

WOOF

adapted screenplay written by

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based upon his novel

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FADE IN on:

CLOSE UP reflection of CARL DANIELSON in his bathroom mirror. He is in his early 40s, has a scruffy strawberry blond beard and blue eyes. Even with the tightness of the shot, we can tell he is a very big man. On the mirror is stuck a Post-It note reading "DWAYNE NOON". SOUNDS OF RAIN GOING DOWN RAINSPOUT HEARD SOFTLY. The lighting is grey and lonesome. A cramped room with an unmade bed can barely be made out behind Carl. With a pained hesitancy, Carl steels himself and finally gives a strong look into his own eyes.

CARL

Today is gonna be a good day.

MAIN TITLES: "FIND MY WAY BACK" BY .38 SPECIAL IS CUED ON SOUNDTRACK. CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS OUT FROM A SIGN MARKED "ENTERING BELLINGHAM", ironically getting smaller and smaller. The sky is drizzly and grey, and any trees that can be seen are nearly bare, denoting our story's late-autumn setting. As the sequence continues, it is revealed that this shot is being taken from the rear cab window of a white pick-up truck.

EXT./DOWNTOWN BELLINGHAM - DAY

MONTAGE -

- a) local bus with an advertisement featuring Western Washington University
- b) downtown area Bellingham storefronts, one of them featuring a prominent Thanksgiving display
- c) HIV clinic windowfront, which includes: "STUDYING IN CANADA? - GET YOUR MED EXAMS HERE!" and "CATCH US ON MYSPACE"
- d) pedestrians abound during busy midday traffic; despite the steady rain, not a single umbrella is seen

CLOSE UP: the boots of DWAYNE LEE BLESSED as they trod the sidewalks of downtown Bellingham, Washington. His steps telegraph purpose, not swagger. MAIN TITLES END. SONG FADES FROM SOUNDTRACK as Dwayne's very Texan voice is heard. He is obviously talking on a cell phone to someone.

DWAYNE

An hour, maybe two, max. I'm not lookin' to hijack your place. In and out, okay?

(beat)

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow around eleven. Yes, ma'am. No worries.

Mmm-hmm.

Dwayne's cell phone claps shut. His boots make a sharp turn.

INT./KALLISTO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

CLOSE UP: CAMERA FOLLOWS BEHIND DWAYNE as he makes his way through a sparsely-attended Greek restaurant. A few PATRONS are kicked back wearily on stools at the long bar. We can only see his head. A black straw cowboy hat sits atop it. Shoulder-length coal black hair fringes his thick shoulders. A BUSBOY looks up as Dwayne passes by.

DWAYNE

Es una hermosa tarde, ese!

BUSBOY

(laughs)

Para noviembre!

SHOT WIDENS as Dwayne stops at the booth where CARL is sitting. We finally see Dwayne's face as he slides in to take his seat. DEMIS ROUSSOS' "FOREVER AND EVER" PLAYS FAINTLY ON RESTAURANT'S INTERCOM. As they have not seen each other face to face for a year, there is a fitting pause before:

CARL

You don't need to ask. I'm sure you know how I've been doing.

DWAYNE

That's one of the reasons I called you here.

CARL

To gloat?

DWAYNE

Shit, Carl, from what I'm hearin',
I don't need to.

(beat)

'Force me, feed me, fuck me'. A
year later and I'm figurin' you've
come up with a better credo by now.

CARL

No.

DWAYNE

It's not what ya want.

CARL

It's been a year, Dwayne. How do
you know what I want anymore?

DWAYNE

'Cause I did all three in spades.

CARL

Yes, you did--

DWAYNE

And it still wasn't enough for ya.
So, pick one. Either you're greedy,
or you're just a fuckin' liar.

CARL

I told you I'd never leave you.

DWAYNE

Course not! How could you get pity
from your friends if you're the bad
guy?

CARL

(helpless)

I told you I'd never leave you!

DWAYNE

(overlapping)

But considerin' I was second
to your cigarettes, your friends,
your weed and the need to suck every
dick that was thrown at you, the way
I look at it, Carl, you pretty much
broke up with me first.

CARL

Now that you have that out of your
system, you wanna tell me why you
couldn't have done this to me in an
email?

DWAYNE

You workin'?

CARL

I'm sure you know the answer to
that.

DWAYNE

I ain't askin' as an ex, I'm askin'
as an employer, so excuse the holy
hell outta me for goin' to the source.

CARL

Employer?

DWAYNE

(sigh, hesitant)

I met a guy.

CARL

(face sinks, equally
hesitant)

A guy?

DWAYNE

Mmm-hmm. At the CBC. He talked me into puttin' together some music docs. Vancouver affiliate, or whatever the hell the Canadian equivalent of a network affiliate is, is showin' some serious interest as a series, and I want to make sure to push this across the finish line.

CARL

What a difference a year makes.

DWAYNE

But I'm gonna need more.

CARL

More?

DWAYNE

I need a feature. He wants a full-length feature to prove I'm worth, that my narratives are worthy. And that's what we're gonna give him.

CARL

"We're"?

DWAYNE

Got fifty grand to do it. On the fly. Quick. Narrative. Doesn't have to be Oscar shit, just cohesive. I'm thinkin' of stickin' close to home.

(beat; in response to Carl's bewilderment)

I wanna do a film about our relationship.

A long pause falls between the two. SONG FADES INTO SOMETHING THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT WOULD BE FROM A GREEK WEDDING.

CARL

You're out of your fucking mind.

DWAYNE

I take that as a 'no'?

CARL

*We have no relationship anymore,
Dwayne.*

DWAYNE

*That's what makes it easy! No
emotions.*

CARL

No...I can't do it.

DWAYNE

*Nah, that's a horseshit answer.
You just don't wanna.*

CARL

*I don't have to explain my reasons
to you anymore.*

DWAYNE

But you're gonna tell me, anyway.

CARL

*Okay, you mind telling me how you
got the money for this?*

DWAYNE

*Doctors, dentists, you know--people
with cash. Driven everywhere between
Vancouver and SFO for the past eight
weeks, and let me tell ya, gas ain't
gettin' any cheaper.*

CARL

And this worked?

DWAYNE

Here, ain't I? And before you go askin' what's-in-it-for-me, 'cause I can tell by the look on your face you're about to, the answer is somethin' like a sponsorship to Canada and my salary to line your pocket.

CARL

(his first smile)

A sponsor?

DWAYNE

That fella at the CBC?

CARL

Yeah?

DWAYNE

Got a seven-year-old daughter he needs a tutor for. You do this movie, you got some money, an iron-clad sponsor, job, what you always wanted.

(beat)

And I never have to see you again. Not bad for a drop-out teacher, huh?

CARL

How much did you say you had to make this?

DWAYNE

'Bout fifty thou.

CARL

Then I want ten. Ten thousand. Twenty percent. I think that's fair.

DWAYNE

(reaching into jacket)

Nah, Carl. We do this, we do it right.

A slip of paper is pulled from Dwayne's jacket, it then held up in front of Carl.

*INSERT: The check reads: "PAY TO THE ORDER OF: CARL M. DANIELSON
- ***\$25,000.00*****"*

DWAYNE

*Half-n-half. Just like the way it
shoulda been from the start.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl reaches for the check. Dwayne quickly pulls it away.

DWAYNE

*Looks like you're changin' your
mind. I don't like people who keep
changin' their mind. Well, here we
are. Year later, and I guess the
question's still the same--How bad
do you want it?*

CARL

Don't I need a script?

DWAYNE

Not yet. You still smokin'?

CARL

Nope. Nicotine-free. Three months.

DWAYNE

*You know what I mean. Smokin' the
shit.*

CARL

You still drinking the martinis??

DWAYNE

What??

CARL

It's organic, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Oh, here we go.

CARL

It's part of the Earth! It's a totally natural material.

DWAYNE

So's dog shit, Carl, you don't see people smokin' that.

CARL

You can literally build homes out of it. Jewelry. You can weave beautiful art with it.

DWAYNE

Ya got any of this art?

CARL

I wish I did.

DWAYNE

Well, unless you want to macramé me up a fuckin' co-star, I insist you lay off the organic chronic till we get this in the can. I want you on time and bullshit-free. You still live the same place?

CARL

Not for long.

DWAYNE

(standing)

Be outside tomorrow morning at eleven.

CARL

You do realize I haven't actually
said 'yes' to this yet, right?
Besides, Friday mornings is when I
meet my friends for coffee.

DWAYNE

I didn't forget. Eleven.

DWAYNE EXITS, leaving Carl sitting there alone. A BOUZUKI
VERSION OF "PUFF THE MAGIC DRAGON" BEGINS TO PLAY. After
wallowing in his predicament for a moment, Carl screws up his
face at the music, it forcing him to stand and WALK OFF SCENE.

EXT./"THE HAMSTER WHEEL" COFFEE SHOP - DAY

TIM, an early-20s skater type with floppy blond hair, slaps on
the trunk of his old Toyota. Its lock is missing. Inside the
car, his girlfriend, KIM, struggles with the trunk release
lever. She is the same age, petite, and sports a pixie haircut.
They are parked in front of a coffee shop that sports a cute
stencil of a hamster. It holds a coffee cup and peers up over
the top of a circle of letters spelling out "THE 'HAMSTER
WHEEL".

TIM

Do it again!

KIM

Aaaaahhhhhh!

TIM

You gotta just...just push it up.
But kinda pull it out at the same
time, too.

KIM

(overlapping)

I told you not to put them in there!

TIM

I know! Baby, you can do it. Come
on, it's fucking freezing out here.

Trunk pops open. Tim begins to unload a couple of bulky video camera cases. Kim steps out.

KIM

(about to lock her
passenger side door)
The refinery ever gives you more
than 20 hours again, you gotta
another rig, for real.

TIM

Nonononono, don't lock it!

KIM

Make it easy for everyone involved.
Put the keys on the front seat, you
know, just for shits 'n' giggles?

TIM

It's right here, nothing's gonna
happen. Where are they? It
eleven?

DWAYNE AND CARL APPEAR IN FRAME.

DWAYNE

Sure as hell hope so, or we're
all gonna be a little red-faced.

TIM

(recovering from his
scare)
Hey there, Mr. Blessed-

DWAYNE

No, no, just Dwayne.

TIM

Dwayne, right. Hey, I just
wanted to say thanks for giving
me and Kim this opportunity.

CARL

(overlapping)

Kim?

KIM

Carl, what are you doing here?

Are you in this, too?

DWAYNE

You two know each other?

CARL

Yeah! Remember that improv group
I used to do stuff with at Western?
Kim was part of that.

KIM

(hoisting case)

And now I'm your camera gal.

DWAYNE

No shit? Small world. I'll let you
two catch up a spell. Tim, let's
get the magic started.

CUE NENEH CHERRY'S "BUFFALO STANCE" ON SOUNDTRACK

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL — DAY

The coffee shop's manager, ANGELA, tends to the till. You could almost say she was stunningly beautiful if she didn't always look so tired. A few PATRONS are waiting to be served. Fronting this queue is ABBY, a hirsute, fifty-something leather daddy type. Two other men seemingly wait for him off to the side; FEELICKS, an ugly transvestite in pearls and a skirt, and KENNY, a bookish man who seems to be younger than his haggard face would lead you to believe. As DWAYNE enters, both Kenny and Feelicks give incredulous looks to him.

DWAYNE

What? You knew I'd be back
someday?

TIM ENTERS after Dwayne. Abby turns from the till to make his way back to where Kenny and Feelicks are settled. His face immediately registers a faint annoyance, as if he's doing a bad job of hiding it.

DWAYNE

*(in response to Abby's
hairy harnessed chest)*

Abby, you got a hair on ya there.

Abby rolls his eyes and settles in as Dwayne begins moving some tables out of the way so that Tim can begin setting up a camera and tripod close by. CARL ENTERS. Kenny and Feelicks offer small cheers. Abby takes only a moment away from his coffee to offer a few flicked fingers to Carl as a hello. It is obvious that there is something sour between them. Carl hugs Kenny warmly. KIM ENTERS carrying her video camera case. Any of the girl's initial meekness is lost in the sea of emotions pinging between the men gathered before her. Tim steadies his tripod in front of Abby, unaware that his jeans are beginning to slide down a bit as he works.

TIM

Just pretend I'm not here, okay?

ABBY

If you insist.

TWO SHOT: Kenny and Carl. Kenny is cagey with the commotion and the return of Dwayne.

KENNY

Do we have to be good boys now?

Feelicks diverts Carl's attention, never answering the question as we

CUT BACK TO:

Abby muses over Tim's waistband predicament.

ABBY

You want me to fill that crack,
kid?

Tim whips around, failing miserably to act tough as he hitches up his trousers. By now, Tim's display has caught Kenny's attention, as well.

TIM

(nodding in Kim's
direction)
That's my girlfriend.

KENNY

(turning to Abby)
Yeah. I remember when I used to
say that.

KIM gives a knowing smile, probably one no one else sees.

TWO SHOT: Carl and Feelicks, who pulls his giant-sized friend aside. There is an urgent, drama-loving tone to his voice, which gets surreptitiously lower as the conversation continues.

FEELICKS

What are you doing here?

CARL

Looking for love or a good time,
whichever makes me cum first!

FEELICKS

No! I mean, with him.

CAMERA PULLS OUT TO INCLUDE DWAYNE and KIM as they busy themselves with the finer details of setting up Kim's camera.

CARL

It's a long story.

Feelicks takes Carl's hand, intending to lead him to the bathroom.

FEELICKS

Yeah? Well, you're gonna have to give me the quickie on this one, handsome.

Their path is stopped short by--

DWAYNE

Carl?

CARL

Yeah?

DWAYNE

Tim's up and Kim will be ready to go in just a minute.

CARL

Ten minutes?

DWAYNE

Five. This ain't a social call. You can talk to your friends later.

FEELICKS

I don't see a time card, pardner--

DWAYNE

He's punchin' my clock, thank you, Feelicks.

(directly to Carl)

And now you got four.

"BUFFALO STANCE" FADES FROM SOUNDTRACK, REPLACED WITH LOOKING GLASS' "BRANDY (YOU'RE A FINE GIRL)". ANGELA stands at the dividing wall behind the till, trying to look nonchalant as Dwayne notices her watching. Caught, she smiles. Feelicks takes this opportunity to lead Carl OFF in the direction of the restroom.

CLOSE SHOT: Abby hooks a forlorn, yet subtly hateful look as he watches Carl disappear into the restroom.

CUT BACK TO Dwayne as he begins to walk toward the till.

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL MENS ROOM - DAY

Fluorescent lights sting our eyes as CARL and FEELICKS ENTER. Feelicks pulls a big marijuana joint from a cigarette case tucked inside the pocket of his skirt.

FEELICKS

Lock it.

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL

INSERT of the men's room knob jiggling slightly as Carl locks it from the other side.

CAMERA PULLS OUT AND PANS TO A TWO SHOT OF DWAYNE AND ANGELA. Dwayne's boots CLICK on the tile as he slowly walks up to the till. He has a sheepish grin, as if trying to get out of trouble.

DWAYNE

Thanks for lettin' us do this.

ANGELA

Thanks for having your camera crew there pull my curtains. So busy this morning, I forgot.

DWAYNE

I'll try to make this as painless as possible.

ANGELA

You know, they're only in here one day a week. You could've come by one of the six others.

DWAYNE

Guilty as charged, ma'am.

Angela give a pink-lipstick smile of forgiveness.

INT./MENS ROOM

FEELICKS lights up the joint. He and CARL pass it back and forth for the duration.

FEELICKS

*You got some 'splainin to do,
Lucy.*

Carl heaves a sign and slides down the wall. His bottom hits the tile with a sloppy slap.

CARL

*Okay, you know the way he is
with his music.*

FEELICKS

Yeah?

CARL

*Well, he wants to start doing filmed
documentaries about music.*

FEELICKS

*What, you mean like "VH1 Behind the
Music"?*

CARL

*Not exactly. At least, I don't think
so!*

FEELICKS

So, how the hell do you fit into this?

CARL

*There's a guy at the CBC up in
Vancouver who wants him to do
a feature. To prove himself.
Dwayne figured that a documentary-
style feature about a gay
relationship would be, I don't know-*

FEELICKS

Yeah, neither do I.

CARL

--easy to film. Close to home! Just edgy enough to get him noticed, so I can see the logic. Gay is new black.

FEELICKS

And you agreed to this? After everything that's happened in the past year?

(beat)

He's never gonna pay you.

CARL

I've seen the check. This guy. This guy at the CBC could sponsor me to immigrate.

FEELICKS

How did you let him get you so tight around the balls again?

CARL

I can't find a job.

FEELICKS

Have you looked?

CARL

Can I lie? I have eight hundred and twenty dollars to my name. I'm gonna lose my student housing because I dropped out. I've lost my insurance, too. My meds. I have no choice. Everyone knows that, and I'm not fooling anybody anymore.

(beat)

I have to do what he says.

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL

DWAYNE is reading the chalkboard between the till and the filming area. It is adorned with daily specials. ANGELA finishes with a PATRON who walks OFF.

ANGELA

How long is this going to take?

DWAYNE

Probably longer than either of us want.

(takes piece of
chalk from the tray)

Gonna borrow this for just a second.

"BRANDY" FADES FROM SOUNDTRACK, REPLACED WITH ALICE IN CHAINS' "BROTHER". CAMERA FOLLOWS Dwayne as he tosses the chalk up and down in the air, purposely remaining quiet. It's as if he's enjoying having the power over his detractors, ABBY and KENNY, who appear annoyed with his wordless pause. TIM and KIM wait on edge, as well.

INT./MENS ROOM

FEEELICKS flushes the joint down the urinal. CARL is getting to his feet.

FEEELICKS

Can you smell it?

Carl shakes his head.

CARL

Oh, how's Kenny's t-cells?

FEEELICKS

Make mine look Olympian in comparison.

(staying Carl's hand
from the light switch)

Leave it on. Fastest exhaust fan in the West.

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL

DWAYNE looks over to FEELICKS and CARL as they ENTER SCENE from the restroom hallway. ANGELA ducks out, wisely walking OFF into the back.

DWAYNE

Now that you're all here...

Dwayne bends down and draws a line on the tile floor fronting the filming area. Abby gives a wolf whistle. It is meant to be derogatory but turns out more whole-hearted than anyone expects. As this is happening, Feelicks and Carl cross to the others, with Carl giving a wave to an excited Kim before they're seated.

DWAYNE

Rule's simple, ladies. You stay on this side of the line, you agree to be filmed. Questions?

ABBY

Do we get paid?

DWAYNE

Any other questions?

FEELICKS

Is it okay if I badmouth you on camera?

DWAYNE

*(getting behind his own camera)
No hair off my ass.*

FEELICKS

Speaking of which, why do all bears have beards?

Abby is offended, maybe genuinely so.

CLOSE UP: Dwayne looking through the viewfinder.

DWAYNE

I wish we all did.

POV: Kenny and Carl framed in shot. Carl rubs his stubbly cheek on Kenny's shoulder.

CARL

It's because they're sexy.

Kenny leans forward to kiss Carl gently.

DWAYNE

It's to hide the double chin.

Dwayne's reply kills the mood for Carl, giving the camera a poisoned look.

CLOSE UP: Dwayne smiles.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Kenny, still aching for Carl's attention, asks

KENNY

Can I say "lights, camera, action"?

FEELICKS

Someone's gotta do it.

KENNY

Lights!

CARL

(low)

There are no lights.

KENNY

Camera!

CARL

Chaos.

FEELICKS

Oh, it won't be chaos. Even a first time

*(directly to Dwayne)
amateur director can hold this together.*

DWAYNE

Big difference between an amateur and a first-timer, Feelicks.

ABBY

What's that?

DWAYNE

Technique. Something I've been told you could brush up on, Abby.

Abby burns a look to Carl who, busted, sinks in his chair.

DWAYNE

Now, don't you have a hot tub party, or somethin', to crow about?

ABBY

I can show everyone my new cock ring.

FEELICKS

I wanna see it!

DWAYNE

I'm tryin' not to offend the masses here, Abby, so keep your cock out of the hairs of my scope unless you want it shot off.

CLOSE UP: Kim looks relieved. She tries not to laugh.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL

I could show everyone MY cock.

DWAYNE

We've all seen it.

ABBY

(nearly audible)

I want to see it again.

DWAYNE'S POV: He centers Kenny into frame.

"BROTHER" FADES FROM SOUNDTRACK, REPLACED BY THE FIXX'S "SAVED BY ZERO".

DWAYNE

I wanna hear from Kenny. What, Feelicks the cat got your tongue, or do you still not have a personality after all this time?

CUT BACK TO SCENE

FEEELICKS

Leave him alone!

DWAYNE

He's on my side of the chalk line. C'mon, Kenny, join in our reindeer games. Tell us how the system ain't workin' for ya.

(others get QUIET)

I used to sit here every. single. week. and listen to you two bitch about how you can't get more assistance. You live in a three hundred thou house at Sandy Point, and the last I heard, you had half a job between the two of ya-

FEEELICKS

How do you know that?

DWAYNE

'Cause you're in the phone book,
and I know how to use the internet
real good.

CLOSE UP on Carl as the realization that this has become a
spiteful set-up begins to sink into Carl's brain.

DWAYNE'S POV: Kenny still trapped by himself in the frame.

KENNY

You little bitch.

DWAYNE

Ah, ah. Be nice—camera's on.

CUT BACK TO SCENE. Carl's anger heightens.

KENNY

Go fuck yourself, you steer-
riding cunt.

ABBY

(agape; shocked and
very uncomfortable)
I'm not listening to this.

Abby stands and *EXITS* out the front door.

DWAYNE

Whoops, we lost one. That anger's
drivin' my actors away, Kenny.

FEEELICKS

Surprised, you hack?

DWAYNE

(slightly overlapping;
unfazed by Feelicks' remark)
I can understand your anger these
days, though. I mean, you didn't
have that case of ass goblins before
you met Feelicks.

CLOSE UP: Tim runs his fingers through his hair. The voyeuristic thrill has soured.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

FEELICKS

And you wonder why we all hated you.

DWAYNE

I still do. Now, I'm just givin' y'all a reason to hate me.

KENNY

Okay, mission accomplished.

DWAYNE

Aww, I'm sorry, Ken. I am. I take back that 'half-a-job-between-you' comment. That wasn't right of me. I mean, hey, like I always say, just 'cause you're gay don't mean you can't be straight with someone, you know what I'm sayin'?"

(half-believing beat from his actors)

More than one job, really. After all, you could almost count scorin' all that medical marijuana to people like Carl here.

Irate, Carl blast out of his chair. ANGELA looks up to see Carl flailing his arms and the other men shouting angrily back and forth to one another. A few PATRONS out in the front of the coffee shop look confused, amused and scared. Angela begins to cross to Dwayne.

DWAYNE

(forceful)

Sit down, Carl, or you'll end up an extra in this movie.

Angela slows her footing at the sight of Carl's face. The big man slowly seats himself again. Angela, her face blanched and intolerant, flashes two sympathetic eyes to the Patrons.

TWO SHOT: Dwayne and Angela, as she pulls Dwayne's arm and whispers

ANGELA

Feel free to come back when you don't have the cameras.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne nods silently and politely. He throws a dissenting nod to Tim, who begins dismantling his camera. Kim, confused, follows suit as Angela leans towards the Patrons.

ANGELA

A filming project that's just wrapping. I'm sorry for the disturbance, folks.

Angela crosses back to the area behind the till.

KENNY

*Thanks for bringing your ex in for a shakedown, Carl.
(heading for bathroom)
Great to see you again, Dwayne.*

DWAYNE

Pleasure's all yours.

Kenny walks OFF, followed by a concerned Feelicks. Carl storms up to Dwayne.

CLOSE UP: Carl's feet as they cross the blue chalk line.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as an angry Carl grabs Dwayne by his shirt.

CARL

Don't you ever humiliate my friends ever—

Dwayne slaps Carl's hand away.

DWAYNE

What? Like they did to me?

CARL

And stop dangling my money in front of my nose.

DWAYNE

Ain't your money yet. Tim?

TIM

Yeah?

DWAYNE

You guys just hang onto 'em for now. I'll be in touch, okay?

Tim and Kim nod and EXIT as fast and efficiently as they can.

CARL

We need to talk.

Dwayne looks unenthused. He holds his truck keys in front of Carl, who snatches them and EXITS. Dwayne follows a few seconds later, tipping his hat politely to the Patrons he inconvenienced as he EXITS.

INSERT: a sponge mop is run under the tap

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Angela walks out and begins to scrub the blue chalk line from her tiled floor.

INT./TIM'S CAR - DAY

KIM is in the passenger's seat. TIM slides behind the wheel, closing his door and giving a sigh.

TIM

How the hell did I let you talk me into this?

KIM

Come on! You didn't find that just a little fun? Besides, Carl's a really great guy.

TIM

Yeah? Well, his choice of boyfriends is whack.

KIM

So sorry you feel that way, 'cause he's the one who's paying us.

TIM

His choice of friends is whacker.

KIM

"Whacker"?

TIM

I thought we were supposed to be shooting a movie—

KIM

"Whacker"? Really?

TIM

--no one said anything about a pride parade.

KIM

Look, let's just mind our business, stick to the script, and—

TIM

There is no script!

KIM

Cinema verite, Tim! You think anybody could have written anything as fucking cool as what we just saw? It's raw! It's uninhibited!

TIM

It's fuckin' gay.

KIM

*You can't just go by a script if
you want something really
uncompromising in life.*

TIM

I'm starving. You got any money?

KIM

Anywhere but Fortune Panda.

EXT./FORTUNE PANDA — DAY

CAMERA HOLDS ON FORTUNE PANDA SIGN, which features a jewelry-sporting cartoon panda driving an expensive car, and then PULLS OUT to include Dwayne's white pick-up truck in frame. DWAYNE, juggling a series of take-out cartons, crosses from the restaurant's entrance down to the truck, where CARL is waiting in the passenger seat.

INT./DWAYNE'S TRUCK — DAY

As DWAYNE struggles to get all his food inside the cab.

INSERT: Carl's foot hits a book that slides out from under the seat. It is entitled, "LIGHT & SHADOW: ART IN VIDEO PHOTOGRAPHY".

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL

*You still haven't told me why
we can't eat inside.*

DWAYNE

It's a beautiful day! Enjoy the sun! And 'cause I don't have room for all the camera shit here in the cab.

CARL

That's what you get for not buying an extended cab.

DWAYNE

Don't need one. Don't have a six and a half foot boyfriend anymore.

CARL

I'm surprised you didn't just take the camera in with us and set up there, too.

DWAYNE

(pondering beat)

Hey, that's a good idea.

(opening his door)

Ya think they'd let us?

CARL

No!

Carl reaches out quickly, his grip finding his ex's thigh as he tries to bolt out of his seat. Both realize where Carl's hand is. A sheepish Carl slides his hand away.

CARL

No. I've had enough for today.

(Dwayne smirks, closes door again)

You will apologize to them.

DWAYNE

No, I won't.

CARL

None of that footage is even usable.

DWAYNE

*Shit was gold, Carl. I'm not stupid!
I never woulda tried somethin' like
that without the cameras.*

CARL

*What made you think it'd work with
them?*

DWAYNE

*Ya ever see a flamin' faggot turn
down the opportunity to be in front
of a camera?*

CARL

*(taking barb personally)
You got some pretty good faith in
some pretty bad stereotypes.*

DWAYNE

*Ah, the atheist pagan is gonna talk
to me about faith.*

CARL

Why do you have to make fun of me?

DWAYNE

*How can you be an atheist and a
pagan at the same time, Carl?
You're a walkin' contradiction!
A German Jew! A teacher who can't
stay in school!*

CARL

Fuck you.

DWAYNE

*A guy who wants to get married,
but doesn't wanna commit to anyone!*

CARL

*I never said I didn't want to
commit to you!*

DWAYNE

(widely overlapping)

*And a gay rights advocate who hangs
with guys who persecute anyone who
doesn't subscribe to their fuckin'
gang mentality!*

*INSERT: A fortune cookie rolls out of one of the bags balanced
between Dwayne and Carl. Carl makes a move for it, but Dwayne
snatches it up first as we*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL

It was in my bag, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

"My bag", hell! I paid for it!

CARL

Fine.

DWAYNE

*(beginning to eat
the cookie)*

Ya wanna know?

CARL

*No. I don't want to know my
future anymore.*

DWAYNE

Aw, come on, Carl. Twenty-five K. All them big Canadian dicks you like so much, justa poundin' your ass. The ability to marry the guy attached to one of 'em, so you can make a political statement! Free health care – well, quasi-free health care, at least, 'cause nothin' is for free. That shit should be music to your ears, boy!

CARL

You gonna read it or not?

DWAYNE

Hold on! Gotta eat the whole thing first. Bad luck.

CARL

(softly)

I've had enough of that, too.

(opening his door)

I'm just gonna walk home. I could use the exercise, anyhow.

EXT./FORTUNE PANDA

CARL steps out of the truck. DWAYNE grabs a pen and begins to write on the back on the fortune.

DWAYNE

Here. Email me later.

CARL

I already got your email, Dwayne. That's how you lassoed me into this, remember?

DWAYNE

(handing off fortune)

Use this one from now on.

CARL

What if I don't want to do this
anymore?

DWAYNE

Then throw it away.

Carl shuts the door and Dwayne drives OFF. Carl stands there watching the truck roll away before looking down at the fortune.

INSERT: Back of fortune is blank. Dwayne didn't write anything on it, and the email excuse was just to get Carl to take it. Hesitant, Carl turns it over. It reads: "NONE OF THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS WILL WORK UNLESS YOU DO." Guilty, Carl SIGHS.

EXT./UNIVERSITY DISTRICT - EST. SHOT - DAY

STUDENTS mill lazily about the area. Some ride bikes. One jogs. Another struggles with Christmas decorations on a balcony. Finally, one throws away a bag of recycling that gives up a LOUD CLINKING, obvious that many beer bottles were inside, before she self-consciously OFF.

INT./CARL'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP: PANNING FROM THE LENGTH OF THE SMALL ROOM, the sweep reveals CARL asleep in bed, as well as some of Carl's belongings resting on or near his headboard: what is clearly a stack of unopened mail, a little Canadian flag on a stick, a cannabis vaporizer, and empty antidepressant blister pack, complete with broken foil backing. SKYPE-TYPE RING POPS FROM THE COMPUTER SPEAKERS as we

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl gets tangled up in the sheets as he hurries to answer the call.

CARL

Carl here.

DWAYNE
(*FILTERED* through
speakers throughout
scene)
Camera guys get the day off.

CARL
What?

DWAYNE
Tim and Kim. Car broke down.
They're stuck on Whidbey Island.
Nothin' major, but I don't suppose
they'll be with us anytime today.

CARL
So, no shooting today, I take it?

DWAYNE
Nah, we can just do it ourselves.

CARL
You think that's a good idea?

DWAYNE
I'm down in your parking lot, ain't I?

Carl darts up out of his seat.

CARL'S POV: Carl pries open the slats of the blinds. DWAYNE is standing down in the parking lot, cell phone to ear. A camera case is at his feet. He tips his hat as Carl sees him.

DWAYNE
Meet ya at the door.

INT./CARL'S BOARDING HOUSE (ENTRYWAY) – DAY

CARL, still in his sleepwear, heads for the door. His *HEAVY FOOTSTEPS* are anxiously quick, giving off an angry vibe as the old house's single-pane windows *RATTLE SOFTLY*. We can see DWAYNE waiting behind a Tiffany-style starburst adorning the door. He carries the camera case.

CARL

Why do you want to film here?

DWAYNE

See how you've been livin' the past year.

CARL

You never said anything about filming at my home, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

(stepping inside)

For twenty-five grand, I didn't think you'd mind.

Carl sighs, closing the door and then fumes all the way back to his room. Dwayne follows at a leisurely pace, passing an open door where CORY, Carl's seedy teenage housemate, bounces in an intoxicated haze to the music coming through his headphones. He never notices Dwayne, who rolls his eyes and walks OFF towards Carl's room.

INT./CARL'S ROOM

DWAYNE spends a good pause scanning his eyes across the tight clutter of the room as CARL closes the door.

DWAYNE

Your clock's about an hour fast.

CARL

Never set it back from Daylight Savings.

DWAYNE

Why?

CARL

(shrugs; sits on bed)

No reason to.

DWAYNE

*(shaking off the
pity he feels;
opening camera)*

*Look, you can relax. This is the
the only time I'm comin' here. The
way I see it, you're workin' for me.
You show up at my place from here
out. Say...eleven?*

CARL

You're the boss.

DWAYNE'S POV: Dwayne centers Carl into frame.

DWAYNE

*So, tell me, is your mom still
payin' your rent?*

*Carl can tell from the tone in Dwayne's voice that he's being
film before he can look up to confirm it. Self-consciously, he
runs a quick hand over his hair and shirt.*

CARL

*Not for much longer. What were
you expecting to get today?*

DWAYNE

What you usually do.

CARL

Which is?

DWAYNE

*Smoke weed. Beg for cigarette money
on your blog. Say horrible things
about me.*

CARL

No.

DWAYNE

No to what? The weed, the beggin'
or the sayin' horrible things about
me?

CARL

I'm not doing anything illegal on
camera. And I don't smoke cigarettes
anymore.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne pulls away from the viewfinder a bit.

DWAYNE

Ah, that's right. That cigarette
money had to funnel somewhere.

(looks over to the
cannabis vaporizer)

Well, I see you took my vaporizer
suggestion and ran with it.

CARL

You and your rock star ego have to
take credit for everything, don't you?

DWAYNE

It saved you some money didn't it??
And I believe rock-star-ego was what
Feelicks wrote about me online after
we broke up.

CARL

(slightly overlapping)

There are people in this world
who are right other than you!

DWAYNE

(overlapping)

And coming from a man who wears pearls and skirts, and I'm usin' the term 'man' real loosely here, Carl, I have a lotta trouble takin' to heart anything Feelicks says about ego.

DWAYNE'S POV: Carl is locked into frame again, ZOOMED slightly. Carl's composure is starting to break.

CARL

What are you going to use this for?

DWAYNE

Whatever I want.

CARL

How are you even going to edit this?

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne, backs away from viewfinder once more.

DWAYNE

Transferin' tape to digital? Be real easy to edit! Never thought VHS come in handy again, did ya? Now, quit squirmin' around and stay put while I get some dialogue, okay?

CARL

Fine!

DWAYNE'S POV: Carl back in frame, ZOOMED A LITTLE TIGHTER THAN BEFORE, as if Dwayne is anticipating a certain response.

DWAYNE

What's the name of that pain in the ass on the other side of the wall?

CARL
You know his name.

DWAYNE
Audience don't.

CARL
Cory.

DWAYNE
Yeah, Cory. You still fightin'
with him?

CARL
No, we're actually cool now.

Dwayne's surprised is telegraphed by the camera which physically pulls back a bit from its previous ambush.

DWAYNE
You're cool??

Carl, pleased, looks directly into the camera.

CARL
Yes, we're cool.

An unsettling CACKLE rises out of Dwayne. Carl tries to hold on to his front.

DWAYNE
Cool? Cool with a guy who lived
to get you kicked out of here?
Called the cops on you? Filed a
horseshit police report saying you
physically threatened him? Helluva
turnaround, Carl?

CARL
How do you know? You don't know
what my life is like these days!

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne tries to keep the camera steady as Carl's annoyance momentarily gets the better of him.

DWAYNE

*That's why I'm here! Jesus Christ.
Gotta admit, though, it doesn't
look like much has changed. Except,
ya know, your good pal, Cory.*

CARL

*Who the hell are you to judge,
anyway?*

DWAYNE'S POV: The frame on Carl becomes rigid and confident.

DWAYNE

Tell ya what.

CARL

What?

DWAYNE

Let's get 'im over here.

CARL

(alarmed beat)

No, Dwayne. Don't bother him.

DWAYNE

*Come on! He's obviously been
instrumental in your well-being.
Bros before hos. You know how
that is.*

CARL

(proud; defiant)

Yes, I do.

DWAYNE

You once said he was a bit of a faggot. How'd ya say it? Like spaghetti...straight till you get 'im hot! Come on, Carl. Let's get Cory over here and you can show me how you sing for you supper.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Pencils, a cigarette lighter, even a phone book still in its delivery bag all begin to be launched in succession at Dwayne and his video camera.

CARL

You southern-fried piece of shit!

DWAYNE

Hey, respect the fuckin' camera, will ya?

CARL

Why? You're not respecting me? You wanna see how I live? You wanna fucking see? Fine!!

(pulls out computer chair)

This is the computer I use to hook up with guys now.

(points to bed)

That's the bed they fuck me on!

(pulls out cloth napkin)

This my cum rag!

Carl throws the napkin at the camera lens. He pushes past Dwayne to manhandle the vaporizer and the empty antidepressant packs from the headboard, holding them in front of the camera, respectively.

CARL

These are the drugs I take, because I can't take these anymore!

These CLATTER off the lens before Carl raises both his hands in the air, almost out of surrender. His fingertips brush the ceiling itself.

CARL

This is it, Dwayne! This is MY life! The life I have without you.

During the pause, Dwayne brushes debris off himself and the camera. Breathing heavily, Carl drops his hands.

DWAYNE

This make you happy?

CARL

(acidly; unmoving)

Only if it doesn't make YOU feel that way.

(softly)

Now, I want to know one thing, and that's what do YOU live like without me?

DWAYNE

I don't think I wanna give you that right now.

CARL

No! NO! I don't need your permission! You come over here and stick your fucking camera into my life—

DWAYNE

That was the deal, Carl.

CARL

Then till I know the same thing about you, you'll always owe me.

DWAYNE

Then I suggest you clean up your mess, boy, and get in the truck.

MONTAGE - Dwayne's white pick-up truck sails past:

- a) soda cans rolling about a curbside recycling receptacle, which has been blown over by the strong winds*
- b) a deer, taking shelter at a distance, watching the truck roll by*
- c) fallen leaves dance and blur through the bare trees*
- d) the pick-up's wheels narrowly miss running over the remains of a smashed, weeks-old jack-o-lantern*

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO - DAY

The truck pulls up the driveway and parks under a carport fronting an apartment complex. One half of the buildings seems to consist of larger, more expensive dwellings, the other half seem more compact and modest.

CLOSE UP: CARL looking out his passenger side window, his apprehensive blue eyes locked on...

MEDIUM SHOT: The exterior door of a smaller, top-floor apartment. There is an '8' on the door.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

DWAYNE

Hold on. I gotta grab the camera.

As Dwayne is collecting his camera case from the bed of the truck, Carl takes it upon himself to get out of the truck and begin climbing the stairs to apartment 8, catching himself as he slips on one of the icy steps.

FLASHBACK: DWAYNE is opening the door to apartment 8. CARL is a short way's behind him. It is sunny and appears to be spring or summer.

DWAYNE

You always end up at my place.

CARL

Because you hate mine, that's why.

DWAYNE

Nah, that ain't why.

CARL

(sheepish)

I can hide here. I feel safe.

DWAYNE

That's how I want ya to feel, son.

Dwayne holds out his hand to help Carl up the last few stairs.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

This is the saddest walk of Carl's life, but he's relishing every second as if the memories are worth the pain. Part of the way up, he realizes Dwayne isn't following him. Carl turns back, seeing Dwayne still at the bottom of the stairs. Holding the camera case, Dwayne wears a subtle smirk. The cold makes their breath visible as they speak.

DWAYNE

I don't live there anymore.

Carl gives another gaze to the door of apartment 8—the place he and Dwayne were happy together. Carl's look lingers longer than he wants.

CARL

Then why did you bring me here?

DWAYNE

Over here now.

Dwayne cocks his head, Carl's eyes moving to a door in the building across the way. It is one of the bigger condos. There is a '4' on the door. Carl watches his footing as he climbs back down the stairs, following Dwayne.

INT./DWAYNE'S CONDO - DAY

DWAYNE and CARL ENTER through the front door. The place is, much to Carl's dismay, very nice and seemingly too big for all Dwayne's sparse belongings, even with all the instruments and music paraphernalia that clutters the foreground. This includes a stereo including turntable, guitars, keyboards, sheet music that litters the desk it sits on, harmonicas and an electric sitar that hangs on the wall. Carl hesitantly continues inside as Dwayne drops the camera case and heads for the stereo.

DWAYNE

Hold on a minute. Somethin's
been botherin' me all day.

CLOSE UP: Dwayne plucks a copy of Bob Dylan's "Blood on the Tracks" from the desk and pulls out the record. A few vinyl TICKS are heard before "LILY, ROSEMARY AND THE JACK OF HEARTS" BEGINS ON SOUNDTRACK.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne hurries to find a harmonica and get in step with the song. Soon, he stops and tosses the harmonica aside for one that matches the key of the song. Carl waits with a bit of a annoyed stance, but cracks a proud smile as his ex continues matching each note perfectly. Carl seats himself at the dining room table. Dwayne is satisfied and LOWERS VOLUME, carefully stowing the harmonica back in its box. He throws his hat on the dining room table as he heads for the kitchen.

DWAYNE

Want a drink? 'Cause I sure as
hell could use one.

Dwayne goes about getting ice, gin and vermouth into two glasses. Carl remains passive-aggressive in the wake of his ex's luxurious home.

CARL

Must be nice having a fireplace.

DWAYNE

Yeah, especially since I expect the heatin' bills will be a bitch this winter.

CARL

What do you do with all this room?

DWAYNE

Entertain. Finally got the space for it.

CARL

When you're not entertaining, what do you do?

DWAYNE

(pauses; weary sigh)

Carl, ya just want me to take you back home?

CARL

No.

DWAYNE

Oh, that's right—I owe you this.

(arrives with drinks)

Fine. Up until last week, I went to work every day, came home, exercised, sent very polite emails to investors, somehow found time to try and learn two new instruments, played Bear Roulette a coupla times and went to bed, alright?

Exasperated, Dwayne places the drinks on the table and takes a seat.

CARL

What's "bear roulette"?

DWAYNE

It's when you hit the slide show feature on the folder you keep all your bear photos in and then start to jerk off. Ya bet on which person will be on the screen when you blow out your wad.

The topic of sex puts a weak smile on Carl's face as he takes hold of his drink.

CARL

What is it?

DWAYNE

'Tini.

Carl takes a small sip, but the happy surprise that passes quickly over his face is caught by Dwayne, making the cowboy smirk.

CARL

You know a lot more people now, don't you? I mean, you have a lot more friends than when we were together?

DWAYNE

(gentle)

Awww. You lookin' out for me, Carl? I was always the one protectin' you. You hangin' out with me too much? Hmm?

Carl buys it. He shrugs and tables his drink.

DWAYNE

All this protection from the man I saw the other night takin' another man's cock up his ass online.

Carl freezes.

DWAYNE

Yeah, I saw it. The video with
the young guy with the ponytail
and the black beard.

(makes 'airquotes')

"Posted ten months ago." Ya didn't
wait long, did ya?

*CLOSE UP: Carl feeling rage, fear and guilt as Dwayne's voice
cracks and tightens.*

DWAYNE

Ya didn't wait long, did ya? Sure,
the kid had the dick, but he didn't
have the moves. You're a tough
hump, though, son.

The final word electrifies Carl's eyes.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

DWAYNE

It's funny how he got you in that
I always fucked you in.

CARL

What's so funny about it? Did it
bother you?

DWAYNE

Yeah. Is that what you want to hear?

CARL

Yes.

DWAYNE

And you know somethin' else? I know why you filmed it, and it sure as hell wasn't to win any more friends. It was to break my heart. I sat there convinced that I wasn't gonna let you get the best of me, boy. So, instead, I lubed up my hairy dick and pumped it over and over till it shot all over the monitor.

(reclines; pleased)

No, he definitely didn't have a hold on ya like I did. Kid coulda used that Christmas present I never got to give ya.

CARL

What?

DWAYNE

Horse bridle.

CARL

(aroused; horrified)

I hate you.

Dwayne takes a casual drink from his glass.

DWAYNE

And I love you, Carl. See? We never woulda made it. Too different.

CARL

(intends to stand)

I need to use your bathroom.

DWAYNE

Nah.

CARL

Nah?

DWAYNE

*I'm not cleanin' your cum off
my fuckin' bathroom wall, Carl.*

CARL

*You're just as bad as they all
said you were.*

Carl intends to get up. Dwayne slams a hand over his Carl's wrist, sending his ex's drink to the floor where it shatters clumsily. Carl pulls away, horrified, standing quickly. Dwayne reaches for his back pocket, pulling out his wallet. Two twenties and two fives are thrown up on the table. Dwayne cranes his neck to lock eyes with his giant ex-boyfriend.

DWAYNE

*Fifty bucks. Fifty bucks says
your dick is hard right now. "Ride
me like a pony, sir..."*

INSERT: As Carl backs away his shoe SNAPS a bit of his broken glass.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

DWAYNE

*"Ride me like a pony." Isn't that
what you always used to say to me?
Go on! Show me your dick is still
soft and it's all yours.*

Carl huffs and pulls up his sweatshirt so he can rake down his zipper. Dwayne's eyes register a muted type of approval.

CARL

*There! That what you wanted to
see? There it is. And it's not
yours anymore.*

DWAYNE

*Horseshit. I'm your director.
You do what I tell you if you want
what I got, son.*

Dwayne gets on his knees and performs fellatio on Carl.

INSERT: The cuffs of Carl's jeans get underfoot as he struggles to keep his balance as Dwayne continues to pleasure him. The puddle of martini begins to soak into the denim.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl orgasms. Dwayne stands and makes his way to a nearby box by the desk. Carl, trying to catch his breath, begins to hike up his jeans.

DWAYNE

No, you take 'em off, boy. Do it!

Dwayne's hands find a gift-wrapped box, tearing off its paper and removing a customized horse bridle. Carl pulls his up his underwear, which he keep on out of shame, but does as told, sinking down on all fours. Dwayne swings the straps of the leather bridle.

DWAYNE

You weren't raised in a barn, boy!

Dwayne CRACKS the leather against Carl's bottom. Carl's yells out in aroused agony. His hands and knees begin to move along the carpet.

INSERT: The video camera case pops open. Dwayne takes it out.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne hoists the camera to his shoulder as he draws back the reins again.

DWAYNE

*That's my boy. You're gonna
make daddy feel real good.*

Dwayne CRACKS the bridle again, taking Carl's breath away.

CARL'S POV: Carl's agonizing crawl to reach the bedroom continues. The leather CRACKS again and we hear Carl's GASP.

DWAYNE

*Yeah, I know you want it inside
ya.*

INT./DWAYNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

*CARL, with only his outstretched hand preceding him, slowly
ENTERS. DWAYNE follows.*

CARL

Please...

DWAYNE

*Yeah, you'll beg. Get your ass
on that bed!*

*CARL'S POV: Carl reaches for the dust ruffle of the bed, pulling
himself up onto the mattress. Behind him, the light of a lamp
is turned on and fills the room. Carl's grip slips as the
leather CRACKS on him yet again.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

*Dwayne puts the bridle on Carl's head, the metal bit sliding
back into his mouth. Dwayne tears down Carl's underwear. Carl
cries out as Dwayne enters him over and over again.*

*CARL'S POV: Carl's face slides from dominated pleasure to
concern as Dwayne's foot slides around his thigh. Dwayne's boot
has a spur on it, never before seen. Dwayne's leg is also
covered in chaps.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

*Dwayne enjoys himself, increasing the speed. Carl quickly grows
progressively worried. The SPURS JANGLE as Dwayne pounds away.
Carl's tear-stained face turns to the wall.*

*CARL'S POV: The shadow of the two copulating men can be seen.
It looks as if Dwayne still has his hat on.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne approaches orgasm; we plainly see he is not wearing his hat.

CARL'S POV: The long barrel of a shotgun slides down Carl's shoulder. He is horrified. This continues until we

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne orgasms. Carl, fearful for his life, plunges forward the instant Dwayne lets go of the reigns. Carl heaves for breath, his hands raking at the buckles of the bridle. Carl lets the bit fall from his mouth. Bloody drool hits the pillows. Carl looks to the side, seeing the video camera. The red light designates that all this has been filmed.

CARL

Can you turn that off now?

Dwayne begins getting dressed. Carl curls up against the wall, fulfilled but violated. Dwayne throws him his underwear.

CARL'S POV: Carl unfolds his underwear. We see that there are traces of blood on them from the whipping of the bridle.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

The state of his underwear gives Carl pause as a now-dressed Dwayne flops down beside him on the bed, exhausted.

CARL

Is this where I tell you "I love you"?

DWAYNE

Don't know. Do ya?

CARL

I hate you.

DWAYNE

Ya know, that's the second time in the past hour that you told me you hate me. You keep sayin' shit like that, you're gonna give me a complex, Carl.

CARL

I didn't mean it.

DWAYNE

No, and you didn't mean it the other time you said it, either. You hate yourself, but it's a lot easier to just blame me, isn't it?

CARL

You always made me feel like the whole world loved me.

DWAYNE

You used to lie in this bed, with your head on my chest, and tell me you were the luckiest man on the planet. That I fucked you the way you dream about gettin' fucked. That you felt safe, and you were right where you needed to be. And it still wasn't enough for you.

CARL

But it's true. That's how I felt.

DWAYNE

But you still wanted more. More dick, more freedom, your way, WHY?

CARL

You hope I end up alone, don't you?

DWAYNE

No, I hope you end up with the person you deserve.

CARL

What would you say if I told you that I had sex with Abby in your place one day while you were at work?

DWAYNE

What if I told ya I didn't care?

CARL

I'd say you're a liar.

DWAYNE

(standing from bed)

Maybe. But it sure would explain that second outbreak of crabs you had, wouldn't it? Get dressed.

CARL

Why?

DWAYNE

I'm takin' you home and then I'm goin' for somethin' to eat.

CARL

I'm hungry, too.

(tries to hide his

big, exposed stomach)

I think we still have a lot to talk about.

DWAYNE

If you say so, Carl.

Dwayne finally switches off the camera.

EXT./THE 'HAMSTER WHEEL — EST. SHOT — DAY

The darkness in the sky suggests late afternoon, with most of the cars sporting headlights. Dwayne's truck is creeping into a parking spot near the front of The 'Hamster Wheel. We see CARL

step out of the passenger's side of the truck, followed shortly by DWAYNE, who, after a few beats, hurries back to the truck. We can tell he is cold. After a few seconds rummaging through the cab, we see him sliding on a pair of gloves as he walks back to where Carl is waiting.

INT./THE 'HAMSTER WHEEL - DAY

CARL ENTERS. As DWAYNE ENTERS, a small gust pulls back open the front door and Dwayne steps back to close it again. The entire coffee shop is smothered in Christmas decorations.

DWAYNE

It's not even Thanksgiving yet!

Carl crosses and sits down in one of the booths by the window. Dwayne seats himself on the opposite side, grimacing at the SQUEAKING he makes as he situates himself.

DWAYNE'S POV: Dwayne's squeaking gets muted response from an ELDERLY COUPLE and a KID IN A HOODIE, the only other patrons present.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Dwayne checks out a small laminated menu, Carl's contented smile catching his eye for a second.

DWAYNE

What the hell you grinnin' about?

Still smiling contentedly, Carl shakes his head in reply. Dwayne goes back to his menu.

DWAYNE

Since when did 'latte' have two 'E's? Why do you always wanna come here? There's nothing on the menu.

CARL

This place means a lot to me. I see my friends here. I feel wanted here.

DWAYNE

Why, because you don't have me to make you feel wanted anymore? And where the hell are these almighty friends you put on a pedestal all the time? The ones you chose instead of me? They ain't fallin' in love with ya. They're not gettin' ya a job. Sure as shit aren't drivin' ya all over town to look for clothes.

CARL

Dwayne, don't...

DWAYNE

You're always wearin' the same clothes, Carl.

CARL

(tearful; looking away)
You don't know...

DWAYNE

What? What don't I know, Carl? Go ahead and tell me.

CARL

You don't know how hard it's been.

DWAYNE

I tried to make it easier. Remember what I said in the letter? Of course you don't because you didn't fuckin' read it.

Dwayne notices that he begins to get looks from the Elderly Couple, but continues.

DWAYNE

No, you scanned it for your friends to read because you didn't have the nuts to read it yourself. That's why you hold your friends in such high esteem, 'cause they've been followin' you around with a broom for the past 25 years, cleanin' up every sexual, financial and psychological mess you make.

Now with his head bowed, it's tough to tell that Carl is crying, but a tear or two falls onto his stomach, blotting darkly into his sweatshirt. He wipes his cheeks in the pause and tries to compose himself.

CARL

Are we working on Thanksgiving?

DWAYNE

Faster we work, faster we're done, the faster you get paid, faster we're all happy again. I'm thinkin' of puttin' music in the next scene, but it's gotta be somethin' public domain.

CARL

Why don't you just do a soundtrack yourself? That way at least you know it's done right.

DWAYNE

Don't have the time. But I need one. It's a necessary evil.

CARL

'Necessary evil'?

DWAYNE

Yeah, uh...somethin' that needs to be there, even though you don't want it to be. Kinda like those backup singers Stevie Nicks has got.

(Carl smiles)

I want somethin' earthy. Somethin' you're not expectin'. And everyone should have their own theme song.

CARL

So, what do you think your theme song should be?

DWAYNE

My theme should be somethin' by a drunken Celtic band. It should probably be somethin' sad, though. Drunken Celtic band playin' somethin' sad. That's like clowns who cry. I find that shit whimsical.

CARL

I thought of what my theme can be.

DWAYNE

Yeah?

CARL

"Slide It In" by Whitesnake!

Dwayne gives a sigh and put his face in his hands.

CARL

(chuckling)

What? It fits!

Carl realizes the second meaning of what he's just said and his proud chuckle continues.

CARL

See, you thought it was good!

DWAYNE

No, it isn't. And your taste in music sucks, too.

CARL

Doesn't matter. You thought it was funny.

DWAYNE

Well, after my experience, it sure as hell ain't gonna be my theme song anytime soon.

Carl's chuckle comes to curt stop. His eyes get wide.

CARL

You bottomed??

DWAYNE'S POV: Dwayne casts a quick look over the Elderly Couple and the Kid In A Hoodie. We can tell they're still listening, but not as intently.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Dwayne slips out of his gloves, his demeanor getting a tad less reluctant.

CARL

Tell me!

DWAYNE

No, Carl. No. Just let it ride, man—

CARL

Sounds like you did!

DWAYNE

You're just a fuckin' comedian today, ain't ya?

CARL

Who? Who did it?

DWAYNE

*That's not really anybody's
business but my own. And I don't
gotta tell you. You know what
it's like—*

CARL

But did you like it?

DWAYNE

*No. No, I didn't! I don't know
how the hell you guys do it! Why
you do it!*

CARL

Well, practice makes perfect.

DWAYNE

*I felt like a fuckin' sock puppet,
man.*

CARL

*Did it change you? I mean, did you
take away a kind of freer sense of
accomplishment when it was done?*

DWAYNE

*Take away? Take away?! I took away
Preparation H, that's what I took
away from it. Shit gave me the worse
case of Dan Aykroyds you'd ever
seen, man.*

CARL

*(starting to lose it)
"Dan Aykroyds"!*

DWAYNE

I thought I was gonna have to go to the hospital. Then you gotta put in these goddamn suppositories that look like fertilizer spikes, or somethin'. I felt like one of my fuckin' houseplants. Three. Weeks. Five minutes! I didn't even get to cum. Never again.

CARL

(overlapping; unable to breathe from laughing)
Stop, oh stop! No, I can't...

DWAYNE

Here on out, Dwayne Lee Blessed Parkway's a one way street, man. Serious.

(pauses; to other Patrons who are now all looking at him)

What??

Carl finally gets back his breath and repositions himself in his seat.

CARL

I have to admit, I forgot how funny you can be sometimes.

DWAYNE

Not bad for someone who isn't your type, huh?

CARL

I never said that, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Yeah, you did, and you meant it, too. The same fuckin' night I told you I loved you and didn't want to be with anyone else.

(mimicking Carl)

"Well, I'll be monogamous with you until the end of the semester."

(normal voice again)

We were in the University cafeteria, remember? Just the kind of thing you tell someone after they tell ya they love ya?

(pauses; hesitating)

Ya know, I was holdin' a knife when you said that--

Dwayne cuts himself off. Carl's trembles, hatefully.

CARL

Go on.

Dwayne refuses to allow himself to say anymore. He shifts in his seat, with the SQUEAKING seat giving the only reply.

CARL

I should have just killed you right then and there, and saved both of us all this trouble." Go ahead, that's what you were going to say, wasn't it?

DWAYNE

I don't need you to speak for me, boy.

CARL

Then why didn't you? Why didn't you do it?

DWAYNE

Because I loved you that much. Even though you stammered around when I said I wanted a commitment. Even though it took me six weeks to drag your ass out on a date. Even though you were in an open relationship with a man you told me, quote, "I never gave a shit about", end quote.

(beat; Carl's expression slips ruefully)

Fucked-up thing is, I never realized it until months later. Amazin' what you believe when you're madly in love, isn't it?

The booth's table CRACKS against the wall as Dwayne gets up and heads for the restroom.

INT./MEN'S ROOM

DWAYNE barrels into the restroom. Leaning against the door, he takes a moment to try and settle down. He catches his reflection in the mirror, not particularly caring for what he sees. Dwayne turns on the tap and washes his face, only to find there are no paper towels. He spins off a bunch of toilet paper instead.

INT./'HAMSTER WHEEL

Calm, DWAYNE walks out of the bathroom. ANGELA is waiting there behind the till with a supportive smirk.

ANGELA

You over there talking to yourself again?

Dwayne shoots a look to the empty booth. Carl has walked out.

DWAYNE

At least I don't have to worry about givin' him a ride back home. Look, I'm sorry about the other day.

ANGELA

It's okay.

DWAYNE

*No, it's not. I didn't want your
place to turn into a boxin' ring.*

ANGELA

No, really. No harm done.

Dwayne fishes two bills out of his pocket.

DWAYNE

Can you give me an orange juice?

ANGELA

*It's the Northwest. Don't you
ever drink coffee?*

DWAYNE

*Flu season! Vitamin C is where
it's at, darlin'.*

*Dwayne reaches for the juice, but Angela pulls it back as ransom
for another answer.*

ANGELA

How's the movie going?

DWAYNE

A lot like real life.

*Angela surrenders. Dwayne takes the juice and heads for the
door.*

ANGELA

Don't you want your change?

DWAYNE

You need a tip jar, Angela.

ANGELA
Amongst other things.

Angela watches Dwayne, who grabs his gloves off the table before he EXITS.

EXT./'HAMSTER WHEEL - NIGHT

DWAYNE searches the streets, looking for any trace of Carl. He gives up and walks to the truck as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./BELLINGHAM - EST. SHOT - DAY

A BUS DRIVES THROUGH FOREGROUND.

INT./BUS - DAY

Some BUS RIDERS are busy talking with each other, looking out the window, and doing anything but talking to CARL, who sits by himself. He seems to crave attention, but his shyness stop him. The chorus to MACY GRAY'S "DO SOMETHING" PLAYS through the bus intercom.

MACY GRAY

(singing)

"Can't spend your whole life
tryin' to get high...You got to
get up, get out, and do somethin'!"

Carl slowly throws a scornfully self-aware scowl up to the speakers.

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO - DAY

CARL steps off the bus, making his way to the front door. He pushes the DOOR BELL, which is faintly heard on our end. He waits. And waits. Carl turns back to check and see if Dwayne's truck is in its spot under the carport. It is. He flips open his cellphone.

INSERT: Carl's cellphone displays a time of 11:11AM. He powers it off and closes it again as we

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl rings DOOR BELL again. After a beat, he rounds the corner and begins to look in the windows, but stops himself almost immediately, fearing what he might see, as well as not wanting to look like a peeping tom. He goes back to the door, knocking his fist on the door for good measure.

CARL

Dwayne?

INSERT: The front doorknob.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl looks down at the doorknob. He hesitates, but finally tries it. The door opens.

INT./DWAYNE'S CONDO - DAY

CARL ENTERS, tentatively. VERDI'S "FORCE OF DESTINY" PLAYS on Dwayne's stereo.

CARL

Dwayne??

As the CAMERA follows Carl's footpath through the condo looking for Dwayne, we see that the bedroom door is closed. Carl eventually ends up in the kitchen, where he looks at some of the things on the refrigerator.

CARL'S POV: Names and numbers on business cards and medical insurance flyers take up most of the magnets stuck on the refrigerator. One single sheet of paper, seemingly newer than the rest of the items, stands out. It is in Dwayne's own script and reads: "TIME HEALS ALL WOUNDS. FOR SOME, IT TAKES MORE TIME THAN YOU'RE GIVEN."

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl stares quizzically at the sheet for a moment, the meaning of it suddenly slamming home. Carl's eyes shift to the closed bedroom door.

CLOSE UP: Magnets and flyers hit the floor of the foreground as Carl's hand grabs the note; in the background, we see Carl rushing for the door.

INT./DWAYNE'S BEDROOM – DAY

With the suicide note always in hand throughout scene, CARL ENTERS, the door SLAMMING against the wall, as he sees DWAYNE lying unconscious on the bed. There is an empty bottle of sleeping pills nearby. Carl slowly begins repeating the word "no", starting softly and raising to a roar by the end of scene. He sets about slapping Dwayne, vainly feeling for a pulse, and trying to open Dwayne's shirt before finally tearing it open, the PINGING SOUND OF A COUPLE OF BUTTONS HITTING OFF THE WALLS IS HEARD. Carl presses his ear to Dwayne's chest. He stands, grabs the empty sleeping pill bottle and begins to dig his cellphone from his pocket. CAMERA FOLLOWS Carl as he gets out to the kitchen, desperately waiting for his phone's splash screen to pass.

INSERT: Carl's cellphone displays says: "Hello, Welcome To Sprint!"

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL
COME ON, GODDAMMIT!!

Carl big fingers carefully and daintily press 9-1-1. We hear a FILTERED RING as Carl agonizes in the passing seconds.

911 OPERATOR
(FILTERED THROUGHOUT
SCENE)
Hello, Emergen—

DWAYNE takes the phone from Carl's hand and closes it, cutting off the call. As Carl goes to speak, Dwayne holds up his index finger on one hand, the cellphone held up in the other.

Approximately five seconds pass, Carl's heavy breath the only thing to take up the space. CELLPHONE BEGINS TO RING.

DWAYNE

*Tell 'em you misdialed.
(beat; as PHONE
CONTINUES TO RING)
Do it.*

Carl takes the phone.

CARL

H-hello?

911 OPERATOR

*Emergency Response. We just
received a call from this number.
Is there an emergency at your
location?*

CARL

*No. No, I'm sorry. I...I must have
misdialed. I'm sorry.*

911 OPERATOR

*Alright, sir, if this should happen
in the future, please stay on the
line so we can more efficiently
handle the response.*

CARL

I understand. I'm sorry, ma'am.

911 OPERATOR

*Thank you for your cooperation, sir.
Have a nice day.*

Carl closes his phone.

DWAYNE

Ya know, I'd thought of everything else, you think I'd remembered to unbutton my shit. Glad I didn't care much for this one, anyway.

CARL

*(shaking suicide note
he still grips)
Do you have any idea?? Any idea at all what could have happened if that call would've gone through?!*

DWAYNE

*Why do ya think I hung up the call, you asshole?
(points through bedroom doorway)
Camera was on ya the whole fuckin' time!*

CARL'S POV: The camera sits atop the tripod, its red light glaring straight at us.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL

Well, gee, Dwayne, I must've gotten distracted by your corpse!

Carl hurls the crumpled suicide note at Dwayne.

DWAYNE

*I figured you at least had the brains to figure it out when you heard the music.
(confused beat from Carl)
Public domain?? We talked about it yesterday!*

CARL

When??!

Exasperated, Dwayne holds out his arms and looks to the ceiling, as if asking Jesus for strength.

CARL

And will you turn that shit off?!

Dwayne crosses to the stereo, and the VERDI RECORD SCRATCHES TO A HALT.

CARL

(counting on fingers)

I could have been fined. I don't have my ID—

DWAYNE

You have a history of mental illness.

(Carl drops his hands)

And I'm willin' to bet you got an illegal substance in you, too. Don't know what you're so pissed off about. It was your best performance yet.

CARL

Where are Tim and Kim?

DWAYNE

Workin'. So I figured we'd do this today.

CARL

I'm not doing this. Not today, and not ever again.

Carl turns and heads for the front door, but Dwayne's voice stops him.

DWAYNE

Verbal contract.

CARL
(with back turned)
I never actually said 'yes',
Dwayne. That much I DO remember.

DWAYNE
You're already on film. So are
your friends. You got the money
to hire an attorney? I do. One
more time. How bad do you want it?
Maybe I should say how bad do you
need it?

CARL
Did you really attempt suicide after
we broke up?

Carl turns around to face Dwayne, who remains unflappable.

DWAYNE
It's not important, Carl.

CARL
It's important to me! Did you?
(SILENT beat from Dwayne;
Carl's eyes fill with
tears)
Just tell me.

DWAYNE
Go home, Carl. I got your scene
for today.

*Dwayne crosses back into the bedroom and begins to disassemble
the camera set-up. Still numb, Carl turns and opens the door.*

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO - DAY

*CARL shuffles out and softly closes the door behind him. His
tears slide down his empty expression as he begins to walk to
the bus stop. NOISE OF THE BUS DOOR CLOSING makes him look up.*

CARL'S POV: Carl watches as his bus slowly pulls away.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl slowly walks to the bus stop. He slliiiiides down the signpost, resting his huge, tired body against it as he starts a lonesome wait for the next ride to come by.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

INT./CARL'S BOARDING HOUSE (ENTRYWAY) – DAY

CORY is in the kitchen, reading the carton to a frozen beef pot pie. A wet and surly *CARL* *ENTERS* through the front door, with a preoccupied Cory not taking notice. During a short pause, Carl takes a bit of pleasure in Cory's oblivion.

CARL

*Heat at four-hundred degrees
for an hour, use pot holders
to take it out, enjoy!*

CORY

*Can you substitute aluminum
foil for a baking sheet?*

CARL

*(smile gets bigger)
Sure! Almost Thanksgiving.
Why didn't you get a turkey one?*

CORY

*Beefy! Protein! But hey, I think
the pilot light's on it's way
out again. Just used a whole
fucking patch of matches trying
to get it lit.*

CARL

*(breaks down laughing;
crossing toward his room)
Just microwave it, Cory.*

CORY

(fingers in ears)

*La! La! La! No baked crust! La!
La! Best part! La! La! Blasphemy,
dude.*

CARL

*(slightly overlapping;
unlocking his door)*

*Look, it's been a fucked day, and
much like your pot pie, I'd just
like to get baked right now.*

CORY

Abby was here lookin' for you.

CARL

(long, hesitant sigh)

*You tell him when I was coming
back?*

CORY

Dude, what am I, psychic?

INT./CARL'S ROOM – DAY

*CARL and CORY ENTER. CARL immediately heads to his vaporizer as
the two continue their conversation.*

CARL

He say if he'd be back?

*Cory shakes his head. Carl rifles through a few nearby spots
and heaves a violent, agitated exhale, running his hands over
his face.*

CORY

You out?

CARL

*I was supposed to meet Feelicks
and Kenny today. I got busy
with Dwayne...*

CORY

*I got primo. Shit from Oregon.
Ain't cheap, though, man.*

(beat)

How much you in for?

CARL

(sitting on bed)

*I can't find my wallet, Cory,
and there's nothing in it if
I did.*

CORY

*Maybe you need some protein,
too, Carly.*

CARL

You got a payment plan, man?

CORY

Bud a blow. Get me?

CARL

Yes, sir.

*Cory begins rubbing the lump in his crotch, crossing to where
Carl sits on the bed.*

CORY

Hmm? We in business?

CARL

Yes, sir...

*Carl begins to fellate Cory, who gets more demanding as he
approaches orgasm. Carl's desperation makes him happy to
oblige.*

CORY

*Yeah, do it, fucker! YEAH!
I'm gonna shoot! Swallow it,
bitch!! Swallow it!*

Cory orgasms. Somehow, Carl swallows it down, despite the look on his face that telegraphs he certainly didn't want to. He gasps for air as Cory zips his jeans and stuffs his hand into his pocket. He pulls out something he covers with his opposite hand.

CARL

What?

CORY

Tah-dah!

Cory opens his hands, revealing a knuckle-bud of marijuana, housed in a plastic bubble, similar to the ones found in gumball machines. Cory drops the bud into Carl's huge hands and then makes a quick EXIT. We hear Cory's DOOR SLAM. From the other side of the wall, Cory's STEREO BEGINS TO LOUDLY PLAY JOURNEY'S "ANY WAY YOU WANT IT". Carl wipes his mouth and then sets about trying to open the stubborn plastic bubble for a short interval. He resorts to crushing it into his hand SNAPPING the plastic. He puts the bud into his grinder, having to pick out small bits of plastic in the process.

INSERT: Carl dials the vaporizer display to 190.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl is lying down on his bed. He sucks from the whip and blows vapor, trying to relax.

CARL'S POV: Carl looking at his feet, which stick off the end of the mattress.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl continues to suck at the whip, longing for escape.

CARL'S POV: Carl looks down at his feet, which now stand on dusty ground. A small breeze blows grit aimlessly.

EXT./MONTANA RANCH — DAY

CARL stands alone out in a mountain ranch setting. It is surrounded by rocky, green hills. Livestock are bracketed in by long, ashy wooden fences. The winds as soft, blowing Carl's hair as he looks around the familiar surroundings he grew up in, a bit confused on how he got here, or what exactly the black lump is that comes toward him in the distance. Carl realizes and begins to run. We see that it is an old, black, early-70s Dodge. Heaving for breath, Carl tries to unlatch one of the gates leading to a barn, but the mechanism is stuck and rusty. The car brakes to a halt, throwing up dust that momentarily blurs our view. CARL'S FATHER steps from the car. There is a shotgun in his hands. Carl throws his weight time and time again against the latch until it breaks. Carl's Father follows his path as Carl ducks into the barn. Chickens RUFFLE AND CLUCK, scattering around Carl, who tries to make his way through the darkness of the barn as his sight tries to adjust. He looks over his shoulder and sees no one there. Lifting up a heavy rail that barricades the barn, he swings open the doors. He sees no one outside. He cautiously walks out of the barn. SHOTGUN CLICKS INTO PLACE and CAMERA PANS to add Carl's Father, who stands about five feet from his son, INTO FRAME. His face is anguished as he gnashes his teeth, black smoker's gums evident, lining up the barrel to Carl.

CARL'S FATHER

Not my boy.

As soon as the trigger is pulled, THE SOUNDTRACK GOES SILENT, REMAINING THAT WAY THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF SCENE. Carl sails back, slamming to the dirty ground. A large, bloody gunshot wound adorns his chest.

CARL'S POV: DWAYNE looks down at Carl with great worry.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Dwayne tries to prop up Carl's head. It seems all Carl is concerned with is getting a grip on Dwayne's hand, which he finally succeeds in doing. As soon as we're certain Carl has died, we

JUMP CUT TO:

INT./CARL'S ROOM – NIGHT

CARL awakens in bed, horrified adrenaline smashing his head back into the headboard. Things shiver and roll from the impact as Carl tries to get his breath.

INSERT: DWAYNE's finger taps at the thermostat as his DOORBELL rings. Finger taps, taps, taps until the SOUND OF THE HEAT TURNING ON fills the walls.

INT./DWAYNE'S CONDO – DAY

DWAYNE answers the door. CARL, cold and wet, stands at the door. Ever-present clouds are over his shoulders.

DWAYNE

I take it you didn't read your email this mornin'.

CARL

Yeah, but I came over anyway.

DWAYNE

An hour. Or two? On two different buses? Why?

CARL

You were in my dream last night.

DWAYNE

Yeah, I know about your dreams. You woke up screamin' you hated me once, remember?

*(steps over to kitchen;
allowing Carl to ENTER)*

Close the door.

Carl does as told, hesitating before continuing.

CARL

You were there this time, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

The one where your dad kills ya?

Carl nods, but Dwayne doesn't need to turn around to see it.

DWAYNE

You need to talk to him, Carl.

You. Hear from Kim?

CARL

Uh, yeah. I guess she's pretty sick, but I'll get in touch with her tonight.

DWAYNE

(opening refrigerator)

It's one of the reasons I decided to take the day off. Want some chili?

Carl's eyes flash open and then sag. Dwayne sets about heating up a small bowl of chili of his own in the microwave.

CARL

Mm--, no, no.

DWAYNE

(bouncing his eyebrows)

It's Texas chili.

CARL

No, that's...it's okay. I'm still on sodium watch. Surprised you Texans don't all have high blood pressure, too.

DWAYNE

We do, we just don't talk about it.

Something catches Carl's eye as he looks down at the papers on the kitchen counter. As the microwave BEEPS, Carl takes advantage of Dwayne's busying himself with the chili to take a closer look.

INSERT: The paperwork contains the bolded words: "THE BEHAVIORIAL HEALTH SERVICES OF WHATCOM COUNTY".

CUT BACK TO SCENE

DWAYNE

(nodding to counter)

I was actually workin' on a script this mornin'.

CARL

Really?

Dwayne heads to the living room, grabbing the notepad off the counter near to the mental health papers. As he passes by, Carl takes one more split second of attention to the paperwork before following Dwayne. The living room is the scene of Dwayne's collection of seven-inch record singles in varying stages of being categorized.

DWAYNE

Yeah. I mean, it's great to be spontaneous, but there has to be a safety net. Structure for this relationship.

CARL

You mean the relationship in the movie?

Dwayne ponders the double-meaning for a second, but finally nods and sits down on the floor. Dwayne snacks on his chili as Carl takes a ridiculously long time getting first into a kneeling position, and then sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall. He gives a grunt at the very first record he lays eyes on, sliding it over to Dwayne.

CARL

A little apropos, isn't it?

Dwayne wipes his mouth and pulls it up to focus on it.

INSERT: The record label states "EVERY TIME TWO FOOLS COLLIDE" by Kenny Rogers and Dottie West.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Dwayne gets to his feet and bumps on the power to the stereo. A HUM from the speakers fills the room before the NEEDLE HITS THE GROOVE and "EVERY TIME TWO FOOLS COLLIDE" BEGINS TO PLAY. Dwayne pulls over a nearby chair and straddles it.

DWAYNE

Let me tell you how I got the way I am.

CARL

This oughta be good.

DWAYNE

We'd just seen a Cowboys game and, after about five years stuck in the parkin' lot, we got a mile or two and stopped at this sandwich shop. It was the first time I'd ever, ever seen a jukebox. Right beside it, there were these big dudes in Cowboys jerseys who'd obviously been at the game, too. Drunk outta their fuckin' minds. One of 'em gave me a quarter and I made what coulda been the mistake of my life, I chose a love song, THIS song. They hooted and hollered, and I didn't know how the hell to take it. I mean, I couldn't figure out if they loved it or hated it. Then somethin' happened...

CARL

What?

DWAYNE

They just shut up. They just shut up and let this little boy listen to his song.

(noticeably moved)
That was probably the first time I
ever realized what music does to
people. It was like that moment
was supposed to happen for me.

SONG ENDS. The SOUND OF THE NEEDLE HITTING THE RUN-OUT GROOVE
shakes Dwayne back into his normal, rugged demeanor. He stands
up to take the record off and shoot it back in its sleeve.

DWAYNE
I miss Dottie. She was top-shelf.
She left us a good-lookin' corpse,
but I'd rather have her wrinkly
and still with us.

CARL
Maybe I'll die and leave a good-
looking corpse.

DWAYNE
Why you have to say shit like that?
You know, Carl, I admit your ass is
a cozy place to be, but you might
wanna pull your head out of it
someday soon.

(at Carl's silent grin)
What? What you grinnin' at?

CARL
I say things like that on purpose.
I just love seeing you go into
protective daddy-bear mode. It
proves you still love me.

DWAYNE
Let's not get ahead of ourselves
here, boy.

CARL

*It's true. You still love me.
That's why you hired me for your
little movie. You could've just
gotten one of your hundred new
bear buddies to play my role...*

DWAYNE

Carl-

CARL

I can't act, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Damn it, I don't want you to act!

CARL

Why do you have to tell this story?

DWAYNE

*How long have you been off your
meds?*

CARL

*You said you didn't want me doing
any drugs while we were working.*

DWAYNE

*Then how come you smell like Cheech
and Chong every time you come over?*

*Dwayne walks over to the nearby camera case and opens it, the
lid SLAMMING AND GRATING against the wall as the camera is
pulled out and put up on its tripod. Dwayne points the lens
right at Carl as the red recording light turns on.*

DWAYNE

*You got another cute little answer
for me? Hmm?!*

CARL

*(unable to look
into the lens)*

I'm not a student anymore.

DWAYNE

*No, because you flunked out
AGAIN! Twenty years and the
only thing you've become is a
millstone around everyone's neck
because you can hold up your end
of the bargain.*

CARL

*I never promised you anything!
I never promised anyone anything.*

DWAYNE

Oh, heaven forbid, Carl—

CARL

FUCK YOU! NEVER ONCE!

DWAYNE

*Don't even know why I bother with
writin' a goddamn script,
considerin' you obviously blaze
yourself into a fuckin' oblivion
when you're not in my physical
presence!!*

*The notebook is hurled at Carl, hitting the wall with a BANG
before crumpling to the floor. Dwayne points at Carl, shaking
and laughing. We don't know if this is real or just an act for
the camera. He advances on the seated, horrified Carl.*

DWAYNE

*But you know what? I'll tell ya
something, Carl. Fuck your mother
for givin' up on you. Fuck your
dad for runnin' out on you, and
fuck all your goddamned friends,
because right now, right this
second, boy, there's only one
person left standing with you.
One left, and it's ME!*

On the final workd, Dwayne's palm rushes past Carl's head, SMACKING the wall. Carl's nerve breaks, shoving Dwayne as hard as he can into the camera. The tripod CLATTERS and buckles, with the camera tumbling down on Dwayne, who growls in momentary pain. As he quickly tries to stand, Carl loses his grip and stumbles. Both men get to their feet. Dwayne is disappointed and reticent; Carl is panicked and regretful.

CARL

I'm sorry. Dwayne, I'm sorry.

Dwayne gives a shake of his head and gives the crippled tripod his full attention.

CARL

You do still love me?

DWAYNE

*I'll always love you, Carl.
You're a part of me now,
whether we like it or not. I
accept you for who ya are now.
(snorts; holding
back tears)
Even though I know that person
can't ever give me what I need.
Take the rest of the day off.
I need some time.*

CARL

*Okay, Um, did you...did you find
my wallet.*

DWAYNE

*No, man, I haven't seen it.
(satisfied with
tripod; undressing)
I'm goin' out in the Jacuzzi.
Go ahead and let yourself out.*

*MEDIUM SHOT: Carl, with the kitchen counter—where Dwayne's
mental health papers—COMES INTO FOCUS WITHIN FRAME.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

CARL

(slightly overlapping)

You mind if I look around for it?

DWAYNE

Yeah. Yeah, I don't care. I want you back over here tomorrow.

CARL

Okay.

By now, Dwayne has gotten part of his thick, hairy body unclothed. Even though he does it for what he believes to be a split second, Carl is caught paying an unblinking over over Dwayne's form. Dwayne doesn't make a big deal of it and walks OFF into the master bedroom's bathroom. WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF DWAYNE URINATING as Carl is torn between checking out the mental health paperwork and looking for his much-needed wallet. He makes his way over to the paperwork, but abandons it, heading into the bedroom, where he stands frozen in place as the TOILET FLUSHES and Dwayne appears, now wearing a robe and holding a towel. He gives a suggestive smirk.

DWAYNE

Your wallet's always in your pants, so you didn't have it in here.

CARL

(blushing)

Yeah. But you never can tell.

DWAYNE

Skype me tomorrow morning.

Dwayne heads out through the CLATTERING slats of the patio door blinds. The SOUNDS OF THE JACUZZI JETS ROAR as Carl's footing sails him back to the kitchen counter.

INSERT: The following words on the paperwork are framed: "PLEASE PROVIDE INSURANCE CARD(S) AT FIRST APPOINTMENT. SUBSCRIBER NAME: BLESSED, DWAYNE LEE. DOB: 08/10/1972."

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Impatient and paranoid, Carl looks over his shoulder, his prying fingers loosening on the paperwork as he sees a nude Dwayne slipping into the water. He forces his attention back to the paperwork.

INSERT: Framed on Dwayne's mental health questionnaire, boxes are checked next to the words: "FAINTING/LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, DIARRHEA, HEADACHES, STOMACH ACHES, CHEST PAIN/TIGHTNESS"

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl looks back, seeing Dwayne begin to masturbate through the murk that clouds the patio doors. A HOLLOW, PLASTIC CLICK, which comes from the paperwork, scares Carl into pulling away his attention.

INSERT: A dictation microcassette with the words "SESSION FIVE" has slid out from in between the paperwork.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl makes a hesitation, but then takes the small cassette and squeezes it into his huge palm. His hands push the now-unimportant papers back into the stack, making sure it looks as if no one has touched it. He holds his breath, gripping the microcassette as he remains fixated on Dwayne, who nears orgasm.

EXT./DWAYNE'S PATIO - DAY

DWAYNE, in hot tub, orgasms. The MUFFLED SOUND OF THE CONDO'S FRONT DOOR SLAMMING IS HEARD IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

INT./CARL'S BOARDING HOUSE (ENTRYWAY) - DAY

CARL ENTERS through front door. He is a mess of urgency and paranoia, but hesitant to approach Cory's door, which is partially ajar. THE ROLLING STONES' "DOWN IN THE HOLE" PLAYS

LOUDLY FROM CORY'S COMPUTER SPEAKERS. Carl pushes his head through the clearance.

CARL

Cory?

CORY is hunched over a desk, filling dark powder into small balloons. Carl queries again, louder, over the music.

CARL

Cory?

Cory turns back to Carl. Despite his usual good cheer, his body language telegraphs his hope that Carl doesn't see the heroin he has been tinkering with. Thankfully, Carl is too preoccupied by his own needs to pay much attention.

CORY

*Hey, Carly! Que pasa, ese?
Business or pleasure?*

CARL

Business.

CORY

Huh?

Cory moves to quickly LOWER VOLUME ON SONG.

CARL

*You still have your old
answering machine?*

CORY

*No. No, dude, that shit be
GONE! Wait. Unless it's in
here.*

Cory gets up and crosses to the closet, beginning to empty some of the messy boxes inside.

CORY

Not in fuckin' there. What, you

Jerky Boys-in' someone, or something?

CARL

I just have a tape to play.

CORY

Nah. No, man, I tossed that fucker a few weeks back...or sold it! Or some shit...

CARL

Cory?—

CORY

Do ya need one? If ya need one, I'm your muh-fucker, G.

CARL

*(pointing over
Cory's shoulder)*

Is that it?

Cory turns around, seeing the answering machine amongst the clutter on a shelving unit, which is squeezed next to his bed.

CORY

Looky, looky!

*(handing it over
to Carl)*

Someone wins the door prize for tonight.

CARL

I'll bring it back.

CORY

Ah shoot, man. I ain't chargin' late fees like the library, Carly. Keep it! Keep it! Pay that shit forward.

CARL

Thanks.

Carl almost makes his getaway, but is stopped one last time. Cory bends down the button fly of his jeans.

CORY

Dude, you got a quarter for the bubble gum machine? Huh...yeah?

Carl breaks away, but Cory's terrible laugh follows him all the way down the hallway.

INT./CARL'S ROOM

CARL locks his door, throws the answering machine on the bed and proceeds to empty his pockets. Dwayne's microcassette, some loose change and a sealed pack of cigarettes are dropped nearby. Carl makes the cigarettes his priority, packing them harshly against his palm as he goes about untangling the electrical cord and plugging it in. He unceremoniously tears off the cellophane from the pack and lights up as he loads the cassette. Blowing smoke about the room, Carl holds the answering machine to the light, trying to discern the rubbed-off lettering next to all the buttons.

CARL

R-E-W, R-E-W...

Carl's finger makes an unwise choice.

INSERT: A small red light, much like the one on Dwayne's video camera, pops on the answering machine as the reels begin to turn.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl jumps up, realizing that he pressed the "REC" button. He breaks into a series of hoarse coughs as he yanks out the answering machine's electrical cord. He recovers and plugs it back in. The machine CLICKS and settles.

CARL

Shit. Okay, how about this one?

Carl presses another button further down the machine.

DWAYNE
(FILTERED ON TAPE
THROUGHOUT SCENE)
Wait, wait, wait...

DR. BRUNSWICK
(FILTERED ON TAPE
THROUGHOUT SCENE)
Is it all set?

DWAYNE
No, just a minute here.

THERE ARE SOME RUSTLING NOISES ON THE TAPE as Carl slowly seats himself next to the answering machine. He blows smoke around the reels as they turn.

DWAYNE
No use in recordin' if the
volume ain't right, right?

DR. BRUNSWICK
Right! So, how was this week?

DWAYNE
Like the last one.

DR. BRUNSWICK
What have you been keeping yourself
busy with?

DWAYNE
Umm...

DR. BRUNSWICK
How's the music?

DWAYNE

Music's always good. Uh, and work's work, ya know? It's like I'm on auto-pilot, but I'm still... 'functioning' in that respect.

WE HEAR SOUNDS THAT HINT CORY IS OUT TALKING TO SOMEONE AT THE FRONT DOOR. This is noticed slightly by Carl, but the tape continues to hold his attention in its grip.

DR. BRUNSWICK

That's good then!

DWAYNE

Yeah, I guess.

DR. BRUNSWICK

The movie project?

DWAYNE

Another two investors.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Friends?

DWAYNE

Meh, it's kinda aggravatin'. I get these pockets of...I don't know... silence, where no one gets back to me. Patience ain't a virtue of mine, so maybe it's just me, but...

MORE NOISES COMING FROM THE FRONT DOOR. They catch more of Carl's attention this time. He passes a short, annoyed glance towards the door, but quickly turns back to the tape.

DR. BRUNSWICK

You said last week--no balance, the extremities of everything.

DWAYNE

Yeah, yeah. Just another example.

DR. BRUNSWICK

It ties in with how you wanted Carl, your relationships. All or nothing.

Carl perks at the mention of his name. His finger dials the volume, but it's already as high as it can go. He leans closer.

DWAYNE

Yeah.

DR. BRUNSWICK

You said last week when you two were together, it felt like he wasn't there, and now that he's gone, it's like...

DWAYNE

I feel him all the time. It's like there's never any peace.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Mmm-hmm. I think we can both agree that you beat up on yourself too often. You have a really strong tendency to internalize things.

DWAYNE

Sure as shit there.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Why do you think you do that? Are you afraid of release? Loss of control?

DWAYNE

Yeah. I like havin' control. I mean, I like people bein' able to rely on me.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Dwayne—

DWAYNE

I like people respectin' me for someone who can keep their shit together—

DR. BRUNSWICK

Dwayne, you're human. We all are. If the allowance to forgive others is there, then you have to learn to forgive yourself because no one—no one, Dwayne—is any worse or better than you. Despite what negative feelings may be there, you made a difference to him.

By now, Carl has stopped smoking, the resulting plumes of smokes swirling around the answering machine dissipating.

DWAYNE

I know.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Just like you made a difference to him.

DWAYNE

I know.

Carl wipes his eyes, but tries not to move too much, fearing he may miss hearing something.

DR. BRUNSWICK

Have you ever considered that this is a case of wanting what you don't have? If Carl came back, hat in hand, would you turn him away? Do you think that might be why you're here?

DWAYNE

I'm all out of answers. That's why I'm here.

A LOUD KNOCK ON CARL'S DOOR scares him and us out of our minds.

CARL

Cory, I'm busy, man!

ABBY

It's me, Carl.

Carl's hands slaps against the side of the answering machine, quickly cutting off the tape's volume. He throws it up atop his headboard.

ABBY

It's me, Abby, Carl. Could you please let me in?

Carl's quick movement prompts him to cough again as his feet head to the bathroom, where he throws his cigarette into the toilet.

CARL

Just a minute!

Carl tries to compose himself as he unlocks and pulls back the door. ABBY is standing there, his demeanor very passive-aggressive, but Carl's red face and alarm prompt his opening question.

ABBY

You okay?

CARL

I'm fine.

ABBY

You don't look fine.

CARL

I'm not fine then. Why are you here?

ABBY

To talk about us.

THEME TO "THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS" PLAYS SOFTLY as Abby continues.

CARL

Us?

ABBY

Yeah. There was an 'us' one time, remember?

CARL

I don't know how many times I have to say this—

ABBY

You never gave me a chance! You hooked up with Hopalong Cassidy, suddenly told me you didn't trust me anymore, and never gave me a chance to say anything! Anything!

CARL

I love you like a brother, Abby, but NOT in that way.

ABBY

It felt so good when you two broke up. I admit it! I admit it, I'm a bad person! I can't stand seeing you two together—

CARL

Dwayne and I are just working together. Is that what you're worried about?

ABBY

I want another chance. I know you don't love him. You never made any attempt to get back with him after you two called it quits.

CARL

He. Dumped. Me.

MUSIC CUE ABRUPTLY ENDS.

ABBY

He's moved on. He's moved on, and now he's just using you to make his life easier. What is he doing for you?

Carl's twenty-five thousand dollars can be seen in the blush on his face. He looks away.

ABBY

*Carl, look at me.
(advances; cradles
Carl's face in his
hands)
He doesn't love you.*

Sadness is now added to Carl's guilt, as he still cannot look at Abby. Abby begins to kiss his neck and win over his desperate ex-boyfriend. They continue to kiss, pawing at each other's clothing.

ABBY

*Oh, Carl. Please let me inside.
Please.*

Carl succumbs, both pulling off their clothes before Abby mounts him. The whole act is done within thirty seconds. Afterward, we can tell neither man is satisfied. Abby falls on top of Carl, clutching onto him and pinning him in a rather uncomfortable position.

ABBY

We might as well be lonely
together.

Abby falls fast asleep, Carl's unhappiness broken as the answering machine reaches the end of the tape *CLICKING AND WHIRRING* its way back to the start. Abby *SNORES SOFTLY*, never roused by the machine. Carl settles and, given the circumstances, tries to make himself as comfortable as he can.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./CARL'S BOARDING HOUSE (ENTRYWAY) - DAY

CORY opens his door. SUZI QUATRO'S "CAN THE CAN" BLARES FROM HIS ROOM. CORY ENTERS SCENE, bouncing to the beat on the back wheel of a bicycle that has no front wheel.

CORY

(singing along)

Make-a-stand fo' yo' man, hun-nay!
Try to can the cannn!!

Cory jumps off the bike, it *CRASHES* into another bicycle that lays on the floor. The second bicycle has no rear wheel. CARL ENTERS, groggily, from his room as Cory goes to work cannibalizing the bicycles to make one complete one.

CARL

You finally buy a new bike?

CORY

Buy? No. And he left about
forty-five minutes ago.

CARL

What?

CORY

Your ex. Not the cowboy one, the
first one. That's what you were
gonna ask, right?

CARL

What?

CORY

You certainly have a way with the gents, Carly. Take a fuckin' number right? Now serving one-oh-three!

CARL

Cory!--

CORY

One-oh-four!

CARL

Cory!

CORY

What, man?!

CARL

He say anything to you when he left?

CORY

Obviously, he didn't say anything to you, dude, so why would he say anything to me?

Carl becomes annoyed and begins to head back into his room.

CARL

Don't hurt yourself out there, Cory.

CORY

Thanks, dad.

Carl, shaken by the word, hesitates a beat before SLAMMING his door.

INT./CARL'S ROOM

CARL gives a hopeless scan of his eyes over the cluttered room, settling on the envelope that has been sticking out of the pile of mail atop the headboard for weeks now. Slowly, he pulls it from the mess and begins to open it. Dust actually flits off of it as he does so.

INSERT: A close-up of the eviction notice reads as follows: "You are hereby notified that your tenancy at the premises of 519 21st STREET APT C, BELLINGHAM, WA 98225 is terminated on 12/15/2006. On this day, you will be required to surrender possession of the premises to the Landlord, POLARIS E-Z RENTS, LLC."

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl falls into his desk chair, dejected. A BEEP comes from his computer as he turns it on. He sits and stares at the screen before typing "THE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES OF WHATCOM COUNTY" into his search engine. CLICKS from Carl's mouse pop up and down as the clinic's home page. He chooses a heading marked "MEET OUR TEAM", confronted with three choices of resident psychologists. The first is Dr. Kaufmann. Since the voice on tape was a woman, he quickly moves on. The next is Dr. Pepper. Carl gives a tired smile.

CARL

You gotta be kidding.

Carl gets over his mirth and continues on. The next, and last choice, is a woman's picture crowned with the heading naming her as Dr. Brunswick.

INSERT: The cursor hovers over the hyperlink: "SEND ME A MESSAGE".

CUT BACK TO Carl, who is wracked by an internal struggle of whether or not to actually contact her. His tormented eyes show that he can't make up his mind. As he seems to be coming close to making a decision, the Skype screen blows up in front of him, its pleasant BLIP-BLOPPING RING showing that there is a video call from Feelicks. Carl CLICKS to connect, with FEELICKS popping up in the video cam window as a result.

CARL

Hey there.

FEELICKS

How now, brown cow?

CARL

You callin' me fat?

FEELICKS

*How ya feeling? Or, maybe, who
ya feeling?*

CARL

I feel like I'm losing my mind.

FEELICKS

*Have you checked under the chair?
I mean, it's gotta be there
somewhere.*

CARL

Oh, Feelicks.

FEELICKS

How much longer you making movies?

CARL

Not long, I hope.

FEELICKS

Why don't you just quit?

Carl looks down at the eviction notice, opting to dodge the question.

CARL

*I'm finding out things I don't
wanna.*

FEELICKS

About him or you?

CARL

(unconvincing)

Him. There's a lot I didn't know. I still don't.

FEELICKS

Well, if you were gonna get back with an ex, at least it wasn't Dwayne.

CARL

What?

FEELICKS

I just got off the phone with Abby.

CARL

Oh, God. That didn't take long.

FEELICKS

(starting to laugh)

Man, he sure is happy!

CARL

I'm glad he is.

FEELICKS

Well, you know what they say: telephone, telegraph, tell a fag.

CARL

Yeah, well, Abby's set a new land speed record for himself with this one...I don't mean how fast he called you.

FEELICKS

Ouch. Anyway, that's not why I'm calling.

CARL

Yeah, right!

FEELICKS

No, seriously. Kenny and me won't be around on Friday. Night flight to Sun Valley sold out so we're taking one that morning instead.

CARL

Oh, already? I forgot about your anniversary.

FEELICKS

Yeah, Idaho for an anniversary—the most heterosexual state in the nation. But I'm a romantic skier, what can I say?

CARL

No, no, that sounds good! You gonna ski in your skirt?

FEELICKS

Hell, yeah. I got leggings.

CARL

Kenny better take a camera.

FEELICKS

Fuck off.

CARL

No, I hope you guys have fun, and I hope by the time you get back, everything'll be normal again.

FEELICKS

Me, too. After while, crocodile.

Feelicks flicks off the screen, with Carl hesitant to go back to real life again. He looks at the clock, which reads 12:44PM. He clicks on "DWAYNE" in the open Skype screen. After a few RINGS, DWAYNE pops up to answer. He is sitting in the living area polishing his instruments. The electric sitar rests

against the wall behind him, and the rag in his hands tosses around a harmonica during the course of the scene.

DWAYNE

Well, well. What the hell happened to you?

CARL

Sorry. I haven't felt very well today

DWAYNE

You ain't gonna tell me you caught that bug from Kim? Camera people gettin' sick, actors hangin' me out to dry—I guess I can't pay people to give a shit these days.

CARL

Hey, at least I called. Better late than never, they say.

DWAYNE

Carl, I'm not payin' you to be witty—

CARL

You haven't paid me at all yet.

DWAYNE

And you never will be if you don't stop fuckin' around.

From the look on Carl's face, it's evident that he's so close to telling Dwayne that he's through. The eviction notice stops him. Just then, Dwayne takes the rubber band from around his wrist and pulls it back, as if it were a slingshot.

DWAYNE

Now, Goliath, you ain't thinkin' about runnin' away from me? Runnin' from our deal? Hmm?

CARL

Sometimes, it's okay to run.

DWAYNE

When?

CARL

*If some of my ancestors hadn't run,
I may not be here.*

DWAYNE

*I certainly hope you're talkin' as
a Jew now and not a fuckin' kraut.*

CARL

*Serious, Dwayne. I don't care what
you do after we part ways—*

DWAYNE

Never woulda guessed!

CARL

*--but I have to be able to look at
myself every morning and be happy
with what you've filmed...and up to
now, I can't.*

DWAYNE

(after a beat)

You still do that?

CARL

What?

DWAYNE

*Every mornin'. Tellin' yourself
it's gonna be a good day? You
still do that? You still tryin'
to convince yourself?*

CARL

It doesn't matter.

DWAYNE

We gotta get that on film.

CARL

What are you talking about?

DWAYNE

Think of it. That would be a great way to end the movie. Anyway, Kim gets off around eleven tomorrow, so just go down and get a ride with her. I have to get some work done on my truck, but I should be back around then.

CARL

Then I guess I see you around then.

Carl exits out of Skype, cutting off Dwayne's intended next sentence. Though angry, he feels an immediate guilt for his actions. His computer's desktop folder marked "TEACHING JOBS" catches his eye. He right clicks and deletes it from existence. He pauses. A few more clicks and a folder marked "DWAYNE" is gone. Then a music playlist called "COWBOY LOVE". He looks around the room. He grabs an empty shoebox and begins depositing in anything that was given to him by Dwayne or remind him of Dwayne. Cards, a stuffed bear with a black cowboy hat, cockrings—all quickly fill up the shoebox, so much so he gets a larger box from his closet and continues. Next is the "NONE OF THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS WILL WORK UNLESS YOU DO" fortune given to him a few days ago. The last thing he grabs for a photo of him and Dwayne. Carl tears it in half, realizing too late that there's another picture under it. He holds it up to see it is a photo of him and his father from when he was a kid. A seven-year-old Carl sits in his father's black Dodge Dart. His ice cream cone appears to be melting. His father is helping him. Carl is heartbroken by what he's done, but, after a few seconds, lets the pieces fall into the box.

MEDIUM SHOT - TAKEN UP FROM THE BOTTOM OF A TRASH DUMPSTER: Carl opens the lid and looks down. He goes to empty out the box into the dumpster, but instead opts to slowly push the entire box

into the void. He does it so gingerly, it's as if he's trying to make up for the unforgivable act he believes he is committing. The metal lid SLAMS shut again.

EXT./BELLINGHAM - EST. SHOT - DAY (DAWN)

Large clouds and fog hedge the bay as a new day starts.

INT./TIM'S APARTMENT - DAY

CAMERA PANS the studio apartment. A thick layer of fish food lays atop the aquarium water inhabited by some very bloated fish. A Cherry Point Refinery ID tag bearing Tim's pic, underscored by "TIM LANKERSHIM", shakes a bit as TIM awakens and gets out of bed. He shuffles to the bathroom. A note is pinned under the toilet seat and its lid. He reads it as he urinates.

INSERT: The note says: "JUST FOUND OUT I HAVE DOUBLE SHIFT TODAY. HOORAY. COWBOY SCORSESE VOICEMAILED. HE DOESN'T NEED EITHER ONE OF US TODAY. STOP FEEDING THE FISH SO MUCH OR THEY'RE GOING TO EXPLODE." The note ended by a heart with a happy face on it.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Tim finishes up. The note is thrown in as he flushes.

EXT./COFFEE COTTAGE - DAY

The mist is heavy, cold and nearly black as CARL approaches the drive-thru coffee stand, giving a look of relief as it comes into view. A car DRIVES OFF and he goes up to the counter, behind which KIM works alone.

CARL

I'll have seventy-five
cappuccinos to go, please.

KIM

What, seventy-six too many for
ya, Danielson?

(begins snapping
her towel at him)

Huh? Seventy-six too many??

CARL

(laugh)

Stop it!

*(mischievously hides face
behind the counter)*

*I'm having a gang bang, and I
want all my friends to stay
awake until I'm satisfied. I
have a lot of friends, you know.*

KIM

*So you used to tell me! What's a
guy like you hanging around a place
like this on such a beautiful
fall morning?*

CARL

*I was just wondering the same
about you? You feeling any better?*

KIM

*Little. We'll see at the end of
the day if the answer's still
the same.*

CARL

*Any chance you're almost at the
end of it?*

KIM

I'm here, alone, till closing!

CARL

Which is when?

KIM

The end of fucking time.

CARL

You have five bucks I can borrow?

KIM

No, I'm skinned! Tim's hours got cut at Cherry Point, and to make things even better, your boyfriend left a voicemail saying he didn't need either of us today.

CARL

(slightly overlapping)

Ex-boyfriend. Wait. He told you he didn't need you today?

(Kim shakes her head)

He told me I was supposed to ride up there with you today! How the hell am I supposed to get up there when he knows I'm broke?

KIM

Go over to Chevron! They have an ATM over there.

CARL

I lost my wallet.

KIM

Awww shit, Carl!

Carl looks down at the paper cup on the counter, which has "TIPS" scrawled on it in thick black marker. He begins to shake it playfully.

KIM

No, Carl!

CARL

Pretty please?

KIM

Carlllll!

CARL

I'll pay you double next week!

KIM

For reals?

(Carl nods)

Ohhh, fine! Tim's gonna shit.

Carl begins to slide the meager mix of bills and change into his palm so he can pocket it.

CARL

You have to promise me you'll never marry Tim.

KIM

I'm flattered, Carl, but I'm not exactly your type.

CARL

Promise me.

KIM

Why??

CARL

Tim-and-Kim-Lan-ker-shim?

KIM

Shut up!

CARL

Promise me!

KIM

I don't think you need to worry about that right now. Besides, I can always hyphenate.

CARL

Kim Lankershim. The story of a woman hyphenated and banished to the shadows of matrimony.

KIM

High concept!

CARL

*Maybe you can get your own movie,
too?*

KIM

*A double-bill with you and Dwayne's.
Sorry I haven't talked to you much
since we started shooting. Nothing
personal, of course, I just figured
shit would be kinda weird working
with your ex-boyfriend and all. See,
I said 'ex-boyfriend' that time.*

CARL

I noticed, thank you.

KIM

You're welcome.

*A TRUCK DRIVES INTO FRAME, waiting for Carl to move from the
window.*

CARL

*And that's another thing, I've
always known you as a drama queen—*

KIM

Oh thanks, Carl!

CARL

*No, how did you decide to start
doing camera work?*

KIM

*You're funny, Carl. But
seriously, it's a hell of a lot
harder than you'd think to stand
and pretend to be a camera tech.*

Carl is dumbfounded by Kim's words. He has no reply. The intimidating truck BLARES ITS HORN at Carl.

CARL

Pretend to be a camera tech?

KIM

*It's a lot like improv—
(catches sight of
truck)*

*Hold on. Let me get this guy's
double-shot-low-on-the-foam-
never-has-anything-smaller-than-
a-fifty ass out of here.*

Carl hesitantly backs away from the counter as the truck revs aggressively up to the counter. The wait seems to take forever to Carl who ponders what Kim has just said over and over as he waits. Finally, the truck drives OFF and Carl is back up to the counter.

CARL

*What do you mean, pretend to
be a camera tech?*

KIM

*Dwayne told us he was thinking
about setting up cameras in hidden
spots for us all to be filmed.
That's what he said that first day
in the coffee shop when we did
the part with you guys and your
friends. I guess he wants
something authentic, you know?*

CARL

*So, you never filmed anything at
all? Tim never filmed anything
at all?*

KIM

You didn't know?

(with vacant eyes, Carl
shakes his head)

Eh, your ex—he's a smart guy.
Doesn't surprise me. Goes along
with the whole 'verité' thing he
wants, I guess.

CARL

(double-checking his
money)

Email me later.

KIM

Why?

CARL

To make sure I didn't do anything
stupid.

KIM

I will.

Carl heads off, walking up through the empty lot. Kim,
noticeably worried, calls out to him.

KIM

Carl, why don't you just go home?

Carl keeps walking into the distance as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO

The BUS PULLS AWAY FROM IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA, revealing CARL
standing and looking in the direction of Dwayne's front door.
He begins to walk closer to the condo, noticing Dwayne's truck
is the only one parked under the carport. He reaches the front
door, giving a look over his shoulder, making sure the coast is
clear and, in a strange way, seemingly wanting some kind of
support for what he's about to do. He tries the door, which is

locked. He doesn't remove his hand; instead, he begins to throw his weight against it. The door PUFFS and SQUEAKS in reply.

INT./DWAYNE'S CONDO

The front door's jamb snaps spilling wood, screws and CARL into the foyer. He closes the door, as if trying to conceal what he's doing. Carl stumbles a bit over the debris as he makes a beeline for the video camera, which sits on the floor in the living room. He picks it up, hesitant to continue.

INSERT: Carl's fingers paw the eject button. The tape cage pops open. It is empty.

CUT BACK TO SCENE

Carl looks up. DWAYNE is standing in the bedroom doorway.

CARL

"Don't worry, Carl. It'll be real easy to edit."

Carl notices his fingers run over something rough, which turns out to be the Velcro holding on the red recording light. He RIPS it from the top of the camera, switching it on.

DWAYNE

Ya push the button to the right, and it blinks.

(Carl does, the light begins to blink)

People use 'em to fake out car thieves. Seven ninety-five at Checker Auto Parts.

Carl drops the light. It blinks over and over from down on the carpet.

CARL

You're insane.

DWAYNE

Me?

CARL

Yes, YOU!

DWAYNE

You break into a residence of an ex you're twice the size of. In a town that has a logged police report of supposed violence against your roommate. Fake 911 call from your own phone just a few days ago. On psych meds since you've been old enough to jack off—"

CARL

I'm not on them now!!

DWAYNE

Mmm-hmm. You think anyone's gonna believe you? Would you believe you? Would ya, Carl?

CARL

Give me my wallet, Dwayne.

DWAYNE

Ya don't need it—

CARL

Now, Dwayne!

DWAYNE

You know who you are! Someone who pissed away the only person who really loved you—

CARL

Fuck you.

DWAYNE

Name one. Go on, Carl. I've been real patient so far, so you go ahead and name ONE FUCKIN' PERSON who didn't bend you over with one hand while holdin' a score card in the other.

Carl begins to back away from Dwayne, who moves closer.

CARL

Many! So many.

DWAYNE

One. All others just goin' for braggin' rights—

CARL

...so many

DWAYNE

--Let's fuck the freak of nature! OOOH WEEEEEE! Self-esteem, boy, you who you are! You know why you do what you do. You do nothing. You got no tools, no balls, nothing. Boy, your dad didn't leave you because you were a faggot, he left you because you're a goddamned COWARD. And that's the worst kinda cocksucker to be!

Carl snaps. He rushes Dwayne, beating him savagely with his own camera. Carl loses grip on the camera and presses down on his ex, who is pinned under him. Dwayne's ribs give a slight CRACK before the cowboy's bloodied mouth gives a horrendous yowl. Coming back to his senses, Carl slides back away from Dwayne to keep from doing anything more. Frightened, he clutches the battered camera to his chest. Dwayne is trying in vain to get up from the floor, mashing smears of blood on the nearby white walls in his attempts. Carl notices something white on the floor. He runs his fingers over the camera and, thinking it's one of the shattered camera's control knobs, goes to pick it up.

INSERT: The knob turns out to be one of Dwayne's molars.

CUT BACK TO SCENE as Carl recoils in shameful horror.

DWAYNE

Just. Finish.

(cough; voice cracks)

Just finish the fuckin' job!

*The only thing I want more than
you...is for all this to end.*

Carl abandons the camera. Dwayne resists, crying out as Carl helps him to his feet. They gracelessly overturn furniture and papers in the process. Panicked and heartbroken, Carl takes to his knees before Dwayne.

CARL

*Please. Please. I haven't been
with anyone since we broke up. I
swear. I'll give up everything,
let's just go back to the way it
was. Please, Dwayne, I'm sorry,
please don't leave me again!...*

Dwayne's pain makes his black eyes unresponsive as his ex clutches at his legs and weeps on the floor before him. Finally, Dwayne's hand ruffles Carl's sweaty hair.

DWAYNE

You ain't been with anyone else?

Carl scratches his hair from his face and looks up to Dwayne. A small louse is on Carl's face, and Dwayne knows exactly what the tiny grey dot is, and just whom it came from. Carl's desperate plea is a lie. Dwayne's blood-caked hand reaches out and wraps around the neck of the electric sitar, which is still resting against the wall after being polished the day before.

DWAYNE

*Hold on. You got a lil' somethin'
on ya, son.*

Dwayne swings the instrument, knocking Carl to the floor. The neck snaps off from the impact. He quickly wraps the strings around Carl's neck, pulling so tightly that the thinner gauge steel begins to cut mercilessly into Dwayne's hand. Dwayne has to let go. Carl dead body falls to the carpet. The pain Dwayne is in brings him to his knees. As he tries to catch his breath, he begins to sob uncontrollably.

DWAYNE

No! No, I did everything! I did everything. You can't be here...

LONG SHOT: Dwayne and Carl's body fill the right-hand portion of the frame. CAMERA PULLS OUT AND PANS SLIGHTLY TO THE LEFT, REVEALING CARL, dressed in his usual university sweatshirt and faded black jeans, sitting at the dining room table. Carl leans forward, gently injecting as Dwayne's cries carry on.

CARL

I told you I'd never leave you.

DWAYNE

*Why can't you just let me alone?
(pointing to Carl's
dead body as he rails
at him)*

*You!! If I can't have you, why
won't you let me alone??*

Dwayne continues to sob as a concerned Carl stands and crosses to the front door.

CARL

*Come on. We've gotta get you to
the hospital. Don't forget your
wallet. I'll wait for you outside.*

CARL EXITS.

DWAYNE

*(v.o.)
You do this movie...*

FLASHBACK: Dwayne and Carl at the Greek restaurant.

DWAYNE

*..And I never have to see you
again.*

*CUT BACK TO SCENE as Dwayne begins the protracted act of getting
to his feet and making it to the front door.*

DR. BRUNSWICK

(v.o.)

*Do you think that might be why
you're here?*

DWAYNE

(v.o.)

*I'm all out of answers. That's why
I'm here.*

INT./DR. BRUNSWICK'S OFFICE - DAY

*Sunlight comes through the blinds of the large office. DR.
BRUNSWICK and DWAYNE are both seated. We see that the past year
has taken a toll on him as he is a bit less haggard than in all
of the other scenes.*

DWAYNE

*It's a little bit weird, but
sometimes I talk to him.*

*FLASHBACK: DWAYNE and CARL in the Christmas-festooned booth at
the 'Hamster Wheel.*

DWAYNE

*You're always wearin' the same
clothes, Carl.*

CUT BACK TO SCENE

DWAYNE

*Just talk to him, like he's in
the room with me, ya know?...*

FLASHBACK MONTAGE: as Dwayne says the former line, we are shown:

- a) Dwayne flipping the \$50 on the dining room table regarding Carl's "erection bet"*
- b) A defiant Carl walks OUT in a huff, slamming Dwayne's front door behind him*
- c) with a near-empty bottle of gin on the nightstand, a groggy, dreaming Dwayne lies in bed*
- d) Carl looking at the frightening shadows on the wall of the bedroom as Dwayne rapes him*

CLOSE UP – SLOWLY ZOOM ON the answering machine on Carl's headboard.

DR. BRUNSWICK

(v.o.)

And does that seem to help?

INT./DWAYNE'S CONDO

Finally having made it to the front door, DWAYNE looks back one last time at Carl's body lying on his living room floor.

DWAYNE

(v.o.)

Yeah. I hope.

ANGELA

(v.o.)

...You over there talking to yourself again?

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO

DWAYNE pulls open the front door, the broken frame giving a SNAP as it gives way. He walks slowly out into the parking empty parking lot. Snow is just beginning to fall. His torn hands slowly drip blood onto the asphalt. The only vehicle in the lot is his white pick-up truck. CARL sits in the passenger seat, waiting obediently. Dwayne sighs, part out of the tremendous pain he's in, and part out of resignation. He crosses to the truck. Hesitating, he finally pulls up the handle of the door, the sliced flesh of his hands splitting and taking away his

breath as the door swings open. Dwayne slides in the best he can.

INT./DWAYNE'S TRUCK

DWAYNE fishes the keys from his pocket and turns the ignition. THE MOTELS' "ONLY THE LONELY" begins on the CD player.

DWAYNE

Watch your knees.

CARL momentarily rolls himself into a ball as Dwayne opens the glove compartment and takes out his pair of gloves, agonizing as he slowly pulls them on over his bloody hands. He grits his teeth and, in doing so, realizes that he is missing a molar. His tongue flicks around his mouth, trying to assess the damage. The blood is coming down his wrists faster now. Dwayne, surrendering to pain, begins to cry. He looks over to Carl, who opens his arms to him. Dwayne falls into them, squeezing Carl tightly and gratefully, continuing to cry.

CLOSE UP: Dwayne's hands squeezing the padding of the passenger seat because, of course, Carl isn't really there.

EXT./DWAYNE'S CONDO – BOOM SHOT

CAMERA HOLDS ON THE PASSENGER WINDOW OF THE TRUCK as CARL continues to comfort DWYANE. Exhaust mixes with the snow as it now begins to swirl and fall heavier. SONG FADES FROM SOUNDTRACK, REPLACED BY A SPARE AND FORELORN CELTIC BALLAD. CAMERA BOOMS up through the snow to give an aerial shot of the town as we

FADE OUT

CUE END TITLES

THE END