avail. The game ends and the K's head back to the locker room with their heads hung in shame.

The DRUMLINE takes over the field and begins pounding away as Blanche and Rory emerge from the school and approach the performance.

CAMERA holds on Blanche and Rory who stand at the fence around the field. A smirk of very temporary satisfaction finds its way onto Rory's face.

A let-down and a triumph are sometimes the same...

CUT TO

INT. DRUBS BOWLING ALLEY - NEXT DAY

MONROE sits at her lane, as if waiting for something. She twiddles her thumbs impatiently, bounces her knee.

Finally, BILL enters the alley carrying a bowling bag and a pair of bowling shoes. He spots Monroe and approaches the lane.

Monroe smiles courteously. Bill takes a seat at the table, begins the business of changing his shoes.

MONROE

Hi...

BILL

Hey.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE
What's going on?

BILL
Bowling with a friend.

MONROE
Hey, can you talk to me?

Bill pauses from his shoes, looks up at Monroe. Monroe points to the seat across from her. Bill accepts her offer.

BILL
What's up?

MONROE
I just wanted to give you a chance to explain yourself. Correct any of the falsehoods, because I really don't want to lose you as a friend.

BILL
Why would you lose me?

MONROE
Bill.

BILL
Monroe? Why would you lose me?

MONROE
Bill. I've heard things. Things are going around. And I have a gut feeling you know what I'm talking about.

BILL
I'm afraid I don't, Monroe.

MONROE
No? About a certain student?

BILL
What student?

MONROE
Rory.

Very, very long silence. There's stern eye-contact between Bill and Monroe.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Okay. What do you want to know?

MONROE

Is it true?

BILL

No.

MONROE

Don't jerk me around, is it true?

BILL

No, Monroe, I wouldn't do that, you're my friend.

MONROE

Did you do any of the things that they said. Clear this up now, so I can be actually sleep tonight.

BILL

No, Monroe. None of them happened. It's silly season right now in school. I haven't really made an impact on any of the students, so they like to make things up about me. You can't take the word of high school gossip over mine? Your colleague...

MONROE

Bill, you can tell me the god's honest truth.

BILL

I am, Monroe! I have a feeling you're out to get certain answers from me that aren't true but you want to be true. And I don't much care for that. So are you going to still interrogate me or can we bowl?

MONROE

Bill, I have a responsibility to this young man. And I know things are strained for you. I'd understand if you were confused. I don't ever want you to have to justify these actions with someone else. You know me. I'm the only one who'd give you mercy. So, please

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MONROE (cont'd)
for the love of God, if it's true,
take this opportunity and tell me
now.

BILL
I don't have anything to say.

Monroe sighs deeply, her eyes swell slightly. Bill goes back to his shoes. She rises and, before she leaves, she kisses Bill square on the crest of his head.

MONROE
(whispered)
I'd have forgiven you.

Hold.

CUT TO

INT. KERMIT'S OFFICE BUILDING - A LITTLE LATER

Monroe passes down a corridor of doctor's offices. In one of the offices, DR. MALANKINE is treating a patient. Monroe finds Kermit's office, lingers outside for a second preparing her game face.

CUT TO

INT. KERMIT'S OFFICE - THAT MOMENT

Kermit sterilizes the room, lays a new white sheet on the examining bench, etc. Monroe enters.

MONROE
Good morning, Dr. Kimball!

KERMIT
Monroe!

MONROE
How are you?

KERMIT
Keeping busy, as usual. How about
yourself, you look great.

MONROE
I'm feeling great, just stopping
in.

(CONTINUED)

KERMIT

That's nice. Always appreciated around the office. Is there anything in particular I can help you with?

MONROE

...not really, I just was in the area, thought it would be nice to see you.

KERMIT

Always nice to see you, Monroe.

MONROE

When do you get off?

KERMIT

Five, same everyday.

MONROE

Do you think I could find you somewhere?

Beat.

KERMIT

I'll be at Maritime.

MONROE

I'll be here at five.

Monroe closes the door behind her briefly and gives Kermit a small peck on the cheek. She leaves. Kermit is hypnotized...

He drinks from a flask he's concealed in his coat.

KERMIT

(to himself)

Slow down...

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - LATER THAT EVENING

Monroe, dressed for an important date, and Kermit, still in work clothes, enter through the saloon doors. They head straight to the bar, where Murphy is already waiting for them.

(CONTINUED)

Unlike all the men we've seen Monroe connect to so far, Kermit is a man she actually feels comfortable sharing silence with.

Without a word spoken, Murphy knows exactly what to fix them; a neat scotch and coca-cola (respectively).

They cheers, sip, eye each other, and finally KISS. They kiss as if they've been reserving themselves for this one predetermined, predestined, preordained, pre-agreed miracle moment. Sweet relief. Juxtapose to the following...

CUT TO

EXT. PERENNIAL WEDDINGS - DAY - MONTHS LATER

Monroe shares her first public kiss as Mrs. Kermit Kimball at the altar of this beautiful outside wedding venue. An off-screen audience applauds.

The Groom's side of the altar is completely bare, and the bride's side occupied only by MONTY as maid of honor.

There are only three familiar faces in the audience:

CRAIG, whose arm is wrapped around the shoulder of IMELDA the mail-lady. She rocks a SLEEPING BABY in her arms.

BILL is sitting isolated from everybody, watching the center of the ceremony with a look of genuine approval carved onto the worn-out canvas of his face.

The rest of the crowd is sparse and unenthusiastic for the obviously smitten newlyweds.

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kermit and Monroe have chosen the place of their first kiss to serve as also the place of their wedding reception. It's festooned to the newlyweds' liking: small decorative brides and grooms tethered about, rice sprinkled along the bar, wedding-veil material hanging from the ceiling. Cake is being passed out to the Few.

THE NEWLYWEDS are getting congratulated left and right.

CRAIG and IMELDA are drinking soda with the safety of their little one in mind, while MONTY is getting hammered at the bar. Monty is a wine-cooler kind of guy, and he's cracking into his sixth.

(CONTINUED)

Through his liquor-slurs, he pours his heart out to EMMETT MURPHY who's tending bar across from him. Murphy, for this special occasion, is wearing only heart-shades.

MONTY

(slurring it up)

So how do you know the bride and groom?

MURPHY

Regulars, you could say.

MONTY

Aren't you going to ask me how I know them?

MURPHY

How do you know them, Monty?

MONTY

Hey, how do you know my name?

MURPHY

You told me. Several times.

MONTY

Anyway, I know them because Monroe is my very best friend. Were you at the wedding?

Murphy shakes his head.

MONTY

You shoulda' been. It was so beautiful. I was her maid of honor. Isn't that fucking HYSTERICAL? Her maid of fucking honor! I'm a boy. I've been one my whole life, whodathunk I'd wind up being a maid of fucking honor at a wedding?!

MURPHY

I never did, Monty.

MONTY

You ever talk to Monroe?

MURPHY

Oh yes. We go way back.

MONTY

She ever talk to you about me?

(CONTINUED)

MURPHY

Can't say she has. Monty.

MONTY

Well, I'm her very best friend. I'd like to think she'd tell people about me. You know I'd do anything for that spoiled brat. I've done everything for that spoiled brat! Of course, she's thankful, don't get me wrong. She can be very affectionate, but I don't think she really knows how much I do for her. I test all her guy friends and make sure they're worth what she has to offer. She's a goddess, as you know. I don't let goddesses get hurt.

MURPHY

So how do you feel about Kermit?

MONTY

...Oops!

Monty explodes into a fit of drunken laughter. He clutches his gut, leans over the bar and pats Murphy in an overly friendly way. Murphy is not impressed.

As his laughter fades...

MONTY

Forgot about that one!

His laughter intensifies again briefly and then dies.

MURPHY

And you're her friend?

MONTY

Excuse me?

MURPHY

The one person you don't research, she marries. Now if this man hits her, cheats on her, or dissatisfies her in any way, you've got only yourself to blame.

Monty stares at Murphy with an icy and drunken glare. Murphy brings out two more wine coolers, one for Monty and one for himself. He cracks them both open.

(CONTINUED)

MURPHY

Please enjoy yourself.

Murphy abandons Monty and begins wiping along the bar with a towel. He now and again sips from his drink.

After a moment, Monty turns from the bar and ventures into the room where he quite literally stumbles upon Bill, who's enjoying some cake.

MONTY

Oh, Bill! I haven't said hi to you yet. How are you feeling today? Everything FINE?

BILL

Yes, Monty. How are you?

MONTY

Oh, I haven't felt this good in a long, long time. And you know what?

BILL

What's that, Monty?

MONTY

I think it's because you're here.

BILL

(nervously chuckling)

Well. Monty. It's great to see you too. Always good to see you.

MONTY

It was a lovely ceremony, wasn't it, Bill?

BILL

Oh yeah. Just gorgeous.

MONTY

That's right. How'd I look as maid of honor?

Monty bursts into more laughter.

MONTY

Ridiculous, isn't it? Maid of honor? But seriously. How'd I look?

BILL

You looked... happy.

(CONTINUED)

MONTY

Well that's good, Bill, you see, because I was happy. I was very happy that my best friend could finally settle down. Weight off my mind, I don't have to worry about those guys walking all over her, know what I mean?

BILL

Yeah, I know.

MONTY

Doesn't she just light up a room?

ANGLE on Monroe who has clearly been staring in their direction for some time, not out of anger, but out of genuine concern.

MONTY

Hm? Bill? Doesn't she?

BILL

She, uh... She sure does, Monty.

MONTY

I'm glad you decided to say that finally, Bill, because you know, if you hadn't, there could've been serious consequences. Consequences, Bill. For your actions. But you know what. I know you'd take responsibility. You're a real level-headed guy.

BILL

Thank you, Monty.

MONTY

You're extremely welcome. I can only hope your kids grow up to be as level-headed as you, Bill.

BILL

That's very sweet of you.

Monty takes a deep swig of his WINE COOLER, and then just about interrupts his swallowing to say...

MONTY

Speaking of kids, what are you drinking?

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Alright look, Monty. I don't want this to happen. I'm not looking for a fight.

MONTY

A fight -- who said anything about a fight?

BILL

That's where you're heading, Monty, I can smell it on you.

MONTY

Ooh, you can smell it on me! That's interesting. And how exactly is it that you can *smell it on me*?

BILL

You keep repeating everything I say.

MONTY

I keep...

Monty's drunken mind is blown by this observation.

MONTY

(slight, almost comical
whisper)

Holy fuck!

Bill smiles, now nervous as ever.

MONTY

That's good, you're a good one there, Bill... Do you like getting pounded in the butt, Bill?

BILL

Monty. You can either go outside like a good little soldier, or I can *help* you go outside.

MONTY

No it's just that, I have to ask if you enjoy that. I really don't. I never have been, but I'm just saying. And so, would you consider being pounded in the ass "fine"?

(CONTINUED)

BILL
If I play this game, will you go
outside?

MONTY
(definitively)
Yes.

BILL
No, Monty, I don't think getting
pounded in the butt is fine.

MONTY
And so if you made a promise to a
friend that everything would be
fine, that would include not
getting pounded. Correct or
incorrect?

BILL
No, that's correct, Monty.

Beat.

MONTY
Thank you. That's all I needed.

Monty staggers out of the pub.

Bill walks over and takes a seat at a table where sits The
Bride Monroe, The Groom Kermit, and Craig & Imelda.

There is a very big silence, which certainly wasn't there
before Bill planted himself at the table.

BILL
...what?

Still more silence. Monroe seems especially disturbed by
what's just happened.

BILL
Is everything okay?

The quiet is painful now. As BILL's POV, CAMERA pans around
the table, every member of it looking searingly embarrassed.

Hold on the groom and especially the bride.

CUT TO

EXT. MARITIME PUB - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Monty enjoys his WINE COOLER on the curb in front of Maritime. He amuses himself by blowing into the neck of his bottle, a dumb grin on his face. After a moment, a shadow casts over him. It's Monroe. He sits frozen for a second, then he removes his jacket and places it on the pavement for her to take a seat. She obliges him.

MONTY

So?

MONROE

So...

MONTY

What's the verdict, pretty bride?

MONROE

I could've done without that little episode back in there.

MONTY

What, that thing? That was nothing.

MONROE

Was it? What's been up with you?

MONTY

I think I'm...

Monty turns his head and vomits in the street.

MONTY

...sad.

MONROE

Is there anything I can do? I don't like seeing you this way.

MONTY

You know what you can do?

Monty wraps his arm over Monroe's shoulder, again a bit too friendly. Monroe holds his hand on the other side.

MONROE

What's that, hon?

MONTY

You can live a good and happy life.

(CONTINUED)

MONROE

I'm asking you a serious question.

MONTY

What? What, what, what, what? Is there anything you can do? Am I alright? Yes and no. Are there some things I need to work out? Is there anything you can work out for me? Yes and no.

MONROE

Monty. You know I'll do anything to make sure you land on two feet. You were handed a plateful, and I understand...

Monty takes his arm off Monroe's shoulder.

MONTY

You can't do any of this anymore. This is for me. You can go in there and have a wedding reception, and I'll be out here in the street where things feel natural and good. See, I'm happy. This is home here. This? Right now? It adds up. It makes sense. This is where I am to be. But what doesn't make sense is that you came out here to talk to me, that's what doesn't make sense. I don't know what you're doing anymore, you've got more celebrating to do, and I've got about a twentieth of my drink left. So let's part ways now and relish when we meet again.

MONROE

(getting up)

So that's it? Just split like a fork in the road?

MONTY

I'll see you after honeymoon.

MONROE

If that's the way you want it, that's the way you'll have it. But Monty?

(CONTINUED)

MONTY

Yeah, mhm?

MONROE

(legitimate)

Just one last thing? Do you think
there was any truth to what you
said in there?

Monty's eyes roll back in his skull. Monroe never expected an answer. She heads back inside. As she opens the door to the pub, we hear society, celebration, music, joy.

Monty is left to the street, a haze of smog obscuring any sense of distance in either direction. In his altered state, he pats the STREET LAMP beside him like an old drinking buddy -- the last we will see of him.

CUT TO

INT. MARITIME PUB - CONTINUOUS

Emmett Murphy is directing the party people into position for a photograph. In various order, we see friends and cherished ones plaster profoundly fake grins to their faces.

Bill. Craig. Kermit. Monroe. HOLD.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - THAT NIGHT

We see the BOUQUET OF WHITE ROSES gliding down the halls of the hotel once again. They roll and roll and roll...

Until they slow to a halt. The white-gloved-hands of the ROOM SERVICE ATTENDANT enter FRAME and pick up the flowers.

The Attendant carries the bouquet down the hall.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

The Attendant holds the bouquet as the elevator moves.

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The Attendant carries the roses through the lobby area, through the lower level of the hotel and to the back exit.

He carries the bouquet to an overflowing trash receptacle, full of bleak brown garbage.

He places the PURE-WHITE FLOWERS on the CONTAMINATED HEAP OF TRASH, and there they will rest...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOTEL - SUITE - THAT NIGHT

Monroe and Kermit are kissing passionately on their queen-sized bed, preparing to "seal the deal" as they say. Kissing tenderly. Kermit takes a swig from his wineglass on the nightstand.

The two newlyweds slowly strip each other bare, savoring every inch of their new counterpart.

KERMIT

I was beginning to think it would never... It wouldn't...

MONROE

It's alright. I know.

KERMIT

You know I've never even... never even...

MONROE

What is it, pumpkin?

KERMIT

I've never loved somebody. Not even my wife. I've never even made love.

MONROE

It's okay...

KERMIT

I can finally stop -- I can sleep again.

MONROE

It's okay, honey.

(CONTINUED)

KERMIT
Yes. Yes it is.

Kermit suckles on Monroe's neck.

KERMIT
Yes it is, yes it is. Yes it is.
Yes, it is.

Kermit continues working on Monroe's neck, periodically drifting up to her face for a classic kiss. He offers Monroe some wine off the nightstand, but she has her own bedside glass from which she sips.

Kermit and Monroe both sit up for a second on the bed, gaze into each other's eyes recognizingly, and then just hug: warmly, friendly, congratulatory.

Through the hugging, into each other's shoulders;

KERMIT
And it will be great.

Monroe hugs her husband even tighter now.

MONROE
...I believe you.

Just as Kermit gets between his new wife's legs...

CAMERA pulls away and glides through the suite; every room, every hall, every corridor, every nook, every cranny.

As we arrive and settle at the BALCONY for our final shot, LARGE FIREWORKS shoot over the city-view and yet we cannot hear them, as if being played on a muted television.

BURSTS become more intense; SMOKE fills the air. Silence.

One last blast of wind sweeps through...

CUT TO BLACK

THE END