

# TB

## *Cedar Rapids*

by  
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# TB

FADE IN ON:

A SHODDILY PRODUCED TV COMMERCIAL

The ad depicts videotaped scenes from Wisconsin's north country-- a farmer and a cow, a woman waterskiing, a guy mowing his lawn. A flat, nasally V.O. accompanies the images.

ROGER LEMKE (V.O.)

The Brown River Valley: It's where we work. It's where we play. It's where we live. But even here in paradise, accidents can happen.

The ad wipes to an inappropriately gruesome photo of an obviously fatal car wreck. The NARRATOR is chroma-keyed over the image. He is ROGER LEMKE, 40, blandly charismatic, with a blonde moustache that evokes a low-rent Tom Selleck.

ROGER LEMKE (CONT'D)

At Northlands Insurance, our goal is to provide high quality insurance services and related products to businesses and individuals in Wisconsin's Northlands. I'm Roger Lemke. Not only do I care about you, we also endeavor to give you the coverage you need at the best prices around. It's that reason Northlands has been awarded the prestigious Two Diamond Award from the American Society of Mutual Insurers three years running. Because at Northlands Insurance, we insure your dreams.

The car accident photo dissolves into a sunset. The treacly music crescendos and we:

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. NORTHLANDS INSURANCE - DAY

The ad has been playing on a 13-inch TV in a small, wood-paneled office. A handful of EMPLOYEES and FAMILY MEMBERS applaud wildly. The proud owner of Northlands, BILL KROGSTAD, 60, embraces the man of the hour, Roger Lemke.

BILL KROGSTAD

Ho-lee Christmas, knocked her outta the park, Roger! Out of the G-D park, you sonofagun!

ROGER LEMKE

Hell, I'm just a pretty face, Bill.  
That copy was all you. Do got one  
little gripe though, boss-- if  
you'd waited until after Cedar  
Rapids we could've said winner of  
the Two Diamonds *four* years  
running!

BILL KROGSTAD

Aroo-aroo!

ROGER LEMKE

Two Diamonds! Two Diamonds!

The men roughhouse playfully. Roger's comely wife, GWEN, 30,  
holding their milk-fed TWIN TODDLERS, gives Roger a kiss.

GWEN LEMKE

So proud of you, Roggie. God, you  
rock. Doesn't your dad rock, boys?!

ROGER LEMKE

(an Elvis impersonation)

Thank you. Thank you very much!

More laughter and backslapping. After a bit, an as yet unseen  
MAN hesitantly approaches. He gently touches Roger's arm, not  
wanting to interrupt the revelry. Roger turns.

ROGER LEMKE (CONT'D)

Tim! Timmy Lippe! Didn't even know  
you were here. You see it, bud?

TIM

(earnest, deeply admiring)

Oh, heck yeah. You were awesome.

Despite appearances to the contrary, this is our hero: TIM  
LIPPE (pronounced *Lippy*), 34, wholesome and positive, though  
undercurrents of desperation lurk just behind his kind eyes.

TIM (CONT'D)

Just super... *super* awesome. Man.

ROGER LEMKE

Y'know what Tim, I want people to  
see the insurance game for what it  
really is-- it's a noble field. I  
believe that. Like I say, we're not  
just insuring vehicles and homes  
and that. Hell no. We're insuring  
people's dreams.

TIM

Oh. Yeah. I say that, too...  
sometimes.

ROGER LEMKE

Well shit, you do, don't you? By god, I stole your line! Knew I'd heard that somewhere!

TIM

Oh, no biggie...

ROGER LEMKE

Bummer they cut your little deal outta the ad, though.

TIM

Ach. Y'know. Got left on the ol'...

A FEMALE CO-WORKER interrupts, accosts Roger and ignores Tim.

FEMALE CO-WORKER

Roger! Look out Brad Pitt!

TIM

The ol' cutting room floor, right?

(upon being ignored)

Brad Pitt. Ha. That's...

(then, with forced nonchalance)

Whoa. Cake. Cool.

Tim goes to the cake table. He smiles at the cake, impressed.

TIM (CONT'D)

So awesome.

The icing on the cake, a frosted visage of Roger Lemke, smiles back.

INT./EXT. TIM'S CAR - DAY (LATE WINTER)

A beige Buick Skylark splashes through a puddle of snow melt in the glum, isolated hamlet of Brown Valley, WI (pop: 337).

Tim bops his head and sings along as a Parliament song plays on a *Good Times, Great Oldies* radio station. A dour OLD LADY shoveling her driveway stares as he passes by.

EXT. TIM'S HOUSE - DAY

The Skylark pulls into the driveway of a tidy umber-colored rambler with a nature scene painted on the garage door.

## INT. TIM'S KITCHEN - DAY

Flowered wallpaper. Vinyl flooring. A spoon collection. The room looks like someone's grandmother designed it. Tim enters.

He opens the fridge, grabs an A & W Root Beer. He opens a cupboard, removes a box of Hostess Cupcakes. He sits at the Formica kitchen table, meticulously eats the cupcake, sips the soda pop and stares out the window at a bird feeder.

## INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - LATER

Tim's bedroom looks like that of a fastidious teenager. Twin bed. Orderly desk. Milwaukee Brewers poster (circa 1987).

Tim removes his penny loafers, pleated khakis and Northlands Insurance polo shirt. He puts on a different pair of pleated khakis, a maroon turtleneck and some Top-siders.

## INT. TIM'S SECOND BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tim enters another bedroom. This one has a four-poster bed--clearly a parents room, clearly unused. He opens the closet.

A label reads *GIFT CLOSET!!!* Each shelf is neatly organized: Toys, knickknacks, occasion-specific greeting cards. He selects a *Get Well* card and a Beanie Baby duck, *Quackers*.

A doorbell RINGS. Tim hurriedly signs the card. He licks the envelope as he hustles to the door.

## INT. TIM'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tim opens the door to MILLIE VANDERHEI, 54, a thick, depressive woman dressed like a 7th grade science teacher.

TIM

There she is! How you feeling?

MILLIE

Oh, it's no big whoop.

Tim pulls the card and Beanie Baby duck from behind his back.

TIM

Ta-da.

(re. the stuffed duck)

*Quack, quack*. D'you already have this guy? Wasn't sure.

MILLIE

Gayle Syrstad gave me a Quackers  
for Secret Santa last year. I can  
probably trade with Nan, though.

Millie sits on Tim's paisley sofa. She opens the card. On the  
front: a Rottweiler in a nurse's outfit. Inside: "Get Well or  
You Deal with Me!" Then in Tim's writing, "Love, Tim."

MILLIE (CONT'D)

(chuckles at the card)

Cute. Brandy would never sit still  
long enough for me to dress her up  
like that. Tell you that right now.

(then)

You didn't have to do this whole  
rigmarole, Tim. I told you it's  
just a little diarrhea.

TIM

I know. But for you to miss a day  
of school, Millie... I can't  
remember you ever calling in sick  
when I had you.

MILLIE

Well I wasn't going through  
menopause when you were in middle  
school now was I?

TIM

Negative. Not to my knowledge. Not  
to my knowledge.

She nods somberly. They sit there silently for a bit. Then:

TIM (CONT'D)

So. Does your tummy feel good  
enough to...?

They exchange a look...

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Millie rides Tim. Tim palms her breasts. He still has on the  
maroon turtleneck. And one brown sock. Their bodies make a  
sound like two soft, thick hands apathetically applauding:  
*Clap-pfft, clon-pfft, clon-pfft.*

The twin bed squeaks disapprovingly.

TIM

I can try and... hold it, Mil. Can you...?

MILLIE

Bring it home. Bring it home.

She waggles her hips with a bit more gusto. He grimaces.

TIM

I'm bringing it. Bringing it!  
Bringing it! D'aaaarrgho'awesome...

Tim exhales. Millie exhales. That worked out well.

INT. TIM'S REC ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Millie and Tim watch *American Idol*. A WOMAN sings Queen's *YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND*. Tim harmonizes.

TIM

*Ooh, you make me live! You're my  
best friend!*

MILLIE

C'mon Tim, I can't hear.

TIM

Sorry. But you are, babygirl.  
(sings)  
*You're my best friend.*

MILLIE

Tss. Goofball.

The song ends. They sit quietly for a bit.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Y'know Galen and Dar Krause just  
did a cruise to the Bahamas? Pretty  
reasonable they said, price-wise.

TIM

(mediocre Jamaican accent)  
Ya mon, Bahama-mama.

MILLIE

It's a little different I suppose--  
a cruise. But...

A beat, then Millie removes a cruise brochure from her purse.

MILLIE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm not gonna shilly-shally around here, Tim. I found a river cruise through Germany-- Viking Line, real grade-A. It's what I want. For the honeymoon.

TIM

(suddenly rattled)

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait... Where's this coming from? We agreed on Wisconsin Dells for the honeymoon. It's what we agreed on.

MILLIE

You've been to the Dells two dozen times...

TIM

So? Roger and Gwen Lemke go to the Dells every year...

MILLIE

Because they have children. Water parks are for children...

TIM

Hello, Tommy Bartlett's Ski, Sky and Stage Show? It's not *just* a water park...

MILLIE

Timothy, settle. You've never even left the state of Wisconsin. Barely left Brown Valley...

TIM

What's so great about...? You're not... You're missing the... We agreed on the Dells.

He avoids eye contact. Millie takes Tim's chin in her hands, forcing him to look at her.

MILLIE

God rest her. Your mom was my best friend. But it's going on 20 years now. You gotta grow up. You gotta let go. You gotta live a life here. See?

TIM

I'm living a perfectly fine life. I don't know why you'd want to...

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)  
rock the waters or whatever.  
Ridiculous.

Tim looks away again, pouting. Millie gives him a motherly hug. Over her shoulder, Tim watches a TEENAGER belting out *QUE SERA, SERA* on *American Idol*. Then, almost inaudibly:

TIM (CONT'D)  
We agreed on the Dells.

FADE OUT:

IN BLACK, a phone RINGS.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Tim sleeps alone in his twin bed. The phone rings again. Tim wakes with a start. He flips on the lamp, picks up the phone:

TIM  
Hello... Oh, hey Bill...

A look of profound anguish appears on Tim's face.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Aw jeez. Oh my gosh. No...

The sound of a church organ playing *ON EAGLES WINGS* fades in.

INT. ST. ANSGAR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

In back of a packed church, Millie whispers with WADE BRODT, 60, a bald, bullet-shaped man. The conversation is discreet.

WADE  
Guy had it all. Everything you'd ever want. Y'know he flew a Cessna? In his spare time?

MILLIE  
I always say people like that-- who live fast? They die hard. Look at River Phoenix.

WADE  
Everything you'd ever want.

MILLIE  
I just don't know. To do those things to yourself. Just perverted.  
(sigh)  
Who ever heard of such a thing?

## CLOSE ON ROGER LEMKE'S CASKET

Roger Lemke looks peaceful in death, although it's hard to miss the marks on his neck left behind by the belt. Tim is at the front of a long line of uneasy MOURNERS. Tim holds back tears as he gently touches the marks on Lemke's neck.

Tim steps aside to greet the widow Gwen Lemke in a receiving line. The grief has left her gaunt. She appears medicated.

TIM

I'm... Gwen, I'm so sorry. Roger is--  
was-- is-- a personal hero to me. He  
just... he had it all. If there's...

He is interrupted by Bill Krogstad's sobs. Tim reaches out to put a comforting hand on Gwen's shoulder, but somehow ends up touching her breast instead. A moment.

TIM (CONT'D)

I'm...

Tim nods sadly as he removes his hand. He walks away.

FADE OUT:

## INT. NORTHLANDS INSURANCE - DAY

The drab office is brightened with week-old funeral flowers and flaccid mylar sympathy balloons.

Tim sits across from a young couple, KURT & PAM GAMBSKY, 20s, in a small, glassed-in conference room. The couple is tense.

PAM

You just don't get it, Kurt...

KURT

Aw Christ, Pammy...

TIM

Hang on guys, how's this sound--  
you can both be right.

(pause for effect)

I know you're probably thinking,  
"Oh, an umbrella policy's only for  
rich people." You know what I say  
to that? Bull roar.

The Gambskys smile, comforted. Tim is good at his job.

TIM (CONT'D)

Pam, Kurt-- I've known you guys since you were little kids. So let's don't think of me as an "insurance salesman." Think of me as your friend who just wants to help you protect your dreams...

Tim glances up and sees Bill Krogstad staring longingly at Northlands' three TWO DIAMOND Award plaques. A beat, then Krogstad SLAMS HIS FIST THROUGH THE WOOD PANELED WALL! The couple reels around upon hearing the sound.

TIM (CONT'D)

I'm... Excuse me a sec...

Tim exits the conference room and approaches Krogstad, whose hand is now bleeding.

TIM (CONT'D)

D'you-- can I get you a napkin or something, Bill? For that?

BILL KROGSTAD

Know how Roger used to get down there to Cedar Rapids? To the ASMI Convention? Any idea?

TIM

Um. I'm with Kurt and Pam Gambsky...

BILL KROGSTAD

Flew himself. In a Cessna. Pilot.  
(a mournful beat)  
It was all worked out. I was going to ease into retirement in July while Roger transitioned into his ownership role.

TIM

Wait, Roger was going to buy Northlands?

BILL KROGSTAD

All worked out. Shit, Dione already put the down payment on a time share. Branson, Black Hills. Florida. Units all over the place.

TIM

Holy cow.

BILL KROGSTAD

Yeah, whole deal. Now? Now I got my back up against Christ-knows-what. No Lemke, no buyer, the wife's spending like we won the goddamn Powerball. And what's worse, because of the way, y'know, the way Roger passed...

Krogstad chokes up. His grief is very real. So is Tim's.

TIM

The... belt and the lederhosen...?

BILL KROGSTAD

(a nod, a sigh)

Quote-unquote *perverted*, they're saying. Like Northlands has some kind of stain. Oh, I'm so goddamned tired...

TIM

Is there...? Can I do anything to help, or...?

Krogstad hands Tim a Manila folder (bloodying it in the process). Tim gestures for his customers to hold tight. Tim opens the folder, reading aloud from a cover page.

TIM (CONT'D)

*"Innovations in Hog Farm Risk Mitigation."* Roger's Two Diamond presentation for the ASMI Convention. I helped prepare it.

BILL KROGSTAD

We need those Two Diamonds more than ever, Tim. If I'm going to sell this company, we need people to feel OK about the Northlands brand.

TIM

(not getting it)

Mm.

BILL KROGSTAD

I'd go myself but my daughter Kayla, the heavy one? She unearthed some Polack to marry her. I'm locked into that wedding over in Gladstone. No flex. Locked in.

TIM

Whoa-whoa-wait. What are you saying?

BILL KROGSTAD

I'm not asking you to fill Roger Lemke's shoes. Not gonna happen. I'm asking you to deliver his presentation-- to bring me home those Two Diamonds.

TIM

I can't go to ASMI. To Iowa. To Cedar Rapids, Iowa... Why can't Lila do it?

BILL KROGSTAD

C'mon Tim. Lila's about as charismatic as a bag of hair.

TIM

Bill, I've never... I mean, I've dabbled in hog farm risk mitigation, but I'm no pro...

Tim is really starting to panic.

BILL KROGSTAD

You were what, 16, when I gave you that filing job? Right after your mom passed? Raising yourself pretty much, living all alone. And I'm thinking, now here's a kid. Here's a kid who's gonna go places.

(a hand on Tim's shoulder)

And then, somehow, you kind of just didn't. Now, I guess it makes some sense-- a child loses both parents at an early age, becomes what you might call stunted. But cripes almighty, do you want to just sit there in your folks old house, just rot away in Brown Valley dating that...

(subtly disparaging)

... woman the rest of your life?

TIM

Millie and I are getting married.

BILL KROGSTAD

Tss, maybe three'll be a charm.

(then, emotional)

(MORE)

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
Point is, I'm not exactly dancing  
in the streets here Tim, but it's a  
perception thing. You go down there  
to Cedar Rapids, wholesome and pie-  
eyed and all that. You show them  
that Northlands is a good outfit--  
an upstanding Christian outfit...

Tim considers the gravity of this moment.

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
Aw cripes, say you'll do it.

Krogstad starts crying again. He hugs Tim, his bloody hand  
staining Tim's canary yellow V-neck sweater. Tim looks up to  
see the Gambskys in the conference room staring at him.

MONTAGE --

A melancholic yet uplifting song (Leonard Cohen's *HALLELUJAH*,  
perhaps) plays as:

- Tim puts birdseed in his backyard feeder. He looks at the  
barren trees as he considers his fate.
- Tim Googles "Cedar Rapids." He looks at photos, crime  
statistics, a Chamber of Commerce Youtube video. He closes  
his eyes, exhales.
- Tim practices the presentation in front of a mirror. He  
works late. He types. He Power Points. Krogstad critiques.
- Tim laminates maps of Cedar Rapids and area attractions.
- Tim pulls a dusty American Tourister suitcase from the  
attic. It looks about 40 years old. He packs.

INT./EXT. TIM'S BUICK SKYLARK - MORNING

Tim looks pensive as he drives. He's wearing a new suit. It's  
a little too big. A greeting card and a Beanie Baby Rooster  
bounce along on the passenger's seat.

Tim pulls up to a SPLIT-LEVEL HOUSE. A pick-up truck with the  
words *Brodt Heating & Cooling* is parked in the driveway.

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tim pokes his head into a living room, surprised to see Wade,  
the 60-ish bald guy from church, reclining on a Lazy Boy.

Wade's boots are off. His socks are dirty. He's watching ESPN on a TV with an Olan-Mills portrait of Tim & Millie atop it.

WADE

Oh, hiya Tim.

TIM

Hey. Wade. Hey. Is Millie...?

Millie enters in a terry cloth robe. A Yorkshire Terrier follows her. Millie acts nonchalant. So does the dog.

MILLIE

Hi Tim.

(re. Wade's presence)

Wade's cable's down.

TIM

It's six AM...?

WADE

*Mike & Mike in the Morning. ESPN 2.*

TIM

Oh yeah. Those guys. Hilarious. Ha.

WADE

Mm.

TIM

(finally, to Millie)

Well I just wanted to...

He displays the Beanie Baby and the card. She takes them with a cold smile. Tim notices an identical stuffed rooster on an oak bookshelf-- home to over 155 other Beanie Babies.

TIM (CONT'D)

Oh shoot. You already have a Strut the Rooster...

MILLIE

So this is it then?

(to Wade)

Tim's jetting off to Cedar Rapids this morning, Wade. Big deal insurance convention. Iowa.

WADE

That right?

TIM

It's only four days.

MILLIE

Won't go to Germany for our  
honeymoon, but for work you can  
just gallivant around like Tom  
Petty or one of them?

TIM

(to Wade)

We agreed on the Dells...

(then, to Millie)

Should we maybe talk in the...?

WADE

Oh it don't bother me.

Tim tries to proceed as if Wade weren't sitting there.

TIM

If I don't try to do this, it's not  
just my job, Mil. There are four  
other employees whose lives are on  
the line. Plus Carol, who does part  
time seasonal work. So.

MILLIE

It's not for certain a new owner  
would even keep you guys on.

TIM

No, Bill said he'd make that part  
of any deal...

MILLIE

Believe you me, Bill Krogstad is  
looking out for one guy. And that's  
Bill Krogstad.

WADE

(overtly disparaging)

Krogstad.

Tim shoots Wade a look.

TIM

It's... Oh, who am I kidding, I'm a  
little scared here. A lot scared.  
But not about us. What we've got--  
we're like lightning in a bottle,  
babygirl. I love you so much, Mil.

He hugs her. Millie melts just a little, yet remains stern.

MILLIE

I want you to be very careful.

TIM

I know. I will. I mean, Cedar Rapids-- there were only four homicides last year. For a city of 122-thousand that's pretty darn good. The forcible rape numbers are admittedly a bit higher, but...

She fidgets with his tie. A bitter tear skulks down her cheek.

MILLIE

I want you to check in with me.

TIM

I will every day. Twice a day.

MILLIE

Make it three times.

TIM

(laughs)

OK, three times! Sheesh. And I'll send a stinkin' telegram, too.

Tim kisses the warm tears from Millie's ruddy cheeks. Millie licks her finger and smooths Tim's cowlick. Wade just sits there watching.

EXT. RHINELANDER, WI REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Tim walks up to the tiny municipal airport. He tries the door. It's locked. A RETARDED MAN shoveling snow spots Tim.

RETARDED MAN

Airport don't open for two hours.

TIM

Thanks! Just wanna be sure I make my flight. Going down to Cedar Rapids. The big ASMI Convention?

The retarded man nods vacantly and goes back to shoveling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RHINELANDER, WI REGIONAL AIRPORT - LATER

Tim is the first (and only) person in the security line. An apathetic TSA AGENT awaits him. Tim has a nervous energy.

TIM

Cold enough for you? I'm heading to Cedar Rapids. Supposed to be up in the mid-30s down there. S-weet!

TSA AGENT

Any liquids, gels or aerosols must be placed in a quart-size Zip-Lock. Laptop computers must be taken out of the case and placed in...

TIM

Whoa... what's all this now?

TSA AGENT

Any liquids, gels or aerosols...

BILL KROGSTAD (O.S.)

Tim! Praise Christ you haven't left yet.

Bill Krogstad runs up to Tim. He's out of breath.

TIM

Hey Bill, what's going on?

BILL KROGSTAD

Can't believe I forgot to get this to you. Hang on, lemme...

Krogstad puts his hands on his knees, takes a few deep breaths. Then he hands Tim a detailed handwritten checklist.

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)

It's basically an ASMI Convention Bible. It's going to tell you who to talk to, who to avoid, how best to fellowship and network...

Tim glances at the list, reads the only name under AVOID.

TIM

Dean Ziegler, Stevens Point.

BILL KROGSTAD

Ziegler is a cancer. Sonofabitch called one of Lemke's biggest clients-- Joyce Armbrüster? Smeared Roger's name and the Northlands' name. Frickin' poacher. Avoid Ziegler like the plague. The fella I got you rooming with, Ronald Wilkes-- that's who you stick by.

By Ziegler's name, Tim frantically writes, "Poacher" and "Armbrüster--" making sure not to forget the umlaut.

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
You got the presentation, right?

TIM  
Affirmative.

Tim untucks his shirt, revealing a zippered cummerbund-like money belt.

TIM (CONT'D)  
On me at all times. Plus three back-up discs.

BILL KROGSTAD  
Hey-hey! That kind of prep is pure Lemke! Didn't know any better, I'd say Roger's spirit had kind of climbed into you, just planted its seed inside you there. Atta boy!

High praise indeed. Tim hesitates. Is now the right time?

TIM  
Bill... I have to ask. Let's say one of these big dogs-- your Allstates, your Prudentials-- does decide to go and buy Northlands...?

BILL KROGSTAD  
Said it before, I'll say it again: Your job, the office in Brown Valley-- all safe. What you need to worry about is getting down there and representing us the best you can. That's all you need to worry about.

Tim swallows hard. Bill brings it in for a hug and inhales Tim's hair.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Tim has a window seat. He reads the safety card. He's sweaty, anxious. A vaguely swarthy MAN (Indian? Italian? Hard to tell.), 40s, sits next to him. A perky FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
You lucky ducks are obviously seated in an exit row. Score!  
(MORE)

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (CONT'D)  
Just gotta make sure you're willing  
and able to assist crew members in  
the event of an emergency  
evacuation...

The man smiles nonchalantly. Tim tries to play it cool.

TIM  
You're talking what, water landing?  
(looks around, whispers)  
Terror type deal? Terrorists...?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
It's really just a formality.

TIM  
Believe it or not, I have actually  
never been on an airplane before.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT  
Oh, well you'll do awesome.

TIM  
(takes a moment)  
OK. If you need any help, I'm in.

The flight attendant smiles politely, if confusedly.

THE PLANE TAKES OFF

Tim looks out the window, watching nervously as the dairy  
farms and frozen lakes of northern Wisconsin recede. He  
instinctively turns to his neighbor.

TIM  
Tim Lippe.

MAN  
Ah. David Marinakis.

They shake hands.

TIM  
Great to meet you, Dave. Wondering,  
what kind of name is Marinakis?

DAVID MARINAKIS  
Greek. It's Greek.

TIM  
Marinakis. OK. Mine's German.  
Lippe.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

As in, "Don't you get lippy with me, mister." My grandma used to say that. Before she passed. Lot of people pronounce it *lip*. Course the high German's probably more like *lipp-uh*.

David Marinakis nods, goes back to his book, seemingly shutting down the conversation. Tim settles in.

THE PLANE LANDS --

Tim hesitates before stepping onto the jetway-- *one small step for man*-- and just like that, he's in IOWA!

INT. CEDAR RAPIDS AIRPORT, BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Tim helps David Marinakis take his bag off the carousel.

TIM

Like I say, Dave, it's not life insurance so much as it is *dream* insurance.

DAVID MARINAKIS

It's a good way of looking at it.

TIM

I think so.

Tim hands David his card, who takes it with a genuine smile.

TIM (CONT'D)

Let me know how things go with your Alltel deal, Dave. E-mail me.

DAVID MARINAKIS

Will do, Tim. Thanks.

David exits. Tim stands there waving.

EXT. CEDAR RAPIDS AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Tim emerges from an elevator on the roof of a parking garage. He inhales the chilly Iowa air. He glances at his rental agreement and spots his car, a red Chevy Cobalt.

TIM

Hello. Score!

As he approaches the car, he stops. He chuckles, in awe.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Holy crap. Awesome.

In the distance, the Cedar Rapids skyline looms-- its tallest building, the Alliant Tower stretching 21 stories into the cloudy sky. Tim snaps a photo with his cell phone.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN HOLIDOME - DAY

The Holidome sign reads, *Welcome ASMI '09 Participants!!!* Tim gets out of the rental car. He looks around-- *not too shabby*. But upon spotting a SIKH CABBIE in a turban, Tim straightens up and cautiously adjusts his money cummerbund.

As he walks toward the entrance, a pretty but gaunt young woman in a short denim skirt, BREE, 22, approaches him.

BREE  
Hey man, can I bum a heater?

TIM  
What's that now?

BREE  
A cigarette?

TIM  
Oh, I'm like, "this gal wants to borrow my heater?" Tss. But no, sorry, can't help you there.

BREE  
You here for the convention?

TIM  
You bet. Tim Lippe. Northlands Insurance. How 'bout yourself?

BREE  
Ah, Bree. I'm Bree.

They shake hands.

TIM  
Well Bree, it's nice to meet you.  
But let me give you a trade secret.  
(stage whisper)  
Keep smoking and your premiums will go through the roof.

BREE  
Thanks Mr. Surgeon General.  
(they laugh, then)  
(MORE)

BREE (CONT'D)

If you want to party, Tim, let me know. I'll be around.

TIM

You bet. Party hearty. Nice chatting with you, Bree.

People are so friendly. Tim enters the hotel.

INT. HOLIDAY INN HOLIDOME - DAY

Tim walks in. He strolls atop the velvety green carpet, past a fountain, beneath a golden-colored chandelier and makes his way to the front desk-- blown away. An apple-cheeked clerk, whose name tag reads TRENT, greets him.

TRENT

Checking in with us, sir?

TIM

You tell me. Never done the hotel deal before.

TRENT

Well, welcome. I'll just need to see a credit card for the incidentals...

TIM

(reads the name tag)

Trent, I was given the impression that you honored traveler's checks.

TRENT

Yes, we just need an imprint of your card. For the incidentals.

TIM

Traveler's check is a fully insured method of, y'know. 100 percent.

TRENT

I'm aware of that, sir. We won't charge the card unless you rent a movie or take something from the mini-bar...

TIM

I'm a non-drinker.

TRENT

It's standard, sir.

Tim eyes Trent cautiously as he unzips his cummerbund/money belt. He removes a credit card and reluctantly hands it over.

INT. HOLIDAY INN HOLIDOME, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Cell phone to his ear, Tim struggles with his bag as he walks to his room.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Have you seen the pool yet?

TIM  
Not yet, but I can smell it. The chlorine. It's a super top-notch place, Mil. You'd be blown away. Oop, 321. I'm at mi casa. Just a... lemme see how this deal works.

He examines the card key. He slides it in. It doesn't work. Tries again. Doesn't work. Each time he fails, it beeps.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Key's like a stinkin' credit card.

Suddenly, the door opens. And standing before Tim is a BLACK MAN. Tim gasps, drops his suitcase, backs away.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
What? What happened?

TIM  
(to the man)  
Oh jeez. I'm sorry. I'm... Please.  
(turns, whispers into phone)  
There's an Afro-American gentleman in this room.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Well get the heck outta there!

Tim turns back and smiles, frightened. The man looks confused.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Tim! Run like hell, Tim!

BLACK MAN  
Are you Tim? Tim Lippe?

Tim just smiles a wide, deer-in-headlights smile.

BLACK MAN (CONT'D)  
I'm Ronald Wilkes. Bill Krogstad said we were gonna be roommates?

RONALD WILKES, 45, is conservative in dress and demeanor.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Tim! Tim! Tiiim!

TIM  
(into phone)  
Let me call you back, Mil.

Tim clicks off his phone, just stares at Ronald.

RONALD  
You are Tim...?

TIM  
Um. Yeah. Yes. You bet. For a minute there I was like, whoa, I'm gonna be robbed here, or...

Tim laughs loudly. Ronald just looks at Tim. A beat.

TIM (CONT'D)  
It's super... just super great to meet you, Ronald.

Tim shakes Ronald's hand, holds onto it for at least two seconds too long.

RONALD  
OK. You want to check out the room then?

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Ronald leads Tim into the room, a junior suite with two beds, a kitchenette and a couch in the separate living room area.

TIM  
Check out these digs. Huzzah!

RONALD  
Yeah, you could do a lot worse.  
(a serious beat)  
Look Tim, I gotta put the cards on the table here. The reason we got the junior suite upgrade is because the hotel overbooked-- wedding or some such. Point being, they were asking folks to take on a third roommate to consolidate space. Now to me, being an independent owner, the savings of adding a third guy sounded like a real positive.  
(MORE)

RONALD (CONT'D)

But if you've got any qualms, I  
hear you L & C, that's Loud &  
Clear.

Ronald has undoubtedly been called a nerd more than once. To Tim, however, he is the embodiment of cool and hilarity.

TIM

No. I'm down. Down with that. Heck  
yeah. Any idea who we're gonna be  
chilling with, roommate-wise?

RONALD

No. Just hope he doesn't snore.

TIM

(laughs boisterously)  
Can you imagine? Or someone who has  
terrible gas?! Like, pull my  
finger. Brrump! Hello, no thanks!

Tim is giddy like a kid away at camp for the first time.

RONALD

This isn't Woodstock, Tim. It's a  
regional insurance convention.  
Whoever it is, I'm sure he'll be a  
straight shooter.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A pair of massive, scuffed wing-tips walk determinedly down the hall. We don't see the man they belong to, but we most definitely hear him as he passes various CONVENTION GOERS.

MAN (O.S.)

Hey Taco Bill, am I gonna see you  
at Horizons tonight? I hear they  
got their all-you-care-to-eat pussy  
buffet going!

A booming laugh follows as the feet continue down the hall.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Tim admires Ronald's laptop. The screen saver is a photo of a billboard advertising *Ronald Wilkes Insurance*. A picture of a stoic-looking Ronald is the centerpiece of the billboard along with the slogan, *Your Insurance Professional*.

RONALD

So far it's just the one billboard north of St. Cloud. Course the traffic load would get me more eyeballs in the Twin Cities corridor, but at the end of the day, it's N-T-S. Not Too Shabby.

TIM

Ha. N-T-S. That's hilarious. I'd love to own my own agency...

The door bursts open. We boom up from the scuffed wing-tips to reveal DEAN ZIEGLER, 45, whose massive personality just barely hides an undercurrent of sadness and insecurity.

DEAN

Baroo-baroo, let's get this party started you mother-rubbers!

Ronald deflates upon seeing Dean. He clearly knows him.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Ronald Wilkes! No fucking way! The Ronimal! Gimme some love-uh, my soul broth-uh!

Dean gives Ronald a bear hug, lifts him off the ground.

RONALD

Turn down the volume, Ziegler. You just got here, for Pete's sake.

Tim looks like someone deciding which direction to run from an oncoming tornado. Dean notices Tim's look.

DEAN

What's the matter, friend, never seen a chocolate-vanilla love sandwich?! Wait until later when we get to the buttfucking! Nah, I'm having fun. Dean Ziegler. Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Tim discreetly looks at the checklist Krogstad gave him. Under *AVOID*, it says *DEAN ZIEGLER*.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I won't bite. I'm medicated. Not really. But I should be. Right Ronimal? So what's your handle pal?

RONALD

We drew the short straw with this pitiful reprobate, Tim. Dean, this is Tim Lippe.

DEAN

Call me Deanzie. Where you hail from, Tim Lippe? Quiet-land?

TIM

No. I do not. I'm down from Brown Valley, Wisconsin.

(pointed)

Northlands Insurance.

DEAN

Bill Krogstad's outfit. The Krogger!

(beat, dials it way down)

Aw shit. I was sorry as hell to hear about Lemke's passing up there. That guy was tits as a rep. Course he thought I was a big, loud asshole-- s'pose he wasn't too far off there. No boy, a real tragedy.

TIM

(suspicious)

Uh, thanks. Thank you. It's...

Roger was just a super great man.

DEAN

Amen. He'll be in my prayers. His family, too. Tragedy.

All three nod. A moment of solemn silence. Then:

DEAN (CONT'D)

Well. I don't know about you wingnuts, but the Deanzie could use a drinkzie. What say we blow off the welcome hoo-ha and hit Horizons for happy hour. Two-for-one cocktails, 10 cent wings, and an all-you-care-to-eat pussy buffet!

RONALD

That line was unappealing last year, Dean. It remains so now.

TIM

I'm planning to watch President Helgesson's opening remarks.

DEAN

Oh, don't get me started on that smug fuck. Orin Helgesson is a-- pardon my French-- a cunt. Just a steaming wet dog cunt.

Tim stands there slack-jawed-- *this man is evil.*

RONALD

No one's buying the potty-mouth nonsense you're selling, Dean. Tim, you'll learn to ignore this degenerate before too long. Let's go hear what Orin has to say.

DEAN

Fine. Have fun ladies... *Not.*

Tim and Ronald exit. Dean can't handle the momentary silence. As he lugs his suitcase into the bedroom:

DEAN (CONT'D)

*Party time. Excellent.*

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - DAY

ORIN HELGESSON, 69, a gentle, avuncular man with a Mr. Rogers persona, addresses a crowd. A banner reading *ASMI '09: Let's Build a Bridge to the 22nd Century!* hangs above the podium.

ORIN

I'm Orin Helgesson, your ASMI Midwest Region Chapter President. But I'm not going to make you play *Hail to the Chief*. Not yet anyhow.

Polite laughter from the 60 or so mostly male INSURANCE WORKERS congregated in the Sunset Terrace Ballroom, which has neither a terrace nor a window through which to view a sunset.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Seriously, we've got a great line-up for *ASMI '09*, with our forward-looking theme, *Let's Build a Bridge to the 22nd Century!* Just so many innovations-- our newsletter, *The ASMI-teer* is now fully digital. So a lot of our breakout sessions will be dealing with this kind of "E-Commerce" sort of thing.

(pause for polite applause)

(MORE)

ORIN (CONT'D)

If you didn't pick up your Welcome Kits, be sure and see Mike Pyle, the gentleman in the-- what color's that sweater vest Mike?

MIKE PYLE, 35, a round, milky-skinned man who favors sweater vests, raises his hand. He's seated near Tim and Ronald.

MIKE PYLE

Beige.

ORIN

In the beige sweater vest. Great.

Orin continues O.S. but we stay with Tim and Ronald.

TIM

(whispering)

I'm worried about this Deanzie guy. Bill Krogstad told me specifically to stay the heck away from him.

RONALD

Oh, Dean ran for President against Orin last year-- only got four votes. He's running again this year. He's just full of bluster.

Tim looks deeply concerned. Back on Orin.

ORIN

... The Two Diamonds are given every year to the agency that best exemplifies the ASMI decree: "To provide high quality insurance services and related products while maintaining Commitment to Community, Country and God." We have a record number of entries this year-- over 15 agencies competing. Good luck to you all.

Tim eyes go wide-- *Did he say over 15 agencies?!*

TIM

Did he say over 15 agencies?

RONALD

Yeah, it's gonna be brutal this year. I brought my A-game though.

TIM

You're competing?

RONALD

Heck yeah. It's the first year I've ever had a real shot. But the guy you really have to worry about is Mike Pyle. He owns the sixth largest Allstate agency in the Upper Midwest. The guy's a shark.

Tim looks at Mike Pyle, the bland-looking man in the sweater vest. Tim's confidence is waning. Back on Orin:

ORIN

... moment of silence for the man many considered to be the Michael Jordan of Mutual Insurance Agents. Roger Lemke.

Orin places a 4 x 6 foot poster of Roger Lemke on an easel. A period of mournful reflection follows. Until Orin breaks out in song-- *WERE YOU THERE?*, a somber hymn.

ORIN (CONT'D)

*Were you there when they crucified  
my Lord? Were you there when they  
crucified my Lord?*

Tim looks around nervously as the entire room joins in song.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLIDAY INN HOLIDOME, HALLWAY - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Tim paces, cell phone to his ear.

TIM

I need to talk to you, Mil. I'm in over my head here. I feel like I can't even swim. It was fun at first, but now it's like, I dunno. I need you so bad, babygirl...

A man's voice picks up on the other end.

WADE (O.S. ON PHONE)

Millie's in the john.

TIM

Who's...? Wade?

WADE (O.S. ON PHONE)

You bet.

TIM

Are...? You're at Millie's still?

WADE (O.S. ON PHONE)

Badger hockey's on. My cable's out.

(silence)

You want her to give you a ring  
when she's off the john?

TIM

Um. Yes, please. And just, would  
you tell her I love her very much.

WADE (O.S.)

You got it, bud.

Tim shuts his eyes for a moment-- *be strong. Be strong.*

INT. HOLIDOME FITNESS CENTER - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim, in shorts, tube socks and a very old Milwaukee Bucks tank top, reads the diagram for the chest press machine. He gives it a try, lifting about 50 pounds. The only other person in the room is a WOMAN, 37, on a treadmill.

Tim glances her way, and by chance they make eye contact in the mirror. She smirks. He immediately looks at the floor. We stay on Tim, lifting weights, eyes to the ground. But we hear the treadmill stop. Finally, Tim looks up to find:

WOMAN

You were checking me out.

Mortified, Tim drops the weights. They crash to their base.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna have to tell the hotel  
there's a pervo in the fitness  
center hitting on innocent women.

TIM

I... Ma'am, no. I'm sorry if you...  
I wouldn't... I have a fiancé!

WOMAN

Unbelievable. That poor woman  
should know what you're up to.

TIM

No, no, no, please. I didn't...

The woman can't keep it in. She starts laughing.

WOMAN

I am so sorry. I'm totally messing with you. God, I'm a jerk.

TIM

Ha. OK. That was different. Ha. Yes. Yes you are. A real... jerkhead.

WOMAN

I'm so sorry. Joan Ostrowski-Fox.

JOAN OSTROWSKI-FOX, middle-management sexy, if slightly too tan, puts out her hand. Tim shakes it.

TIM

Tim Lippe.

JOAN

Don't get lippy with me, mister.

Whoa. Tim is taken aback by this. Joan notices Tim's outfit.

JOAN (CONT'D)

So do you play professional basketball, Tim? Because that's a pretty updated uniform there.

TIM

No I don't. I'm actually in town for the ASMI convention.

JOAN

Oh, is that where a bunch of guys sit around a table looking up the word "gullible" in a dictionary?

TIM

No, it's an association of insur... Oh. You're screwing with me again.

JOAN

Indeed I am. I'm here for ASMI, too. In from *Oh-my-god*, Nebraska. Just kidding-- Omaha.

(wipes off some sweat)

Ugh, I am gross, so I'm going to bid you farewell, Tim Lippe. See you at Horizons tonight?

TIM

Um.

JOAN

Unless you were planning on spying  
on me in the shower.

Tim reddens, once again going into panic mode. Joan laughs.

JOAN (CONT'D)

God, I am evil. I need help.

Tim tries to think of something clever to say, but just sits  
there with his mouth open. He's never met a woman like this.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim finishes showering. He steps out of the shower to find  
Orin Helgesson, completely naked. Orin has just exited  
another shower. He smiles pleasantly at Tim, also naked.

ORIN

How ya doin'?

TIM

Oh. I... OK.

(then)

I... I really enjoyed your speech,  
President Helgesson.

ORIN

You were in there? Marvelous. Did  
you like the part about E-Commerce?

TIM

You bet. Very much, sir.

ORIN

Terrific. It's the future y'know.  
Anyhow, I don't think we've...

TIM

Tim Lippe. Down from Brown Valley,  
Wisconsin. Northlands Insurance?

A flash of emotion-- maybe even anxiety-- on Orin's face.

ORIN

Whew boy. Tim, what can I say? I  
just-- we're all feeling it. I'm so  
sorry for the loss...

Orin puts a supportive hand on Tim's shoulder.

TIM

Um, well, it's rough. Real rough.  
Like you said in your remarks,  
Roger wasn't just a great rep, he  
was a good father and...

ORIN

And a pilot. Flew a Cessna.

TIM

Yeah. It's just rough.

ORIN

Come here, son.

Orin gives Tim a hug. Tim juts his butt out so that their  
penises don't touch. A JANITOR enters the locker room, sees  
this odd embrace, pauses a beat and hurriedly exits.

TIM

Thank you.

The embrace runs its course. Tim isn't sure where to look.

ORIN

Tim, I know Bill's looking to  
retire and from the sound of it  
he's on the hook for a pretty sweet  
time share.

TIM

Yeah, it sounds pretty top-notch.

ORIN

I want to help him find a buyer,  
and God knows I'll try my  
darnedest. But-- and it pains me to  
say this-- there's a petition going  
around trying to rescind all of  
Northlands' Two Diamond Awards.

TIM

What?!

ORIN

I know. But let's be honest, one of  
the core tenets of the Two Diamonds  
*is* Commitment to God. And the way  
Roger passed on... well, some folks  
are saying that type of activity  
isn't entirely "godly."

Tim shakes his head, disbelieving.

ORIN (CONT'D)

You have to understand, this isn't some namby-pamby local event. This is a *regional* convention, Tim. Now, I want to help you, but you're going to have to help yourself too.

Orin goes to his locker, removes a folder.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Let me give you a few extra drink coupons for Horizons. Get down there-- fellowship and network. Buy a few drinks. Let 'em see the good side of Northlands Insurance-- the wholesome side, OK?

TIM

Thank you President Helgesson.

ORIN

Please. Orin. And if you need anything, Tim-- I mean *anything*-- I'm up in the Tiffany Suite. Room 411. Balcony overlooks the pool.

Tim accepts the stack of drink tickets. He's scared shitless.

INT. HORIZONS BAR & GRILLE - NIGHT

Tim, with taupe turtleneck tucked in to pleated corduroys, hesitates at the threshold of Horizons, a brightly lit, aeronautically-themed establishment. The cavernous bar is largely empty. Tim considers his drink coupons.

DEAN (O.S.)

Timbo! Over here roomie!

Dean sits alone at the bar. Tim reluctantly goes to him.

DEAN (CONT'D)

How's she hanging Big Tim? Big time Big Tim...

TIM

Hello Dean.

DEAN

It's Deanzie, c'mon.

(shouts at bartender)

Ahoy Cap'n, we got a thirsty sailor over here!

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)  
(re. the bartender)  
Kid was in the navy. Seaman.

Dean nudges Tim and laughs as the BARTENDER, 25, approaches.

BARTENDER  
What can I getcha?

TIM  
Ah. Do you guys have root beer?

DEAN  
You want a nipple with that?

TIM  
Ah, why would I need a nipple...?

DEAN  
Ach, I'm busting your balls. You  
don't get out much, do you buddy?  
(spots Tim's drink coupons)  
Whoa, who'd you have to blow to get  
all those?

TIM  
I didn't... Nobody. President  
Helgesson gave them to me.

DEAN  
Smug fuck. Trying to poison *my*  
roommate with his B-S propaganda.

TIM  
I really don't... Orin, President  
Helgesson, he wanted to help me  
meet people. Just being friendly.

DEAN  
(softens, fatherly)  
Wow-wow-wow, you are naïve. A rail  
cocktail's, what, four bucks? Times  
that by 10 drink coupons. We're  
talking 40 large, Tim. Doesn't sound  
so friendly anymore, does it? Sounds  
more like one of these *I-scratch-  
your-back-you-scratch-mine* deals.  
(off Tim's confused look)  
I bet ol' Orin invited you up to  
the Tiffany Suite, too, hmm? Fourth  
floor? View of the pool? Yup.  
(leans in, conspiratorial)  
Cocksucker's buying your vote, pal.

Tim shudders. Dean gestures for Tim to act natural as Ronald enters with a taciturn Latino man, BILL HERNANDEZ.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
Ronimal! Taco Bill! Over here!  
(to Tim)  
Bill Hernandez. I call him Taco  
Bill. Mexican.

LATER --

Lubricated INSURANCE WORKERS are now singing karaoke. Orin and Mike Pyle, the sweater vest guy, sit at a table in back. Orin looks at Tim with concern as Dean regales him.

DEAN  
So Big Time Tim, what're you looking  
for pussy-wise here in Cedar CRAPids?

TIM  
Ah, that would be nothing...

Tim displays a photo of Millie (a portrait from the junior high where she teaches) in his wallet.

DEAN  
That your mom?

TIM  
No. No it is not. Millie and I are  
engaged. To be married.

RONALD  
You're married yourself, Ziegler.  
The heck's your moral compass?

DEAN  
My moral compass is pointing true  
north, if you read me. Right Taco  
Bill?

Taco Bill sighs and wanders off to get a drink.

DEAN (CONT'D)  
And by the way, Ronimal-- I was  
married. *Was*.

RONALD  
Oh jeez. You and Patti split? Sorry  
to hear that.

DEAN  
(barely covering the pain)  
Ah, she's a fucking asshole.  
(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

Together 17 years. Lucky if one of  
'em was decent. ASS. FUCKING. HOLE.

It's a weird moment. Dean takes a drink, laughs it off.

DEAN (CONT'D)

What I was talking about anyway,  
Ronimal, is that from what I can  
deduce, young Timbo Lippe here has  
led a-- shall I say-- *sheltered*  
existence. And I think we oughta  
help him, y'know, *aroo-aroo!*

Dean raises his drink heroically. No one else joins him.

RONALD

ASMI isn't a vacation for everybody,  
Dean. End of the day, Tim's here to  
work and to win. For his agency.

TIM

Exactly. And P-S, I would never,  
ever have "relations" or whatever  
with another woman.

As fate-- *that wily minx*-- would have it...

JOAN (O.S.)

Hubba-hubba, check out these studs.

It's Joan Ostrowski-Fox, the woman Tim met in the gym. Dean  
and Ronald get up, greet her warmly. Tim looks at his soda.

RONALD

Joan Ostrowski-Fox.

DEAN

The O-Fox!

Joan does an ironic, flirtatious curtsy.

JOAN

Here she is, Miss America.

RONALD

You fly in from Omaha, Joan?

JOAN

Yup. And boy are my arms tired.

Ronald giggles, more animated than we've seen him.

JOAN (CONT'D)

No, not really. I drove. Deanzie,  
let me say...

(does Billy Crystal character)  
... you look maah-velous!

DEAN

(does a bad Austin Powers)  
Oh yeah baby. Shag-a-licious!

They laugh. Tim stares ahead, wishing for invisibility.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Tim, this is the Queen Bee of ASMI,  
Joan Ostrowski-Fox. The O-Fox.

Tim turns around, acts like he just now recognizes Joan.

TIM

Hey. Ha. From the fitness center.

JOAN

Hey! It's Tim "don't get lippy with  
me" Lippe.

RONALD

You guys met?

JOAN

Oh yeah, and I was very naughty in  
there. I'm sorry about that, Tim.

DEAN

No she's not.

JOAN

No I'm not.

(then)

Shots! What'll it be, gentlemen?

DEAN

Oh yeah, Jaeger time!

RONALD

Oh what the heck. Drambuie.

JOAN

Lippe?

TIM

Oh, I don't, ah...

The peer pressure! Tim scans the liquor behind the bar,  
settles on a bottle that looks impressive.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Ah... Grenadine? Please.

SLAM CUT TO:

SHOT POUNDING - MOMENTS LATER

Joan, Ronald and Dean wince as they slam their shots. Tim sips the thick red syrup, surprised by its sweetness.

JOAN  
Careful you don't get too loaded,  
Lippe, or I might have to take  
advantage of you.

Joan squeezes Tim's thigh. Tim bolts off of his stool.

TIM  
It's been a super long day. I, ah,  
better... Good night...

Tim awkwardly leaves the bar. Dean nudges Joan.

DEAN  
(sings Hall & Oates)  
*Whoa-o here she comes-- she's a man  
eater!*

As Tim hurries out of the bar, Bree, the woman in the denim skirt who Tim met outside enters. She's locking arms with a stout INSURER, 49. Tim pauses long enough to say hi.

TIM  
Hello Bree.

BREE  
(vaguely sexy)  
Hey. Hey.

With that, Tim is gone...

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Millie is on the phone in her bathrobe. Her dog sits with her.

MILLIE  
Marlene's brother's back in the  
hospital, so bridge got canceled.  
So we just watched hockey.

TIM (O.S. ON PHONE)  
We?

Wade is still there watching TV. He's drinking a beer.

MILLIE

Me and Wade.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Tim sits on a roll-away bed in his pajamas. He's on his cell.

TIM

Wade.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

He says hey.

TIM

Oh. Tell him hey.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

Tim says hey...

A beat of silence. Tim looks irritated.

MILLIE (O. S. ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

I picked up that diet wet food for  
Brandy today.

TIM

I have to do some work before bed,  
so...

MILLIE (O. S. ON PHONE)

(terse)

Well I should let you go.

TIM

No, it's-- I love you so bad,  
babygirl. It's so hard here. I just  
miss you.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

I miss you, too, Tim. But this was  
your decision. You have to act like  
a big boy now.

TIM

Tss. Yeah, yeah. Keep reminding me.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

You'll be fine. Just be careful.

TIM

OK. You, too. I love you.

Tim hangs up, world-weary.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE BATHROOM - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim sits on the toilet. His laptop sits on the counter, the Two Diamond presentation on the screen. He practices for the full-length mirror on back of the bathroom door.

TIM

Current risk mitigation mechanisms  
available to hog farm operations  
include futures and options to...

The bathroom door opens. It's Deanzie. Tim shrieks.

TIM (CONT'D)

I'm in here!

DEAN

(whispering)

I know. This needs to be private.

(whiffs)

Whoa. Something didn't agree with  
you, did it? Second thought, meet  
me in the stairwell after you wrap  
things up in here.

INT. STAIRWELL - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Deanzie sips from a mini-bar bottle of rum as Tim, now in a flannel bathrobe and slippers, enters the dingy stairwell.

TIM

What the heck is going on here?

DEAN

You sound like my fuckin' wife,  
Timbo. Jesus. Ex, I should say. EX.

Dean sits heavily on the cement stairs. He hiccups, burps.  
Tim looks at Dean with a feeling that borders pity.

TIM

Are you drunk?

DEAN

Fuck yeah!

(calms himself, whispers)

Fuck yeah. But we didn't get to  
finish our little confab back at  
the bar. I figured some shit out.

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

Like I told you, no shocker--  
Helgesson's buttering you up to get  
you in his camp, because he knows  
you and me are close...

TIM

We're not close...

DEAN

Close enough. You're voting for me  
for President, right?

TIM

No I'm not.

DEAN

Well anyway, there's a petition  
going around trying to take away  
your company's Two Diamond Awards.

TIM

I know. I heard.

DEAN

Well hear this: After you left the  
bar, Mike Pyle comes up to me--  
*Pyle of shit*, I call him-- and he  
asks do I want to sign this thing.  
And I go, "Lemke might have been a  
class-A deviant, but the guy was  
tits as a rep..."

TIM

Pardon my French, Dean, but that's  
a bunch of bull roar. My boss, Bill  
Krogstad? He told me how you called  
up Joyce Armbrüster and smeared  
Roger's name all over town...

DEAN

Joyce who...? Oh, no-no-no, whoa-  
whoa-whoa, that old whore called  
ME. Harping about Lemke being a  
pervert and how she wants to take  
her business elsewhere. So I says,  
"OK, I'll run some numbers." Well,  
she calls back later that same day,  
says she got Krogstad to lower her  
premium. Which is all the greasy  
twat wanted in the first place.

TIM

So wait, you didn't call her?

DEAN

I may be a lot of things, but  
poacher ain't one of 'em.

Tim lets this sink in. Dean hiccups and burps again.

TIM

So what's with this petition?

DEAN

Personally? I think Mike Pyle of  
*Shit* started the thing as a way to  
drive down the price of your  
agency. Dollars to donuts he wants  
to swoop in and pick up Northlands  
at a bargain basement price. And  
you know what else I think? I think  
Orin's in on the deal somehow.

What? That's impossible.

TIM

What? That's impossible.

DEAN

I can't quite figure it myself, but  
I know what I know. And what I know  
is you're wading into some duvious,  
er dubious, shit. Just be careful.

Tim looks shell-shocked. What a long, long day it's been.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS -- AS SLUMBER OVERTAKES THE HOLIDOME

- IN JOAN OSTROWSKI-FOX'S ROOM: Joan is bent over her tub,  
applying a Clairol *Nice 'N' Easy* home hair color kit. She  
gets up, puts on a shower cap. She applies cold cream to her  
face. She looks tired and decidedly middle-aged.

- IN THE HALLWAY: Bree drunkenly escorts a different INSURER  
back to his room.

- IN THE JUNIOR SUITE BEDROOM: Ronald sleeps soundly, gently  
snoring. Tim tosses and turns in his cot. He looks out into  
the living room where he sees:

Deanzie at the desk chair, gently masturbating. We move in to  
see what he's looking at: A photo of a woman in a bikini.  
She's attractive enough, carrying a few too many pounds.  
Certainly no supermodel. Pull out to reveal:

The woman is the subject of a Christmas photo card. The typed script reads, *Happy Holidays from Dean & Patti Ziegler. Christmas '93, Panama City Beach, FLA.*

Next to the woman stands a younger, slimmer Deanzie.

FADE OUT:

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Tim holds hands with Ronald and a DOUGHY MAN at a round table in a room full of people holding hands. Orin says a prayer.

ORIN

... In Your Name we pray Lord Jesus,  
Son of God, Author of our Salvation,  
our Redeemer, our Truth. Amen.

Amen. The gathered INSURERS head to the breakfast buffet.

RONALD

Orin knows how to lead a prayer  
breakfast, tell you what.

TIM

Hmm...? Oh. Yeah.

RONALD

Little overwhelming? All this?

TIM

Hello, thank you. I feel like my  
head is gonna like...  
(makes explosion face)  
Y'know?

RONALD

Oh I hear ya L & C. Loud and clear.  
I was the same way when I first  
came to ASMI. The deciding which  
break-out sessions to attend, plus  
the politics, the pressure, the not  
knowing who to trust...

Orin catches Tim's eye, gives him a friendly wink. Just then, Tim's phone rings. He looks at the caller ID.

TIM

Excuse me, Ronald. It's my boss.  
(answers phone)  
This is Tim.

TB

INT./EXT. BILL KROGSTAD'S BUICK LESABRE - DAY

Bill Krogstad talks on the phone as he drives. His wife, DIONE, crochets in the passenger's seat.

BILL KROGSTAD

Tim. Bill Krogstad. Got a call from Orin Helgesson. Tells me he's worried about you. Tells me you're palling around with Dean Ziegler. Laughing at his jokes, buying him drinks...

TIM (O.S. ON PHONE)

I... No...

BILL KROGSTAD

What's the ONE thing I told you to do? The one thing, Tim? Steer clear of Dean Ziegler. GODDAMNIT, you're lousing the whole thing up!

DIONE KROGSTAD

Bill...

BILL KROGSTAD

Not now Dione.

INT. HOLIDOME LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Tim tries to get a word in.

TIM

Bill, I... That Dean Ziegler-- he was trying to warn me about Orin.

BILL KROGSTAD (O.S. ON PHONE)

Warn you about Orin? Orin Helgesson has been ASMI Midwest Region President for 13 years! He is a LEGEND! And what do you do?! You go and pal around with his sworn enemy-- who, P.S., is a drunken loser!

TIM

Bill, I'm sorry...

INT. BILL KROGSTAD'S LESABRE - CONTINUOUS

Krogstad punches the car roof.

BILL KROGSTAD

I sent you to ASMI to restore our image, Tim. One day into the deal you're lousing the whole thing up!

(to Dione)

See how far Gladstone is from Cedar Rapids, Dione. Look in the atlas.

DIONE KROGSTAD

You're not driving to Iowa, Bill. This is your daughter's wedding.

BILL KROGSTAD

Oh cripes, you know as well as I do that Polack's gonna head for the hills the second he gets his papers. But no, you want to end up in the poor house, Dione, we'll go. Let's just keep on cashing checks we don't have...

DIONE KROGSTAD

We are going to our daughter's wedding, Bill.

INT. HOLIDOME LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Tim deflates, actually fighting back tears.

TIM

I didn't know I did anything wrong.

BILL KROGSTAD (O.S. ON PHONE)

Well you better try doing something right, Lippe. Because if you keep lousing up, we all by god starve! And don't you tell me to calm down Dione!

Krogstad hangs up. Rattled, Tim hurries for the exit. He gets in the revolving door when he spots Joan Ostrowski-Fox outside having a cigarette. Rather than face her, Tim keeps going in the revolving door. But she sees him and waves.

EXT. HOLIDOME - CONTINUOUS

Tim does one more turn in the revolving door and steps out.

JOAN

I'm a very bad girl. But I swear I only smoke in Cedar Rapids. Care for a Virginia Slim, Lippe?

Tim just shakes his head, unable to hide his despondence.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Whoa, what's wrong?

TIM

Mm, I don't know. Only everything.

Joan gives him a kind, gentle smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEDAR RAPIDS PARK - DAY (A LITTLE WHILE LATER)

Tim and Joan swing on a swing set in a dreary little park overlooking the Cedar River. It is a cold, gray day.

TIM

He didn't have to yell at me. I didn't do anything wrong. I'm trying my hardest.

JOAN

D'you want me to kick his butt?

TIM

Could you?

JOAN

Absolutely. I know Krogstad. I could take him. 'Sides, I'm a ninja. A nin-jette, actually. Hoo-waaaah!

(Tim chuckles)

So Lippe, how'd you end up in the insurance game? God that sounded dorky-- *insurance game*.

(does 40s-style Cagney)

*Look here, see, how'd you end up in the insurance game, see...?*

TIM

You are freaky.

(laughs, then)

No, it's kind of weird how I got interested in insurance, actually. When I was six, my dad got killed in a sawmill accident.

JOAN

Oh my God.

TIM

Yeah. Not good. But after he died, our insurance agent fought like a tiger against the sawmill to make sure me and my mom were taken care of. And we were.

(beat)

The crazy thing-- our agent was actually Bill Krogstad.

JOAN

No way. Really?

TIM

He had just opened Northlands. Anyway, I remember thinking, this guy's a hero. A real hero. So even if he doesn't always treat me, like y'know... whatever now-- I'll never forget that.

Tim jumps off the swing, taking care not to slip in the snow. Joan jumps off. They walk toward the river, silent for a bit.

TIM (CONT'D)

This river-- the Cedar River? It flooded the whole city a couple years ago.

JOAN

I remember that. Massive disaster.

TIM

People talk about the firemen and policemen and that. But think about all the claims in a disaster like that-- how hard those agents worked to make sure people's lives weren't left in the lurch. We're talking *billions* of dollars in damages, literally. And claim by claim, dream by dream, those agents helped rebuild this city. I'm telling you, it's a noble calling. I really believe that.

JOAN

You realize you just made it sound cool to be an insurance salesman? You are a hero, Lippe.

TIM

Tss. I wish.

JOAN

No, I can tell. You're the Superman type. Kind of dweeby on the surface but a real frickin' stud underneath. They'd call you *Insurance Man*-- put a big red "I" on your chest...

TIM

Well, even if you're being full of it, thanks for saying that anyway.

JOAN

Well, you're welcome.

(then)

So can you fly me back to the hotel, Insurance Man? I'm freezing my arse off.

He laughs, sufficiently cheered up. She snaps her fingers and starts heading back.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - DAY

Dean and Orin argue. Ronald tries to stay out of it.

DEAN

I'm saying a *Bridge to the 22nd Century* is a stupid theme, Helgesson. Not a goddamn one of us is even going to be alive in the 22nd Century...

ORIN

Oh, and I suppose under a Dean Ziegler administration, we'd just abandon E-Commerce and all that, huh? What's your take, Ronald?

RONALD

End of the day, you know I'm a big supporter of yours, Orin...

DEAN

Stab me in the fucking back why don't you, Wilkes...

RONALD

Why would I stab you in the back, Dean, when I'm telling you to your face that I think you'd be a lousy President?

That deflates the tension. The three men are laughing as Tim approaches. Dean spots him first.

DEAN

Timbo! Sorry about that gigantic boner I got while we were spooning.

Tim freezes, looks at Orin.

TIM

We didn't spoon, Orin...

ORIN

To each his own, Tim.

(gives Tim a kind wink)

I'm teasing, of course. Well, I gotta run to an Executive Council meeting. You fellas really ought to check out Mike Pyle's Prop/Cas seminar...

DEAN

Pyle of *shit*.

ORIN

Mike's a dynamite orator. I think you'd enjoy it. We'll see ya.

Orin walks away.

DEAN

Smug fuck.

(then, to Tim & Ronald)

So who's ready for a drink?

RONALD

It's 11 in the morning.

DEAN

(mimics)

*It's 11 in the morning.* Can you believe this guy? C'mon Timbo, let's get the flock outta here.

TIM

You need to leave me alone.

Dean and Ronald watch curiously as Tim practically runs away.

TB

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Tim, Ronald and Joan sit on folding chairs in the front row. Mike Pyle, his creamy skin offset by an aquamarine sweater vest, speaks with subdued energy to the half-full room.

MIKE PYLE

I'd like to share a humorous anecdote. A gentleman is drowning in a lake or pond, and he's 20 feet offshore. Well, along comes an actuary. And this actuary sees the drowning gentleman and throws him an 11 foot rope. And the gentleman says, "But I'm 20 feet offshore!" And the actuary says, "Well, I'm meeting you MORE than halfway."

The room busts up laughing. Tim takes notes.

MIKE PYLE (CONT'D)

So Property/Casualty Insurance, or Prop/Cas, it's one of the most dynamic areas of our industry...

Mike Pyle pauses as a HOTEL CLERK enters, whispers something to him and hands him a note. Mike reads the note.

MIKE PYLE (CONT'D)

Ah, is there a Tim Lip in here?  
There's an emergency call.

Tim looks concerned as he rises.

INT. HOLIDOME FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Tim takes the phone from the DESK CLERK.

TIM

Hello.

VOICE (O.S. ON PHONE)

(Chinese accent)

Herro Mr. Tim, my name Chin Chang.  
There bad news about your fiancé.

TIM

Millie? Something happened...?

VOICE (O.S. ON PHONE)

Ah, you wise man Mr. Tim. She die  
in horrible car accident...

Tim's stomach drops.

VOICE (O.S. ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
... but her dying wish for you, Mr.  
Tim, to get shit-face with Deanzie.

Whip pan to reveal Dean on another house phone.

DEAN  
Timbo! Turn around!

Tim turns, sees Dean. A torrent of anger rises. Tim charges at Dean. He shoves him. Dean is a much larger man and is therefore impervious to Tim's inelegant, girlish assault. Despite the low-key nature of the melee, it draws the attention of Trent, the desk clerk.

TRENT  
Gentlemen! I will call security.

Tim deflates. He gives Dean one more shove. Dean laughs.

TIM  
What the H did I ever do to you,  
you a-hole.

Tim walks away. Dean calls after him.

DEAN  
Come on bud, I was having fun.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim sits on his cot. He is on his cell phone.

TIM  
I just wanted to hear your voice.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Brandy, no! Bad girl! Sorry, she's  
giving me grief over this new wet  
food. What did you need now, Tim?

TIM  
Nothing. Nothing really...

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Well I for one feel like I ought to  
be on the fire department, I'm  
putting out so many fires. Lucy  
Kofnetka asked me to do altar guild  
for her. Again.

Oh. TIM

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Patti told me Lucy's seeing some  
guy who doesn't even go to church,  
so she apparently feels no need to  
maintain her responsibility... Brandy!  
No! She's going number two on the  
floor! No! You get outside! I'll  
call you later, Tim...

He hangs up. He exhales. He looks out the window: An  
Applebee's. A Super Target. Traffic on the distant interstate.

Something is bubbling in Tim-- maybe not cauldron of lava;  
more like a cup of soup left in the microwave a bit too long.  
But still, there's a boiling, churning glow behind his eyes.

INT. NOTTINGHAM BANQUET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tim determinedly enters a banquet room where VENDORS have set  
up booths. He approaches a WOMAN at a table with a sign that  
says *Met Life Scavenger Hunt!*

TIM  
I'd like to sign up for the  
scavenger hunt.

WOMAN  
Super. Teaming with a co-worker or  
are you in need of a partner?  
(off Tim's look)  
This is a team event, like the  
*Amazing Race*. On TV? But instead of  
going around the world, you look  
for stuff in Cedar Rapids. And  
instead of a million dollars, the  
winning team gets a \$75 gift card  
for Westdale, which is...

TIM  
Eastern Iowa's largest two-story  
mall. I know. Sweet.  
(a thought, a moment)  
And yes, I do have a teammate.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY (OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM) - DAY

Ronald and Joan exit the Seminar. They spot Tim.

RONALD  
Everything OK?

JOAN  
Yeah, what was that call?

TIM  
Oh, nothing. Say Joan, you have  
something on your blouse.

Joan looks down at her blouse. Tim flicks her chin.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Burn.

JOAN  
(laughs)  
You are very weird...

TIM  
(bad Elvis impersonation)  
Thank you. Thank you very much.  
(awkward)  
So, ah, I signed you up for the  
Scavenger Hunt. To be my teammate.  
In the Scavenger Hunt.

JOAN  
Really? Why?

TIM  
Uh, well I... Because Ronald  
already had a teammate...

RONALD  
Bill Hernandez?

JOAN  
Taco Bill.

TIM  
... And I thought you'd-- we'd-- be  
y'know, a decent team. So...  
(then, firm)  
I think you should do it.

JOAN  
Heck yeah! I get to be *Insurance*  
*Man's* sidekick. We're going to kick  
some ASS!

A few PEOPLE look curiously at Joan. Tim stands up a bit  
straighter. This is good. This is good.

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Orin, in a theme-appropriate safari hat, addresses the 10 TEAMS. Among them: Tim & Joan, Ronald & Taco Bill, Mike Pyle & a FRIZZY-HAIRED WOMAN. Dean is absent.

ORIN

Like last year there'll be a few physical challenges...

TIM

(to Joan)

I am super pumped!

JOAN

(whispers)

Whoo-hoo.

ORIN

Course this should be considered a fun event, in the spirit of team building. You can find your first clue "under the sea." By which I mean in the pool area. So ready, set, race!

As the teams take off for the pool, Dean enters. Tim pauses long enough to say:

TIM

You're going down, a-hole.

Just then, Dean's partner, a MAN in an electric wheelchair, PERRY KUHN, 29, rolls in. They high five and whoo-hoo.

DEAN

Let's roll, Perry-- Perry-plegic. Get it, like paraplegic? But...

PERRY

Yeah. Good one, Dean-tard. Like retard, but Dean-tard. Get it?

Dean laughs as he and Perry follow the other contestants.

INT. HOLIDOME POOL AREA - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

The pool is large and reasonably impressive, with a slide, lawn furniture, a whirlpool and a video arcade nearby. The contestants rush in. Tim spots something on the bottom of the pool. A series of bricks spell out: *PLANET X*.

TIM  
Check it out-- Planet X!

Tim unzips his hidden cummerbund/money belt. He pulls out a small laminated packet, held together with metal rings.

TIM (CONT'D)  
I compiled a ton of info on Cedar Rapids. I've got a sweet laminator in my basement.

JOAN  
Ooh, that's hot...

TIM  
(flips through his packet)  
... Maps, area attractions, crime stats, local customs...

JOAN  
Look at you...

TIM  
Bingo! Right here-- *Planet X Family Fun Center*. Let's go. Act natural.

Joan cracks up. They walk out casually. For good measure:

JOAN  
What a gyp. There are no stinkin' clues in here.

INT./EXT. TIM'S RENTAL CAR - DAY

Tim and Joan laugh as he peels out of the parking lot.

TIM  
OK, I think we're going to want to take Blair's Ferry Road to Avenue C, then probably east on 100.

JOAN  
Why would you possibly know that?

TIM  
I memorized the major thoroughfares and landmarks in the metro area.

Rather than say anything, Joan just shakes her head and turns on the radio. *GROOVE IS IN THE HEART* kicks in, providing a:

MUSIC BED OVER:

## THE SCAVENGER HUNT MONTAGE --

INT. PLANET X FAMILY FUN CENTER - DAY

Tim, Joan and the other teams bound through a huge, Martian-themed ball pit. They start digging through the balls. Perry sits dejectedly off to the side in his wheelchair.

Tim and Ronald shove past Mike Pyle, knocking him down. Tim is the first to discover a foam "moon rock" amid the balls. The rock reads, "ASMI ROCKS!" Taped to the bottom, a message:

TIM

(reads message)

*"You've seen the future, now Czech out Cedar Rapid's past."* But it's Czech, like Czechoslovakia. C'mon!

SERIES OF SHOTS --

- AT THE NATIONAL CZECH MUSEUM: A traditionally costumed CZECH WOMAN, 80, shows Tim and Joan how to paint an EGG. The egg is lovely, with intricate patterns and vibrant colors.

- IN THE CAR: Joan reads through Tim's laminated booklet as he drives. She's really getting into it, too. Tim's phone keeps ringing. It's Millie. He ignores it.

- IN A GYMNASIUM: Ronald awkwardly tries to make a basket, becomes upset when he misses. Joan swishes a 3-pointer.

- AT A DAIRY FARM: The teams milk cows. Mike Pyle is particularly proficient. Dean can't help himself.

DEAN

Know what that cow's thinking, Pyle? She's thinking, "quit pulling on my tits and fuck me already."

- IN A PARKING LOT: Dean loads Perry into a handicap-accessible van as Mike Pyle and his partner blow past them.

- AT THE IOWA PORK SHRINE: Joan gobbles down hot dogs in a speed eating contest. Tim cheers her on.

JOAN

Ugh. I'm gonna puke.

TIM

No, you're doing great, Joan. And you look super awesome with a wiener in your mouth.

JOAN

(stunned, mouth full)

Oh my God, did you just make a dick  
joke, Lippe?

TIM

No.

(giggles, with pride)

Maybe.

Joan bites seductively into her hot dog. The others are close behind. Except Ronald's partner, Taco Bill, who is vomiting.

EXT. SILO ADVENTURE PARK - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

The sun is low. Long, phallic shadows are cast by a series of 70-foot silos which are covered with thick sheets of ice.

Tim and Joan run up to Orin, who is waiting by the silos.

ORIN

OK guys, this is it. First team to  
complete this challenge wins the  
whole shootin' match.

(unfurls a scroll, reads)

*ASMI's past is behind us; But our  
future looks nice; Let's Build a  
Bridge to the 22nd Century... by  
scaling this silo of ice!*

Some DUDES with ice climbing equipment-- ropes, picks, etc.  
appear. Tim looks petrified. Joan shakes her head.

JOAN

That doesn't even... There's no  
such thing as silo ice climbing.

TIM

No, it's actually a big thing in  
Iowa. ABC news did a story about  
it. I saw it on YouTube.

JOAN

Of course you did. Well, you can do  
it then...

TIM

Uh-uh, absolutely not. I'm scared  
crapless of heights.

JOAN

You need to get over it, Lippe, cuz  
I'm not climbing jack.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

Come on *Insurance Man*-- leap tall buildings in a single bound and all that...

Tim's nostrils flair. Just then, Mike Pyle and his partner arrive. Tim looks to the top of the silo. It is dizzyingly high. He shuts his eyes for a moment, exhales.

TIM

Yeah. Let's do this thing.

Orin turns on a boom box, which blasts some triumphant music (Whitesnake's *HERE I GO AGAIN*, perhaps).

QUICK CUTS: The Dudes get Tim and Mike Pyle into their climbing gear-- harnesses, helmets, crampons.

And they start climbing. Sort of. Tim jams his pick into the ice. He tries to pull himself up, but can't. Mike fares worse. He can't even get his pick to stick in the ice.

TIM (CONT'D)

Hang on... How's it...?

MIKE PYLE

Little help here...

The Dudes shout instructions. Tim and Mike try again. To no avail. Neither could do a pull-up if his life depended on it.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER --

All the contestants have shown up. But not a damn one of them can get more than a foot off the ground.

TIM

Ugh. This is frickin' hard.

RONALD

Really hard.

DEAN

I think I just shit my pants.

Joan cheers. Orin looks to the Dudes, who shrug.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER --

Orin talks on his cell phone, conferring. The contestants wait in a field, shivering. The sun is getting lower. Orin hangs up, sighs, shuts off the uplifting music.

ORIN

OK gang, that was Rick Martini with the National Chapter. Here's the deal. Since no one could do the final task, and since Joan and Tim were the first team to get here, we're just gonna go ahead and award them the first place prize. Unless anyone's got a problem with that?

Ronald mutters to himself, frustrated with his performance.

RONALD

Dangit. You could've done better, Wilkes.

TIM

Wait, we won?

ORIN

Yup. So here you guys go. Your \$75 gift card for the Westdale Mall.

Orin hands Joan the gift card. Despite the anticlimax, Tim is overjoyed. He picks up Joan and spins her around. Everyone else just wanders away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIM'S RENTAL CAR (DRIVING) - THAT EVENING

Tim is ebullient. Joan rides shotgun. The screen on Tim's phone says that he's missed 11 calls. It rings again.

TIM

Oh crap. I forgot...  
(answers phone)  
Hey, Millie.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

I have been trying to reach you for the last eight hours, Timothy. I was going to call the police. Where have you been?

TIM

I'm sorry, Mil. I signed up for this scavenger hunt, and check it out-- we won! My teammate and I, that is. Joan.

JOAN

Hi Millie!

TIM

That was Joan saying hi.  
(beat, to Joan)  
Millie says hi.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)

I did not say hi. I didn't say  
anything. If you had asked, I would  
have told you that I've been at the  
vet half the day because Brandy  
swallowed a pencil eraser.

Something dawns on Tim-- *who gives a shit*. He glances at Joan  
and her skirt and her exposed knee.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Lucky for us it came out naturally  
or we'd have been looking at  
surgery.

Tim pulls into a spot in the Westdale Mall parking lot. He  
gestures for Joan to wait a second.

JOAN

I'll just meet you inside.

TIM

OK. Sounds good.  
(to Millie)  
Sorry Mil, go ahead.

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Millie looks wounded.

MILLIE

So who's this Joan?

EXT. WESTDALE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Tim gets out of the car.

TIM

Just some gal from Omaha they  
paired me up with. Between you and  
me, she's a little different. Real  
hyper-- one of these types who kind  
of overdoes it. But for a 75 dollar  
gift card, I'm not going to  
complain.

MILLIE (O.S. ON PHONE)  
You promised you'd check in with  
me. I'm very disappointed.

TIM  
(playful)  
OK, Mom...

Silence. It's as though a profound revelation has just  
slipped out. As if, in an instant, everything has changed.

INT. MILLIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Millie's heart sinks. She looks at her Beanie Babies.

MILLIE  
Well. You obviously have more  
important things to do than talk to  
me. My brother and I were just  
getting ready to go for fish at the  
Eagles anyhow.

Reveal: Wade is sitting in his rightful throne, watching an  
aerobics show on TV. Millie snaps at him.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
Go warm up the car, Wade.

TIM (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Mil, I didn't...

MILLIE  
It's fine. You'll call me some time  
when it's convenient for you, Tim.  
Good Night.

Millie hangs up. Wade gives her a supportive shrug.

EXT. WESTDALE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Tim snaps his phone shut. What just happened? He considers  
his options for a moment.

INT. WESTDALE MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Joan window shops at a LensCrafters. Tim approaches her.

TIM  
Hey. What say we just use the gift  
certificate to get a nice supper  
here? At the mall.

Joan smiles at him, and we:

CUT TO:

INT. OLIVE GARDEN - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim approaches the Olive Garden MAÎTRE D'.

TIM

We have a gift card. But I didn't  
make a reservation. Is that OK?

Save for three tables of ELDERLY PEOPLE, the place is empty.

MAÎTRE D'

Right this way, sir.

Tim raises his eyebrows to Joan-- *not too shabby*.

INT. OLIVE GARDEN, ROMANTIC BOOTH - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tim and Joan are seated in a candlelit booth. Opera Muzak tinkles. If you didn't know this to be a mall-based chain, you might think it a romantic Italian restaurant. Maybe.

An acne-scarred WAITER, 21, approaches with a tray.

WAITER

Coors Lite for the madam. A cream  
sherry for monsieur. And here are  
some bottomless bread sticks.

TIM

Nice. Thanks.

The waiter exits. Tim raises his glass for a toast.

TIM (CONT'D)

To victory. To new friends. To life.  
And all the joys of living it.

JOAN

That's really nice. Cheers.

They clink glasses. Tim takes a dainty sip of his sherry.

TIM

Mm, it *does* taste a lot like  
communion wine. Awesome.

LATER --

Joan feeds Tim a bite of her lasagna. A bit sticks to his chin. She wipes it off, semi-seductively. Tim laughs.

JOAN

So Lippe, I'm trying to figure you out. Hopes, dreams, aspirations, blah-blah-blah? Whaddaya got?

TIM

Mine? Let's see. Um. I would love-- some day-- to put a little greenhouse in my backyard.

JOAN

Dream the impossible dream...

TIM

No, I've actually seen some fairly decent portable ones at Fleet Farm that won't break the bank...

JOAN

C'mon, man. I mean fantasy-land stuff. What do you *really* want?

A beat. He takes a sip of sherry, shrugs.

TIM

Well. I always hoped I could take over Northlands when Bill retired. But that obviously isn't going to happen now.

JOAN

Oh, screw him. He wants to sell, why don't you just buy Northlands?

TIM

Yeah right.

JOAN

Why not? You could get a loan.

TIM

I don't... Probably not.

JOAN

You know the business. You know the clients. You actually care about your job. You'd be perfect.

TIM

Grrrr. Ha. Time out. Sheesh. Let's.  
(beat)

OK. What I'd really like is a family. To be a dad. So kids, I guess, that's what I really want.

JOAN

Yeah well, you can have mine.

TIM

You've got kids?

Joan takes out her Blackberry. The screensaver is a family portrait: Joan, a MAN with a goatee, and TWO CUTE KIDS. All of them are dressed in denim.

JOAN

Tyler's ten. Ashley'll be eight next month. My little squirrels.

TIM

Awesome. Beautiful kids. And that's...?

JOAN

My hubby. Rich Fox. Richie. We met when we were both Rotary exchange students in high school. Lived in Norway for a semester.

TIM

Norway.

JOAN

I was such a spaz. Band geek, total ugly duckling-- braces, acne, the whole nine. I didn't even get boobs until college. Anyway, we ended up getting married sophomore year. Then kids. Then blah-blah-blah, and here we are. Richie's a Supervisor in the Parks Department now. For the County.

TIM

Wow.

Tim doesn't hide his shock well. Joan sees it.

JOAN

I know it's effed up. And if I had it all to do over again, I don't know what I'd choose.

(MORE)

JOAN (CONT'D)

But I don't have that option. So this is *my* fantasy-land, Tim. Cedar Rapids. ASMI. This. I come here, and for a few days I'm someone else. No kids. No husband. No responsibility. Wild woman.

(an ironic growl)

Sometimes a gal just needs a vacation from who she really is-- know what I mean, Lippe?

Tim nods but looks more confused than ever.

INT. TIM'S RENTAL CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tim drives. The Olive Garden doggie bag sits in Joan's lap. Silence, other than the radio. After a bit:

TIM

OK. I thought of another one.

JOAN

One what?

TIM

Wish. Or dream or whatever. It's still small potatoes compared to...

JOAN

No, let's hear it...

TIM

... to all you've done-- Norway and all that, but...

(beat)

Do you watch *American Idol* ever?

JOAN

You wanna be on *American Idol*?

TIM

No-no-no. Negative! Sheesh. But I do enjoy watching it quite a bit. Randy's always like, "That's awesome, dawg!" And Simon's such a--  
(mediocre British accent)

"Oh, I'm so superior."

(then)

Anyway I was thinking of maybe trying-- *trying*-- to get a solo in my choir. At church. I mean, it's all super political. But I'm a fair to middlin' baritone, so...

He shrugs. Joan fights her instinct to tease him.

JOAN

That's great, Tim. You'll do it. I know you will. Very cool.

He shrugs again, but now he's grinning from ear to ear.

INT. HOLIDOME LOBBY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tim yawns as he and Joan enter the lobby.

JOAN

Wanna get one for the road, stud?

TIM

Oh no, I have to practice my Two Diamond presentation. I can't...

JOAN

One nightcap. It'll loosen you up.

Tim looks at the ground. He looks up, tries to make a joke.

TIM

Ha. Nightcap. Kneecap, more like...

JOAN

What?

TIM

Yes.

She looks at him oddly as he charges ahead to the bar.

INT. HORIZONS BAR & GRILLE - NIGHT

Taco Bill sings *DON'T STOP BELIEVING* on the karaoke stage. Bree, wearing a new denim skirt, grinds on the dance floor with yet another INSURER. Dean watches the action.

DEAN

Timbo and the O-Fox! Wondered when you crazy kids were gonna show up.

He ushers them to the bar, where Ronald is seated.

RONALD

Can I buy the big-shot winners a drink? Coors Lite for Joan. And Tim, you want a pop?

TIM

Actually, do they have cream sherry?

RONALD

Cream sherry. Jeez, guess that victory really *did* go to your head.

JOAN

Coors Lite's good for me, thanks. I gotta run wash my hands quick.

Joan exits. Ronald goes to order the drinks.

DEAN

You tag that yet, Timbo? Bet she's moist as a damp sponge, huh?

TIM

She is MARRIED. And you're just... What is wrong with you?

DEAN

Shit, what *isn't* wrong me? I drink too much, I weigh too much, I piss people off. Speaking of, that crank call earlier-- way outta line. People are right, I am an asshole.

TIM

Well. Yeah. You kind of are. But I guess I've seen worse.

DEAN

I love it! "I guess I've seen worse." I love it!

(big laugh, then)

Yeah shit, s'pose we all wish our lives had gone a little different. You don't come into this deal going, "Dear God, please let my wife toss me out on my ass. Please give my children the courage to hate my fucking guts. Thank you Jesus. Praise Jesus! Praise Jesus!" Ach, I'm just having fun.

(crosses himself, looks heavenward)

No offense Big Man! Right, Timbo?

Dean laughs heartily. It's a deeply uncomfortable moment. Tim looks around. He sees Joan talking to the karaoke DJ. Thankfully, Ronald returns with the drinks.

TIM

Ronald! Hello.

(takes his drink)

Thanks mucho... So Ronald, what's your situation? You married, or...?

RONALD

Negative. I'm pretty well married to Ronald Wilkes Insurance. I also do quite a bit of work with the St. Cloud Chamber. I'm Senior Warden at my church. So really, no time for a Mrs. Ronald Wilkes.

TIM

Wow.

RONALD

Don't get me wrong, I have my guilty pleasures-- antiquing, I'm active in community theater. And I have to admit I'm a big enthusiast of the HBO program, *The Wire*. But shux, I haven't had a proper vacation in nine years.

TIM

I never use my vacation time.

DEAN

Maybe you two should take one of those gay cruises together.

RONALD

You know what you are Ziegler?  
You're what I call a real Richard.

Dean and Tim look confused. Ronald giggles to himself.

RONALD (CONT'D)

Mr. Richard Head.

TIM

(titters as he figures it out)

Dick head. Yeah Dean, you are a total Richard!

DEAN

Ha! I love it! Richard head!

Tim high fives Ronald. Joan returns, sits next to Tim.

RONALD

To Tim-- the young rookie comes in,  
takes the scavenger hunt. That  
right there is P-T. Prime Time.

They all drink to that.

A BIT LATER --

Tim has finished his sherry. The bartender pours a second glass. Tim wears the shit-eating grin of a first-time drunk.

DEAN

Would you rather toss a bum's  
salad, y'know, eat out his buttohole  
or... give your dad a B-J?

RONALD

Come on Ziegler, this is supposed  
to be a clean game...

TIM

No, if you used some salad dressing  
a bum's a-hole might not taste that  
bad. Thousand Island!

Tim laughs hysterically. Which makes everyone else laugh.

JOAN

Shots!  
(to the bartender)  
Kamikazes, good sir.

KARAOKE DJ (O.S.)

OK. We're ready for Tim Lip to rock  
the mic. Is there a Tim Lip?

TIM

Did he just...?

JOAN

Why wait for the church choir when  
you can take care of one of your  
dreams right now, dude?

TIM

No, no, no, no, no...

The bartender pours the shots. Joan whispers to Tim.

JOAN

I know you can do it, Lippe. Go be  
my hero-- *Insurance Man*.

## KARAOKE DJ

Tim Lip? You in the house?

Joan passes Tim the shot. He slams it. The room applauds as Tim nervously makes his way to the stage.

Tim confers with the DJ. The DJ nods, cues up the song. Tim gives Joan a look of mock anger as he takes the mic.

TIM

I, um, I've met some really, just super neat people here. But this song, I'd like to dedicate to the first African-American person I've ever met. I mean, I've seen guys at the Oneida Mall in Rhinelander-- said hello and that. But... Anyway, I just think you're one of the most awesome guys around. Ronald Wilkes!

Tim gives Ronald a thumbs-up. Ronald returns the gesture as the opening bars of Clarence Carter's *PATCHES* kick in. [NOTE: *Patches* is an EXTREMELY sentimental soul song about a poor black kid named Patches.] The first verse is spoken word.

TIM (CONT'D)

(reading off the screen)

I was born and raised down in Alabama. On a farm way back up in the woods. I was so ragged that folks used to call me Patches. Papa used to tease me about it. But deep down inside he was hurt, 'cause he'd done all he could.

Joan and Dean whoo-hoo!

TIM (CONT'D)

(breaks into song, very soulful)

*My papa was a great old man. I can see him with a shovel in his hands. See education he never had; He did wonders when the times got bad. The little money from the crops he raised barely paid the bills we made.*

Joan and Dean rush to the dance floor. Ronald remains on his bar stool but bops his head politely. Tim tears it up. *Patches* continues, creating a:

MUSIC BED OVER:

TB  
A SERIES OF SHOTS --

- Tim drinks more sherry. The gang laughs, having a blast.
- Ronald tries to excuse himself.

RONALD

The presentation's in 36 hours. I  
can't afford to be off my game.  
Frankly, neither can you, Tim.

Tim responds by giving Ronald a noogie. Everyone laughs.

- Joan, Dean and Ronald roam the Holidome halls. Tim jumps  
out from behind a corner, whips some ice machine ice at Dean.  
Dean takes off running after Tim. Joan and Ronald follow.

- The song fades out as the four of them approach the Pool  
Area. The sign on the pool door says, *Hours 8 AM - 11 PM*.

RONALD (CONT'D)

This is ridiculous, you guys. Told  
you, it closed an hour ago.

Tim tries the door. It's open. Dean and Joan go in. Tim and  
Ronald stay in the hall.

RONALD (CONT'D)

Tim. Come on. This isn't you.

TIM

Uh-oh. Who is it then?

RONALD

You know what I mean. We've both  
worked our tails off. Why poop it  
away on...

INSIDE THE POOL AREA:

DEAN

Check this out-- Captain Nemo!

Dean has placed the top of a garbage can on his head. It  
looks like an old-time scuba apparatus. Tim laughs.

TIM

(to Ronald)

I know. I just...

Dean slides down the kiddie slide into the pool, fully  
clothed. Tim busts up. It looks like too much fun.

TIM (CONT'D)  
No frickin' way!

Tim goes through the door. Ronald shakes his head.

INT. HOLIDOME POOL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Tim turns back, sees Ronald walking away. Tim thinks a beat, then keeps on. Other than Dean's splashing, it's quiet and peaceful in the semi-darkness. Joan sits on a lawn chair.

JOAN  
Whaddaya say, Lippe? Take a dippy?

TIM  
(German accent)  
Ich can nicht schwimmen. That's "I can't swim." In German. And I can't. 'Sides, I didn't bring a bathing suit.

JOAN  
So we stay in the shallow end.  
(starts removing clothes)  
And neither did I.

Gulp. Now in her bra and thong, Joan jumps in. Dean bobs around with the trash can on his head.

Tim slowly starts to undress. He carefully places his money belt on a table. He gets down to his T-shirt and tightie-whities. Far enough. He eases himself into the shallow end.

TIM  
Yow. Chilly. Ha.

Joan back strokes over to Tim. He tries to look elsewhere.

JOAN  
So.

TIM  
Yep. Ha. Fun. Fun day.

JOAN  
So.

Joan undoes her bra. Oh jeez.

TIM  
Oh jeez.

She removes the bra, revealing her breasts-- lovely, soft, bright white orbs surrounded by very tan skin. Tim shudders.

TIM (CONT'D)

You have tan. A tan. Tan line. You have a.

Joan gets close to Tim. His arms remain at his side.

TIM (CONT'D)

You. Are. You're. Married.

Closer.

TIM (CONT'D)

I have a fian...

She kisses him on the mouth, moves his hands to her breasts.

TIM (CONT'D)

Oh jeez...

Tim gives in. They make out. In the deep end, Dean takes the garbage can off his head and watches.

DEAN

Hell yeah.

Joan pulls off Tim's T-shirt, flings it aside. They're really going to town. OFF-SCREEN, we hear a sliding door open.

HIGH ANGLE (Specifically, four floors up): From this POV, it looks like Tim and Joan are having sex. Dean, meanwhile, has moved closer and may or may not be masturbating as he watches them. Reveal whose POV this is:

Orin has come out onto his balcony. He looks aghast.

ORIN

What the heck's going on down there?!

Tim looks up, makes fleeting eye contact with Orin. Shit! Tim scrambles to get out of the pool. Joan is a half-step behind him. Dean decides that now would be a good time to moon Orin.

DEAN

Suck my ass, Helgesson.

ORIN

I'm calling security!

Tim grabs his money belt as he and Joan run out of the pool area. [Note: Tim has a conspicuous erection.]

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Joan, still topless, leads Tim by the hand as they sprint toward her room. They run past a SECURITY GUARD along the way. [Note: Tim still has a conspicuous erection.]

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They burst into Joan's room, laughing to the point of tears.

TIM  
Holy crap! We're so dead!

Then Joan mauls Tim. She tackles him to her bed. He rolls on top of her. A primal, guttural howl erupts from Tim. Then:

TIM (CONT'D)  
I want to make love!

It's on.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - NIGHT (A LITTLE WHILE LATER)

Dean pounds on the door to the Junior Suite.

DEAN  
Come on, Ronimal! My key got wet.  
Wake up, man!  
(no response)  
Ah, fuck it.

Dean lumbers away, leaving puddles of water in his wake.

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Post-sex. Tim lies in bed, beatific. Joan, now wearing glasses and conservative PJ's, comes out of the bathroom.

TIM  
Your body's just so... firm and  
pretty. Mmm. Making love to you was  
just super... super awesome.

Joan just smiles as she gets into bed.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Wanna cuddle?

JOAN  
Cuddle? Um. OK.

TIM  
I love to cuddle.  
(nuzzles)  
You're special, Joan. So special...

Joan awkwardly pats Tim on the head as he drifts to sleep.

FADE OUT:

INT. JOAN'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Joan is talking on the phone with her son. Her demeanor is entirely different-- a tone and physicality we've not seen.

JOAN  
No baby, you guys are playing at  
Papillion/La Vista. Ralston is next  
week...  
(listens)  
Calm down, Tyler. You're not gonna  
miss it. It's not that far. Put  
your dad on.

Tim wakes up. The morning light hurts his hung over eyes.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Hey. Did you not look at the  
schedule on the fridge? Did we not  
have this conversation 10 minutes  
before I left?  
(listens, sighs)  
No, no, no. The *playoffs* are in  
Ralston. This is the last regular  
season game. He actually has a  
chance to play, Richie. Christ.

Tim staggers out of bed, smiles. Joan holds up a finger.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Fine, but watch your speed on 84th  
by Giles Road. Chris Beeler's  
gotten busted twice right there. By  
that golf course.  
(listens)  
Yeah, Tara Hills. Exactly. OK. Love  
you, too. Bye. Oh, tell Ty to kick  
some butt for me. 'K. See ya.

She hangs up. Tim does a theatrical stretch and yawn.

TIM  
Good morning.

JOAN

Crisis on the home front. Sorry if  
I woke you up.

TIM

No problemo.

Tim sees that Joan's computer is open-- and his Two Diamond presentation is up on the screen.

TIM (CONT'D)

Is that...? Were you looking at my  
Two Diamond presentation?

JOAN

Your cell phone kept ringing in  
your little fanny pack thing, so I  
shut it off. When I saw the discs,  
I figured I'd take a look. It's a  
solid presentation.

TIM

Um. Thanks. It was Roger Lemke's...

JOAN

Yeah, I see that.  
(wistful beat)  
You know we were together right?

TIM

What? Whaddaya...? You and... You  
and Roger, you mean?

JOAN

It's so stupid-- but everyone  
basically treated us like the  
Brangelina of ASMI for a while  
there. It ended two years ago. He  
was getting into some pretty weird  
stuff... as we all know now.

Tim is livid. He ejects his disc from Joan's computer.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Come on, Lippe. It doesn't matter.  
You knew, didn't you?

TIM

My foot I knew! No, I did not. And  
yes, it most certainly does matter.  
Man, this T's me off.

JOAN

Tell me you're not jealous. You  
can't be jealous. The guy's dead.

TIM

Every stinkin' place I go people  
remind me: You're no Roger Lemke.  
You're not as good as Roger Lemke.  
Here we go again.

JOAN

As good? Tim, Roger was a small-  
minded, egotistical jerk. You're an  
infinitely better man than he was.

This stops Tim in his tracks. *Better than Roger Lemke.* Wow.

TIM

Why were you with him then?

This stops Joan in *her* tracks. Her inner pain percolates.

JOAN

Why? I don't know. I don't know. I  
guess I probably maybe don't like  
myself very much. I don't know.

TIM

Hey, hey. Come on. You're pretty  
and smart and just super awesome.  
(coy)  
I like you.

She allows a chuckle. Tim rubs her shoulders, supportive.

TIM (CONT'D)

Grrr. I'm so frickin' confused. Last  
thing I thought was that I'd come to  
Cedar Rapids and fall in love.

Joan shakes him off.

JOAN

What are you talking about?

TIM

Us. This.

JOAN

What this? What are you talking  
about? There's no this. There's no  
us. I have a family.

TIM

What about...?

JOAN

What about it? I told you, what I  
do here... In Cedar Rapids... It  
stays here.

Tim gets up, even more pissed off than he was before.

TIM

Where the heck are my clothes?

JOAN

Come on, Tim. We're adults here.  
You're acting like a child...

TIM

Yeah. Well, you're acting like a  
fricking... prostitute.

He wraps up in a towel, grabs his money cummerbund and goes.

A moment. Joan looks at the rumpled bed sheets, starts making  
the bed. As she does, she sees the Clairol *Nice 'N' Easy* hair  
dye box in the garbage. Joan smiles a *what has become of my  
life* smile. She sits on the bed and stares out the window.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

A MAID looks up from her cart, smiles. Tim, wearing only the  
towel, mumbles as he walks by.

TIM

I lost my slacks somewhere.

INT. HOLIDOME POOL AREA - THAT MOMENT

Tim's clothes remain where he left them the night before. We  
drift off his clothes to a CHUBBY KID with floaties bobbing  
in the pool. The kid is staring at something:

Dean is asleep in a chaise lounge chair in his underpants.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tim approaches the Junior Suite just as Ronald exits. Tim  
self-consciously tightens the towel.

TIM

I'm really, really sorry Ronald. If I said anything, or...

RONALD

Hey, it's not Ronald Wilkes's job to judge you, Tim. End of the day, the Lord's got that covered. But am I disappointed? You bet I am. Heck, I'm all for having fun. But I didn't think you were one of these guys who comes down here *only* to get loaded and act like a derelict.

TIM

No, I'm not. I...

DEAN (O.S.)

Timbo! Ronimal!

Dean, still in his underpants, approaches.

DEAN (CONT'D)

You should have stuck around last night, Ronimal. Watching Timbo and the O-Fox get it on in the pool--shit, I was harder than Chinese arithmetic.

RONALD

What a couple of class acts. I'm running late for the prayer breakfast. Oh and Tim, Bill Krogstad's been trying to reach you all morning. FYI.

Ronald walks off. Tim deflates.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Bill Krogstad paces in a church, talking on his phone.

BILL KROGSTAD

Tim, Bill Krogstad again. Orin Helgesson told me about your little hootenanny in the pool there. Clear violation of ASMI's Morals Code--meaning we lose our ASMI certification, we lose our Two Diamond rating, we lose our customers and I lose any chance of ANYONE buying my goddamn business.

(MORE)

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
I may as well just commit  
suicide...

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)  
Father of the bride. We're set.

Reveal: An OBESE BRIDE, 25, and her greasy, mustached GROOM,  
40, pose for a PHOTOGRAPHER.

BILL KROGSTAD  
(to Photographer, despondent)  
Yah. Be there in a...  
(into phone)  
Call me when you get this Tim.  
Because unless you pull off a  
miracle, we're done. You've let me  
down hard. Cripes... shaping up to  
be the worst day of my life.

Krogstad hangs up. He walks over to his large, beaming  
daughter. He puts on a fake smile as she gives him a hug.

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
You look real beautiful, Kayla.  
Like a flower.

The photographer snaps a photo. Krogstad chokes back tears.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE BATHROOM - DAY

Tim stares at his cell phone. He looks in the mirror.

TIM  
Goddarnit!

He picks up a hairbrush and tries to break it. But it won't  
break. Dean enters.

DEAN  
That time of the month?  
(off Tim's look)  
C'mon man, it's gonna be OK.

TIM  
No it's not. Nothing is OK. My job,  
my fiancé...  
(dawns on him)  
God, I'm a philanderer. I've let  
Bill down. I've let everybody down.

DEAN  
C'mere, kiddo. Sit. Sit down.

Dean leads Tim out of the bathroom. Tim sits on a desk chair. Dean sits on the edge of the desk. He looks fatherly.

DEAN (CONT'D)

My ex, Patti? Well-established fact that this broad is a serious fucking cuntstain, right? But like I say, she's made it pretty much so the kids hate my guts-- I'm the bad guy. 'Cept when our 17-year-old daughter comes home PREGNANT-- oh yeah, happy day in the Ziegler household, lemme tell ya-- who's the one so depressed that she can't get out from under the afghan on the goddamn couch? Patti. And who's the one planning the baby showers and taking Meg to the gyno, all that shit? The fucking Deanzie. That's who.

Tim stares at Dean for an incredulous moment.

TIM

Is this...? Why is this all of a sudden about you, Dean?

DEAN

I'm telling you this, buddy, because it shows to go ya-- even if you're a fucking waste of space jerk-off like myself, there's always opportunities to do the right thing. If this Two Diamond bullshit and that matters so much, you'll find a way to make it right. If not, fuck it. Life's way too short to lose sleep over shit that don't matter.

Tim slowly nods, surprised to find himself moved.

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Orin enthusiastically introduces a WOMAN in a smart pantsuit.

ORIN

Without any more ado, our keynote speaker, Iowa Insurance Commissioner, Mrs. Susan Voss!

The room goes nuts. As Orin leaves the stage he spots Tim waiting in the wings. Tim gestures for Orin to come outside.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Orin, stone-faced, approaches Tim.

TIM

President Helgesson, please let me stay in the Two Diamond contest. Please. This isn't for me-- it's for Bill Krogstad. I can't let him down. Please just let me compete.

A moment. Orin nods, almost imperceptibly.

INT. HOLIDOME ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Tim and Orin silently ride the elevator to the fourth floor.

INT. THE TIFFANY SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Orin opens the door to the Tiffany Suite, a slightly larger version of the Junior Suite. He ushers Tim inside.

ORIN

(self-deprecating, but proud)  
Tiffany Suite. Bit much. Perks of the Presidency, guess you'd say. Please. Have a seat on the davenport.

Tim sits. Orin goes to the mini-fridge, takes out a Sprite.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Drink?

TIM

Ah, no. Thanks.

ORIN

Suit yourself.

Orin opens the Sprite, drinks. He reaches into a briefcase. He hands Tim a document with dozens of signatures on it.

TIM

This is the petition?

Tim shakes his head as he reads the names.

ORIN

Between you and me-- this was a ploy by Mike Pyle. Trying to drive down the value of Northlands so he could get it on the cheap.

Just as Deanzie predicted. Orin snatches back the petition. He rips it in two.

ORIN (CONT'D)

I just made that happen. Poof.  
Gone. Rainmaker.

(makes rain gesture)

Northlands keeps its three previous  
Two Diamond Awards.

TIM

Oh my gosh, really? Thank you.

Orin sits next to Tim on the couch, closer than he needs to.

ORIN

One thing Roger Lemke knew, Tim? He  
knew that when you get all dolled  
up, go to the prom-- the Big Dance--  
that you gotta be prepared to put  
out. To show a little teat.

(off Tim's confused look)

You ever hear of PayPal, Tim?

TIM

PayPal? Um, yeah. I've used it to  
pay for Beanie Babies on E-Bay...  
(guilty)

For my fiancé.

ORIN

Good. Thing you gotta ask yourself  
now is this: "Am I ready to dance?  
Am I ready to show a little TEAT?"

TIM

I don't understand what you mean...

ORIN

Calm down, Orin. I'm sorry. Please,  
let's talk E-Commerce for a minute.

Tim hesitantly follows Orin to the desk. A laptop sits open.

ORIN (CONT'D)

Four years ago, the *brain trust* at  
ASMI National mandated we go "on-  
line" for everything. Billing,  
newsletter, the whole shebang. Now  
I'm almost 70-years-old-- I's about  
as likely to figure this deal out  
as I was to learn Chinese. Well, as  
you know Roger Lemke was a real  
whiz on the computer...

TIM

You bet.

ORIN

So Roger's up here looking over this new system, and he gets one of these *lightbulb-going-off* kinda looks, the way he did. And he says, "Orin, with that newsletter going digital you're saving almost four grand a year in printing costs alone. Four grand. Pure profit." You see where this is going, Tim?

TIM

I can't say that I do...

ORIN

PayPal. That's where. What has ASMI ever given Orin Helgesson? Huh? Not dime one. Sure as shoot not an opportunity to serve on the National Board. Have I not been a good President? Do I not deserve a little something?

TIM

You're an awesome President...

ORIN

You're GODDAMN right I am!

Orin pounds his fist on the desk. Tim swallows hard.

ORIN (CONT'D)

But I don't know the first blessed thing about this PayPal deal. Roger had the on-line know-how, not me.

TIM

I'm still not reading you here...

ORIN

There aren't printing costs anymore, see? *The ASMI-teer's* digital. E-Commerce! Don't you get it, Tim? All that money-- almost 39-hundred dollars a year-- that goes into a PayPal account now. *My* PayPal account. But I've got no idea how to use it.

TIM

Do you literally mean you just need help, like, getting on-line, or...?

ORIN

Your performance in that scavenger hunt was first-rate. Then I see you in the pool making love to that floozy, I realize maybe you've got a bit of Lemke's, shall we say, *moral ambiguity*. I need that.

TIM

You're talking about stealing.

ORIN

Pontoon boats don't pay for themselves, Tim. Roger Lemke came to the prom. He showed me a little teat. I rewarded him with the Two Diamonds three years running. I'm prepared to do the same for you. What do you say? You take home those those Two Diamonds, Northlands' value skyrockets, Bill Krogstad retires to his time share. Everybody wins...

We push in on Tim-- at the crossroads of all crossroads. Outside, a clap of thunder booms ominously.

TIM

I'd be doing it for Northlands-- to keep it in Brown Valley and help my co-workers. To help Bill...

Tim looks away, avoiding eye contact. Then:

TIM (CONT'D)

What would you need me to do exactly...?

Orin claps once, smiles like a proud grandparent.

ORIN

OK, marvelous!

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY (OUTSIDE HORIZONS) - LATER

Dean has dozens of *Hello My Name Is* stickers with "Deanzie For President!" written on them. He forces one on a WOMAN.

DEAN

Vote for Deanzie. Vote for change.

WOMAN

I'm good thanks.

DEAN

Well fuck you very much, Carla.

The woman shakes her head and walks away. Ronald approaches.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I can count on your vote tomorrow,  
right Ronimal?

RONALD

Not a snowball's chance in Hades.

DEAN

You're all a bunch of dicks.

RONALD

(spots Tim O.S.)

Hey there, Hangover Harry. 18 hours  
and counting. Got your guns loaded  
for the Two Diamonds, partner?

Tim's guilt is apparent in his awkward demeanor.

TIM

Um. I... I don't know about that.

RONALD

Don't be nervous. You'll do fine.  
There's a prayer circle tonight  
before the entertainment program--  
might help ease your mind.

TIM

I'm sorry about... Ronald. Just...  
about everything...

Tim abruptly walks away. Dean and Ronald look at each other,  
perplexed, as Tim exits the hotel into the pouring rain.

EXT. CEDAR RAPIDS STREET - EVENING (MOMENTS LATER)

A cold, hard rain falls as Tim walks from the Holidome toward  
an Applebee's across the busy street.

TB  
INT. APPLEBEE'S - CONTINUOUS

Tim enters and walks to the bar. He's soaking wet and looks despondent. A cheery female bartender, KAY, 40, greets him.

KAY  
Happy Saturday! What'cha drinkin'?

TIM  
A large cream sherry, please.

As she pours a healthy glass of sherry:

KAY  
Looks like you could use some  
cheering up. What do you call it  
when it rains chickens and ducks?  
(pause)  
Fowl weather.

TIM  
(distracted)  
That's pretty hilarious.

Tim slams the sherry in one gulp-- to Kay's dismay.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Another please. I have to use the  
little boy's room.

Kay watches as Tim heads for the bathroom. He leaves his cell phone on the bar.

INT. APPLEBEE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tim pees at the urinal. He zips up, goes to wash his hands. In the mirror, he's shocked to see: A squinty, drugged out MAN, 25, exit the stall, followed by... Bree.

A moment of recognition.

TIM  
Bree?  
(off her confused look)  
It's Tim Lippe. From the ASMI  
convention. We met out in front of  
the Holidome across the street?

Bree coughs a hacking, phlegmy cough. She's very out of it.

TIM (CONT'D)

That's what you get from smoking all those-- what'd you call 'em, heaters? Smoker's cough. Ha. Just kidding. Butterscotch?

He removes a few hard candies from his pocket. She takes one.

TIM (CONT'D)

Small world, huh?

BREE

Totally. You wanna party?

TIM

Ooh, that's really awesome of you to ask. But I have a super important presentation in the morning unfortunately, so...

The squinty-eyed man, GARY, who has been drinking out of the sink, looks up at Tim.

GARY

I gotta work in the morning, too. Can't be productive or whatever without occasionally taking a little ride on the good times express. It's like, fuck that shit, yo.

TIM

Yeah. I hear that. L & C. Loud and... clear.

BREE

Seriously. We're going to this thing at my Uncle Ken's later-- after his shift's done.

Bree examines Tim, standing stiffly, hands in his pockets.

BREE (CONT'D)

You look like you're in serious need of some relaxation, dude.

Bree nonchalantly pinches his nose. Tim looks oddly touched.

TIM

I have had a pretty messed up day actually. Might not hurt to forget about it for a little while.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mike Pyle, in a bold chartreuse sweater vest, quietly confers with Orin outside a conference room.

ORIN

My advice, Mike? Pull the trigger. I've pretty well convinced him that his company's in the crapper. 85-thousand is as low as I could possibly get him.

MIKE PYLE

He's said nothing to indicate I'd have to hang onto his employees or the office up there, right?

ORIN

Bill was real clear about that. You're buying his clients-- not his brand. You've done this before, Mike. The Northlands policies will simply roll over into your Allstate office in Milwaukee. Unless you want to keep a satellite branch up there in North Palookaville.

MIKE PYLE

(chuckles)

OK. Let's pull the trigger.

ORIN

Oh, and Mike-- we're square on my consultant's fee?

MIKE PYLE

Ten percent, as agreed.

ORIN

Marvelous. Now just give me a second here...

INT. HOLIDOME CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Orin enters the conference room alone. He un-mutes a speakerphone. The Chicken Dance Polka blares from the other end.

ORIN

We're all systems go over here, Bill.

BILL KROGSTAD (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Praise Christ! This is super, Orin!

ORIN  
I was able to get Pyle up to 81-thousand for you, Bill, which is pretty amazing given all the... the tribulations and that. Of course that number doesn't include my 15 percent consultant's fee.

INT. VFW RECEPTION HALL - CONTINUOUS

WEDDING GUESTS do the chicken dance. Krogstad strains to be heard over the music.

BILL KROGSTAD  
Y'know what Orin, it's only a seven hour drive to Cedar Rapids. If I leave right now, I can be there first thing in the A-M and we can lock this sonofagun down.

ORIN (O.S. ON PHONE)  
I wouldn't want to put you out, Bill, but it would be nice to put pen to paper on a contract sooner than later.

BILL KROGSTAD  
Hell yes. You bet. It's no problem. I'll be there in time to see the Two Diamond presentations-- not that that matters to me anymore! Thanks a million, Orin!

Krogstad clicks off his phone, pumps his fist, overjoyed. He approaches his wife.

BILL KROGSTAD (CONT'D)  
Dione, the deal's going through! 81-grand! We're getting this albatross off our backs after all. I'm going to Cedar Rapids.

DIONE KROGSTAD  
No, Bill...

BILL KROGSTAD  
Goddamnit, Dione, not now. This is happening. No flex on this one!

Krogstad hustles out of the reception hall. The fleshy bride and her oily groom watch him go.

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - NIGHT

On stage, a JACK NICHOLSON IMPERSONATOR does a lame routine.

JACK NICHOLSON IMPERSONATOR  
... You can't handle the truth!

Laughter. Joan and Ronald are in the back of the room.

JOAN  
We used to get bands, Ronald. Real bands. Kansas. REO Speedwagon... Remember REO let me get on stage and play tambourine?

RONALD  
I'll go ahead and admit, this is an odd choice for an ASMI headliner. Budget crunch, I guess.

JACK NICHOLSON IMPERSONATOR  
Danny isn't here Mrs. Torrance!

Dean urgently approaches Joan and Ronald.

DEAN  
Are you ready for this? Mike Pyle of Shit just bought Northlands. Word is the cocksucker's liquidating Timbo and the whole Brown Valley operation.

RONALD  
What? Holy smokes. Does Tim know?

JOAN  
Don't look at me. I don't think Tim likes me very much anymore.

DEAN  
Cry me a fucking river, honey. This isn't about you for once.

JOAN  
Fuck off, Dean. Jackass.

RONALD  
Hey. Come on you guys. Cut it out.

The crowd guffaws as faux Jack does his thing.

JACK NICHOLSON IMPERSONATOR

I said, I'm not gonna hurt ya. I'm  
just going to bash your brains in.

A pall overtakes the room-- this used to be fun. Now it's  
just kind of sad.

DEAN

You two are a couple of serious  
fucking downers, man. Timbo left  
here in a huff a few hours ago--  
you saw him Ronimal. Maybe he  
already knew. Shit, the kid's one  
of my best friends...

RONALD

You met him two days ago, Ziegler.

DEAN

Know what, blow me Ronald. It's not  
my fault you're too goddamn afraid  
to open up and tell another man you  
love him. Do what you want, but the  
Deanzie's gonna make sure his  
friend is doing OK.

INT. UNCLE KEN'S PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

Boston's *MORE THAN A FEELING* blares on the radio of a pick-up  
truck. Tim politely rocks out, sandwiched between Bree and  
Gary in the front seat. A violent-looking, wire-thin man in  
an Applebee's uniform, UNCLE KEN, 40, drives. After a bit:

TIM

That must be pretty all right, Ken,  
getting half off at Applebee's all  
the time. I'd only weigh like 10-  
thousand pounds...

UNCLE KEN

Pass me that cube, Skeet.

Gary opens the glove box, passes Ken a glass pipe. Ken lights  
up, takes a hit, passes it to Bree. Bree follows suit, then  
passes the pipe to Tim. Tim looks at it, pauses.

TIM

Ah...? This would be marijuana, I'm  
guessing?

A beat. Then they all laugh like crazy. So Tim laughs, too.  
Bree puts the pipe in Tim's mouth. He looks frightened.

BREE

Suck the glass dick, dude.

They laugh. Bree lights the pipe. Tim inhales and instantly:  
oh fuck, Oh Fuck, OH FUCK! Tim's eyes bulge, his teeth grind.  
Then he shakes his head like a wet dog and violently COUGHS.

TIM

Oh jeez, oh jeez, oh jeez.

BREE

A butterscotch might help.

INT. HOLIDOME HALLWAY (OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM) - NIGHT

Dean has his phone to his ear. Ronald and Joan watch.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S. ON PHONE)

Hello.

DEAN

Trying to reach Tim Lippe. Who am I  
talking to?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S. ON PHONE)

This is Kay over at the Applebee's.  
Your friend left his phone here.

DEAN

That right? Is he there now?

KAY (O.S. ON PHONE)

No he's not. Be honest, I was kinda  
worried about the little guy...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

A series of shots as Tim-- sweaty, high and extremely hyper--  
dances with Bree to the deafening death metal. The party is a  
volatile mix of BIKER TYPES and SPEED FREAKS. Even though his  
salmon-colored oxford shirt has come untucked from his casual  
slacks, Tim still looks a tad out of place.

The following conversation is shouted because of the music.

TIM

I FEEL AMAZING! THIS IS AWESOME!

BREE

HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU HAVE ON YOU?

TIM

AH, CASH-WISE? ABOUT 90 DOLLARS, I THINK. I'VE GOT A TON OF TRAVELER'S CHECKS, THOUGH. WHY?

BREE

I'LL GET US SOME MORE CRYPTO. THEN YOU CAN FUCK ME IF YOU WANT.

TIM

(not sure he heard right)  
DO *WHAT* NOW?

BREE

JUST GIMME A HUNDRED.

Tim pauses. Then-- *what the heck*. He unzips his money belt...

INT. APPLEBEE'S - NIGHT

Dean, Ronald and Joan look worried as they listen to Kay, the friendly Applebee's bartender.

KAY

Like I say, he was pretty ripped from all that sherry. He left with Ken and them for some party.

DEAN

Who's Ken?

KAY

(conspiratorial)  
Ken's our cook. We all think he deals dope, though. I get along good with everyone. But Ken? He's just real different.

RONALD

Oh jeez. D'you know where they were going? Any idea?

KAY

You could try Ken's place. It's way out in the boonies...

INT. FARMHOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bree snorts a line in a disgusting, fetid bathroom. Tim sits on the counter. He's jacked up, sweaty and very chatty.

TIM

My mom became real protective of me after my dad passed. She didn't really let me play sports or any of that. Fact, if I think about it, I never really did much of anything. Except gardening, which I do enjoy.

BREE

Well you're livin' now. Here.

She offers Tim a line. He declines.

BREE (CONT'D)

I bought some pills, too. Here. These'll make you feel better.

She gives him a couple pills. He pops them without thinking.

TIM

Thanks. It's funny, though, because my job is all about protecting other people's dreams. But what about my dreams?

BREE

It could be like-- maybe...  
(does another line)

Whoa, shit's tight... Like maybe it has to do with your parents both dying? Like, maybe by protecting other people-- it's like you're trying to save your parents. Like somehow you feel like it's your fault? Like in your sub-conscience?

Something struck a nerve with Tim. He chokes up.

BREE (CONT'D)

And so you're not really like, living your own life fully? But dude, let me tell you this: the only *real* insurance in this life-- is love.

That did it. Now Tim is weeping. Bree notices.

BREE (CONT'D)

Oh baby, c'mere. C'mere.  
(hugs Tim)

You can fuck my ass if you want.

Before Tim can respond to that, the door bursts open. It's Uncle Ken, and he is NOT happy. Uh-oh.

CUT TO:

INT. BILL KROGSTAD'S LESABRE - NIGHT

Krogstad chugs coffee as he drives through the night.

CUT TO:

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - NIGHT

Orin and Mike Pyle laugh as they raise a glass for a toast.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Dean's minivan pulls into the gravel driveway of the dilapidated, isolated farmhouse. We can tell it's the party house by the music blasting and the DEGENERATES on the porch.

Dean and Joan climb out of the minivan. The rain is falling harder. Ronald slides open the back door and climbs out. He has on a long black rain coat. He nearly slips on some ice.

JOAN

Oh man. This place is bad news.

INT. FARMHOUSE BATHROOM/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Ken grabs Tim and shoves him out into the hall. Tim trips over a WASTED TEEN GIRL and stumbles against the wall.

WASTED TEEN GIRL

Faggot. Watch out.

Bree looks legitimately worried for Tim.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dean, Joan and Ronald formulate a plan.

DEAN

I'll be standing by 'case things get squirrely in there. Getaway vehicle type scenario.

JOAN

So you're sending me into that  
shithole? How chivalrous, Dean.

RONALD

You and me can go in, Joan. It'll  
be fine, I'm sure...

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Ken drags Tim into a kitchen full of PARTYGOERS gathered around a keg of Natural Ice. He shoves Tim face first against the wall. Tim takes this opportunity to notice the peeling wallpaper, which surprisingly has the same floral pattern as his own kitchen wallpaper.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ronald and Joan approach the front door. Judging from the looks on the faces of the DUDES on the porch, black folks are not a common sight at this residence. Gary, the squinty-eyed guy Tim met in the bathroom with Bree, ogles Joan.

GARY

Nice tits.

JOAN

(not missing a beat)

Thanks. Thank you. That's nice.

RONALD

We don't want any trouble, guys.  
We're just looking for our friend.

The dudes let Joan and Ronald pass into the house.

INT./EXT. DEAN'S MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Dean sits silently in the driver's seat. The quiet gets to him. He starts humming, then mumble-sings to himself and drums the steering wheel.

DEAN

*Mm-mow-mow... Two tickets to  
paradise. Hmm-hmm, pack your bags  
we'll leave tonight...*

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Joan and Ronald make their way through the house, clocking the aggressively angry looks as they go. Joan sees something:

JOAN

Oh shit.

IN THE KITCHEN: Uncle Ken is choking Tim. The PARTYGOERS cheer. Uncle Ken punches Tim in the stomach. Tim falls to the filthy linoleum. Bree protests.

BREE

But he paid for it, Uncle Ken...

UNCLE KEN

You can't let some dude pay for crystal meth and an ass fuck with a traveler's check, Bree. That shit can be traced.

TIM

(wheezing)

It's fully insured. 100 percent.

(then)

And we didn't make love...

UNCLE KEN

Shut the fuck up.

He kicks Tim hard. It's looking bad, when all of a sudden:

RONALD (O.S.)

Hey! HEY!

They all turn to see Ronald. In the black trench coat, he actually looks BAD ASS. He has one hand in the coat pocket.

RONALD (CONT'D)

(hard-core gangsta speak)

I may look like some suit wearin' businessman to y'all. Truth is, I'm straight up gangsta. And I always keeps one in the chamber...

(indicates the bulge in his pocket)

... in case you ponderin'. So I suggest for the time being that you let my nigga be. *Muthafucka*.

Uncle Ken blinks a few times. Then he lets Tim get up.

RONALD (CONT'D)

Indeed.

Ronald takes Tim's arm. Joan joins them. The three of them walk backwards toward the door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dean is outside the minivan, taking a leak on a tree. He looks toward the house.

DEAN

Oh fuck!

Ronald, Tim and Joan exit the house.

RONALD

Run!

They run for Dean's minivan. Tim slips, sliding across the snow and mud. Ronald drags him halfway across the lawn before Tim finally gets to his feet.

Dean, meanwhile, tries to finish peeing as he makes his way back to the van-- doing a sort of crab walk to avoid pissing on himself. Tim, Ronald and Joan dive into the minivan. Dean climbs back into the driver's seat.

Bree and gang exit the house and watch as Dean peels out, tossing up bits of gravel as he speeds away.

INT. DEAN'S MINIVAN - MOMENTS LATER

Dean looks nervously in the rearview mirror-- all clear. Ronald tries to calm Tim down in the backseat.

DEAN

What the fuck happened?

JOAN

Oh my God, Tim. Are you OK?

TIM

(jittery)

I don't know. I don't know. All I know is I was getting kicked and then Ronald was there talking like a ghetto person...

Dean looks at Joan and Ronald-- *What?*

RONALD

In order to extricate Tim from what was clearly a volatile situation, I did, in fact, rely on my community theater training. I don't like to brag, but I do a pretty convincing Omar from the HBO program, *The Wire*.  
(beat, as a gangsta)  
Least them crackers back yonder seemed to buy it.

DEAN

The Ronimal!

The minivan speeds through the dark, rainy night.

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tim sits on the couch bouncing his legs, still messed up.  
Joan sits with him. Dean and Ronald watch, worried.

TIM

I can't believe Bill would do this to me. He was like a father...

DEAN

Wasn't just Krogstad, Timbo. Orin's the real devil in this deal.

Joan shoots Dean a look-- *shut the fuck up*.

JOAN

You'll find another job, Lippe.  
Maybe even move to a new town.

RONALD

Shoot, you could come work for me if you wanted.

For some reason, Tim finds this funny. He laughs hysterically.

TIM

I love you, Joan.

JOAN

(to Dean & Ronald)  
Get some sleep you guys. I'll stay up with him-- make sure he doesn't chew his arm off.

Ronald sighs, nods. Dean kisses Tim's sweaty forehead.

DEAN  
Sleep good, little friend.

Dean and Ronald head for the bedroom. Tim looks at Joan.

TIM  
I didn't make love to Bree, Joan.

JOAN  
It doesn't matter. Here, lie down,  
Lippe.

Tim rests his head on Joan's lap. His eyes are still on fire.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
(sings quietly)  
*Oh dear, what can the matter be  
Johnny's so long at the fair. He  
promised to bring me a pocket of  
posies...*

Tim shuts his eyes. Joan must be a good mom.

A KNOCKING sound fades in, providing a:

SOUND BRIDGE TO:

INT. THE TIFFANY SUITE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Orin stirs in his king-size bed. The knocking is at his door. He gets out of bed, puts on a robe and goes to the door. He peeks through the eyehole.

ORIN  
Oh, Tim. Just a sec.

Orin glances in the mirror, smooths his hair. He undoes the chain and opens the door...

Tim bursts in and attacks! Orin, being relatively frail, immediately tumbles to the carpet. This can't be good.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT./EXT. BILL KROGSTAD'S LESABRE (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Krogstad yawns but drives with determination as his car passes a sign that reads CEDAR RAPIDS - 100 MILES.

TB

INT. JUNIOR SUITE - EARLY MORNING

Dean and Ronald sleep soundly in their beds. We drift off of them to the couch, where Joan has fallen asleep. She wakes, realizes that Tim is no longer there.

JOAN

Oh shit...

INT./EXT. TIM'S RENTAL CAR (DRIVING) - EARLY MORNING

The first hints of daylight illuminate the eastern sky. Kenny Loggins' *WHENEVER I CALL YOU FRIEND* plays on the radio. Tim, still hopped up, drives. He enthusiastically sings along.

TIM

*Sweet love showin' us a heavenly  
light. I never seen such a  
beautiful sight! See love glowin'  
on us every night, I know forever  
we'll be doin' it right!*

Tim drives past a farm and sees dozens of hogs foraging around in a sloppy pen. He stomps the brakes, sliding dangerously onto the muddy shoulder.

EXT. RURAL ROADSIDE/HOG FARM - CONTINUOUS

Tim gets out of the car. The peppy song is still playing. Tim sings along as he dances to the back of the car.

TIM

*I always wanna call you "friend!"  
Sweet love showin' us a heavenly...*

Tim opens up the trunk. That's when we see:

INSIDE THE TRUNK: Orin, in his pajamas, bound and gagged by Holiday Inn bedsheets. His shouts are muffled by the gag.

Tim pulls Orin from the trunk. Orin's feet are tied together, so he has to hop as Tim leads him toward the hog farm.

TIM (CONT'D)

Careful. It's super slippery.

Orin falls face first into the muddy ditch.

TIM (CONT'D)

Whoop. Careful now.

Tim helps Orin to his feet. Several enormous HOGS rush toward them on the other side of a barbed wire fence.

ORIN  
(terrified, through gag)  
Nnnnnnnnnnnnn!

TIM  
I did a ton of research on hog farm risk mitigation. Don't worry-- they might bite you a little if they think you're a food source. But there's never been a recorded hog-bite death. So...

With great difficulty, Tim picks up Orin. Then, he awkwardly hurls him over the barbed wire fence. Orin lands on his back in a deep pile of mud and hog shit. The hogs descend.

TIM (CONT'D)  
The Two Diamonds may be meaningless to you and Bill. But there are people who care about this stuff. Ronald Wilkes. Even Dean. Honest, good people. I'll come back for you after the Two Diamonds have been handed out to a *legitimate* winner. I'm really sorry about this, Orin, but the insurance industry deserves better than you.

Tim goes to his car, leaving Orin wriggling with the hogs.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A HUSBAND and WIFE sleep. Their phone rings. They stir. The clock says 6:45 AM. The woman rolls over.

WIFE  
Who the heck's calling at this hour on a Sunday morning?

The man answers the phone. (NOTE: We should now recognize the couple as the clients Tim dealt with in the Northlands conference room.)

HUSBAND  
Hello.

TIM (O.S. ON PHONE)  
Kurt Gambsky, Tim Lippe-- your insurance agent. How's Pam and the girls?

HUSBAND  
(whispers to wife)  
Tim Lippe.  
(to Tim)  
Um, fine, Tim. We're fine.  
Everything OK by you?

INT. TIM'S RENTAL CAR - CONTINUOUS

Tim talks on his cell as he drives.

TIM  
Well, I think everything's OK. Hope  
it is anyway. Listen Kurt, here's  
why I'm calling...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUNSET TERRACE BALLROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

An eagle soars on a large video screen. A patriotic anthem plays. We boom down from the screen to find Ronald. He's on stage finishing up his Two Diamond presentation.

RONALD  
People sometimes say that promises  
are cheap. You know what Ronald  
Wilkes says to that? *N-S-F*. Not so  
fast. At the end of the day, a  
man's word is a sacred creed. And  
the word I give you at Ronald  
Wilkes Insurance is-- *I will work  
for you*. Thank you.

The words, "*Ronald Wilkes Insurance: Working For You*" appear on screen. Ronald's face dissolves over the eagle.

The CROWD goes nuts, applauding wildly. Dean and Joan start a standing ovation. Ronald, though exhausted, beams on stage.

Tim is nowhere to be found. An EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER addresses the crowd.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER  
Once again folks, President  
Helgesson left a note under my door  
this morning saying he had to leave  
ASMI early due to a family  
emergency. I haven't been able to  
reach him on his mobile, but  
obviously our thoughts and prayers  
go out to Orin and his family.  
(MORE)

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER (CONT'D)  
(a moment of silence)  
Now... we're set to hear our final  
Two Diamond presenter. Tim Lip from  
Northlands Insurance. Tim?

Joan, Dean and Ronald exchange worried looks. Dean stands.

DEAN  
Hey Travis, I don't think Tim...

Just then, Tim appears. He is filthy-- covered in mud, sweat, hog shit and tears. He futilely smooths his hair and tries to tuck in his shirt as he takes the stage to sparse applause.

Tim goes to the computer set up on stage for Power Point. He puts in his disc. His presentation appears on the screen.

TIM  
(severely coughs)  
Thank you. I'm Tim Lippe. Hog farm  
risk mitigation... What is...?

Tim knocks a folder off the podium. Papers fly everywhere.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Smooth move, Ex-Lax.  
(a few chuckles)  
So, Hog... No. I, ah... this girl I  
met, sorry woman, I guess. She's  
23. She takes drugs, and I think  
might be some kind of prostitute.  
(a collective gasp)  
But she's super insightful. Y'know  
what she said to me last night?  
Said the only real insurance is  
love. That's fricking INTENSE,  
isn't it...?

Awkward murmurs. At this moment, a very pleased Bill Krogstad walks in with Mike Pyle. Krogstad tenses, however, when he sees Tim's state.

TIM (CONT'D)  
I'm... ah... Our only true safety  
net. Love. Crazy. I believe in  
insurance. I believe in love...

Tim laughs. He looks up and sees Bill.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Bill! Bill Krogstad. My former  
boss, everybody.

BILL KROGSTAD  
(jaw-clenched smile)  
What're you doing, Lippe?

TIM  
Why'd you do this, Bill? I don't understand.

Krogstad chuckles, preferring to avoid any public drama.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Why'd you do it, Bill? Why'd you do it? Why'd you lie, Bill?

BILL KROGSTAD  
(to the audience)  
Sorry, folks. Guess it's against the law now for a business owner to sell his own business. Must've missed that constitutional amendment.

This draws chuckles from the crowd.

TIM  
Insurance isn't just a business, Bill. Insurance is personal. I've got some savings. I could've gotten a loan. We could've worked something out.

BILL KROGSTAD  
(still playing to the crowd)  
Yeah, there's a guy you want running an agency, isn't it?  
(then)  
Come on, Tim, you're tired. You're looking foolish here. You couldn't run an agency if your life depended on it.

Tim's lip starts to quiver, and with great effort:

TIM  
Screw you, Bill. Screw you... hard.  
(gathers strength)  
That's a bunch of dog crap. You and Lemke, that... *fucking* pervert... you stole my ideas and called them your own for years. And I didn't say squat-- because I figured we were like a family. I may not have quite as many clients as Roger had. But my people are loyal, Bill.  
(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

I care about them. And guess what, they care about me. Fact, I've called more than half of them already this morning...

BILL KROGSTAD

Watch yourself, Lippe...

TIM

I knew which ones would be on their way to church, which ones I'd be waking up, which ones probably got a little blotto last night and might be hung over... And every single person I talked to-- every one-- is staying with me.

BILL KROGSTAD

You don't know what you're doing.

TIM

I do actually. I *do* know, Bill. And before the day is out, I'll have called all my clients. All of them.

(to Mike Pyle)

So hey, congratulations Pyle of Shit-- you just bought a company that's losing half its business.

DEAN

Fuck yeah Timbo!

Mike Pyle blinks several times. Krogstad seethes. Before Tim can fully bask in the glow of his triumph:

ORIN (O.S.)

Right there, officer. That's him.

Orin, still in his pajamas and caked in hog shit, points TWO CEDAR RAPIDS COPS in Tim's direction. Tactful pandemonium ensues. Dean, Ronald and Joan rush to Tim's side.

JOAN

RONALD

Jesus Lippe, what did you do? Aw jeez. This is no good.

DEAN

What's the fucking charge?

TIM

Here.

Before the cops get to him, Tim hands Dean a crumpled piece of paper.

DEAN

What's this?

TIM

You'll figure it out.

A cop cuffs Tim and leads him out of the ballroom.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Tim sits on a metal bench in a dank holding cell.

TIM

I know what you're thinking--  
thinking "this wiseacre's full of  
baloney." Am I right?

Reveal: He's chatting with a massive black man, REGINALD, 30.

TIM (CONT'D)

But I'm telling you Reginald,  
you're actually a perfect candidate  
for term life...

A GUARD opens the cell door.

GUARD

Tim Lip?

REGINALD

He pronounce it like Lippy.

GUARD

Well, you're outta here, Lippe.

Tim hands Reginald a business card.

TIM

I'm serious. Call any time-- on the  
mobile or home phone, though. The  
office number's no good anymore.

Reginald gives Tim a warm hug.

REGINALD

Thanks Tim. You're all right.

EXT. CITY LOCK-UP - DAY

Tim walks out of the jail into the bright sunlight. Dean is there waiting for him. They walk toward Dean's minivan.

TIM

Don't even say it, Deanzie-- no one butt rammed me or whatever in there.

DEAN

"Butt ram!" I love it!

Dean gives Tim a hug. He then pulls a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket-- it's the sheet Tim gave him earlier.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Want your get out of jail free card back?

TIM

Not particularly.

DEAN

When I saw it, at first I was like, shit am I supposed to take money out of the account, or what?

TIM

Did you?

DEAN

Nah, it was more fun watching the smug fuck sweat. I told him I'd rat his pathetic ass out if he didn't drop the charges against you.

TIM

(a genuine smile)  
Sweet.

Dean tosses the paper into the trash. We now see what it says. On Holiday Inn stationary, in Tim's scrawl: *www.paypal.com*.  
*Username: OrinHelgesson. Password: PontoonMan123.*

INT. DEAN'S MINIVAN - DAY

Dean drives. Ronald rides shotgun. Tim and Joan are in back. The minivan cruises past downtown Cedar Rapids. Tim looks up at the buildings. So tall.

Ronald considers his Two Diamond plaque.

RONALD

It's not as cool as I thought it'd be. I don't think this is even real wood.

DEAN

(lacking his usual energy)  
I'll show you some real wood.

Ronald starts giggling. It turns into a laugh. The laugh becomes infectious. Before long, Tim, Joan, Ronald and Dean are all laughing their asses off.

EXT. CEDAR RAPIDS AIRPORT - EVENING

Dean, Ronald and Joan accompany Tim, now cleaned up, to the airport. Tim sets down his old American Tourister.

TIM

Well.

JOAN

Deep subject. D'aar. Get it?  
(punches his arm)  
I told you you were a hero, Lippe.  
*Insurance Man* saves the day!

TIM

Tss. Ruined it more like.

JOAN

True sign of a good day.

DEAN

Well, pal, it's been real.

TIM

(chokes up)  
I'm gonna miss you guys.

RONALD

Yeah. You bet.

DEAN

Listen, my cousin Bob-- guy made a truckload selling these little scented pine trees all the ragheads hang in their cabs? Fuckin' believe that? Anyhow, he's got a sweet cottage up on Lake of the Woods. Canada? I can use it whenever I want.

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

I say we book it for June, before  
the mosquitoes go apeshit up there.

RONALD

More time in a tightly enclosed  
space with Ziegler. Gee, sign me up.

TIM

I think it sounds awesome.

RONALD

Actually, me too. The Ronimal could  
use a vacation.

DEAN

Done.

Dean picks Tim up in a bear hug, spins him around. Ronald  
gives Tim a more subdued hug. Then there's Joan.

JOAN

So. Keep in touch. E-mail, all that  
good stuff.

TIM

You bet. You bet. You too.

JOAN

If you're ever-- not that you would  
be-- ever in Oh-my-God, Nebraska...

TIM

Yeah. *Mutual of Omaha's Wild  
Kingdom*. I used to watch that.  
Would be cool some day to see.

JOAN

Yeah. Look me up.

TIM

So.

He puts out his hand. She laughs and hugs him instead. Tim  
closes his eyes. She feels so good. Smells so good.

Joan's eyes are wide open. She swallows hard. She will not  
cry. *It's OK. Keep telling yourself everything will be OK...*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Tim looks out the window, watching the city lights of Cedar Rapids fade away. He catches his reflection in the window. He exhales. He smiles a little.

Tim relaxes in his seat. He looks at his seat mate, a pleasant-looking WOMAN in her mid-30s.

TIM  
So, did you do anything fun in  
Cedar Rapids...?

FADE TO BLACK:

**SUPERSCRIPT: One Day Later**

FADE IN:

INT. OLD COUNTRY BUFFET - NIGHT

Tim loads a plate with macaroni, meatloaf, peas and mashed potatoes. Millie selects fish, potatoes, rice and corn.

They wordlessly walk from the buffet to a booth. They sit and start eating in silence. After a bit:

TIM  
How's the walleye?

MILLIE  
Decent. Not bad.

TIM  
Meatloaf's on the dry side.

MILLIE  
Mm.

Tim tries to smile at Millie. He is surprised to see that her eyes are filling with tears.

TIM  
What's...?

Without saying a word, Millie struggles to pry the small diamond engagement ring from her sausage-like finger. Finally, she gets it off and hands it to Tim.

He thinks of protesting. Instead, he takes the ring and puts it in his pocket. Millie snuffles a bit, composes herself. Tim opens his mouth to say something. Before he can think of anything to say:

Wade sits down with a ridiculously full plate of food.

WADE

Shit, where were they hidin' the meatloaf...?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TIM'S BACKYARD - DAY

Tim dumps birdseed in the feeder. Sunlight filters through the tree branches. The snow is starting to melt.

NEIGHBOR MAN (O.S.)

You're just gonna attract red squirrels with that junk, Tim.

Tim smiles at his old, gnarled neighbor, LESLIE, 80.

TIM

How ya doin' there, Leslie?

LESLIE

Ach, I'm too old to give a shit.

They take off their gloves to shake hands. Leslie won't let go of Tim's hand-- the way old men sometimes do.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Bill Krogstad told me he's switching our policy to some fella down in Milwaukee. Allstate. Says I won't notice a bit of difference in coverage or nothin'.

TIM

No, you probably won't.

LESLIE

Mm. Anyhow, I told the cocksucker to go fuck himself. Says I'm going with Tim Lippe. A man I can trust.  
(a wink)

It's a good thing you're doin'-- keepin' work in Brown Valley.

TIM

I'm trying...

Leslie pats Tim on the shoulder. As he heads back inside:

LESLIE

Let me know when them red squirrels  
show up at your feeder. I'll borrow  
you my 22.

Tim chuckles. He goes back to his yard. He pauses. At his  
feeder: A robin. A sure sign of spring.

An uplifting song fades in, along with:

TIM (V.O.)

The chances we take in life are  
called risks.

DISSOLVE TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS --

- ON A LAKE: Tim is pulled behind a boat on waterskis. He  
falls face first, skipping across the lake.

TIM (V.O.)

We pay insurance companies premiums  
as a way of hedging our bets, in  
case those risks we take cause us  
or our property harm.

- AT A BALL DIAMOND: Tim, playing in a summer softball  
league, slides headfirst into third base.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's the point of insurance-- so  
we can live and love life to the  
fullest.

- AT A STRIP MALL: A COUPLE walks past a discount shoe store  
and into *TIM LIPPE INSURANCE*. The camera follows them into  
the cramped, decidedly unimpressive office. Tim, seated at a  
desk, looks directly at the camera and stiffly addresses it.

TIM (CONT'D)

At Tim Lippe Insurance, we can't  
guarantee that you'll live your  
life without devastating losses.  
But we can give you peace of mind--  
knowing that if something awful or  
unfortunate *does* happen-- we'll  
have you covered. Tim Lippe  
Insurance. Insuring your Home *and*  
your Hopes.

A fanciful unicorn prances across the screen, and we:

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CANADIAN CABIN - DAY

REVEAL: Tim, Dean and Ronald have been watching Tim's ad on a TV at a lakeside cabin. Tim looks proudly at his friends.

RONALD

Can I be honest here, Tim?

TIM

You bet.

DEAN

What was with the fuckin' unicorn?

TIM

What? It represented hope...

RONALD

All's I'm saying is you might've wanted to hire an actor with some professional training...

DEAN

Jesus-- a retarded kid just sitting there yelling would've been better than you.

TIM

Aw, you're both a couple of a-holes...

Tim whips an empty beer can at Dean. The three friends laugh-- living life in the moment. As it should be.

FADE OUT:

THE END