



MANAGEMENT

Written and Directed by
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LOS ANGELES

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CREDITS ROLL

MUSIC: "COWBOY" by Kid Rock, as we see a SERIES OF SHOTS:

1 INT. FRONT DESK/ LOBBY AREA - DAY 1
--C.U. on a large, breakfast buffet plastic cereal dispenser being filled with Fruit Loops from an industrial-sized Fruit Loop box. The cereal slowly piling up, ready to do its job.

--A plastic sack of orange juice being lowered into a cafeteria-style orange juice dispenser.

--Fruit being arranged semi-artfully into a large plastic bowl.

--Various pre-packaged breakfast goodies, (Cinnamon Delites, Pecan Twirlers, Blueberry Blazes...) being lined in rows on a theoretically white table cloth.

--PULL BACK to reveal MIKE CRANSHAW, late 30's, cigarette dangling from mouth, hair like a rain forest, nametag crooked and yet a genuine sweetness beneath it all, performing these early-morning chores with the enthusiasm of a dead squirrel.

2 EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY 2
--Mike on a step ladder in a parking lot of a small, two-story L-shaped motel. He is replacing a stolen letter on the motel's welcome sign, in this case the "B" in the phrase: "FREE HBO"

3 INT. FRONT DESK/ LOBBY AREA - DAY 3
--Mike, cigarette in mouth, smiles pleasantly as he gestures several motel guests from the front the desk area toward the complimentary continental breakfast spread.

4 INT. BACK ROOM OFF THE LOBBY - MOTEL - DAY 4
--Mike, shirt off, in a room behind the front desk area, struggling with a chin-up on a bar he's jammed into a doorway, all the while keeping an eye on Regis and Kelly, which plays on an old TV.

--MUSIC FADES as he completes his 5th chin-up and calls it a morning. As Regis drones on, his mother, TRISH CRANSHAW, early 60's, chipper and vital, sticks her head in from the lobby.

TRISH
Mike, did you ever call the ice machine guy?

MIKE
...I forgot.

TRISH
Mike, do me a favor and call the ice machine fellow before we go completely ice-less.

MIKE
OK, Ma.

Mike puts his shirt on as he heads for the lobby.

5 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DAY

5

Mike and Trish make room for each other behind the small front desk, Mike finding a phone book.

MIKE
How're you feeling today?

TRISH
Feeling great today, Mike.

MIKE
Good.
(flipping pages)
Where's Dad?

TRISH
Crossword.

Mike glances over to a small, closed door that says RESTROOM. From the breakfast area, a BUSINESSMAN, 40's, enters, placing his key on the desk--

BUSINESSMAN
Checking out of 202.

TRISH
(perfect motel demeanor)
And how was your stay, Mr. Edmonds?

BUSINESSMAN
Fine, thanks.

TRISH
Heading back east?

5 CONTINUED:

BUSINESSMAN

No, I gotta head over to Vegas then up to
Salt Lake.

TRISH

If it's not one thing, it's another.

Mike, as is his habit, completely ignores this conversation.

6 INT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY

6

Mike drives his beat-up 2-door Buick along a commercial strip
that could be anywhere in America. He pulls into the parking
lot of "FLAGSTAFF FOO-YUNG, \$5.95 ALL-U-CAN-EAT" *

7 INT. FLAGSTAFF FOO-YUNG - DAY

7

Mike at a darkened corner table reading *National Geographic*,
mouthful of Lo Mein. A waitress starts to clear his plate--

MIKE

(polite)

I'm not quite finished yet.

She smiles, he smiles, he chews...he reads.

8 EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

8

Mike's car pulls back into the lot. As he parks and gets out
he looks through the glass door into the lobby and sees a
woman checking in. He pauses, perhaps interested by her
hair, which is long and well-groomed, and possibly the only
thing he can really see of her.

9 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DAY

9

Mike enters from the lot, the small "entrance bell" sounding.
Trish smiles to him from behind the desk, as he subtly
attempts to check out the WOMAN checking in. She is mid-
30's, pretty but all-business, in a pants-suit that seems to
match her emotionally-curt personality.

WOMAN

One night, preferably something on the
upper level.

TRISH

Smoking?--non-smok--

WOMAN

Non-smoking.

9 CONTINUED:

9

Mike slips behind the desk as if urgently looking for something, at the same time sneaking a glance at her face. She ignores him, which causes him to lose confidence and retreat to the back room.

10 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT/ROOM - DAY

10

Mike sits in his one-room apartment, which is pretty much a showroom for dysfunction: clothes everywhere, a couple *Van Halen* posters on the wall, 3 stand-up ashtrays, a CASIO KEYBOARD a record player... He sits on a recliner, smoking, reading *National Geographic* in silence. After a moment--

*
*

JERRY (O.S.)

Mike!

(pause)

MIKE!!

Mike looks up, then stands and goes to the window. His POV on the motel parking lot below, where his Dad, JERRY CRANSHAW, is looking up. To say that Jerry, early 60's, is on the quiet, stoic side would be the understatement of the decade. Mike opens his window--

(We can see from this angle that the last two rooms at the end of the motel's "L" have been converted into Mike's living quarters)

JERRY (cont'd)

Need you to sweep the pool.

Blank look from Mike...and then:

MIKE

Why?

JERRY

Too much crud.

MIKE

Isn't it Marissa's job?

JERRY

She's got extra rooms today.

Mike absorbs this a moment...then closes his window.

11 EXT. MOTEL POOL - DAY

11

Mike, broom in hand, stands by the motel pool, essentially a large bathtub covered with a dirt-strewn green tarp. He stares at it...and finally begins sweeping. He might as well be doing it in his sleep.

12 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - NIGHT

12

Mike behind the desk as his parents prepare to go home for the night, his mom chatty, his dad silent.

TRISH
110's called twice to complain that 111's making too much noise.

MIKE
What kind of noise?

TRISH
Not *that* kind, Mike, get your mind out of the gutter. Apparently 111's got some sort of *grinder* in there.

MIKE
I thought you said to get my mind out of the gutter.

TRISH
That's disgusting, Michael.

MIKE
You're the one who said it.

JERRY
Don't be gross, Mike.

Mike nods, obeying his Dad.

TRISH
And get some sleep, you look tired.

MIKE
I'm not tired.

TRISH
You *look* tired.

MIKE
You're the one who's sick, Ma'.

TRISH
Oh *that's* a nice thing to say.

MIKE
I'm sorry.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek--

12 CONTINUED:

12

MIKE (cont'd)
 I love you.

TRISH
 I love you, too.

MIKE
 'Night, Dad.

Jerry nods stoically and he and Trish head out the front door, leaving Mike alone behind the desk. He watches them get in their car, then retreats to the back room.

13 INT. BACK ROOM OFF THE LOBBY - MOTEL - NIGHT

13

Mike enters, lighting a cigarette, grabbing a Cinnamon Delite from the supply area and flipping on the tube but muting it. He plops on a couch, opens the Delite, contemplates a back issue of *National Geographic*, but decides against it. So he just sits, chewing, staring at nothing. This is his life.

After a moment he remote controls through some channels, arriving at Adult Movies On Demand. He shuffles through the choices, the exotic and imaginative titles and all that they suggest. But he hesitates before selecting...his thoughts elsewhere. He closes his eyes, perhaps willing himself through a difficult decision...

And in a decisive gesture, he switches off the TV, stands and walks to the supply area, digging beneath cereal boxes, napkins, fruit boxes and orange juice bags...until he digs out a dusty bottle of cheap wine. He looks at it...and perhaps nods a little, determinately, to himself.

14 INT. ROOM 221 - THE MOTEL - NIGHT

14

The woman who checked in earlier, SUE CLEMMONS, works a laptop at a small desk. Her suit jacket is off but she's otherwise still pretty buttoned up, sipping bottled water and looking dour. *Headline News* plays silently on the TV. This is a woman who has acquaintances but not friends. After a moment there is a quiet KNOCK on the door. Sue looks up, perplexed or perhaps just annoyed.

SUE
 Who is it?

MIKE (O.S.)
 Management.

SUE
 What?

MIKE (O.S.)
Management.
(pause)
Welcome gift.

Sue now *is* annoyed. She goes to the door and opens it to Mike, who stands there, his hair relatively combed, a wrinkled but respectable oxford shirt, sweat on his upper lip and the no-longer dusty bottle of wine in his hand.

MIKE (cont'd)
Hi.

SUE
Hi.

MIKE
I have your complimentary welcome gift.
(pause)
Wine.
(pause)
On the house.

She looks at him, taking in the oddness, then glances at the wine...and reaches for it. Mike gestures to his nametag.

MIKE (cont'd)
Mike. I'm with management.

SUE
Nice to meet you, Mike.

MIKE
(nervous)
My pleasure. Where would you like it?

SUE
Umm, I can just take it.

MIKE
...OK.

He hands her the wine. Beat.

MIKE (cont'd)
Would you like me to open it?
(pause)
Sometimes guests don't have screws.
Corkscrews.

She looks around, thinking.

SUE
Ah--sure, why not.

Mike gingerly steps in, making sure to leave the door open in a gesture of trustworthiness. He places the wine on the dresser, pulls a corkscrew from his back pocket and proceeds to open the wine. He works silently...but then, re: the TV:

MIKE
Anything interesting tonight?

SUE
I haven't really been paying attention.

MIKE
I know the feeling.
(beat)
There should be cups in the bathroom.

She looks at him...but unsure what else to do, she ducks into the bathroom and emerges with a plastic-covered plastic cup.

MIKE (cont'd)
Completely sanitary.

SUE
Good.

MIKE
Shall I?

As Mike offers to pour her a cup, we might sense that he's occasionally tried this ploy with other women, but never with any success. He's basically making it up as he goes. But Sue is too caught off guard to really object.

SUE
Sure.

He pours, then stands back to watch.

MIKE
It's a very good year.

She smiles, takes a sip, nods in tentative agreement.

MIKE (cont'd)
...Sometimes guests invite me to join them for a taste.

SUE
...Is that right?

MIKE
Yeah. Not always, but...often.
(she just looks at him)
There should be another cup in the
bathroom.

SUE
I actually have to get back to work.

MIKE
Oh.
(pause)
What do you do?

SUE
I sell paintings.

MIKE
Really? I love paintings. What kind?

SUE
Like that.

She is pointing to a generic wall-hanging of hounds chasing a fox.

MIKE
Wow. So you sell them to, like--?

SUE
Companies, offices. Hotels.

MIKE
Nice. So you're in town doing that?
(she just nods)
For just tonight?

SUE
I have presentations tomorrow, then fly
out the next morning.

MIKE
What's the name of your company? That
you work for?

SUE
I'm not really interested in this, Mike.

MIKE
I'm just asking because I've been trying
to convince my parents to buy some new
art for this place.

She takes this in, on its several levels...then hands him a business card.

SUE
It's called Corporate Bliss.

MIKE
(off the card)
Nice. Maryland, huh?

SUE
Yep.

MIKE
Never been there.
(pause)
"Maryland Is For Lovers." Bumper
sticker.

SUE
Actually, *Virginia* is for lovers.
(pause)
Maryland is for *crabs*.

Caught off guard, he then tries to recover.

MIKE
Oh. Right.

SUE
(toward the door)
OK, Mike.

MIKE
So I should get back to work.

She nods as she ushers him toward the door, but not before he catches a glimpse of her open laptop.

MIKE (cont'd)
Solitaire. Good game.

SUE
Yes.

He also notes her open suitcase on the bed: Fanatically folded clothes, pristinely organized transparent toiletry bag... At the door, he turns back, slightly more confidant.

MIKE
So I'll be in the office until 11, then up in my apartment but reachable by front-door buzzer from then on.

11.

14 CONTINUED: (5)

14

SUE
OK.

MIKE
In case you need a solitaire partner.

She smiles and gently closes the door--

MIKE (cont'd)
OK then, have a great night.

15 EXT. MOTEL STAIRS - NIGHT

15

Mike descends down the outdoor stairs in the crook of the L, relatively satisfied with how that went. When he reaches the ground floor, he lights up a cigarette and smokes in quiet.

16 INT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

16

Mike's car pulls into the lot and parks. He quickly gets out and goes around to help his Mom out the passenger side. Her perkiness is a touch suspect.

TRISH
I'm not an invalid, Mike.

MIKE
No one said you were, Ma'.

He holds her elbow as she walks toward the lobby, where Jerry, monosyllabic as ever, opens the door to them.

JERRY
How'd it go?

TRISH
It went fine, Jerry.

As Mike ushers her through the door, he steals a quick glance up towards room 221, but the curtains are closed.

TRISH (cont'd)
Mike?

MIKE
(returning his attention)
Yeah, Ma'?

TRISH
You know I love you, right?

MIKE
Yeah.

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(CONTINUED)

12.

16 CONTINUED:

16

TRISH

Good. Just making sure.

*
*

And she heads inside.

*

17 OMIT

17 *

18 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DUSK

18 *

Mike sits at the desk reading *National Geographic* but keeping an eye on the parking lot out front. He reads....but his attention is then diverted by the sound of a car door's slam out front. He looks up to see Sue exiting a generic rental car and heading for the stairs to the 2nd level. Mike watches, then checks his watch, then looks toward the back room. He calls back to his folks.

*
*

MIKE

Hey guys, you should go home early tonight, I can handle things!

*

JERRY (O.S.)

After my show is over!

Stumped for a moment, Mike thinks hard then heads for the parking lot.

19 EXT. MIKE'S CAR - DUSK

19

Mike drives along the strip, then pulls into the lot of FLAGSTAFF LIQUORS.

20 INT. FLAGSTAFF LIQUORS - DUSK

20

Mike studies the champagne choices. He knows nothing about champagne and is a little baffled by the prices; to the point where he surreptitiously peels the tag off a cheap sparkling wine and switches it with that of a slightly-less-cheap champagne.

21 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - NIGHT

21

Mike reenters only find Sue at the front desk talking to his Mom. She is holding the now-empty wine bottle he gave her last night.

SUE

--and that's when I realized that I don't think your establishment has *any* type of recycling option, much less one for glassware alone.

(CONTINUED)

TRISH

(ever the hostess)

You're absolutely right, we don't, which I apologize for. It's something that we're working on, but as you may know the Flagstaff metropolitan area has been a little slow to fully embrace--

SUE

So what should I do with this bottle?

TRISH

Well, let's see, if you go about three blocks west--

SUE

You want me to get in my car to recycle a bottle for you?

TRISH

Well, you wouldn't be doing it for me, per se--

SUE

I'm sorry, I don't mean to be rude, it's just this is something I'm very passionate about.

TRISH

Recycling?

SUE

Yes, recycling.

MIKE

Ah--I can take it. I'll do it. I was gonna make a recycling run anyway, so...

TRISH

Oh, well that's nice--

(to Sue)

This is my son, Michael, he's our official night manager.

Mike can't quite look Sue in the eye, but takes the bottle from her anyway.

SUE

Thank you. It's nice of you.

MIKE

I'll just put in the back with, ah, with all my other ones.

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

He takes the bottle and sheepishly heads to the back.

22 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT/ROOM - NIGHT

22

Mike watches out the window as his parents get in their car and head home for the night. As they leave, he quickly grabs the bottle of cheap champagne, peels off the extra cheap price tag, gives himself a shot of Binaca Blast and puts on one of his Dad's old Fedoras.

23 INT. ROOM 221 - THE MOTEL - NIGHT

23

Sue sits up in bed watching TV and eating a vegetarian wrap. After a moment there is a KNOCK on the door. This time, she is not entirely surprised.

SUE
Who is it?!

MIKE (O.S.)
Mike; from management.

SUE
I already turned in my recycling, Mike.

MIKE (O.S.)
That's not why I'm here.

SUE
So why are you here?

MIKE (O.S.)
...Complimentary gift.

SUE
Isn't that redundant?

MIKE (O.S.)
I'm just doing my job, ma'am.

Sue thinks...then stands and opens the door. Mike, in his fedora, holds the champagne and looks unsure of what to say.

MIKE (cont'd)
Bottle of champagne.

SUE
Why?

MIKE
We give it to our guests when they stay for two nights.

SUE

That's quite a good deal. Did you and your mom come up with that on your own?

MIKE

(no comeback)

...Would you like me to open it for you?

SUE

You don't need a corkscrew to open champagne, Mike.

MIKE

I know, but....the fat cork can get kinda tricky sometimes.

SUE

I'm sure it can.

MIKE

...So should I?

SUE

Why not.

He unwraps the foil as she retrieves bathroom cups; she comes back just as he POPS THE CORK. It overflows a little as he waits for her to unwrap the two cups; he then pours.

SUE (cont'd)

(once they're set)

So you gonna make a toast, Mike?

MIKE

Sure.

(pause)

You're Sue, right?

SUE

Yeah.

MIKE

I read it on the credit card imprint.

SUE

Good to know.

MIKE

Here's to, um....people being happy.

SUE

Are you happy?

MIKE
Absolutely.

She just looks at him, too easy a target.

MIKE (cont'd)
Are you?

SUE
(pause)
I'm happier than you, Mike.

MIKE
You think?

SUE
I'm pretty sure.

MIKE
...You're probably right.

They clink cups and sip. Mike looks for an upbeat.

MIKE (cont'd)
So how were your presentations today?

SUE
Average.

They stand in silence, slowly sipping.

MIKE
(shy)
You have a great butt.
(she just looks at him)
I noticed it the moment you checked in.

SUE
...Thank you.

MIKE
I hope that isn't...

SUE
No. I mean...yes, but...

MIKE
(genuine)
Thank you.

SUE
You do this a lot, Mike?

MIKE

No.

SUE

Sometimes?

MIKE

Very rarely.

SUE

Does it work?

MIKE

...Never.

SUE

What would constitute having it work?

MIKE

Ah...I dunno; you know...

SUE

Us having sex?

MIKE

(squeamish)

Umm...

SUE

You getting to touch my ass?

MIKE

That would...Yeah, I'd consider that--

SUE

OK. You can touch my ass but then you have to leave.

Mike tries to discern whether she's messing with him, watching as she puts her champagne down, then sort of leans with both palms onto the dresser, thus slightly exposing her butt. Mike looks at her, wondering if it's a trap.

MIKE

Are you serious?

SUE

Yeah. Touch it and go. Touch and go, Mike.

Slowly, he puts his champagne down, and gently, very lightly cups her right buttock with his right hand. He leaves it there; all is still. Beat.

*

*

MIKE
So you're from Maryland?

SUE
Yeah.

MIKE
Which part?

SUE
Columbia. What about you?

MIKE
Here. Flagstaff.
(pause)
It's nice. It's very warm.

They stand in silence.....and then:

SUE
OK, Mike, I got an early plane tomorrow.

MIKE
OK.

She opens the door and shows him out.

SUE
Bye now.

MIKE
Bye.

The next morning and Mike is overseeing the complimentary continental breakfast spread, at which 5 or 6 sleepy-looking guests pick. After a moment, Sue enters ready for business in her pants-suit, her hair just-washed and pulled tight. She heads for the coffee urn, disdainfully surveying the pre-packaged treats.

Mike shyly slides over and, seeing that she's got a to-go cup, offers her a lid.

MIKE
Hi, Sue.

SUE
Hi.

She's not giving him much to work with.

MIKE

I was wondering if I could snag your cell phone number, or email or something, before you leave.

SUE

(a look, and then:) I don't think so, Mike.

MIKE

Why not?

SUE

Not my style.

MIKE

But we...you know, I touched your butt.

SUE

I know, Mike, and it was nice, but I think that's all she wrote.

Mike stands there, shocked, as she heads for the door.

Mike, having sought refuge, stands by a dryer breathing deep, pissed, bummed, confused. The machines WHIRL LOUDLY. After several moments he looks up and sees Sue standing at the door, holding the handle of her rolling suitcase. She watches him, then closes the door behind her and approaches. He waits. She is inches away, watching him, then she cups her hands on his face and kisses him. It ends; she pulls back, considering...and then she kisses him again. This time it is passionate, deep, generous and needy; and it lasts, soon becoming a tangle of hands and arms and legs seeking legs. Soon both their shirts are off, with both sets of pants heading south. It's sloppy, chaotic and ultimately kinda hot...sex as a contact sport full of uncoordinated lust and deep emotional needs--all on the edge of a dryer.

*

The laundry room door opens onto the lot and Mike and Sue exit, both showing the signs of their frivolity but trying not to. Standing right next to the door is Jerry, smoking his morning cigarette. Mike almost has a heart attack, as Sue rolls her suitcase to the rental car, places it in the trunk and opens the driver's side door. She attempts to give Jerry a smooth smile.

SUE

Thanks for the wonderful hospitality.

JERRY
You all checked out?

SUE
Yeah, I did it with your wife. Earlier.

Jerry looks at her, then at Mike, who also forces a smile.

MIKE
Come back and see us sometime.

SUE
It all depends on work.

MIKE
Right.

She gets in the car and starts it up. Mike just stares, unable to believe she's about to disappear from his life. As Sue's car pulls out of the lot, she gives a little wave and a honk...and then she's gone. Jerry turns to Mike.

JERRY
What was that about?

MIKE
(covering emotion)
What was what about?
(Jerry stares suspiciously)
She sells motel paintings.

Jerry watches him, maybe throwing a glance towards the laundry room as well, then stubs his cigarette and walks--

JERRY
Whatever you say, Mike.

Mike stays, looking at the empty road that Sue's car just drove away on. It could almost make him cry. And then:

TRISH (O.S.)
Mike, the heat's out in 118!

Mike drives, listening to *Van Halen*. He pulls into the lot of a building on which a sign reads: FLAGSTAFF KARATE.

28 INT. FLAGSTAFF KARATE STUDIO - FLOOR - NIGHT

28

Mike, in robe with yellow belt, stands among nine students, all practicing their mae geri snap kick in front of a wall mirror as a high-pitched instructor, sort of a Ritchie Cunningham with a goatee, shouts at them to find their *chi*. Mike, who is not particularly flexible or agile, is nonetheless working out his anger and sadness with significant chopping and kicking efforts.

29 INT. FLAGSTAFF KARATE STUDIO - CORNER - NIGHT

29 *

Behind a partition designating the men's changing area, Mike puts on street clothes next to a tall, lanky 24-year-old computer expert named JED. They both wear tighty-whitey's.

JED

Mike, brew tonight?

MIKE

Not tonight, Jed.

JED

Why not, you said last week we'd blow it out this week.

MIKE

I know--

JED

So what's the deal?--I want us to puke.

MIKE

Why?

JED

'Cause I like puking, it's like karate, it's fucking cathartic.

MIKE

I know, man, but I got some thinking to do tonight.

JED

About what?

MIKE

...Gotta figure out what it's all about.

30 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT/ROOM - NIGHT

30

Mike looks out his window to the parking lot below: Nothing going on, a slow night at the motel. He turns back into his room and takes a swig out of a just-purchased bottle of Jack Daniels. He goes to his boom-box and cranks the volume on the song already playing, so that we're suddenly overwhelmed and revved by the inspiring sounds of *DEEPER SHADE OF SOUL*, by Urban Dance Squad.

Mike allows the music to lead him to his closet, where he unearths an old shoe box, from which he then digs out a minutely folded, ancient-looking dollar bill. He sits and unfolds the bill until we glimpse its contents: Some rather grayish cocaine. Mike smells it, winces; then tastes it to see if its age has made it toxic; it probably is but he's willing to risk it all, so he then tries snorting it straight from the bill, which only partially works (he must lick off the excess from his upper lip and chin). He then uses a key to scoop and snort more from the bill. He is psyching himself up, there is fury and passion to his recklessness.

He goes to an already-opened Yellow Pages and dials a number from it on his phone, switching it to speaker mode.

AUTOMATED VOICE (O.S.)
 Thank you for calling Cheap Tickets, your call is important to us and will be answered in the order in which it was received.

Mike takes this in stride, finding a long straw, which he inserts into the Jack Daniels bottle and takes long sips as he makes his way to his chest of clothes, where he pulls a wad of cash from a pile of underwear. He's already counted it but he's gonna count again to make sure. He does this quickly, mumbling to himself, then pockets the cash, glances at the phone, glances at the Jack, then drum beats his head--

MIKE
 C'MON MIKE, NOW OR NEVER YOU FUCKING PUSSY, NOW OR NEVER!!!
 (he waits, and then:)
 I SAID C'MON YOU LITTLE DICK, JUST DO IT,
 LET'S GO LET'S GO LET'S GO!!!

Beat.

CHEAP TICKETS OPERATOR (O.S.)
 Hello, Cheap Tickets, how may I assist you?

(CONTINUED)

23.

30 CONTINUED:

30

Mike hurtles himself at the phone, speaking at it before he has the chance to change his mind--

MIKE

Yes hi I'd like to book a one-way cash ticket from Phoenix to Baltimore for as fast as fucking possible!

--off Mike, intense, listening to the next question--as:

MUSIC INTENSIFIES--CUT TO: SERIES OF SHOTS--

31 INT. BALTIMORE AIRPORT- DAY

31

Mike standing still on a horizontally moving escalator as it glides him beneath a WELCOME TO MARYLAND! sign. *

32 OMIT

32 *

33 OMIT

33 *

34 OMIT

34 *

35 I/E. TAXI CAB - DAY

35 *

Mike sits stone-faced in the cab's backseat. C.U. on the meter: \$43.60 And rolling. *

*
*

36 EXT. CORPORATE BLISS - DAY

36

Mike, eating a Taco Bell burrito, walking up to a small, two-story building in the middle of a perfectly suburban office park. He looks at the nameplates on the building's facade, one of which says, CORPORATE BLISS. He enters--

MUSIC FADES

37 INT. CORPORATE BLISS - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

37

Walls adorned with many paintings of foxes and hounds. Mike approaches a 20-something blond RECEPTIONIST.

MIKE

Hi, I'm here to see, ah, Sue Clemons.

RECEPTIONIST

Is she expecting you?

MIKE

I left a couple messages.

(CONTINUED)

RECEPTIONIST
 (looking up at him)
 Messages regarding--?

MIKE
 Regarding Sue. Telling her I'm in town.
 (pause)
 I'm an old friend.

RECEPTIONIST
 I see.

As the receptionist starts to pick up the phone, Sue emerges from within the office area, wearing her coat and accompanied by two COLLEAGUES. She sees Mike and her expression goes from casual to shock to annoyance rather quickly, although there's possibly a glimmer of pleasure hidden in there as well.

SUE
 What are you doing here?

MIKE
 I was wondering if we could talk.

SUE
 Why are you here?

MIKE
 I called. Twice. Did you get the--?

SUE
 (to her colleagues)
 Sorry about this. You guys go ahead.

"Awkward."

COLLEAGUE
 You sure, Sue?

SUE
 Yeah, no problem, go.

They look at Mike with some concern, then leave.

RECEPTIONIST
 You all right, Sue?

SUE
 I'm fine.
 (to Mike)
 This is completely inappropriate.

MIKE

Why?

SUE

Because I barely even know you.

MIKE

But we--

SUE

It's like a *violation*.

MIKE

I wasn't trying to--

SUE

Well you did, OK? You *are*. You're violating my personal *space* and you're violating my personal *life*. I've got half a mind to call the police.

MIKE

Please don't do that.

SUE

(beat)

I have to be somewhere. I'm late.

MIKE

It's five o'clock.

SUE

I know.

MIKE

What are you late for?

SUE

I have an event.

MIKE

What kind of event?

SUE

Indoor soccer practice.

MIKE

...Can I come?

SUE

No.

MIKE
Please?
(pause)
I'm not...I swear. I'm nice.

Off Sue, considering--

38 INT. GYMNASIUM - DUSK

38

Sue, Mike and six women in their 20's play an intense, no-nonsense game of indoor soccer. The women are great, Sue is pretty good and Mike, playing in his brown work shoes and borrowed (tight) Umbro shorts, sucks air, tries his damndest and is exhilarated just to be there.

39 INT. GYMNASIUM - BLEACHERS - LATER

39

Mike sits alone, sweating, alive, sucking on a cigarette. After a moment Sue approaches to sip from her Gatorade.

MIKE
This is great, you do it every week?

SUE
Yeah.

MIKE
You're really good.

SUE
Thanks.

MIKE
(pause)
I didn't notice that the first time we
met.

*

They both look at her left leg, which has a large birthmark in a strange, unidentifiable shape.

MIKE (cont'd)
It looks like a heart.

SUE
No it doesn't.

*

MIKE
(he decides to move on)
...So look, I'm sorry if I--

SUE
You can't stay, Mike.

MIKE
...Why not?

SUE
Because it's fucking ludicrous. I let
you touch my ass and then you fly across
country and--

MIKE
It was more than just an ass-touch.

She's forced to concede this.

SUE
You still can't stay.

MIKE
Can I stay for just tonight?

SUE
I've got things to do.

MIKE
How much stuff can you do in one night?--

SUE
I do a lot of stuff. It may not be
"interesting," but I do it.

MIKE
Like what? Do you go out with friends?

SUE
I don't have friends, Mike.

MIKE
...OK. So what do you do?

SUE
I pass out vouchers. See that girl over
there? She works for Burger King.

MIKE
OK.

SUE
And she gives me vouchers every week.
Which I pass out.

Mike looks over to where one of the 20-something's juggles a
ball with her feet. He looks back at Sue...utterly honest:

MIKE

I just wanna let you know I'd never hurt you. Ever. And I'll leave tomorrow if you want. I promise.

Sue looks at him, his genuine sweetness undeniable...and seems a little less annoyed.

40 INT. SUE'S CAR - NIGHT

40

Sue drives, Mike in the passenger seat.

MIKE

Is this a--?

SUE

Prius.

(pause)

I also give away 30 percent of my yearly income.

He nods as she pulls to a side street near Baltimore's train station. She gets out; Mike follows.

41 EXT. HEATING GRATE - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

41

Sue approaches a small enclave of HOMELESS MEN lying across a heat grate. A voice calls out warily.

HOMELESS VOICE

Sue's here.

The homeless men all sit up, not in unison but close. Sue is not the warm, beloved Mother Teresa type, but she does her thing and she does it well.

SUE

Whoppers?

Several men raise their hands and she hands them Burger King Whopper vouchers.

SUE (cont'd)

Chicken Tenders?

Several other men raise, and she hands out more.

SUE (cont'd)

The new Veggie burger? Supposed to be very good.

(no hands go up)

(MORE)

41 CONTINUED:

41

SUE (cont'd)
 C'mon you guys, it's the only thing
 that's not gonna cause an immediate heart
 attack.

One guy raises his hand and she dispenses.

SUE (cont'd)
 Mike?

Mike, still in his tight Umbros, now dutifully hands out
 Gatorades leftover from practice. The homeless men nod their
 thanks.

SUE (cont'd)
 OK then.

HOMELESS VOICE
 Thanks, Sue.

She turns and leaves. Mike follows.

42 EXT. PARKING LOT - SUE'S CONDO - NIGHT

42

Sue and Mike get out of her car in front of a line of
 recently-built suburban "townhouses" in what is essentially,
 if not technically, a gated condo complex. Both are nervous
 as they approach her entrance.

MIKE
 It's nice.

SUE
 Thanks. Been here two years.

43 INT. LIVING ROOM - SUE'S CONDO - NIGHT

43

They enter; Sue turns on a light and we see a fairly small
 one-bedroom unit, the wall-to-wall carpet fastidiously
 vacuumed, the kitchen area immaculate, trinkets and framed
 photos arranged perfectly on a side table. It's nice but
 she's about 10 years shy of being a spinster. She turns to
 him:

SUE
 I'm too tired to make love.

MIKE
 OK. Me too. The soccer wore me out.
 (pause; light)
 You want me to touch your butt?

SUE

No.

(small smile)

I only do that when I'm travelling.

She turns on a light switch.

SUE (cont'd)

(re: the light source)

Compact florescent.

(he nods)

Yoga nook.

*

*

She is pointing to some pillows arranged near a window.

*

MIKE

(again nodding)

...So do you have relatives around here?

*

*

SUE

My Mom. Over in Laurel.

She sees Mike glance at a photo of an older woman wearing nylon and a plastic smile.

SUE (cont'd)

Her name's Mary. She's a freak.

MIKE

What does she do?

SUE

Sells insurance to deaf people.

MIKE

...Who else do you hang out with?

SUE

I'm busy, Mike, I work.

MIKE

Right.

SUE

(not cold, just rational:)

You can sleep on the couch.

MIKE

(summoning courage)

I was wondering if I...could sleep in
your bed but promise not to touch you.

SUE

...Fine.

44 INT. BEDROOM - SUE'S CONDO - DAY

44

Mike and Sue lie side-by-side beneath covers. Mike is awake, watching Sue sleep. Sun shines in through a window. After a moment he spots some breath mints on the bedside table. He furtively pops one, then leans over and kisses Sue forehead. He looks at her for a reaction; there is none. He then leans and kisses her cheek; still nothing. And now her lips, very gently. Far from a smooth operator, he's making it up as he goes along. He kisses her lips again. And then....her lips reciprocate. She's kissing him back, eyes still closed, and yet we realize she's awake, consenting and they're on their way to making love.

*
*

45 INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - SUE'S APARTMENT - DAY

45

Sue and Mike sit side-by-side sipping orange juice and nibbling very dark, German spelt bread. Beat.

SUE

So is your return ticket all set?

MIKE

...I don't actually have one.

SUE

(incredulity)

You don't have a return ticket?

MIKE

I bought a one-way.

SUE

Why?

MIKE

I don't know.

SUE

That's unacceptable, Mike.

MIKE

I know--

SUE

You need to buy one--

MIKE
I know. I'm sorry.
(pause)
I don't have enough money.

SUE
What the fuck are you--?

MIKE
I only had enough for a one-way. I
thought I would just...go for it.

SUE
With me?

MIKE
Yeah. It was a far-flung notion.

SUE
It was a fucking *stupid* notion.

MIKE
I guess.

SUE
I'll lend you money.

MIKE
You don't have to--

SUE
Well I'm gonna.

MIKE
(pause)
Would you first consider taking the
morning off? From work?

SUE
No.

MIKE
We can hang out. Then I'll leave. I
swear to God. If I don't you can mace
me.

SUE
You're fucking insane--

MIKE
We'll go to the zoo or something. It'll
be fun.

SUE
Zoo's suck.

MIKE
We'll do something else.
(she considers...beat)
Do you have a boyfriend, Sue?

SUE
...No.

MIKE
Did you used to?

SUE
Yes.

MIKE
What was his name?

SUE
Jango. He's a punk. Ex-punk.

MIKE
A punk like--?

SUE
Like a rock punk.

MIKE
Oh. So do you still hang out with him?

SUE
He moved away. Last month.

MIKE
Did he want you to go with him?

SUE
...Yes.

MIKE
(a nod...and then:)
Why'd he leave?

SUE
He's the VP of a yogurt company. He went
to run their Pacific Northwest
operations.
(pause)
I hate the fact that you smoke.

MIKE
I'll quit.

SUE
You don't have to.

MIKE
I will. I'll quit forever. Seriously.

46 EXT. BUMPER CARS - AMUSEMENT PARK - DAY

46

Sue and Mike squushed into a bumper-car, going nuts at a relatively empty bumper-car arena, the only other drivers being disenchanted high school drop-outs, with whom they are having a riotous time.

As the ride ends, Sue turns to him breathlessly and he engulfs her with a protective, laughing hug.

47 INT. AMUSEMENT PARK - GROUNDS - DAY

47

Sue and Mike stroll through the empty amusement park sipping milk shakes. The conversation takes time to pick up.

MIKE
Do you mind if I call you Susan?

SUE
Yes.

MIKE
(pause)
So...Sue. I was just wondering what your fears are.
(she looks at him like he's an idiot)
Like things that you're scared of.

SUE
I don't have fears, Mike.

MIKE
C'mon, everyone's got fears.

SUE
(beat)
I have no desire to parachute.

MIKE
It scares you?

SUE
Immensely.

MIKE
Me too. It's like...insane.
(pause)
How about kids?

SUE
What about them?

MIKE
Do you want 'em?
(no answer)
Sue?

SUE
...Yes.

MIKE
Me to. I think.

They walk; she stops, turns to him:

SUE
Why are you even here, Mike? I mean, do you think you, like, "like" me or something?

MIKE
Yes.

SUE
Why?

MIKE
You have style.

SUE
No I don't.

MIKE
Yeah you do.

SUE
You're wrong--

MIKE
You give away 30 percent of your income.

SUE
You would too if you made more.

MIKE
No I wouldn't.
(pause)
You're also incredibly sweet. Beneath...

SUE
Beneath what?

MIKE
Beneath the part of you that's not.

She looks at him. Beat.

MIKE (cont'd)
Is your Dad still around?

SUE
Why do you ask?

MIKE
'Cause you only mentioned your mom.

SUE
...He lives on an ashram in northern California.

MIKE
Is he, like....a *hippie*?

SUE
I guess before I was born. But it's a fine line between that and a self-obsessed dick.

MIKE
Meaning what, he was---?

SUE
Mellow to the point of apathy. Hands-off to the point of...

MIKE
Absence?

SUE
Yeah.

She looks him in the eye; then looks away.

SUE (cont'd)
You should catch your bus.

MIKE

...Right.

48 EXT. BUS STATION - BALTIMORE - DAY

48

Mike and Sue stand by the bus. He's about to get in.

MIKE

I'll pay you back for the ticket.

SUE

Don't worry about it.

MIKE

Do you think I'll ever see you again?

SUE

No.

(he is speechless)

We're not right for each other, Mike.

MIKE

But--

SUE

You live two-thousand miles away.

(pause)

With your parents. At a motel.

MIKE

You're being a jerk.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

OK, buddy, all aboard.

Mike looks to the driver, who sits in the idling bus. Mike and Sue regard each other. She speaks very quietly:

SUE

I wouldn't be good for you anyway.

MIKE

Why not?

SUE

I'm not good with people.

MIKE

It's not true--

SUE

Yeah it is--

MIKE

No--those homeless guys love you.

(no answer)

And what about the ex-punk guy? And what about me?

SUE

I think, Mike...

(pause)

...that you better get on.

She offers her hand, not meanly, but rather because it's all she can really do. He shakes it goodbye, then climbs on board. She walks down to the window where Mike takes his seat. They watch each other as the bus engines rev up. It's like something out of Casablanca, with Mike close to tears and Sue suppressing emotions with a tight, forced grimace. As the bus pulls away, Mike can barely lift his arm up to wave goodbye through the window.

*

Mike's POV: Sue standing alone, stoically waving back.

FADE TO:

49 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - MOTEL - DAY

49

Mike sits behind the front desk reading *Sport Illustrated*. After a moment, MARISSA, the 25-year-old Latina motel maid enters carrying a pile of clean towels.

MIKE

Hey, Marissa. 102's asked me if you could do their room by noon.

MARISSA

Why?

MIKE

Ah, 'cause they're coming back then and they wanna take a nap.

MARISSA

(exiting)

Whatever you say, Mike.

Mike, perplexed by her attitude, watches her go. Then Jerry walks in. Mike's eyes follow him as he essentially ignores Mike. Finally:

MIKE

Hi, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

JERRY
Hi.

MIKE
Everything OK?

JERRY
Yep.

MIKE
Where's Ma?

JERRY
Hardware store.

MIKE
I got an appointment at 3 today. Just so
you remember I won't be--

JERRY
I got you.

And with that he's gone, into the back room. Mike looks
after him, then looks out front to see if the coast is clear.
He then looks at his watch, puts down his magazine and
determinedly picks up the phone. He dials and waits...

MIKE
Ah, hey, Sue, it's Mike again, trying not
to call too much but I just wanted to
make sure you got the poem I sent last
week. The, ah, the sorta elongated haiku
thing.

(glancing around nervously)
Anyway, you know my home number, or of
course the front desk. Seriously though,
you should give a call, 'cause I'm
definitely around.

(as Marissa enters--)
Anyway...talk to you soon; I hope. Bye.

Marissa walks by, staring at him as he hangs up embarrassed
and pissed at himself. She leaves as Mike's attention is
suddenly diverted by something out in the parking lot: His
POV on his Mom near the entrance to the lot, standing with
eyes closed as though trying to regain her balance. He
quickly gets up--

*

Mike hurries over to where Trish is still trying to regain
composure--

MIKE
Ma, you OK?

She nods but doesn't answer.

MIKE (cont'd)
Let me help you--

He takes her elbow and ushers her toward the lobby--

TRISH
I'm fine, I just got disoriented--

MIKE
It's OK--

TRISH
I know it's OK, it's just the medicine.

MIKE
Next time send me or Dad to the store--

TRISH
I wanted the exercise.

MIKE
Well then let one of us go with you.

TRISH
I'm OK now, let go of me, Mike.

He lets go, watching as she walks on her own--

*

TRISH (cont'd)
These bushes need to be trimmed.

MIKE
I know, Ma, it's on my list.

*

51 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT/ROOM - NIGHT

51 *

Mike at his Casio piano stumbling through the chord progression of Neil Young's *Keep on Rockin' in the Free World*. After a moment he stops, lost in thought, then stands.

*

*

*

52 EXT. MOTEL BALCONY/WALKWAY - NIGHT

52

Mike, hair combed badly, in a wrinkled Oxford, KNOCKS on the door to room 209. He's holding a bottle of wine.

30-SOMETHING WOMAN (O.S.)
Who is it?!

(CONTINUED)

MIKE
Management.

30-SOMETHING WOMAN (O.S.)
Who?!

MIKE
Welcome gift. From management.

The door is opened by a 30-SOMETHING WOMAN whose demeanor is perhaps warmer than Sue's but who is far less willing to tolerate Mike's oddness.

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
I'm sorry?

MIKE
I'm Mike, from management, and I have a complimentary welcome gift for you.

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
What is it?

MIKE
Wine.

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
I don't drink.

MIKE
...Would you like some seltzer?

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
No.

MIKE
Fruit?

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
I'm really very busy.

MIKE
(pause)
Do you like Neil Young?

30-SOMETHING WOMAN
Please leave me alone.

She slams the door. Off Mike, alone--

53 EXT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY

53

Mike's car pulls up to a small house on a residential street. He parks and gets out, and as he walks up the front path Jerry emerges from the house to meet him.

MIKE

Hey.

JERRY

Hi.

MIKE

How is she?

JERRY

I've seen her better.

Mike looks to his Dad for more, but, Jerry being Jerry, there is none. Beat.

MIKE

How're you doing?

JERRY

I'm not the sick one.

MIKE

I know, but...

JERRY

But what?

MIKE

Nothing.

They stand, staring at the houses across the street.

JERRY

You know, I've seen my share of people leave this earth...

MIKE

She's not leaving, Dad.

JERRY

(a pause to ignore)

I've seen my share of folks leave, and it's ugly every time, which after a whilemakes you wonder.

Pause. Mike tries to put his hand on Jerry's shoulder, but Jerry turns and walks back inside.

54 INT. BEDROOM - JERRY AND TRISH'S HOUSE - DAY

54

Mike stands at his Mom's bedside. She is quite weakened but still has the remnants of her vitality.

MIKE
How're you doin', Ma?

TRISH
Don't pity me, Mike.

MIKE
I'm not.

TRISH
Good.

MIKE
So does that mean you're good?

TRISH
I'm fine. Just feeling a little weak.

*

MIKE
You have bone cancer, Mom.

TRISH
Everyone's got bone cancer, Michael.

He's not sure how to respond to this one, so he doesn't.

TRISH (cont'd)
How's the motel?

MIKE
It's fine.

TRISH
How's the weekend looking?

MIKE
Pretty good. There's a flower convention downtown, so...

TRISH
Good.

MIKE
...You know that appointment I've been doing for the last three Wednesday's, that I didn't wanna tell you about?

(CONTINUED)

TRISH

Hmm hmm.

MIKE

It's piano. I'm taking piano lessons;
from this kid over at the university.*
*

TRISH

(a slow smile)

Really?

MIKE

Yeah.

TRISH

That's wonderful, Mike.

MIKE

I like it.

TRISH

I bet you're good at it.

MIKE

Not really, but--

TRISH

Yes you are. And if you're not, you will
be. Do you practice?

*

MIKE

A bit. In my room.

*

TRISH

Good. Good for you.

He stands by her in silence a moment.

MIKE

Is there anything I can get you?

TRISH

I'll take some of those flowers when the
weekend rolls around.

MIKE

OK.

TRISH

And try an' cheer your father up. He's
not very good with stress.

MIKE
I'll try.

She looks at him lovingly, and pats down a particularly
unsettled strand of his hair.

TRISH
You're a good son, Mike.

55 EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DUSK

55

Mike stands alone in the lot smoking a cigarette, lost in thought. After a several moments, a generic rental car pulls in and parks. Mike looks up as *Sue gets out*. She looks at him. He stares back.

SUE
I thought you were gonna quit smoking.

MIKE
I did.

SUE
But not forever?

MIKE
...What are you doing here?

SUE
Work.

He takes this in as she takes a suitcase from the trunk.

MIKE
Did you get my haiku?

SUE
The elongated one?

MIKE
Yeah.

SUE
Yes.

MIKE
How come you didn't call me back?

SUE
I've been busy.

She walks up to him, suitcase in tow.

MIKE
You're here for work?

SUE
(nodding)
I fly out tomorrow.

MIKE
...I'm glad you chose to stay here.

SUE
Me too.

She looks at him...and can't help but smile. She kisses him softly on the lips, but just once.

SUE (cont'd)
I'd like a room for the night, please.

56 INT. FLAGSTAFF KARATE STUDIO - NIGHT

56

Mike and Sue, both in robes, face the mirror amidst the rest of Mike's perennially desultory karate class. Mike sneaks a look to her in the mirror, and she actually seems to be enjoying herself, until the moment she sees him looking and acts put upon. He then catches Jed's eye, who gives him an enormous thumbs up.

57 INT. FLAGSTAFF FOO-YUNG - DAY

57

Mike and Sue sit at his corner table enjoying steaming soups.

MIKE
So you're really out here for work?

SUE
What, you think I'm lying?

MIKE
No. I mean...it would be nice if you were, but--

SUE
If I were lying?

MIKE
No, if you were...here to see me. Also.

SUE
It's complicated.

MIKE
What is?

SUE
(not looking at him)
The reasons people do what they do.

MIKE
(beat; letting it go)
Are you *liking* your work these days?

SUE
It's OK.

MIKE
But not great?

SUE
Not really.

MIKE
You should quit.

SUE
You think it's that easy?

MIKE
No, but--

SUE
Do you like *your* job?

MIKE
No--

SUE
OK then.

MIKE
(pause)
What would you do if you *could* choose
something else? Like your fantasy job.

SUE
I don't really do fantasies--

MIKE
I know, but, if you *could*. If someone
said, "You can do whatever you want for
the rest of your life, Sue." What would
it be?

SUE

(pause)

It would probably be to run the world's most full service soup kitchen. In Stamford, Connecticut.

MIKE

Wow.

SUE

Industrial-sized kitchen, state-of-the-art equipment, multiple housing units upstairs, recreational facilities in the basement, 24-hour-a-day medical assistance, job out-reach, anti-recidivist counselors, psychiatric counselling, midnight basketball--

MIKE

Really good soup.

SUE

Yes. Excellent soup. First and foremost.

MIKE

Why Stamford?

SUE

I was once there on business and I saw some incredibly poor people and I didn't know how to help them.

MIKE

...What about your B.K. vouchers?

SUE

I had them but they're only redeemable in Maryland.

(re: her soup)

This is actually quite good.

He nods; they both sip. And then:

MIKE

Would you, if I asked you...would you visit my Mom with me?

Mike and Sue stand at Trish's bedside. She is considerably weaker. Sue holds out a bouquet of flowers.

SUE

These are for you. I guess there's a big flower convention coming to town so stores are really stocking up.

TRISH

That's nice of you.

MIKE

Sue flew in from Baltimore just this afternoon.

SUE

I was actually in St. Louis last night.

TRISH

What do you do, Sue?

SUE

I sell corporate decorative art.

This elicits an utterly blank stare from Trish.

TRISH

(pause)

I've met you before.

MIKE

She actually once stayed at the motel, Mom. That's how we met.

This time Trish's stare is mixed with suspicion.

TRISH

Oh.

(a forced smile)

And where are you from. Originally?

SUE

Columbia, Maryland.

MIKE

Sue gives away thirty per cent of her income, Ma'.

TRISH

...Do you come from a good family?

Mike looks nervously from Trish to Sue.

SUE

Not really.

TRISH
Why not?

SUE
I don't know. You can't really control
the cookie crumble, can you?

TRISH
...Was there something specifically *wrong*
with your family?

SUE
(pause; and then:)
My Dad's name is Dennis. He has the
integrity of wet bread. He once forgot
to pick me up from gymnastics for an
entire night.

TRISH
That's a lot of somersaults.

SUE
I didn't really care. It doesn't
"explain" me. It more just explains
Dennis.

MIKE
Tell her about your Mom.

SUE
She used to wear sarongs. Now she wears
nylon.
(pause)
Your son is funny. In a good way.

Trish regards Sue with a long look. Then:

TRISH
You're a little odd, no?

SUE
I'm actually too *normal*.

Trish nods, as if to say, "Keep telling yourself that."

TRISH
Can you hand me those pills, Mike?

Mike hands her pills from a bedside table, and she slowly
opens and takes one, washing it down with water. To Sue:

SUE
May I talk to my son in private for a moment?

Sue glances at Mike, who nods apologetically. Sue leaves.

TRISH
I like her.

MIKE
Really?

TRISH
She's logical, in an emotionally-annihilated kind of way. But that's OK. Underneath that there's a heart of....

MIKE
Gold?

TRISH
No, I wouldn't say gold, but there *is* a heart. Maybe made of leather. But nice leather. High quality, durable, probably very soft; over time.

Mike looks pleased.

TRISH (cont'd)
She'll be good for you when I'm gone. *If* you can keep her.

MIKE
Ma', don't talk like--

TRISH
Stop whining, Michael, I'm on my way out and we all know it. Needless to say, what would make me happy is for you to find a little something for yourself before my check-out time, just so I know it's not you and your father alone here walking around like robots.

MIKE
Dad's not a robot, Ma'.

TRISH
Sure he is, but I was more talking about you. Unless you find something to...lift yourself out.

MIKE
Out of what?

TRISH
Of whatever it is you're stuck in.

MIKE
...You think I'm stuck?

TRISH
You get it from your father. That's what I'm saying. It's his legacy; handed down. He came back from the war...stuck. Been talkin' about joining a gym ever since. Never has. But that doesn't have to be you.

(beat; Mike has no answer)
Give your mother a kiss.

MIKE
Mom--

TRISH
Now. Give me a kiss--

MIKE
Why?--

TRISH
Because I want you to.

Mike leans over and kisses her on the cheek.

TRISH (cont'd)
(quiet)
Goodbye, Michael.

MIKE
Ma', you're not that sick!--

TRISH
I know. But just in case I forget to do it later.
(she regards him with love)
Goodbye. Be good to yourself. Be good to the world. Be good to whoever it is who ends up loving you back.

Off Mike, unable to answer...

Mike drives, Sue in the passenger seat.

MIKE
She liked you.

SUE
No she didn't--

MIKE
She did, she told me.

SUE
It doesn't matter anyway.

Mike decides to ignore this as Sue resignedly stares out the window.

MIKE
Your Dad sounds like a real asshole.

She looks at him, a small smile.

SUE
Yeah.

Mike drives...and then:

MIKE
Is that why you dated the ex-punk guy?
To get away from the whole hippie-dad
thing?

SUE
What are you, Dr. Ruth?

MIKE
I'm just saying, if your Dad was hands-
off, then maybe you dated an older punk
guy because he was more...

SUE
More what?

MIKE
...Aggressively hands-on?

SUE
(pause)
I don't really think about things that
way, Mike.

They drive in silence.

SUE (cont'd)
Your father seems nice.

MIKE
He's sort of fucked up.

SUE
Why?

MIKE
I dunno. I mean, he loves my Mom, so I'm glad they have a good thing, but I don't think he's very...comfortable. In life.

SUE
That's not a good feeling.

MIKE
No. He was in Vietnam, and my Mom sometimes says that it really messed him up, but everybody says that about Vietnam guys.

SUE
Probably 'cause it's true.
(pause)
What kind of stuff did he do over there?

MIKE
I don't really know. I think he was like one of those gunners. In a helicopter.
(beat)
My mom says he came back without balance.
(pause)
Maybe it messed us all up.

Sue nods and looks out the window, as Mike drives in silence, pulling into the motel's parking lot.

A59 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - NIGHT

A59

Mike and Sue enter. Jerry, who's been listening to the radio behind the front desk, stands to go.

JERRY
You hear?

MIKE
Hear what?

JERRY
Terrorist bombing in Reykjavik.

60 INT. ROOM 221 - THE MOTEL - NIGHT

60

Mike and Sue sit up in bed eating from a tub of Breyer's ice cream and watching TV images of a bombed-out resort hotel in Iceland's capital. We catch glimpses of some of the destruction and human suffering, which is brutal. After several moments, Mike mutes the sound.

MIKE
It's all so messed up.

Silence a moment, and then:

SUE
Whenever I see this kind of stuff, it's like I have to remind myself to just breathe. Like I literally have to instruct my heart to request additional air. I just tell myself--
(doing it, eyes closed)
Breath, Sue. Just keep breathing...

After several more seconds she slowly opening her eyes...

MIKE
Can I ask you something?

SUE
Sure.

MIKE
Why'd you let me touch your butt that time? I mean...why'd you even have the idea?

SUE
(pause)
Because normal sex sucks, Mike. Right?
Not always, but often. At least for some of us. Normal sex sucks.

Mike absorbs this...then sort of just nods. Then he gently takes her hand in his... Beat.

MIKE
Do you like Neil Young?

SUE
(pause)
I do, actually.

He smiles...as they sit, eating ice cream, watching the muted images of destruction on TV...

61 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DAY

61

Mike tidies the front desk, having already set up the breakfast area. After a moment Sue enters from outside, showered, dressed for business, suitcase in tow. She gives a small smile.

SUE
Checking out of 221.

MIKE
You're really leaving?

SUE
I have to.

MIKE
Can't do one more night?

SUE
I've got meetings in Seattle this afternoon.

MIKE
Blow 'em off. Stay for awhile.

SUE
(not mean, just rational)
I don't understand where you think this is going, Mike. Are you thinking I'm gonna move from Baltimore to live in the corner double-room of your parents' motel?
(no answer)
Because if you are, I think you should think again.

He looks at her, but before he can answer, two 20-something, fat, meathead, DICKS emerge from the breakfast area. *

DICK #1
We ain't paying for our room.

MIKE
Is there a problem, sir?

DICK #2
You all got mice.

MIKE
I'm sorry?

DICK #1
You got mice infestation.

MIKE
Where?

DICK #2
In your rooms.

MIKE
You saw a mouse?--

DICK #1
Yeah--we saw a mouse plus I saw like 10
mouse poop pellets in the bathroom.

MIKE
I'm sorry for the inconvenience, sir--

DICK #2
Fuck that, we're not paying for the room.

Mike, aware that Sue is watching, tries to stay strong.

MIKE
Well I'm sorry but that's not how our
policy works--

DICK #1
We don't care about your policy, we're
not paying for your shitty little room.

MIKE
I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll give you
a voucher for half-price next time you--

DICK #1
(in Mike's face)
Fuck you. Gimme the thing I signed.

MIKE
...No.

DICK #1
(grabbing Mike's shirt)
You think I'm messing around?--Gimme the
fucking thing!

SUE
Excuse me, this is *not* how you solve
problems--

DICK #2
Shut up, bitch, go make some coffee.

Dick #1, finding this hilarious, slams Mike's face into the front desk counter--

DICK #1
I'm gonna count to three, fucker: One
Two Three!--

He reaches for a pile of papers behind the counter and starts going through it, throwing each to the floor until he comes to his room form--

DICK #1 (cont'd)
BINGO!

SUE
STOP IT!--

Sue steps forward to intervene but Dick #2 roughly cuts her off with his large, hairy arm. Mike, blood trickling from his nose, can only watch as Dick #1 gleefully pockets the form and the dicks now head for the door--

DICK #1
Call the fucking exterminator you loser!

They laughingly head outside. Mike helplessly watches and Sue goes to the door, yelling as they get into their pick-up. *

SUE
YOU GUYS ARE ASSHOLES!!

DICK #2
THAT'S RIGHT, AND YOU'RE A BITCH WITH
SHITTY CLOTHES! *

SUE
FUCK YOU!

But the Dicks simply flip her the bird as they peel out of the lot... Sue turns back into the lobby.

SUE (cont'd)
You OK?

MIKE
(more embarrassed than hurt)
I'm fine.

SUE
I'm sorry.

MIKE
It happens sometimes.

He cleans his nose and straightens up the papers...

SUE
I'm sorry I'm going.

He keeps cleaning, not answering, as an elderly couple enters and heads for the breakfast nook.....

SUE (cont'd)
I'll stay in better touch this time?

MIKE
Whatever you say.

SUE
Mike--

MIKE
I have to attend to the fruit bowl.
(extends his hand formally)
It was nice to see you again.

SUE
Don't be like this.

But Mike stands, hand out, waiting. She reluctantly shakes and he turns and walks to the breakfast area, leaving her there with her suitcase. Her POV on Mike tidying the fruit bowl, trying not to bleed on the bananas. His hair is tousled, his shirt untucked. She watches...

SUE (cont'd)
I could love you.

She's spoken loud enough that the elderly couple takes notice. They watch attentively, awaiting his response.

SUE (cont'd)
Mike?

He stops with the fruit, blood again trickling from his nose, but still doesn't answer. Silence. After a moment, Sue turns and leaves, suitcase in tow.

FADE TO:

*
*
*
*

*
*

62 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DAY

62

A Latino PRIEST with a thick accent concludes a prayer; next to him, in the breakfast nook, is a beautifully adorned and petal-strewn table with a large, hand-painted ceramic vase resting atop. An enormous color photo of Trish, in much more vital and alive times, stands on a nearby easel, as Mike, Jerry, Marissa and a small crowd of other mourners sit on folding chairs, listening, with Mike and Jerry front-center.

*

PRIEST

And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "There, she is gone!" There are other eyes watching her coming, and other voices ready to take up the glad shout: "Here she comes!"

(pause)

And that is dying.

Mike dries his eyes a little, as Jerry just stares at the vase, which is now delicately picked up by the priest and gracefully offered to Mike and Jerry. Jerry remains lost in thought, so Mike accepts.

63 EXT. STRETCH OF DIMINISHING DESERT - DAY

63

Mike and Jerry, still in their black funeral suits, stand on this stretch of land, with cacti, sand and a not-so-distant row of Port-O-Potties, which border a construction site where a gated community is rapidly going up. As Mike holds the vase, they silently gaze at the horizon....

MIKE

So this is where she wanted?

JERRY

(nodding)

This used to be all desert. She'd be cringing right now if she knew they were building here, but....I promised her I'd do it.

MIKE

It's still nice. The sand and rock. She'll become part of the.....earth.

*

Jerry nods, then slowly takes a handful of Trish from the vase. He holds it near his mouth and sort of kisses it, then walks a few steps forward, letting the ash slip from his hands. Mike places down the vase and does the same. It is a lovely image, these two grown men, mostly on the inarticulate side, quietly spreading their articulate loved one across the desert floor.

(CONTINUED)

But after that first handful, they're not quite sure what to do with the ash remnant on their hands. Jerry discreetly wipes it on his pants leg. He then carefully takes from his pocket two delicate-looking necklaces.

JERRY
 Meant to give these to you earlier.
 They're your mom's favorite two pieces of jewelry. As you know, she was a necklace woman.

He hands them to Mike, who lets each one dangle from a hand.

JERRY (cont'd)
 (re: the first)
 You ask me, that one's kinda tacky, but she loved the hell outta it. And God knows it costs a lot. The other one's the one *I* like. Happens to be on the cheaper side, but that's not why.

MIKE
 They're nice.

JERRY
 I thought you should have 'em. Not sure why, 'cause I wouldn't want you to start wearing 'em, but...I thought you might enjoy.

MIKE
 Thanks, Dad.

Jerry nods; beat.

JERRY
 I also had some guy call me wantin' to buy the motel.

MIKE
 ...To buy *our* motel?

JERRY
 Yeah.

MIKE
 ...You gonna do it?

JERRY
 No.

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

MIKE
 (pause)
 You don't think it's worth...*considering*?

Jerry looks at him...

JERRY
 Might as well keep runnin' it.
 (pause)
 But you can do what you want, Mike. I
 won't be hurt if you leave.

Jerry reaches for another handful of ash, then slowly walks away to have a moment on his own. Mike also takes another handful...but instead decides to put it in his coat pocket. He then just stands, watching Jerry sprinkle Trish onto and into the sand....

*

64 OMIT

64 *

65 EXT. PARKING LOT - FLAGSTAFF MALL - DAY

65

Mike's car pulls into a parking space and he gets out, no longer in funeral clothes and now *wearing* the cheaper but nicer of the two necklaces. He stands, surveying the array of choices before him: SUBWAY, BLOCKBUSTER, PETCO, STARBUCKS... His eye also catches two homeless men asleep against the side wall of BEST BUY. He lingers on them for a moment, then turns and walks toward....JACK'S PAWN SHOP.

*

*

*

*

66 INT. JACK'S PAWN SHOP - DAY

66

Mike talks to JACK, a Flagstaffian redneck, who stands behind the counter holding the more expensive necklace.

*

*

JACK
 It ain't a bad piece a' stuff.

MIKE
 It was my mother's.

JACK
 Well now let's not go down the
 sentimental road, fellas--

MIKE
 I'm just saying--

JACK
 I know what you're *sayin'* and next thing
 I know you'll be *cryin'*--

MIKE
No I won't--

JACK
How long you been in the pawn business,
pal?

MIKE
The *porn* business?

JACK
The *pawn* business, goddammit, the *PAWN*
business--

MIKE
Oh. I'm *not*--

JACK
OK then so don't tell me you ain't gonna
start cryin' 'cause that ain't nothin'
but a sure-as-shit sign that someone's
about to start motherfrickin' *cryin'*.

Mike just stares at him, annoyed...but then he is suddenly
forced to suppress a swell of emotion.

JACK (cont'd)
You see what the frick I mean!?

MIKE
...How much can you give me?

JACK
(scrutinizing the necklace)
Well now let's see...let's seedy-beety-
seedy-see. Let's just give this little
fricker a shitsy-bitsy-looksy-tooksy...
(still scrutinizing)
Let's just give her a little suss-fuss-
bus-pus....let's give this little pussy
some pus as opposed to some puss...

Mike is looking at this guy like the largest loser on earth.

JACK (cont'd)
I'll give you five-hundred bucks.

MIKE
...Really?

JACK
Not a red ant cent more.

*

67	OMIT	67	*
68	EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY	68	
	LONG shot of a Trailways bus approaching....and passing.		*
69	EXT. BUILDING ENTRANCE - OFFICE PARK - DAY	69	
	Mike, looking pretty dishevelled, walks up to the outside entrance of the Corporate Bliss headquarters.		
70	INT. CORPORATE BLISS - RECEPTION AREA - DAY	70	
	Mike enters, looking exhausted, which comes off as psychotic. The receptionist regards him carefully.		

MIKE

Hi, I'm here to see Sue please.

RECEPTIONIST

Umm, Sue no longer works here.

MIKE

...I'm sorry?

RECEPTIONIST

She moved to Washington.

MIKE

D.C.?

RECEPTIONIST

State.

MIKE

(stunned)

Umm...are you serious?

(she nods)

When?

RECEPTIONIST

A month ago.

MIKE

Why?

RECEPTIONIST

Her old boyfriend convinced her to move out to Aberdeen.

(Mike is speechless)

Showed up with flowers and first-class plane tickets. It was very *Officer and a Gentleman*.

*

*

Mike tries to maintain balance, the nausea overwhelming.

*

MIKE

But...why?

RECEPTIONIST

She loves him. Plus he's gonna let her
run the not-for-profit yogurt fund.

MIKE

(beat)

Do you, ah, do you have a forwarding
address, or like, a phone number?

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, I don't.

(Mike closes his eyes)

Are you all right, sir?

MIKE

Yeah I just, I walked here; from the
Baltimore bus station.

*

He takes out his wallet and checks its meager contents. He
then looks back at her.

MIKE (cont'd)

Listen, I don't have a credit card and
I'm on a budget these days, so....can
help me book a cheap plane ticket and I
could, you know, give you cash?

*

*

*

RECEPTIONIST

You don't have a *credit card*?

*

*

He shakes his head; she regards him...and actually believes
him; she then glances around to see if anyone's watching:

*

*

RECEPTIONIST (cont'd)

Where do you wanna go?

*

MIKE

Washington State.

MUSIC KICKS IN:

The Clash's *JUNKIE SLIP* over the following SERIES OF SHOTS:

*

71	EXT. ROAD - WASHINGTON STATE - DAY	71	*
	LONG, WIDE SHOT of coastal Washington lush but depleted landscape--distant mountains, hillsides stripped of timber, rain; SLOW ZOOM IN...until we find Mike, with duffel bag, on the side of the road, thumb out....as a car passes him.		*
72	EXT. ROAD - WASHINGTON STATE - LATER	72	*
	Mike, walking on the side of the road past a sign: WELCOME TO ABERDEEN: COME AS YOU ARE, and the spray-painted addendum: <i>We Miss You, Kurt.</i>		*
73	EXT. SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT	73	
	--Mike asleep beneath the stars in the center of a huge, empty soccer field. He's ensconced in a sleeping bag, his duffel bag is his pillow, and he actually looks comfortable ...until the AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS pop on, shocking him awake.		*
74	OMIT	74	*
75	INT. INTERNET CAFE - DAY	75	
	--Mike at an internet cafe surfing for Sue's address.		*
76	OMIT	76	*
77	EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY	77	
	--Mike walking down a residential street holding a cardboard sign over his head that reads: DOES ANYONE KNOW SUE CLEMMONS?		*
78	OMIT	78	*
79	OMIT	79	*
80	EXT. MUSIC STORE - ABERDEEN	80	*
	--Mike gazing through the window of a music store next to a sign: KURT COBAIN BOUGHT HIS FIRST GUITAR HERE.		*
81	EXT. SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT	81	
	--the soccer field's sprinklers going full blast at 2 a.m., but Mike--fast asleep--has positioned himself perfectly between them so as to be on the field's lone dry spot.		*
	MUSIC FADES AS--		

82 INT. ABERDEEN FOO YUNG RESTAURANT - DAY

82

Mike has found the Aberdeen equivalent of his favorite Flagstaff all-U-can-eat buffet, where he now sits in a gloomy corner eating Lo Mein and reading the local Want Ads. After a moment a 30-something Chinese guy, AL--wry, slightly hip-hop--approaches with a can of Diet Coke and a glass.

*
*
*

AL

Here.

MIKE

Thanks.

AL

(off Mike's duffel)

New in town?

MIKE

Yeah.

AL

Looking for a job?

MIKE

Yeah.

AL

Wanna work *here*?

MIKE

...Seriously?

AL

Why the fuck wouldn't I be serious?

Mike looks at Al, not sure how to respond. Al extends hand--

AL (cont'd)

Al.

MIKE

Mike.

AL

Nice to meet you.

MIKE

You too.

AL

You stink, dude.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

I do?

AL

Big time. You can't work here if you stink. It's my parents' place, they're old school, they fucking hate stinky people.

MIKE

OK--

AL

Go home, take a shower, come back and I'll get you the job.

MIKE

...I don't have a home.

AL

Really?

MIKE

Yeah.

AL

(nods, thinks...)

I might be able to help you.

83 INT. KITCHEN - ABERDEEN FOO YUNG - DAY

83

Mike, freshly showered, hair slicked back and looking better than we've seen him for a while, stands with Al and Al's parents, BETTY and YU, 70's. Betty speaks broken English. *

AL

He also needs a place to live and I was thinking we could let him stay in the basement and maybe, you know, deduct some rent from his pay.

Betty says something very quickly in Mandarin.

AL (cont'd)

His Dad runs a motel in Arizona, I already called him, the whole thing's legit.

BETTY

(to Mike)
Do you steal things?

*

(CONTINUED)

MIKE

No.

BETTY

If you steal, I kick ass.

*

MIKE

I understand.

AL

Cool. Dad?

*

Yu just stares at Mike.

*

BETTY

He too will kick ass.

*

MIKE

Absolutely.

84 INT. ABERDEEN FOO YUNG RESTAURANT - DAY

84

Mike, in a red, polyester bow tie and matching vest, stocks a glass-doored refrigerator with Cokes and Sprites as Al sits at the cash register doing nothing.

MIKE

Thanks for helping me; it means a lot.

*

AL

No problem, man. I been trying to get my folks to hire someone American 'cause we catch less bigot bullshit that way. Plus I hate working the mornings.

*

MIKE

Why?

AL

I smoke a lotta pot and I like sleeping in. ...Plus I'm a people person.

*

MIKE

Cool.

AL

So why'd you come to Aberdeen?

MIKE

This girl I'm in love with moved here to be with her ex-boyfriend.

*

*

*

AL

That sucks.

*

MIKE

Especially considering the guy's a punk.

*

*

AL

Like a *punk* punk?

*

*

MIKE

Ex-punk. I think he's older now.

*

*

AL

Does he train dogs?

MIKE

I dunno.

AL

Is his name, like, *Jango*?

MIKE

... Yeah.

*

AL

I *heard* about that dude!

MIKE

Is he a punk?

AL

No, he's an ex-punk! Got a mini-mansion
with fucking vicious attack dogs in the
back. *My buddy Bo's been there!!!*

*

*

*

CUT TO:

Mike and Al dressed in black, crouched behind a bush looking
through binoculars at a mini-mansion on a residential street.

*

*

AL

You see this fence here?--it's 'cause he
owns the adjacent lot which he uses to
train the dogs. He's also like a fucking
yogurt magnate. Totally huge in the
yogurt business. He's like a yogurt
fucking *mogul*.

*

They both peer over the bush to what indeed appears to be a
dog rink, with kennels, old tires and big rubber dummies.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE
Damn.

AL
What?

MIKE
I mean the guy must be a total stud.
(Al regards him quizzically)
I'm not sure I ever satisfied Sue in bed.
I'm not a sexual superman, Al.

AL
Dude, you're probably fine.

MIKE
You're just saying that.

AL
That's true but whattayou *want* me to say,
that you're right?

MIKE
No, but--

AL
Look, chicks these days don't *want* sexual
supermen, they want, like, hard-workers,
you know?--guys who *hustle*. And you look
like a hustler, Mike. So to speak. I
mean you came all the way to fucking
Aberdeen, dude, that's gotta count for
something.

(looking through binoculars)
Oh shit, he's got a pool shaped like a
Rottweiler!

*

But Mike has suddenly been distracted by something else--

MIKE
Al, check it out.

Al aims the binoculars to where Mike is pointing. His POV of
Sue and JANGO SMITH, early 50's, an ex-punk: Dockers,
blazer, no tie; buzz cut, tattoos crawling up his neck from
beneath a pressed oxford. Sue and Jango are getting out of a
big, shiny pickup truck and heading toward the front door.
Al lowers the binoculars and looks at Mike, who looks like a
small, lost child.

86 INT. ABERDEEN FOO YUNG RESTAURANT - DAY

86

Mike takes fortune cookies from a big cardboard box and places them into a small plastic one. Al approaches.

AL

You come up with a plan yet?

MIKE

Not yet.

AL

Well I think I got one *for* you.

(pointing to corner table)

You see that chick over there? She was a porn star in L.A in the late 70's.

Mike looks and sees JANET, a woman who might very well be someone's doting grandmother.

MIKE

She's like 70, Al.

AL

I know, but it's not as though people *forget* those type of skills.

MIKE

I guess, but--

AL

I've arranged for you to have some face-time with her, to give you some advice in order to get Sue back.

Janet smiles and waves to Mike.

MIKE

Right now?

AL

Yeah, just ten minutes, man, she's got *phat* technique.

Mike tentatively waves back, and then, with a shove from Al, nervously makes his way over. He sits across from her.

JANET

So Al tells me you wanna fuck better.

MIKE

Sort of. I'm more just nervous about how to win someone over.

(CONTINUED)

JANET

Back in my day, we used to have a trick called The Cranberry.

(Mike waits for more)

Basically, it entails clenching a handful of cranberries between your buttocks, then standing above your partner and--carefully--dropping them one at a time into his or her mouth, after which you squat down low and allow the partner to segue into some good ole oral. Now, if you're a *man* and you get a ball-blow from someone with ass-moistened cranberries in their mouth, you'll *reap* the reward, which is that your orgasm will be--as we called it--an "Asian Sunrise Squirt," which can only be compared to the sensation of skydiving completely naked into a shimmering Hawaiian waterfall.

*

Off Mike, absorbing this last part, and then:

*

MIKE

What if you're a *woman* getting oral sex from someone with cranberry mouth?

*

JANET

With *ass*-cranberry mouth?

MIKE

Yes.

JANET

Well, to be honest, that's really only good if you have a uterine infection. The berries sort of clear out the bad bacteria.

Al eats an egg roll. Mike enters.

AL

So how did it go?

MIKE

It was good.

AL

She tell you about the cranberry thing?

MIKE

Yeah.

AL
I'm gonna teach that to my girlfriend.

MIKE
You don't have a girlfriend.

AL
But when I do--first lesson she'll get.

MIKE
(pause; then, determined:) *
I think I did get an idea, though.

AL
Is it related to the cranberry maneuver?

MIKE
Inspired by. But I'd need a day off and *
300-bucks.
(Al looks at him)
I swear I'd work it off, Al. *

AL
(pause, then a big smile)
That's a lotta fucking cranberries, dude.

88 OMIT

88 *

89 INT. SMALL AIRPLANE - DAY

89 *

Mike by the door of a small twin propeller chugging along at *
14-thousand feet. Next to him is STAN BALL, 36, a *
testosterone-fueled sky-dive instructor with a touch of new- *
age to boot. From what we can see of Mike's face behind the *
dive suit and goggles, he is doing everything he can to pump *
himself up--as Stan shouts at him at a high volume. *

STAN BALL
OK now Mike, you've been doin' a heckuva *
job on heading maintenance and canopy *
control, but what I need now is for you *
to free your so as to have a spiritually *
fulfilling religious fucking moment! *

MIKE
I'm pretty sure I can do it, Stan! *

STAN BALL
Pretty sure works for poetry and pussy, *
Mike, but it'll tear you a new asshole *
when you're diving! *

MIKE
I'm positive I can do it, Stan!

*

STAN BALL
That's the Michael I've come to know over
8 hours, **that's the Mike!!**

*

Stan now slides open the plane door and signals for Mike to stand. The need to shout is now imperative:

*

*

STAN BALL (cont'd)
I'LL COUNT FROM 10 AND THEN WE'RE GONE--
JUST AS DISCUSSED! I LINE US UP OVER THE
TARGET AND WHEN I SEPARATE IT'S YOUR JOB
TO STAY ALIGNED! AND MIKE?

*

*

*

*

*

MIKE
YES?!

STAN BALL
I WANT YOU TO FUCKING ENJOY THIS!!

MIKE
I WILL.

STAN BALL
I DIDN'T HEAR YOU, MIKE!!

MIKE
I'LL ENJOY IT.

STAN BALL
I DIDN'T FUCKING HEAR YOU, MIKE!!

MIKE
(screaming)
I'LL FUCKING ENJOY IT, STAN!!!

Stan gives him the thumbs up and Mike faces the door; Stan stands behind, clutching him piggy-back style. Stan peers out the door, then looks to the pilot, who's watching the coordinates...finally giving Stan the thumbs-up.

*

*

STAN BALL
10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1--

Stan and Mike jump, as we get a C.U. on MIKE'S FACE, screaming with a mix of total fear and unadulterated seize-the-day abandon, the likes of which we haven't seen from him. *He's a total fucking animal--*

CAMERA PULLS BACK...AND DOWN, as it follows Stan and Mike's faces for their 10 more seconds of tandem free-fall, after which Stan maneuvers his body away and we are left with a TIGHT SHOT of Mike's fear-stricken but completely alive face in free fall...until he pulls the rip cord:

--and we CUT TO A LONG SHOT of the parachute rippling out and Mike's body momentarily JERKING UP before transitioning into a graceful and silent fall through the air.

--CUT TO ANGLE FROM BELOW of Mike falling straight down. *

--CUT TO MIKE'S POV as he looks directly below him to the target: Jango's dog-training property; more directly:

--JANGO'S SKY-BLUE, ROTWEILLER-SHAPED GLISTENING POOL.

90 EXT. JANGO'S POOL - DAY

90

Sue, sunbathing by the pool, reading the latest Maxim...as Mike and his enormous state-of-the-art square parachute land with a deafening THUD and subsequent FLUTTER into the pool, scaring the bejeepers out of Sue, who, not recognizing Mike behind the goggles, SCREAMS.

As Mike struggles to untangle himself and not drown and take off his goggles to show her who he is, Jango, in a wife-beater and boxers, races out of the house carrying an AIR GUN RIFLE and sprays Mike with up to 30 bee-bee's.

Mike topples back and sinks into the pool just as Sue recognizes him, all causing her to SCREAM EVEN MORE.

She races over to help Mike, who is now struggling to grab onto the pool's edge--

SUE
Oh my God!--

JANGO
What the fuck's going on!?

SUE
I know him, Jango!--

MIKE
I'm bleeding!

JANGO
That's 'cause I shot you!

MIKE
(weak)
Why'd you do that?

SUE
I think we should call an ambulance--

JANGO
Who the fuck jumps into people's pools?!

SUE
Here, let me help you--

JANGO
He's a fucking psycho!

MIKE
I think I'm dying--

SUE
Oh my God--

As Mike passes out--

JANGO
It's only bee-bee's, let me at him--

SUE
Oh my God, oh my God--

JANGO
C'mon, Sue--move out of the way!--

As Jango pulls Mike out and starts mouth-to-mouth... *

FADE TO:

Mike on a hospital bed, unconscious. After a moment he comes to, peering around, trying to figure out where he is. And then he sees Sue, sitting quietly in the corner, having been there for some time. She stands.

MIKE
Where am I?

SUE
The Aberdeen Medical Center. It's one of the best care facilities south of the Puget Sound and north of Oregon.

MIKE
Did.....?

SUE
Yes. Jango shot you. With bee-bee's.
But he didn't mean to.

MIKE
He's a punk.

SUE
No, Mike. Not anymore. *

Silence. She gently touches his hair.

SUE (cont'd)
Why the hell did you come out here?

MIKE
Because you said you could love me.
(pause)
And I love you. And I parachuted to
prove to you I could overcome my fears.
(silence...)
Do I have bee-bee holes in my stomach?

SUE
Yes.

MIKE
(gingerly lifting his gown)
They hurt.

SUE
I can imagine.

MIKE
...I thought it was over with that guy.
(she has no answer)
Do you love him? *

SUE
He's good to me.

MIKE
I'd be good to you if you'd frickin' let
me. *

SUE
I know.

MIKE
So what's the problem?!

SUE

(pause)

He put me in charge of the Pacific Northwest sector of his company's nonprofit yogurt fund. There are people out here in need. It's a chance for me to do some good.

MIKE

And to sit by his Rotweiller pool.

SUE

It was my day off.

Mike grimaces from the pain and the hurt. She soothingly touches his hand. And then Al walks in.

AL

What's up, dude?! When you told me you needed the day off I didn't think you were gonna try and fucking kill yourself!

MIKE

Sue, Al; Al, Sue.

SUE

Hi.

AL

You're Sue?

SUE

Yes.

AL

Why're you driving my boy here crazy?

SUE

I'm not.

AL

He told me you let him touch your ass the first time you met him.

SUE

Who are you?

*

MIKE

Al got me a job and a place to live.

AL

We're like blood brothers, Sue.

*

She smiles politely. Awkward silence. And then, genuine:

*

SUE

*

Jango feels horrible about shooting you.

(pause)

He wants to have you over for dinner.

92 INT. DEN - JANGO'S HOUSE - DUSK

92

Jango shows Al and Mike, who's wearing his nice suit, a wall full of black and white photos from his punk days. He's sort of an upbeat guy...and possibly manic.

JANGO

*

So this is me and Joe Strummer in 1979 at a club called Fuck You, in Bristol.

AL

*

Who's Joe Strummer?

*

(Jango is speechless)

*

Not everyone's a punk, J-man.

JANGO

*

Joe Strummer most likely made love to your mother, Al. And then wrote a song about it.

*

(different photo)

*

That's us throwing up together at CBGB's.

*

(a different photo)

*

Over here is me having just broken a piano against my forehead.

*

AL

*

Did it hurt?

JANGO

*

It fucking tickled, Al.

MIKE

*

Who's this?

JANGO

*

That's me with Ed McMahon.

AL

*

Did you ever fuck animals?

JANGO

*

Punks don't do that, Al. But I did once splurge into a bull's eye from 20 feet away. For fun.

*

*

AL
A bull's eye like a bull's eye?

JANGO
No, just a regular bull's eye.

MIKE
Why were you a punk?

JANGO
(honest reflection)
Why was I a punk...?
(staring into the biosphere)
I think *initially* it was an attempt to
subvert the quest for order that my
father smothered me with as a child. I
didn't wanna just rage against the
machine, I wanted to *fuck* the machine.
But eventually that anger morphed into
the wellspring of what had become a
cohesive *world movement*, whose goal it
was to align ourselves with certain
entropic forces which we felt were at the
core of the entire fucking *universe*.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Mike and Al stare at him.

JANGO (cont'd)
Do you guys like Chicken Marsala?
(calling toward the kitchen)
Sue?!

Sue appears at the door to the kitchen.

JANGO (cont'd)
Are you starving?

SUE
I'm OK.

JANGO
What do you say I give these guys a quick
dog demo and then I'll start the Marsala?

*

SUE
...Sure.

JANGO
(with pride)
Sue's the greatest.

Off Mike and Al, watching this interaction.

93 EXT. DOG RINK - JANGO'S PROPERTY - DUSK

93

Mike, in a gigantic Kevlar suit, follows Jango, Al and Sue as
they approach a row of kennels. SOUND OF GROWLING DOGS.

JANGO
So I'm a fully licensed trainer but I
essentially just train my own. SOmetimes
I'll do one for a friend.

He opens the door to a kennel--

JANGO (cont'd)
Heel!

He reaches in and leashes up a NASTY-LOOKING ROTTWEILER.

JANGO (cont'd)
This here is Bimminy.
(totally intense)
Come, Bimminy!

The dog obediently follows him a short way away.

JANGO (cont'd)
Sit, Bimminy!

Bimminy sits; Jango checks Mike's suit, then paces him off 15 yards.

JANGO (cont'd)
OK--stand there, and when Bimminy
charges, let him hit you full on, and
then yell stuff like you're an intruder
about to shit his pants.

Without awaiting an answer, Jango turns toward the dog,
eyeballs it a moment...and then shouts:

JANGO (cont'd)
ATTACK!

Bimminy sprints toward Mike, HURLING itself through the air
so that it SLAMS into his body--jettisoning him back.

JANGO (cont'd)
ACT LIKE AN INTRUDER, MIKE!

Mike *instinctually*, no need to act, starts shouting and
screaming, playing the part of a terrified robber--

MIKE
AAAHH!!--SHIT!--GET THE FUCK OFF OF ME!!!

(CONTINUED)

Al watches, dumbfounded, while Sue screams, horrified--

SUE
Jango, make it stop!

JANGO
Good job, Mikey, doing great, just keep provoking it!!

--as the chaos continues...

CUT TO:

94 INT. DINING ROOM - JANGO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

94

Jango, Sue, Mike and Al sit around an elegantly set table sipping wine and eating Chicken Marsala. CLASSICAL MUSIC. *

JANGO
 Basically, for me, dog-work is a thrill, an adrenaline rush, if you will, that's otherwise hard for me to replicate in the world of yogurt.

AL
 Especially now that you're not a punk.

JANGO
 (re: his heart)
 I'm still a punk in here, Al, make no mistake, but there's less need to call myself a punk in a world where the very notion of punkdom has been commodified for the mass-market.

AL
 But why do you sell yogurt?

JANGO
 Because punks like yogurt, too, Alvin.
 EXCUSE ME--

He reaches into his mouth and carefully takes out his two false front teeth, carefully placing them beside his plate.

JANGO (cont'd)
 Chicken's the worst. Gets stuck right in the crevice here.

He points to the space between the two fake teeth, where there is indeed a large chunk of chicken.

(CONTINUED)

Silence as they all sip wine and Jango finger-swipes clean the enormous void where his two front teeth once were. ANGLE on Sue, hiding her embarrassment. Finishing his gum-swipe, Jango turns to Mike with great sincerity and humility.

JANGO (cont'd)

Mike, I'd just like to formally and quite sincerely apologize to you for the bee-bee gun incident. I lost my cool.

(arm protectively around Sue)
I was scared for Sue, scared for the dogs, scared for the well-being of the pool, so...I just wanna say I'm sorry.

MIKE

Thanks, Jango.

JANGO

You accept my apology?

MIKE

I do.

JANGO

Good. So how's the restaurant business?

MIKE

It's good.

*

JANGO

Do you guys serve yogurt at that place?

AL

No, but Mike *did* convince my parents to give away 25 per cent of the restaurant's profits to charity. I couldn't believe they actually agreed. He *tried* for 30.

*

*

A big smile spreads over Sue's face as she sneaks a loving look to Mike, who looks down, embarrassed but happy.

JANGO

That's great. Maybe you could dovetail it with Sue's yogurt fund. Speaking of which, who's up for dessert? I wanna try out a new flavor on you guys.

The others say Sure...as Jango heads for the kitchen. Mike looks at Sue, trying to discern what she really thinks of this guy. Al, picking up on her blank expression, leans over.

*

*

*

AL

Hey Sue, Mike and I are gonna go to the Cowboy Club after this, if you wanna join us. They got great dancing.

Sue looks at him, then at Mike, then toward the kitchen.

SUE

I'll think about it.

95 INT. COWBOY CLUB - NIGHT

95

Al and Mike kinda dancing together to honky-tonk music at a near-empty "club"--really just a few tables, a jukebox and two colored lights aimed at a patch of parquet dance floor--the only other occupant of which is a single woman with huge hair swaying drunkenly by herself. They yell over the music--

*
*
*

AL

--and what *I'm* trying to say is that China is not only gonna kick America's economic ass, it's going to *invade your whole fucking country!* I'm talking annex and motherfucking *occupy!*

MIKE

All I can say is I hope you treat *our* cats better than you treat *your own!*

AL

Mike.

*

MIKE

Al.

*
*

AL

Mike.

*
*

MIKE

Al.

*
*
*
*

(pause)

I'm totally fucking with you.

Mike smiles and Al insists on receiving a high-five...as he eyeballs the lonely woman swaying on the dance floor.

AL
You think she's hot?

*

MIKE
She's OK.

*

AL
I think she's kind of amazing.

SUE (O.S.)
Hey, guys.

They both turn to see Sue.

AL
YEEAAHHH!!! I knew you'd show up!

MIKE
Hey, Sue.

SUE
Hi, Mike.

MIKE
(looking at the door)
You didn't bring Jango, did you?

SUE
He got kinda drunk; so I told him I had
to run an errand.

AL
Dance with us, Sue!

She smiles, hesitating...and then slowly starts to dance to
the honky-tonk stylings coming from the jukebox; Al joins
in...and then Mike--until the three of them find a groove,
shaking their butts with joy and a certain amount of abandon.

Mike and Sue make love next to a headstone on a hill; the
town's twinkling lights below. They finish, nicely, then lie
on their backs looking up at the stars. Silence...and then:

SUE
Have you been, like, with other women
since the last time we made love?

MIKE
No.

SUE
I was just curious, because...

MIKE
Why?

SUE
Your lovemaking's more...mature.

*

MIKE
I did get some advice. From this
woman who comes into the restaurant. She
wanted me to do this cranberry thing but
it's not really my style.

*

*

*

(Sue is staring at him)
But she's the one who told me about that
other thing.

SUE
It was nice.

MIKE
Thank you.
(pause)
Sue?

SUE
Yeah?

MIKE
What are you doing here?

SUE
In this cemetery or in Aberdeen?

MIKE
Both.

SUE
...I'm not sure.

Mike suddenly looks down, having noticed something--

MIKE
Oh, man--

Still wearing his suit coat, Mike has discovered that
something has fallen out of its pocket.

SUE
What is it?

MIKE
It's...my Mom. It's her ashes.

SUE
What?

MIKE
She died. I forgot to tell you. And we
cremated her, and...

He picks up the spilled ash and holds it for her to see. *

SUE
I'm so sorry, Mike.
(beat)
Why is she in your *pocket*?

MIKE
I was waiting until I found a special
place to put her.

SUE
...How about here?

MIKE
(glancing around)
OK.

SUE
It'll be nice. We'll bury it and make a
little shrine.

Sue jolts into action, clearing away brush and leaves,
digging a little pit into which Mike now ceremoniously
sprinkles the ash, taking off his blazer and turning the
pocket inside out to ensure that it all gets out. They cover
the ashes with earth, and then Sue digs through her purse for
items with which to enshrine the mound. She shows Mike--

SUE (cont'd)
Cowboy Club matches; Bolivian money; a
pen from your parents' motel--
(from her hair)
--and a beret.

She carefully arranges these items on the earth and ash.
Mike looks at her lovingly, then takes off one of his socks.

MIKE
A sock she gave me for my birthday two
years ago.

They regard the shrine, then sit back, smiling at each other.

SUE
It smells so nice here.

MIKE
It does.

SUE
I think it's all the flowers.

AL (O.S.)
Hey, are you guys through yet?!

They look over to see Al, naked, several headstones away, having just finished making sweet love to the lonely swaying woman from the club.

97 INT. ABERDEEN FOO YUNG RESTAURANT - DAY

97

Mike and Al set tables for the lunch rush.

MIKE
I was thinking we should start donating the leftover lunch buffet food to that homeless shelter over on Scrantz Avenue.
(pause)
And using recycled-cardboard take-out containers.

AL
Whatever the fuck you say, Mike.

MIKE
(beat)
Did you know Aberdeen is building the country's largest biodiesel fuel plant?

AL
...Cool.

MIKE
We should find a way to get in on that.

AL
Did you know that when Kurt Cobain was a kid, he spray painted "God Is Gay" on that bridge over Monroe Street?

MIKE
...Cool.

The front door opens and Jango and a 40-something PUNK walk in, followed by two large, snarling GERMAN SHEPHERDS. The punk walks up to Al and blocks him, as Jango walks straight up to Mike and HEAD-BUTTS him.

MIKE (cont'd)
Oww!--

*
*
*

*
*
*

*

*

AL

Hey!--

Al starts toward Jango but is quickly restrained by the punk;
 Jango jumps on Mike and POUNDS HIM WITH HIS FIST in the face-- *

JANGO

I have you over for dinner and serve you
 my best fucking wine and *that's* what you
 go and do?! I oughta fucking *destroy* you! *

He is wailing on Mike, Al is struggling but unable to break
 free of the punk and the dogs are BARKING LIKE MANIACS.
 Finally Jango rises, turns and walks back out the door. *

JANET

Don't ever fucking touch her again! *

The punk follows, swiping a bottle of Soy Sauce as he goes.
 Al rushes to Mike, who is bloody and beaten. *

AL

Jesus Christ, man, are you all right?

MIKE

Yeah... *

98 EXT. BACK ALLEY - ABERDEEN FOO YUNG - NIGHT

98

Mike and Al hoist a large electric keyboard onto the back of
 a tandem-bicycle that's been rigged with a wooden wagon-
 trailer. Al plugs the keyboard into a portable generator,
 which he also attaches to two speakers that sit on the wagon.
 They're both dressed in black..

AL

So you're sure you wanna do this?

MIKE

Stop asking me.

AL

I'm just asking--

MIKE

Don't come if you don't want.

AL

No, dude, I'm with you.

MIKE

(re: the piano)
 It feel secure?

(CONTINUED)

AL
If we ride smooth we're golden.

MIKE
OK then. Let's do it.

They mount the bike...and slowly pedal off through the darkened streets of Aberdeen.

99 EXT. JANGO'S HOUSE AND PROPERTY - NIGHT

99

Mike and Al pull up on the double-bike, parking it on Jango's front lawn. Al stays on his seat but Mike dismounts, walks around, steps onto the wagon and sits behind the keyboard, using an amp as stool. He turns on the power, tests a couple keys, then takes out and attaches a small clip-on microphone, which is also rigged to the amp. He clears his throat, takes a composure moment...and begins playing, his singing at first soft, not quite on par with Neil Young:

MIKE
*There's colors on the street
Red, white and blue
People shufflin' their feet
People sleepin' in their shoes*

100 INT. - JANGO'S DEN - SAME

100

*

SOUND OF SEX PISTOLS. Sue lies stomach-down on the floor, as Jango sits atop her giving her a "karate chop" massage, which looks more irritating than relaxing. They both wear headphones plugged into the same bedside I-Pod. Sue's eye catches a framed photo of a SNARLING PIT BULL on the wall.

*

*

*

101 EXT. JANGO'S HOUSE AND PROPERTY - SAME

101

Mike gaining confidence and momentum:

MIKE
*But there's a warnin' sign on the road
ahead!
There's a lot of people sayin' we'd be
better off dead!*

ANGLE on Sue, hearing something, letting her wire slip off:

*

MIKE (O.S.) (cont'd)
*Don't feel like Satan, but I am to them!
So I try to forget it, any way I can!*

ANGLE on Mike, totally getting into it:

101 CONTINUED:

101

MIKE (cont'd)
Keep on rockin' in the free world!

ANGLE on Sue, moved to tears, as Jango remains oblivious--

MIKE (O.S.) (cont'd)
Keep on rockin' in the free world!

ANGLE on Al, furiously drumming on an upside-down bucket-- *

MIKE (cont'd)
Keep on rockin' in the free world!

ANGLE on Mike, intensity, passion and abandon in his voice-- *

MIKE (cont'd)
Keep on rockin' in the free world!

Bringing it to a climactic, exhilarating, uplifting finish... *

As Jango suddenly looks up, takin out *his* headphone-- *

As Al cheers for Mike--

As Mike, still with two black eyes and a puffy nose, smiles in satisfaction. And then, at the top of his lungs:

MIKE (cont'd)
*YOUR GIRLFRIEND WAS GREAT IN THE
 CEMETERY, YOU FUCKING GERIATRIC FUCKING
 EX-PUNK DRUNKARD! !*

At which point he remounts the bike seat and he and Al pedal away as fast as possible. ANGLE on Sue at her window looking out after them, joined a moment later by a confused Jango... *

102 INT. KITCHEN - ABERDEEN FOO YUNG - DAY

102

Mike--now slightly less bruised and swollen--loosens his bow tie after that afternoon's particularly hectic lunch rush. He speaks to Betty. *

MIKE
 I'll be back at 4 to do the set-ups.

Betty nods as Mike makes his way toward a door in the corner-- *

*

103 INT. BASEMENT - ABERDEEN FOO YUNG - DAY

103

Mike slowly descends from the kitchen to his basement apartment, which is small but which he's managed to make cozy in his Mike sort of way: a KURT WARNER poster, a GOD'S GREEN EARTH recycling poster, a pile of *National Geographic's*, one of which he picks up as he lowers himself down onto a thick mattress on the floor. But after a moment he's interrupted from the door at the top of the stairs:

BETTY
Mike! You have visitor!

MIKE
Ah--OK.

A moment later Sue descends the stairs. Mike sits up as she regards his swollen face with sadness..... He smiles humbly.

MIKE (cont'd)
You shoulda' seen it two days ago.
(exaggerating)
Out to here.

SUE
I'm sorry he did that. It's my fault.

MIKE
It was worth it.

She tries to smile, not answering.

MIKE (cont'd)
I've been leaving you messages.

SUE
I know.

MIKE
How did Jango find out about the cemetery?

SUE
I told him.

MIKE
Why?

SUE
Because the way I've been handling things, with both of you, is unfair. And I shouldn't do it anymore.
(MORE)

*

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

SUE (cont'd)
(Mike is speechless--)
We need to talk, Mike.

MIKE
I know--

SUE
I'm marrying Jango.

MIKE
...What?--

SUE
And I need you to accept it.

MIKE
Why?!

SUE
Because I'm at a point in my life where
there are certain things I don't think
you can help me with.

MIKE
Things like what?

SUE
Like stability--

MIKE
I'm stable!

SUE
No you're not--

MIKE
Well I'm not a frickin' PUNK!

SUE
Ex-punk--

MIKE
This is bullshit--

SUE
It doesn't mean I don't love you; because
part of me somewhere does, but I'm also a
person who needs a certain kind of love--

MIKE
What kind?--

SUE

The kind that's not an unguided missile.
You can't stalk people around the country
just because you're feeling a lonely.

*

MIKE

That's not why I stalked you--

SUE

So then why--because I have a nice butt?

MIKE

Yes!--

SUE

Well that's not sufficient either; being
in love isn't based just on what *you*
need. It's gotta be more selfless.

MIKE

Oh, like, save everyone in the world
except yourself? Is *that* how love works?
Being a *martyr*?

SUE

That's not what I do--

MIKE

Yeah it is. You're so busy being
"selfless" that you end up treating
yourself like shit. Is *that* what you
mean by "sufficient"?

(pissed)

You're the unstable one, Sue.

*

SUE

(pause; quiet)

At least I don't live in a motel.

MIKE

No--you live with a rich yogurt dick
who's obsessed with killer dogs.

(she stares at him icily)

I mean you think *that's* what's gonna make
you happy? A gap-toothed ex-punk who
treats you like his puppy?

(no answer)

Oh but I guess that's better than living
back east in a sanitized nursing home for
lonely yuppies.

SUE

Is that really what you think of me?

MIKE
I'm just saying that I know what you need.

SUE
Which is what?

MIKE
To take care of *yourself* a little. So that you're not miserable. So that the people who love you don't feel like they're *annoying* you.

(pause)
There's nothing wrong with a little selfishness if it at least makes you happy, Sue, because I'll tell you what, even the hungriest, most homeless person in the world isn't gonna wanna be cared for by a miserable, dog-bitten *freak*.

(he goes to her)
Just marry me. Let the world go fuck itself for like half a *second* and see what happens. Maybe it'll be all right.

*

She looks at him, close to tears but not allowing them....

SUE
We're getting married this Saturday.

MIKE
(his heart cracking)
Why?--

SUE
Because I'm pregnant.
(pause)
I found out yesterday.

MIKE
(beat)
Could it...couldn't it be mine?

SUE
No.

MIKE
Are you sure?

SUE
Yes. Which is why I'm getting married.
(trying not to lose it)
I can't *afford* to be selfish on this.
(MORE)

103 CONTINUED: (4)

103

SUE (cont'd)
 I need someone who knows what they're
 doing with their life.
 (he just looks at her)
 Jango has that.
 (pause)
 I'm sorry.

Mike is broken. But then, after several moments, the
 devastation becomes a slow build...to fury:

*

MIKE
 Can you leave now? Please?
 (pause)
 I want you to leave.
 (eruption:)
GET OUT OF MY HOUSE RIGHT NOW, SUE,
FUCKING "SUSAN"--GET OUT!!
 (she doesn't move)
I'M SERIOUS, GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY HOUSE
RIGHT THIS FUCKING FUCKING INSTANT!!!

She looks at him through her tears, not wanting it to end
 this way, but he remains steadfast...and so she turns, and
 slowly walks up the stairs.

104 EXT. A HILL - DAY

104

Mike and Al stand on this elevated earth overlooking a lake,
 at the side of which Sue and Jango are having their wedding
 ceremony. Mike stoically looks through binoculars: ANGLE on
 Jango kissing Sue as a crowd of ex-punk types applauds and
 another SEX PISTOLS' tune cranks up in the distance.

*

*

*

AL
 I wish I had that fucker's bee-bee gun
 right now.

MIKE
 (distant)
 ...Yeah.

AL
 They going on a honeymoon?

MIKE
 Don't know.

AL
 Probably waiting 'til yogurt season's
 over.

*

This gets a look from Mike, but not a comment. He re-raises
 the binoculars: His POV on a table gorgeously covered with
 mini-yogurt cups patiently awaiting the wedding guests...

(CONTINUED)

AL (cont'd)
You read that article this morning about
the biodiesel fuel plant?

(no answer)

Apparently the guy who's building it is
like total scam artist. Been going
around getting people to invest in
"green" technology, then ditching fucking
town.

(pause)
Bummer for the community.

Mike lowers the binoculars, looks at Al, expressionless, then
stares at nothing. Al puts his arm around his shoulder.

AL (cont'd)
You gonna be all right?

MIKE
You know what she told me the other day?
She said the only reason I love her is
cause I'm lonely.

(pause)
And that I'm not capable; of, like,
raising a kid.

AL
...Fucking chicks.

MIKE
It's enough to make you wanna be a monk.

AL
Or like a *Buddhist* monk.
(Mike looks at him)
My people are good at that shit.
(beat)
I once read about a Buddhist monastery in
Idaho. Supposed to be really fucking...

MIKE
Peaceful?

AL
Yeah.

Al looks at him, realizing that Mike is getting an idea.

AL (cont'd)
Dude. Don't get carried away.

MIKE
It's not as though she wants me around
here anyway.

AL
I know, but--

MIKE
I wonder how much it costs.

They watch the weddin...and then Al turns to him--genuine: *

AL
I consider you my friend.
(no answer)
So while I'm in no way encouraging
monkhood, if you ever *do* need money...I
can get it for you.

MIKE
How?

AL
By stealing from my parents.

MIKE
I'm not stealing money from your parents,
Al.

AL
You wouldn't be. *I* would.
(pause)
It's totally up to you, but if that's
what you want...I'm here for you.

Mike thinks for several moments...then looks up at Al: *

MIKE
(honest, eye-to-eye)
You're the best friend I ever had.

They hug--genuine and real...

CUT TO:

STRAIGHT SHOT OF MIKE, in total silence, **HEAD SHAVED**, IN A
BRIGHT ORANGE BUDDHIST MONK ROBE sitting on a bed in an
otherwise unfurnished room--

MUSIC FADES IN as we see the following SERIES OF SHOTS:

106 INT. GARDEN - TU HIEU BUDDHIST MONASTERY - DAY 106 *

Mike shaking hands with other apprentice-monks as the Tu Hieu Buddhist Monastery in Idaho.

107 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 107

Sue conducting a Power-Point presentation for a room full of yogurt executives, including Jango. Her pointer on a pie-graph above which reads: "Flo-Gurt Fund's Quarterly Charitable Distributions." Jango smiles at her like she was his daughter; she tries to smile back.

108 INT. UNFURNISHED ROOM - DAY 108

Mike, cross-legged on his inch-thick mattress, trying to meditate but opening his eyes in frustration. He glimpses something out the window. His POV on a seldom-used volleyball net in the Buddhist Tranquility Garden.

109 INT. JANGO'S DEN - DAY 109 *

Sue, cross-legged, eyes closed in meditation. But it's not working, and after a moment she opens her eyes, frustrated. And then she glimpses something out the window.

110 INT. TU HIEU BUDDHIST MONASTERY - VOLLEYBALL COURT -DAY 110

Mike playing 2-on-2 volleyball on the sand pit; it's *Top Gun* meets Ghandi, all sand and sweat and bright orange robes.

111 INT. JANGO'S DEN - DAY 111 *

Sue at the den window. Her POV on Jango in full Kevlar, screaming at the dogs to attack him with more viciousness. *

112 INT. GARDEN - TU HIEU BUDDHIST MONASTERY -DAY 112 *

Mike, expressionless, sweeping the patio. He stops to recycle a stray can. *

113 INT. JANGO'S HOUSE - NURSERY - DAY 113

C.U. on Sue, watching, expressionless. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Jango, next to a crib, holding a DOLL which is being torn from his hands by one of his Rottweilers, which proceeds to rip it apart despite Jango's efforts to grab it back.

CROSS-FADE TO--

114 EXT. - GARDENS - TU HIEU BUDDHIST MONASTERY - DAY

114

Mike walks along an exquisitely tranquil garden full of green and shady sal trees. With him is TRUC QUOC, 38, a patient Buddhist instructor who runs the apprentice monk program. He is a calm, gentle, rather Americanized guy.

TRUC QUOC

Michael, the progress you've made in your four months here has been remarkable.

MIKE

Thank you, Father.

TRUC QUOC

And needless to say, your immersion into the duties of carrot-chopper and broom-chief has been full and complete.

MIKE

Thank you.

TRUC QUOC

But some worries have arisen.

MIKE

Such as what, Father?

TRUC QUOC

Well, first of all, you're not supposed to call me father.

MIKE

Oh.

TRUC QUOC

But that's OK. I'll admit I've grown fond of it.

(pause)

An aspiring Bodhisattva, such as you, must seek to produce a heart that does not dwell.

MIKE

Of course, Father.

TRUC QUOC

Your heart, Michael, if I may say, does dwell.

MIKE

No it doesn't.

TRUC QUOC

It does, Michael. It continues to be influenced by external conditions.

(Mike looks bummed)

The goal of Shakyamuni is to cease suffering, which is caused by earthly passions. In order to transcend, you must relinquish these passions. And as hard a worker as you are, I fear you are not achieving this.

(pause)

To put it bluntly: You are *stuck*; in the realm of earthly passion.

Mike is at a complete loss.

TRUC QUOC (cont'd)

You also spend too much time playing volleyball.

MIKE

I thought that was permitted, Father.

TRUC QUOC

It is, but not for seven hours a day. Hours that *should* be spent in meditation.

MIKE

But I'm *good* at it--

TRUC QUOC

I know--

MIKE

And you encouraged it for stress release.

TRUC QUOC

Yes, Mike, but Buddhist monks aren't supposed to have seven hours a day worth of stress. We're *Buddhist* monks.

Truc Quoc stops and looks Mike straight in the eye:

TRUC QUOC (cont'd)

Everyone here likes you; but I don't think that you truly desire an immersion into the oneness. I think that what you *actually* desire...is individuation.

*

MIKE

...So what should I do?

TRUC QUOC
You need to move on. To fully become
someone.

MIKE
But how?

TRUC QUOC
(beat)
My parents died when I was five, Mike.
Two months later my uncle and I moved to
America. I was forced to let go of
everything I knew. Everything. To
simply...let go. In order to move on.
(pause)
Sometimes in life you must do that. To
get to the next stage.

MIKE
...Move on?

TRUC QUOC
Yes.

Mike looks around the garden, taking this in.

MIKE
Where are you from?

TRUC QUOC
Vietnam. Hau Nghia province. My parents
were killed in the war.

MIKE
By the Americans?

TRUC QUOC
Yes. And yet look at me. I moved here.
Life is odd.

MIKE
...I'm sorry.

TRUC QUOC
(gentle; honest)
It's not your fault.

Mike absorbs....

TRUC QUOC (cont'd)
Let go, Mike. Let go and move on.

115 EXT. HIGHWAY - ARIZONA - DAY

115

Mike walks along the highway, duffel bag slung over his back. *

116 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT/ROOM - DAY

116

Mike stands at the dusty window of the room he's lived in for years. He stares out, lost in thought.

117 INT. FRONT DESK/LOBBY AREA - DAY

117

Jerry is behind the front desk doing the crossword without much energy. Mike enters. Jerry looks up, then back down. *

MIKE

You want me to make you some lunch?

JERRY

I'm all right.

He works the crossword but Mike doesn't move on.... Beat.

MIKE

Hey Dad, when you were over in Vietnam, did you ever do any fighting in Hau Nghia province?

Jerry looks up, Vietnam not being a topic they often discuss. *

JERRY

...Yeah. *

Mike nods, but doesn't say anything.

JERRY (cont'd)

Why?

MIKE

I met a guy up at the monastery who was from that area.

(beat)

Seemed to really have his shit together.

JERRY

(beat; then back to the puzzle)
Good to hear.

Silence. Mike just stands there... And then:

MIKE

Dad I think you should sell this place.

Jerry again looks up but doesn't answer.

MIKE (cont'd)
 You don't even like it here. This was
Mom's thing.

JERRY
 Why do you say that?

MIKE
 'Cause it's true. She loved people, she
 loved running things, it made her feel
 alive. But that's not you, Dad. You're,
 like, not a people-person. You should
 let it go. Move on.
 (pause)
 Otherwise you're just gonna rot.

JERRY
Sell it and do *what*? *

MIKE
Anything. You still got time. You'd
 have money. Just, you know...move on to
 the next stage.

JERRY
 What do you need, Mike, a loan?

MIKE
 No. I just wanted to say.....that this
 doesn't have to be it.
 (pause)
 And that I love you.

Jerry looks at him for a long moment....then slowly takes a
 look around the lobby, perhaps considering life without it.

Mike enters the darkened room where he first met Sue. He
 turns on a light and looks around. The bed is made, the room
 is as spotless as it's gonna get. Mike looks around, perhaps
 touching the pillow...the bedspread. He peaks into the
 bathroom, his eye catching two plastic-covered cups... *

And then he sits on the bed...and just sits. He's not
 meditating, not depressed, not happy; just sitting... *

Mike in his 2nd-story apartment throwing out junk that hasn't
 been touched in years. *

119 CONTINUED:

119

Ancient *National Geographic's* are jettisoned into an industrial-sized trash can, smothering piles of clothes that once fit. Then a KNOCK on the already-ajar door; Marissa is there, a piece of mail in her hand.

MARISSA
This came for you.

MIKE
(taking the letter)
Thanks, Marissa.

He looks at the return address: C.U. on "SUE CLEMMONS." He opens and starts to read...as we see a SERIES OF SHOTS.

SUE (V.O.)
Dear Mike, I'm not sure where you are these days, so who knows when you might get this.

119A Sue, alone in a car, driving.

119A *

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
But I wanted to write to say that I'm sorry we argued the last time we were together. I was confused and I took it out on you.

119B Jango in a tank-top, smoking an El Producto, quietly, cleaning his pool.

119B *

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
I also wanted to let you know that Jango and I broke up.

119C Jango on a couch with his dogs, eating yogurt from a trial-119C tested triangular yogurt container and laughing at the TV.

* *

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
The whole idea was sort of...misguided.
What I need to do is take care of myself--

119D Sue, 5 months pregnant, in a baby yoga class.

119D *

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
--and the baby, who's getting bigger inside me everyday.

119E Mike watching out his window: His POV of Jerry, standing in119E the parking lot, considering the motel.

* *

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I think that in some weird way, you
 taught me that: to commit, fully, to
 what's important.

119F Sue, at a kitchen table, writing.

119F *

Anyway, so I just wanted to say thank
 you. For coming into my life. Even if
 it was only for a little while.

Mike, seated on his bed, reading the letter.

SUE (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I really do hope you're happy. You
 deserve it. Goodbye, Mike. ...Sue.

Off Mike--lost in thought; and then, maybe, a small, sad
 smile.

120 INT. FLAGSTAFF FOO-YUNG - DAY

120

Mike and Jerry sit at Mike's old table, sipping large bowls
 of soup in silence. After a moment:

JERRY
 So I thought about what you said the
 other day.

MIKE
 Oh yeah?

JERRY
 Yeah.
 (he sips the soup)
 I think you had a point.

He takes another sip of soup, then reaches into his breast
 pocket and takes out a folded piece of paper.

JERRY (cont'd)
 That being said, this is yours.

He hands the paper to Mike, who starts to unfold.

MIKE
 What is it?

JERRY
 Deed for the motel. Signed over to you.

MIKE
 What do you mean?

JERRY
It's yours. You can either keep it or sell it, it's up to you.

MIKE
Dad, that's not why I--

JERRY
I know, but I don't need it. Your mom was good about that.

MIKE
But you can't just give me the motel.

JERRY
Yeah I can. It's your birthright.

MIKE
(pause)
Dad--

JERRY
I'll be fine, Mike.

MIKE
But what would you do?

JERRY
(he sips more soup)
I wanna get in shape. Join a gym.
(another sip)
Maybe join one 'a those basketball leagues.

Mike just looks at him as he sips more soup.

JERRY (cont'd)
What about you?

MIKE
...Not sure.

JERRY
Done with the monk stuff?

MIKE
Yeah. I mean...I'll still occasionally do it, but...not professionally.

JERRY
...What about that girl?

MIKE
...Didn't work out. I think we weren't, you know, meant for each other.

Jerry looks at him, perhaps for the first time in years, like a father who knows best for his kid.

JERRY
I dunno, Mike. Things change. In life.

MIKE
...What do you mean?

JERRY
You're not the same guy you were.

Mike absorbs. Jerry looks at his soup; takes a sip...

JERRY (cont'd)
Good soup.

He takes another soup sip...and then C.U on Mike, hearing this last line....then looking down at the deed...

Mike just stands there, looking up at the two-story motel, studying it, deep in thought.

ANGLE on the motel sign, which now says: WE ARE CLOSED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR MANY YEARS OF FINE PATRONAGE.

ANGLE on Mike, still surveying the building, his eyes inspired. After a moment he sort of nods to himself...

MIKE
You can do this, Mike.

After a moment he sees Jerry exiting the lobby in rather tight-fitting shorts that seem to date from 1970. He holds a dusty basketball. Mike watches as Jerry approaches.....Beat. *

JERRY
So I'm gonna hit the gym.

MIKE
Oh yeah?

JERRY
Yeah. They got a senior citizen hoop run from three to five.
(off Mike's look)
I'm borrowing your ball.

121 CONTINUED:

110.

121

MIKE
It's actually yours. From way back.

JERRY
I know.

MIKE
...Hey Dad?

JERRY
Yeah?

MIKE
I'm gonna take a little trip. I'm
thinking I'll be back in a week.

JERRY
...OK, Mike.

And with that, Jerry heads for his car.

122 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LAUREL, MARYLAND - DAY

122 *

Mike walks down the street, his only luggage a backpack. He
comes to a stop in front of a small house with a tidy lawn.
He checks the address with what he's written on his forearm,
then starts up the front path.

He rings the doorbell and waits. After a moment, MARY
CLEMMONS, late 50's, misguidedly cheery, opens the door.

MIKE
Hi, are you Mary Clemons?

MARY
(cautious)
Yes.

MIKE
Sue's mom?

MARY
...Yes.

MIKE
Hi. I'm Mike, a friend of Sue's. Is she
by any chance here?

MARY
Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE
 Mike. From management.
 (she looks at him with
 suspicion)
 You sell insurance to deaf people and you
 used to be married to a dick named
 Dennis.

Mary's eyes grow wide....and then she carefully calls back
 toward the living room.

MARY
 Sue! There's someone here for you! He
 says he's Mike! From management!

Silence a moment....and then Sue, still pregnant, steps to
 the door. She and Mike regard each other intensely.

MARY (cont'd)
 Do you know him, Sue?

SUE
 Yes, Mom. I know him.

MARY
 (to Mike)
 I own a gun.

And with this, she steps out of the way and heads back into
 the house, as Sue steps out, letting the screen door shut
 behind her. They stand together on the stoop. Beat.

MIKE
 Hi.

SUE
 Hi.

MIKE
 ...How's your baby?

SUE
 So far so good.

MIKE
 I, ah, got your letter.

SUE
 I'm glad. I wasn't sure.

MIKE
 I hope it's OK that I'm here.

Sue sort of smiles, her way of saying yes. *

SUE
How did you know where I was?

MIKE
It was post-marked Laurel. I looked up
all the Sue Clemons. *

SUE
...I'm sorry, Mike.

MIKE
Why?

SUE
(quiet)
Because I messed up with you.

MIKE
No you didn't--

SUE
Yeah I did.
(near tears)
A lot.

MIKE
But you were *right*. I wasn't giving you
what you needed. I was like a kid. When
what you *needed* was...

SUE
A *man*?

MIKE
...Yeah.

SUE
(beat)
Where did you go?

MIKE
Idaho.
(pause)
To become a monk.

SUE
(she nods; and then:)
Did you?

MIKE
A bit.

SUE
(beat)
What're you gonna do now?

MIKE
With my life?

SUE
Yeah.

...He takes a piece of paper from his pocket and hands it to her.

SUE (cont'd)
What is it?

MIKE
The deed to the motel.

She looks up at him; he takes out another piece of paper.

MIKE (cont'd)
And this is my application for nonprofit status.
(pause)
It's a copy.

SUE
Why do you need nonprofit status?

MIKE
'Cause I'm turning it into a homeless shelter.
(pause)
With multiple housing units upstairs.
(pause)
And midnight basketball.
(pause)
Or indoor soccer.

SUE
...Are you serious?

MIKE
(he nods...)
I've got the rooms, the beds, the clock radios... I have a basketball.
(pause)
I also called Al; he says he might come down and be the cook.

SUE
So it'll be like an Asian-themed--?

MIKE
Soup kitchen. Yeah.

SUE
Wow.

MIKE
I've already bought like 300 pounds of
noodles. To get us started.

He takes out a photo and shows it to her. C.U. On the photo,
showing five 60-pound bags of noodles piled in the motel
lobby.

She regards him, in love. And then...with a small smile:

SUE
You know, you don't have to *buy* the
noodle. Once you get approved, they'll
donate it.

MIKE
Who will?

SUE
Noodle companies.

MIKE
...Oh.
(pause)
So maybe I could use your help.

Beat. Mike speaks softly:

MIKE (cont'd)
I really love you, Sue. And I wanna take
care of you. And whoever that is inside
of you.
(pause)
I wanna live with you.
(pause)
I wanna live.

SUE
Me too.

They smile at the corniness of what they've just said... (Mike
perhaps even mutters to himself how stupid that must've
sounded.) Beat.

SUE (cont'd)
I wrote you a haiku. In my head.

MIKE
Really?

SUE
(she nods, and then:)
You wanna hear it?

MIKE
Sure.

She clears her throat, closes her eyes....then speaks shyly.

SUE
"Mike, oh Mike, my man
Keeps showing up, like UPS
Sue, you're such a bitch"

She looks up....

SUE (cont'd)
It's elongated, so there's a little more.

MIKE
"My noble risk. My leap of faith. He
is, down deep, my love"

Mike is near tears. He looks up at her; so is she.

MIKE (cont'd)
...Breathe, Sue. Just keep breathing.

She keeps crying...and tries to breathe: Deep, slow breaths,
slowly regaining some composure.....

She now looks out onto the quiet street before them; Mike
half turns, looking also. Beat....

SUE
It's nice, no?

MIKE
...Yeah.

Beat. After a moment, Sue very casually lets her hand rest
upon Mike's left buttock, not squeezing, not pulling, just
there. They are side-by-side, her hand on his butt, facing
the street, and they just remain there like that,
simple.....as the--

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, into the street and up...as they
just stand, quite still...and the CAMERA RECEDES, UP AND
AWAY...as the beginning chords of Neil Young's *Keep on
Rockin' in the Free World* FADE IN....

--and the CAMERA CONTINUES RECEDING, farther and farther and farther away...until we can barely see them standing there, on this empty residential street in the middle of the state of Maryland, on the east coast of America...

THE END