

OWEN ' S MANUAL

by

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INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

We OPEN on a big ball of COVERS. Bunched together in the middle of a queen size bed. As an ALARM CLOCK wails, like a truck backing up, a HAND emerges from the sheets. Just enough to feel around. And smack the SNOOZE.

Minutes later the alarm goes again. Again the hand sneaks out. Smacks the snooze. It goes on like this: Alarm, snooze, alarm, snooze. Finally, from under the pile, a soft GROAN. The covers are pulled down:

We get our first look at OWEN GRAY. Tangled mass of hair. Lazy, thick scraggly beard. And a look on his face. Not sadness so much as, though his day is all of ten seconds old, DISAPPOINTMENT.

Owen rolls out of bed. Strips off boxers and a t-shirt. Shows us a well-sculpted body. Or at least what happens when you have one and don't exercise for nine years. He examines his gut in the mirror. Sucks it in, lets it out.

Does get in a certain kind of morning workout - masturbating over the toilet. With about the same level of enthusiasm he had for getting out of bed.

He turns on the shower. Water DRIBBLES OUT. He jiggles the showerhead. Nothing. Stares up at it blankly. Gets in anyway. Stands under little droplets of water...

Rifles through a pile of clothes on the floor. Chooses the least wrinkled shirt and paint combo. They don't really match, but Owen doesn't really care. His socks have holes. His shoes are tattered and old.

He throws on a ridiculous Elmer Fudd winter hat and is out the door...

SUBTITLE: MONDAY

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - GARAGE - MORNING

Owen walks out into bitter cold to find a three inch layer of ICE on the windshield of his 1996 Saturn.

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Through a tiny HOLE he's scraped off the windshield, Owen looks out into parking lot like traffic. Passes a sign:

- WELCOME TO HIGH POINT, WISCONSIN. POPULATION: FRIENDLY!

(CONTINUED)

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Owen picks up his cell. Calls WORK VOICEMAIL. Punches in his password. Hears the VOICEMAIL LADY say:

VOICEMAIL LADY

"You have one new message."

Owen sighs. Hits a button. Hears the distinctive nasal drone of NED NASH, his boss:

NED NASH

Owen, it's Ned. Timmy's laptop crashed again. Take it home this weekend and bring the files back, k? We'll be in by nine Monday.

He looks at the clock on the dash. 8:49.

VOICEMAIL LADY

"Received Friday 4:59 p.m."

OWEN

Sweet.

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen's now off the freeway, in entirely different but equally painful traffic. He comes up on a McDonalds. Looks at the clock. 8:52. Hesitates.

INT. MCDONALDS DRIVE THRU - MORNING

OWEN

One McGriddle, and uh, one...other McGriddle.

INT. MCDONALDS PARKING LOT - MORNING

Owen sits in the parking lot, scarfing down McGriddle number two. It's 8:56.

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen rides the ass of a car in front of him.

OWEN

Oh my God!! GO!!!

He cuts a guy off, who HONKS and FLIPS HIM OFF. Owen gives the guy a deadpan THUMBS UP.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MORNING

Owen rides up with SUSAN and BECKY, two bleached blonde, vapid girls in their 20s. They ignore Owen. Focus on EDDIE, big, beefy, ex-lineman like. The girls hang on his every word. And he knows it.

EDDIE

My article on pre-game playlists
for top high schools? Homestead
gave me this insane external hard
drive. 60 gigs, 10,000 songs.

He smiles at them both, flirting with them equally.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You should come over sometime,
check it out.

BECKY

I'd love to.

Susan shoots Becky a nasty look. Owen rolls his eyes.
The elevator stops at the top floor, at...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - TOP FLOOR - MORNING

A glass building the length of a football field. Maze of cubicles in the middle. MAGAZINE COVERS, blown up and framed, line the walls. Enormous block letters etched into the lobby wall say:

- HIP PARENT MAGAZINE: The Know. You're Soooo In!

A hundred or so writers, researchers and interns are running frantic, trying to meet deadlines, including:

The WOMEN KNITTING, who don't talk or ever look up from their needles.

The YOUNG MOMMIES holding BABIES in Bjorn carriers:

YOUNG MOMMIE

A nanny has to speak some language
that will be useful for my kids to
learn. Guatemalan does not count.

Eddie and other SPORTS GUYS tossing a nurf football,
talking high school sports:

EDDIE

They have to be juiced. The third
graders had mustaches. They all
looked like 70s porn stars...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Susan & Becky babbling about middle school trends:

SUSAN

Lipstick that color totally like
invites rainbow parties, girls
wearing different lipsticks, boys
trying to get rainbows on their -

Owen walks past them all. Looks at a clock. 9:04.

INT. NED NASH'S OFFICE - MORNING

He comes up on a large corner office. Peeks his head in. It's dark. He grabs a laptop off a chair. Waits for it to boot up. Looks out the window:

Sees a balding, ruddy-faced little MAN coming into the building. His fat, ruddy-faced little son waddling behind him. They are NED NASH, 40s, and TIMMY NASH, 10. Owen starts punching keys on the laptop.

OWEN

"Gee, Owen, I don't know what
could be wrong with little Timmy's
laptop. All he does is type up
his school work, check espn.com,
and occasionally- "

From the computer, we hear a PORN GIRL shriek:

PORN GIRL

OH JAM IT IN MY DIRTY LITTLE HOLE!

On the laptop Porn Girl's getting reamed by a half dozen PORN DUDES. As Owen hits keys, she narrates:

PORN GIRL (CONT'D)

OH THAT'S THE DIRTY HALF DOZEN!

OWEN

(off the monitor)
Update security settings? Yes.
Recover all docs? Yes. Kill
little Timmy for being the world's
dirtiest 10 year-old? Yes.

NED NASH (O.S.)

Owen.

Owen wheels around to see Ned and Timmy come in. He hands Ned the laptop. Nonchalant. Cool.

NED NASH (CONT'D)

The hellsa matter with it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Owen looks right at Timmy.

OWEN

Something keeps getting jammed in there...

Timmy picks his nose, ignores Owen's stare.

NED NASH

It's the fourth time you've "fixed it" this month. Once more and I'll have tell Alex. Cole.

Ned holds up a FORBES MAGAZINE. On the cover is an extraordinarily good looking man surrounded by stacks of MAGAZINES. Next to him are the words THIS IS ALEX COLE.

NED NASH (CONT'D)

Doubt the big boss would be too happy to hear the magazine he gave his brother-in-law to run has an IT guy who can't fix a laptop...

Owen forces a fake smile. Asshole.

NED NASH (CONT'D)

Hey have a look at the copier, k?

INT. HIP PARENT - COPY ROOM - MORNING

Owen is surrounded by angry CO-WORKERS as he stands before an enormous COPIER-FAX-SCANNER-MAKE YOUR LIFE A LIVING HELL machine. This one talks to you:

COPIER

Paper jammed...paper jammed...
paper jammed...paper jammed...

In a stunning FLASH, Owen punches two buttons, opens three drawers, and yanks out a single sheet of paper from somewhere deep within the core of the thing. Immediately the machine stops talking. Until:

COPIER (CONT'D)

Ready...ready...ready...

As his Co-Workers look at him with awe, Owen walks off. Clearly the days of deriving any satisfaction from fixing shit have long since passed. He looks at a clock on the wall. Wanting the day to be over. It's 9:06.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen comes into his office. A supply closet/server room. Behind him is a shelf filled with TOILET PAPER, a MOP and CLEANING PRODUCTS. The rest of the room is filled with computers, servers, blinking and beeping devices.

It's all pouring data into three giant MONITORS on Owen's desk. The second Owen sits, his phone starts ringing. A lot. Most people calling think Owen's name is IRWIN.

KNITTING WOMAN (V.O.)

IRWIN! Why's my email so slow?

YOUNG MOMMY (V.O.)

Irwin, I can't log on to IM.

SPORTS GUY (V.O.)

Irwin, my blackberry won't sync with my computer!

Owen scans one of his monitors. His phone still ringing incessantly. Then it dawns on him. He grabs his phone:

OWEN

Eddie. Please tell me you're not downloading that entire 60 gig hard drive onto your computer here, which has 40 gigs of space.

INT. EDDIE'S CUBICLE - MORNING

Eddie's kneeling in his cube. Susan's at his chair. ITUNES on his computer: DOWNLOADING SONG 23 OF 10,404.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen slams the phone down. His other lines have not stopped ringing. He types an email:

OWEN

A required server maintenance will be performed this morning. Email access will be slow and sporadic. Apologies for any inconvenience. Sincerely yours, this job's awesome, life's really working out for me, OWEN in the IT department.

He hits send. The phones simultaneously STOP ringing. Silence for a moment. Then they ALL START RINGING AGAIN. Owen puts his head on his desk. A second later, looks up:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARA KLEIN is sitting there. Whip smart, curvy in a way that makes it hard not to stare, genuinely funny, and somehow vulnerable enough to want you to want her. And you do. Owen sure as hell does. Which he deals with by simultaneously sabotaging and trying to ignore:

OWEN (CONT'D)

If you're here about the email,
I'm never talking to you again.

CARA

Don't I get a little credit?

OWEN

Sorry. What's up?

She's clutching a notebook to her chest. He fights the urge to look up her skirt as she swings her legs around like a little kid.

CARA

It's my lead for this article. It
might be the worst lead in the
history of the written word.

OWEN

Worse than last month's?

CARA

Now that's just mean.

OWEN

Read it to me.

CARA

How about if I email it? Email
will be up again in what, like,
five, six hours?

OWEN

Not funny...

CARA

It's a little funny. Little Timmy
send some porn around the office?

OWEN

Read me your lead.

CARA

Okay, but first you have to know
I'm writing about cheerleaders -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

An intellectual piece. Challenge the readers, got it.

CARA

It's not what you think. One girl on the squad got a boob job at 14, proceeded to become captain of the freshman cheerleaders, girlfriend of the freshman quarterback, so -

OWEN

One by one they all got boob jobs?

CARA

Each one bigger than the last.

OWEN

Really? How big were -

CARA

38 Triple G's. Good story, right?

OWEN

'Specially if it comes with photos

CARA

Cute. So my lead -

OWEN

Just read it to me.

A familiar look passes between them.

CARA

God Owen, promise you won't tell anyone how pathetic I am. Head story editor who can't come up with a lead! I practically begged Ned to let me write this too -

OWEN

You're just a little stuck.

CARA

Yeah and it's your fault. You started helping me and now I'm, I'm addicted to you, Owen.

She's teasing, but not really. He has no idea what to do with her flirting. So he says nothing. Until:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OWEN

"With all the emphasis our country places on the superficial these days, on impossible expectations of beauty, it's nice to know some places are free from those pressures, and from parents teaching kids that self-esteem is just two bags of silicon away. Sadly, that place is not EatMyAssNowhere, Wisconsin."

Cara scribbles it all down, eating it up.

CARA

Gas City, Illinois, actually. But it's brilliant. You're brilliant. I know I don't have to say this -

OWEN

I won't say a word.

She gives him a shy smile and goes. Two seconds later...

INT. HIP PARENT - OFFICE - MORNING

Owen leans his head out into the hallway. Watching Cara walk back to her office. Doesn't notice Eddie swing by.

EDDIE

Would you stick it in her already? You know she wants a little P.O.O.

OWEN

Poo?

EDDIE

Piece of Owen.

OWEN

Just cuz she talks to me without wanting me to fix her Ipod... besides, no fraternizing with co-workers, remember?

Eddie gives Owen a blank stare.

EDDIE

Hey so, sorry about this morning. And Happy Birthday.

(off Owen's look)

Susan told me. She and Becky set up some lunch for you off campus. It'll be fun. You should go...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Are you going?

EDDIE

Hell no.

(back at Cara)

But I know someone who is...

INT. INSIDE TEEN WEEKLY - ELEVATOR - DAY

Owen's at the elevator with Becky, Susan, the Young Mommies, and the Knitting Women, who talk to each other. No one talks to Owen. Until Cara comes around the corner.

OWEN

I was getting nervous.

CARA

I can't go. Alex Cole got me a guest column for SI.

OWEN

That's amazing! Isn't it?

CARA

Just once I'd like to write about something that mattered. Walk into some amazing hotel suite, talk to someone who's actually done something with their life.

OWEN

Locker room full of hot Canadians?

CARA

There's one other problem.

OWEN

You're missing my birthday lunch?

CARA

Okay, two other problems.

OWEN

What's the first one?

CARA

Can you teach me everything there is to know about hockey before the elevator gets here?

The elevator DINGS. Everyone starts piling in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

How much do you know?

CARA

I know how they have to keep
dribbling or it's a penalty.
What's that called again?

OWEN

Basketball.

BECKY

Shake a leg, Owen! We can't go
without the birthday boy...
otherwise we can't expense it.

Owen follows Becky into the elevator. Looks back at Cara.

OWEN

Call me if you need anything.

CARA

Sorry about your lunch.

As the doors close on him:

OWEN

You should be...

INT. BECKY REYNOLDS' YUKON - DAY

Owen's crammed in the way back of an SUV, face pressed
against the window. Surrounded by babies and knitting
needles. Becky and Susan are singing along, in fever
pitched unison, to MY MILKSHAKE.

INT. BENNIGANS - DAY

At a booth in a crowded Bennigans, Owen's in the center
seat, staring straight ahead. Blank. The Knitting Women
knit, the Young Mommies tend to their little ones, and
Becky and Susan engage in deep conversation:

BECKY

I totally want to do something on
discrimination against people with
personal shoppers, because I have
a personal shopper, and I totally
shouldn't have to, like, apologize
for it or whatever.

SUSAN

Totally.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

I mean a lot of the things my personal shopper picks out go to support AIDS in Afghanistan.

SUSAN

You are so generous.

MY MILKSHAKE comes on in the place. The girls erupt all over again. The WAITRESS appears with CAKE. The girls artfully roll MILKSHAKE right into "Happy Birthday."

They're joined by the BENNIGANS' STAFF, who all think Owen's name is IRWIN. Happy Birthday, dear Irwin. Happy Birthday to you. Owen reluctantly blows out the candles.

BECKY

We have something for you...

He can hardly wait. Becky takes a CARD from her purse. The girls pretend to be excited. Owen tears it open:

- On the front is picture of the most wrinkled OLD GUY you've ever seen. He's got one foot in an actual GRAVE.

OWEN

"You're a year older, but don't worry, soon it won't matter..."

He looks inside the card:

OWEN (CONT'D)

"Because you'll be dead."

Owen's not amused.

BECKY

We all signed it.

Owen scans the mindless crap they wrote. But then his fake smile fades. In the corner of the card, he sees:

- TO MY SECRET WEAPON. HAVE A HAPPY ONE. YOUR BUD, CARA.

OWEN

(mumbling)
I knew it.

BECKY

So, how old are you today?

OWEN

30.

Becky GASPS like he said 130.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG MOMMIE

You know 68% of moms think if a guy is single and over 35, there's something wrong with him, and they'd be worried about him marrying their daughters.

Owen has no idea how to respond to that.

YOUNG MOMMIE 2

Men are idiots. Don't they know if they wait too long, all the good ones get taken?

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We're CLOSE on a WEDDING INVITATION. Beautiful, elegant, expensive. Addressed to OWEN GRAY and GUEST. Owen's on his couch, about to open it, when the phone rings. He spies the caller ID. Pauses. Sighs. Gives in.

OWEN

Hey, Mom.

INT. OWEN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

In the kitchen of a modest Midwestern home, OWEN'S MOM, plump, pleasant-faced, oblivious in a don't-want-to-think-about-anything-sad kinda way, is singing. Badly.

OWEN'S MOM

Happy Birdle Turtle toodle youdle,
Happy Birdle Turtle toodle youdle,
Happy Birdle Turtle toodle youdle -

OWEN (V.O.)

How are you, Mom?

OWEN'S MOM

Good, honey. How was your day?

OWEN (V.O.)

Incredibly...standard.

OWEN'S MOM

Did you get Grandma's card?

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's picks up a BIRTHDAY CARD that says "TO MY GRANDSON ON HIS 12TH BIRTHDAY." Inside, 3 dollars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Very thoughtful.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)

And you know your father and I made a donation to plant a tree in your name.

OWEN

How could I forget?

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)

Did anything else exciting come?

Owen looks at the INVITATION.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hayden Bell's wedding, honey!

Owen opens the invitation. A half dozen other little cards inside. All elegant, all perfect.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

New Year's Eve. In Kauai, Hawaii!

Owen's just staring at the invitation.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Her husband-to-be does a lot of work there. He's a very successful real estate, um, what's the word?

OWEN

Ditch digger?

OWEN'S MOM

Mogul! A very successful real estate mogul. And of course you know how well Hayden's doing...

INSERT:

We're CLOSE on HAYDEN BELL, achingly beautiful. And in a regal, flowing silk cap and gown, as she receives the NOBEL PEACE PRIZE. A PHOTO of the moment becomes the front page of THE NEW YORK TIMES, under the headline:

CLEAN WATER INVENTION GETS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR CHEMICAL ENGINEER & YOUNGEST RECIPIENT EVER!

The photo of Hayden becomes an endless stream of MAGAZINE COVERS. Ending on the COVER of PEOPLE'S 50 MOST BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. She's certainly that. Half the world's in love with her. The other half just don't have TV.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)
It's going to be quite the affair.
I saw a whole special on E! about
who's coming - heads of state,
celebrities, not to mention your
father and I.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN
You guys are invited?

OWEN'S MOM
Yes, we're invited, thank you very
much. I see Hayden whenever she
comes home. Which is a lot more
than once every five Christmases,
like someone I know...

Owen just watches that one sail past.

OWEN'S MOM (CONT'D)
So I RSVP'd yes for all of us -

OWEN
YOU WHAT!?

OWEN'S MOM
What? Hayden didn't have your
address so she sent your
invitation here. You don't return
phone calls, she needed an answer -

OWEN
Mom, it's New Year's Eve. Did you
stop to think I might have plans?

OWEN'S MOM
Well do you?

OWEN
Well, no, but -

OWEN'S MOM
What could be better than a
wedding in Hawaii for your oldest
and dearest friend?

OWEN
Mom, I haven't talked to Hayden
since...

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Owen, 21, thin, is on ONE KNEE in a small dorm room. Holding out a MICROSCOPIC DIAMOND RING to Hayden, who's in just a ROBE. She WINCES as SWEATY HOT GUY comes in the room in just a towel. Carrying bottles of Gatorade. Owen looks at Hayden, utterly devastated...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

OWEN

College.

OWEN'S MOM

Hang on, honey...

She pauses as we hear a MAN'S VOICE in the background.

OWEN'S MOM (CONT'D)

Your father wants me to tell you Hayden invited you with a "Plus One," so I RSVP'd for you and a "friend."

OWEN

Mom, for the last time, I don't have a "friend."

OWEN'S MOM

Friend, partner, whatever they're calling it these days -

OWEN

Mom, I don't have a partner!

OWEN'S MOM

Oh, honey. I hope you're being careful...

OWEN

Mom, I'm not -

OWEN'S MOM

Listen noodle, I have to run. I gave Hayden your number. She wanted to know all about you. I said you don't tell us a thing. She should call you herself.

OWEN

Unbelievable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN'S MOM

I know, it's so exciting, isn't it? Happy Birthday, you old man!

Owen hangs up the phone. Does a face plant into the couch. Doesn't move for a long moment. Finally lifts his head up. Eyes a set of DUMBBELLS in the corner. And above it on a bookshelf, a JOINT and book of matches.

He walks over. Looks at the dumbbells. And the joint. Wavering. Settles on the dumbbells. Picks one up. And immediately puts it back down. Lights the joint. Goes to the fridge, which is filled with:

Four beers, a bag of OREOS, a small container of HALF & HALF, and a two month old lime. He snags two of the beers. Then the third. And the fourth.

Sits back on the couch. Puffs on the joint. Cracks open a beer. Flips on the TV. The MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL jingle begins. The first smile we've seen on Owen spreads across his face as he picks up the phone:

OWEN

Yeah for delivery? Large meat lovers, and cheesy bread with extra garlic butter dipping sauce.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

We see Owen go through a typical night, stoned and alone in his apartment:

- On the couch, really really into FINDING NEMO.
- Dancing around, rapping in perfect sync to NUTHIN' BUT A G THANG ("It's the capital S, so yes, I'm fresh, N-Double O-P, D-O-Double G-Y, D-O-Double G, ya see")
- Perusing MATCH.COM. Stopping on a PRETTY GIRL'S profile. Agonizing over emailing her. Hitting the WINK AT HER option instead.
- SURFING PORN. Going into the bathroom. After a few moments, we hear the TOILET FLUSH. He comes back out. Sits back at the computer. Goes back to MATCH.COM.
- Pouring Oreos into a bowl. Adding HALF & HALF. Eating the cookies as if they were cereal...
- Asleep on the couch. FIGHT CLUB on TV. Waking up. Stumbling into bed...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

SUBTITLE: TUESDAY

MONTAGE:

- In a rapid BLUR of images, we see Owen go through the EXACT SAME ROUTINE as yesterday. Slapping the snooze. Dribbling shower. Traffic. McDonalds. Phone ringing incessantly at work. Watching the server. Fixing the COPIER and someone's BLACKBERRY. Until...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's back on the couch. Flipping channels, eating Oreos. Empty beer cans and a half smoked joint in front of him again. He starts to nod off when the TV booms:

INFOMERCIAL VOICE (V.O.)
Are you tired of the life you're
leading? Do you find yourself
wondering, "How did I get here?
Is this all life is about?" Well,
wonder no more!

ON TV, an attractive BUFF GUY is on a couch, a thick BELT around his waist and dozens of little WIRES hooked up to his bare chest and head. All of them PULSING...

INFORMERCIAL VOICE (V.O.)
The SVELTE-BELT is here! Other
exercise equipment promises to
change your life, but this is the
only one that will! Scientifically
proven, patent pending, to change
the way you look and feel...

The Buff Guy walks around a picturesque neighborhood with the belt and electrodes still attached to his body.

INFOMERCIAL VOICE
As you sit on your couch or walk
through your neighborhood, the
Svelte-Belt sends an electric
current pulsing through your body,
causing your muscles and
neurotransmitters to respond.
Helping you to look, think and
feel better almost instantly.

Owen snickers at how ridiculous this is.

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INFOMERCIAL VOICE (CONT'D)

The Svelte-Belt is sold in stores
for as much as \$149.99. Order now
and it's yours for only \$59.99.
Along with a special one time
bonus offer: Dr. Zero's Pheromone
Pills, the only supplement you'll
ever need to attract everything
and everyone you've ever wanted
right into your life.

Buff Guy pops a few pills from a bottle that says DR. Z'S
P-PILLS. Instantly an army of SEXY GIRLS swarm.

INFOMERCIAL VOICE (CONT'D)

Change your body and your life
today! What are you waiting for?
CALL NOW!

Owen looks around his apartment. At the dumbbells he
never uses. At the Oreos and beer cans at his feet. At
the WEDDING INVITATION on the table. His superiority
fading. He reaches for the phone. Muttering:

OWEN

Seriously. What do I have to lose?

We hear an AUTOMATED VOICE answer...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

SUBTITLE: TWO NIGHTS LATER

Owen comes home and checks his mailbox. Empty but for a
UPS slip. Signed for by M. MCGREEVY.

INT. MRS. MCGREEVY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen knocks on a door. It opens just enough for one
beady little EYE to poke out. The eye belongs to MRS.
MCGREEVY, Owen's 80-something landlady. She's very sweet.

MRS. MCGREEVY

What the hell do you want?

OWEN

Nice to see you too, Mrs.
McGreevy. I believe you have a
package for me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. MCGREEVY

It's a violation of your lease to have pets, firearms, or nuclear explosives in the building.

OWEN

It's exercise equipment.

MRS. MCGREEVY

Since when do you exercise?

OWEN

Can I just have the box, please?

MRS. MCGREEVY

You got a girlfriend or something?

OWEN

No.

MRS. MCGREEVY

Why not? You religious?

OWEN

No, Mrs. McGreevy, I'm just at a point in my life where I can tell in the first 20 seconds whether a girl is...

He trails off. But she knows what he means.

MRS. MCGREEVY

No girls like that? How about at work? I understand young people meet at work these days...

OWEN

I'm not allowed to date at work.

MRS. MCGREEVY

Because you're the janitor?

OWEN

I'm not the janitor, I'm the IT guy. And it's company policy. It applies to everyone.

MRS. MCGREEVY

Maybe you should quit.

OWEN

Or maybe I'm just one of those people who isn't supposed to end up with anybody.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN (CONT'D)

Who just dies alone in some tiny
apartment with no water pressure.

Mrs. McGreevy pauses. Opens the door all the way. Owen
follows her inside...

INT. MRS. MCGREEVY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen looks around her dark, cluttered apartment. Every
inch of it - walls, shelves, everything - filled with
photos and little trinkets. He hears something odd in
the kitchen. High-pitched WHIMPERING.

OWEN

What's that sound?

He heads towards her tiny kitchen. Stops on seeing a
chubby DACHSHUND in the corner. STUFFED ANIMAL DOG in
his mouth. A pretty well-worn one, too. And in an
instant we see why:

MRS. MCGREEVY

Wrinkles, don't even think about -

WRINKLES drops the stuffed animal right at Owen's feet.
MOUNTS it and starts HUMMING the crud out of it.

MRS. MCGREEVY (CONT'D)

Wrinkles, stop that this instant!

OWEN

I thought we couldn't have pets in
the building?

Mrs. McGreevy gives Owen a dirty look. Shoves a UPS box
at him and hurries him out the door. Slams it shut
behind him. He calls back to her as she locks it:

OWEN (CONT'D)

Always a pleasure, Mrs. McGreevy.
And nice meeting you, Wrinkles...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen rips open the UPS box. Inside is NOTHING. Not even
the little peanut things. Just the MANUAL. He tosses
the box aside in disgust. Then thinks better of it.
Picks up the manual, looks at the back of it.

Grabs the phone. It rings and rings until a GUY answers.
He talks like a smart-mouthed 8th grader, with the accent
of Ghandi. Not quite SHORT CIRCUIT, but close:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY (V.O.)
Owen, how are ya, bro?

OWEN
Who the hell is this? How do you
know my name?

INT. MANUAL CALL CENTER - NIGHT

We're CLOSE on a pleasant-faced INDIAN GUY. Dark, thoughtful eyes. We stay CLOSE on him. And so have no idea where he actually is. He is RAJEESH.

RAJEESH
'Sup bro? I'm Rajeesh. Your
personal customer service rep.
What's the trouble Barney Rubble?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN
The trouble is I ordered this
thing and it didn't come.

RAJEESH
Do we me a favor, bro. Peep the
table of contents.

OWEN
You don't understand. I don't
need help putting it together.
There's nothing to put together.

RAJEESH
Dude, just trust me. The T-O-C.

Owen opens the manual. Looks at the TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR BOSS & HIS SON'S LAPTOP
- HOW TO ASK OUT & TAKE OUT THAT GIRL IN YOUR OFFICE
- HOW TO GET TO WORK FASTER
- HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR GUT & MAN BOOBS
- HOW TO STOP BEING EVERYONE'S PERSONAL I.T. BITCH
- HOW TO FIX THE WATER PRESSURE IN YOUR SHOWER

Owen flips through it. It's dense, complicated. DIAGRAMS, DRAWINGS, WARNINGS, CAUTIONS. He slaps it shut. The cover says OWEN'S MANUAL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

This is a dream. I'm asleep.

RAJEESH

You're awake, boss.

OWEN

Then it's the pot. I'm
hallucinating.

RAJEESH

It's not the pot. This is really
happening. Just be cool, okay?
Don't freak out on me.

OWEN

(freaking out)

I'M NOT FREAKING OUT!! I just need
you to tell me who the hell you
are, and how you know all this
about me?!!

RAJEESH

Bro, this is nothing to be afraid
of. Happens all the time.

OWEN

Oh really?! You send out a lot of
these things?

RAJEESH

We do. Most people don't even
look at 'em. They throw 'em away
or put 'em in a drawer with their
other manuals.

OWEN

So why me? Why did I get this?

RAJEESH

There are certain triggers which
cause us to send a manual.
Ordering a Svelte-Belt -

OWEN

That's why? Because I ordered
some stupid -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAJEESH

We cross reference folks who order the Svelte-Belt between one and three in the morning with credit card debt, number of times you've winked at a girl on Match.com without ever emailing her, number of times you've Tivo'd reruns of Laguna Beach: the Real OC. Other triggers we find effective.

OWEN

Who's "we?" Effective for what?

RAJEESH

The manual gets sent to people we feel could use some...assistance.

Owen's other line beeps.

OWEN

That's my other line.

RAJEESH

Take it, bro. I'm up in this piece 24-7 to answer any manual-related questions.

OWEN

Uh huh, thanks. You're a figment of my imagination cuz I'm a little too stoned. Nice talking to ya.

Owen hangs up on Rajeesh. Then looks at his phone to see who's calling on the other line: NED NASH.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Asshole is calling me at home!

Owen's not going to answer it. But then he pauses. Slowly, nervously looks in the manual. Finds: HOW TO DEAL WITH YOUR BOSS & HIS SON'S LAPTOP. Flips to that page. Phone's still ringing. He reads:

OWEN (CONT'D)

"The next time Ned calls you at home, pick up the phone."

Unsure, and a little frightened, Owen answers.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. NED NASH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned is on the couch in the large living room of his home. Timmy's laptop in his lap. Phone to his ear.

NED NASH

Owen, little Timmy's laptop crashed again. I need you to come over and fix it, k? He's got some project due in the morning. Also the DirecTV is acting up again.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen looks at the manual. Considers this for a second, remembering...

EXT. NED NASH'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

In a DRIVING BLIZZARD, Owen is hanging off the side of Ned's house, one hand holding on for dear life to the DIRECTV SATELLITE, the other waving wildly, trying to get the attention of the PARTYGUESTS enjoying Thanksgiving turkey and a warm fire inside.

OWEN

Little help...!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen looks at the manual: REFUSE TO GO TO HIS HOUSE.

OWEN

I uh...refuse to go to your house.

NED NASH (V.O.)

You what?

He looks at the manual again: OFFER TO WALK HIM THROUGH IT OVER THE PHONE. DO THE COMPUTER FIRST.

OWEN

But I can walk you through it over the phone...the computer first?

Pause.

NED NASH (V.O.)

Fine. What the hell do I do?

Manual: TELL HIM WHAT YOU WOULD NORMALLY DO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN
Okay. Double click "My Computer."

INT. NED NASH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned keeps the phone to his ear as Owen guides him.

OWEN (V.O.)
Click on "search." Type in
"Temporary Internet files."

On Timmy's LAPTOP SCREEN, we see the computer searching.

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You should see the word "Alltola"
near the top. Then...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen looks at the manual: MAKE HIM SEE IT.

OWEN
Double click on it.

INT. NED NASH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned does and then watches as a VIDEO pops up...

NED NASH
"Jug Jammers?" What the -

On the Laptop Screen, a BIG BREASTED GIRL moans as she
rides a BIG PORN GUY.

GAIL NASH (O.S.)
Ned! What in God's name -

Ned leaps off the couch to find his wife, GAIL NASH, well
put together, 40s, standing behind him. Horrified at
what she sees on the computer screen in his hands.

NED NASH
Honey, it's not me! It's Timmy.
(yelling upstairs)
Timothy, you get down here and
admit what you've done!

GAIL NASH
So this is what you're doing in
the basement all night? Checking
our portfolio, my ass!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ned suddenly remembers he's holding the phone.

NED NASH

Owen?

OWEN (V.O.)

How's it going?

NED NASH

Uh, I'll, uh, call you back. Or
just see you tomorrow...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen hangs up, stunned. Puts the manual down. Picks up
a half-smoked joint. SMELLS it. Puts it back down.

OWEN

I'll sleep it off. This will all
be fine in the morning...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Owen comes into the living room. Sees the MANUAL on the
couch. It wasn't a dream. Or a hallucination. He walks
out of the apartment. A second later comes back in.
Takes the MANUAL with him...

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen's looking at the same shitty traffic through the
same tiny HOLE he's scraped off his windshield. And then
it dawns on him. He opens the manual. Reads:

OWEN

"How to Get to Work Faster: Stop
taking the freeway." No shit.

He looks at the manual again.

OWEN (CONT'D)

"Drive 35 and take side streets.
It's faster than riding people's
asses on the freeway. And it'll
add 4.7 years to your life by
lowering your blood pressure..."

EXT. FREEWAY - MORNING

We see Owen's Saturn exit the freeway. Then take a
series of turns, slowly winding through neighborhoods.

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen takes one last turn and stops, no idea where he is. But then he looks up to see - his OFFICE BUILDING. He's stunned as he pulls into the parking garage...

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

Owen mumbles to himself as he reads:

OWEN

"In general, you have to relax.
Try being nice to everyone you
meet or interact with."

Owen laughs. Goes back to it:

OWEN (CONT'D)

"Don't laugh. It's a revolutionary
idea. If everyone woke up and did
it tomorrow, the world would
instantly be a better place."

INT. HIP PARENT - MORNING

Owen walks into the office to find everyone milling around, goofing off. A strange energy in the place. He passes Eddie's cubicle. He's there again with Susan.

OWEN

Eddie, what's going on?

EDDIE

Check your email, man.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Owen flips on his computer. Before he can even sit, MS. PATTERSON, Ned's SECRETARY, pops her head in:

MS. PATTERSON

You're wanted in Ned's office.

Owen looks at her with dread.

INT. NED NASH'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen cautiously enters Ned's office. Ned's chair is turned around so Owen's staring at the back of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

You wanted to see me, Mr. Nash?

Ned's chair swivels around. Cara is sitting in it.

CARA

Actually, I did.

OWEN

What are you doing in here?

CARA

Waiting for you. You wanna tell me what happened last night?

Owen clutches the manual, suddenly suspicious.

CARA (CONT'D)

Why Mrs. Nash thinks Ned was using little Timmy's computer to check out some pretty nasty porn?

OWEN

How do you know that?

CARA

She emailed her brother about it. Only she didn't just email Alex Cole, she cc'd every one of his employees. All 2,408 of us.

OWEN

On purpose?

Cara shrugs.

OWEN (CONT'D)

So where's Ned?

CARA

Enjoying the first of his many days off.

OWEN

He got canned?

CARA

Leave of absence. Forced. And indefinite.

Owen realizes the chain of events he started. Just by opening the manual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARA (CONT'D)
(a little nervous)
Alex Cole asked me to take over.
Temporarily. As of today, I'm
sort of running the magazine.

He beams at her. Genuinely happy for her. She can sense it, and it calms her a little. Ms. Patterson, now Cara's secretary, comes in, holding CARPET SWATCHES.

MS. PATTERSON
Ms. Klein, the decorators sent
these over for you.

CARA
Thanks. You can leave them on the
desk, Ms. Patterson.

Ms. Patterson does and then goes. Cara turns to Owen.

CARA (CONT'D)
So?! What happened? Did you
finally just decide to tell Ned
his son is a dirty little pervert?

OWEN
Uh...

Ms. Patterson pops back in.

MS. PATTERSON
Ms. Klein, Alex Cole for you -

CARA
(to Owen)
Sorry. I have to -

She gets up and walks him out.

OWEN
So this makes you my boss now?

CARA
For now. But don't worry. I
watch all my porn on DVD.

He laughs. She really is amazing.

CARA (CONT'D)
And don't think you're off the
hook. You're telling me how this
happened. I know you had
something to do with it...

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen comes into his office, losing it. Sits at his desk. Starts scanning the table of contents in the manual.

OWEN

What the hell else is in here?!

He stops on HOW TO ASK OUT & TAKE OUT THAT GIRL IN YOUR OFFICE. Reads:

OWEN (CONT'D)

"Make sure you've already helped Ned with little Timmy's laptop."

INT. CALL CENTER - DAY

Rajeesh is playing online POKER in a small cube. He's surrounded by other TELEMARKETER-looking types. We see him clearly for the first time. Mid-20s, handsome. Feet up on his desk. Headset on his head.

RAJEESH

Go for Rajeesh!

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

What the hell's happening, Raj?!

RAJEESH

Owen! I'm up 378K in online poker on these Harvard Law douchebags. I swear my friend's 6 year-old is smarter than all these Ivy League bitches. So, how much you loving the manual, bro?

OWEN

Not that much, Raj. I got Ned fired. I'm following this thing that came from God knows where. I don't have a clue who you are -

RAJEESH

I'm Raj, bro. Your personal customer service rep -

OWEN

Yeah but where are you? How is this happening!? What if I don't want to use the manual? What if I just want things to stay the way they are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAJEESH

You want to sit on your couch getting stoned and eating Oreos for the rest of your life, be my guest. Just toss the manual out.

Pause.

OWEN

I just said "what if." Obviously, I wish...things were better. Used to think they would be. At some point, stopped believing I guess.

RAJEESH

Well it ain't over yet. You got hooked up for a reason, bro.

OWEN

I thought you said it was 'cause I ordered the Svelte Belt. That it happens all the time.

RAJEESH

I just said that so you wouldn't freak out on me. Yeah, people get manuals - Abraham, Moses, Oprah. People chosen to change the course of history.

OWEN

What are you talking about? How the hell am I going to do that?

RAJEESH

By doing everything in the manual.

OWEN

I still don't know why I got it.

RAJEESH

Nobody does. Maybe it has something to do with the wedding.

OWEN

You know about the wedding?

RAJEESH

I know everything in your manual. Maybe God chose you, bro. Maybe he looked at the grand plan and said, "man, if Owen doesn't get to the wedding and do all this other shit beforehand, the whole thing's gonna fall apart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAJEESH (CONT'D)

So I'll give him a manual to make sure he doesn't screw it up."

OWEN

You really think that's true?

RAJEESH

I have no idea. There's also a theory it's just someone here in the call center fucking with people. My money's on Vindalu. That cat is straight up crazy.

OWEN

But it might be from God?

RAJEESH

God, the universe, Vindalu. Someone gave you a manual. All you have to do is use it.

OWEN

And it's gonna change the course of history once I do?

RAJEESH

It already is. God winks, my man. If we only pay attention, it's happening all the time. I'm telling you, bro, your life's about to change...

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - DAY

Owen's at a table in the bookstore chain. Reading a book entitled HEARING GOD & OTHER PSYCHOTIC DELUSIONS. Next to him is a STACK of other books: THE CHOSEN; THE BIBLE FOR DUMMIES; 100 MEN WHO CHANGED HISTORY...

OWEN

(reading)

"You might be insane. But beware! History is rife with those who ignored the legitimate call of a deity. In each case, they were..."

Owen puts the book down. And:

OWEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

SMOTE, Raj!? SMOTE?! You think maybe you shoulda mentioned that!?

INT. CALL CENTER - NIGHT

As Owen screams at him, Rajeeesh plays HALO on XBOX 360, which he's hooked up to his monitor. Rajeeesh starts furiously pounding his keyboard, which Owen can hear.

OWEN (V.O.)
What the hell are you doing?!

RAJEEESH
I got the beta for Halo 4, bro.
It's so genius!

OWEN (V.O.)
Raj, if there are serious
consequences for not doing what's
in the manual, I need to know!

RAJEEESH
Why? You're gonna do everything
in there anyway, right? Or you
back to looking for excuses to
avoid making your life better?

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - NIGHT

Owen's driving home past kids having snowball fights.

OWEN
That's not what I'm doing.

RAJEEESH (V.O.)
Oh really? You ask Cara out yet?
Or you worried about that No
Fraternization policy?

OWEN
That shit is real! Just like my
fear of being smote!

RAJEEESH (V.O.)
Do you even know what smote means?

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's at his COMPUTER, reading from DICTIONARY.COM:

OWEN
"Smote. To damage, demolish,
destroy, or inflict a heavy blow,
often by a supreme being..."

Owen pauses. Looks up at the sky. Grabs the manual:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN (CONT'D)
 "How to Ask Out and Take Out That
 Girl in Your Office."

The PHONE RINGS. He steals a look at the manual. Then:

OWEN (CONT'D)
 Hello?

EXT. KAUAI BEACH - SUNSET

A middle aged black WOMAN is walking along a white sandy beach. She's wearing a BLUETOOTH HEADSET and carrying a CLIPBOARD. Her tone is tight, officious, vaguely bitchy:

BLAIR
 Owen Gray?

OWEN (V.O.)
 Um...who wants to know?

Blair stops.

BLAIR
 Please, honey, I was with Madge on
 Material Girl. So you can check
 the 'tude at the door, umk? Now
 are you Owen or not?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN
 (pause)
 Yes.

BLAIR (V.O.)
 Lovely. I'm Blair, Hayden Bell's
 chief assistant and wedding
 coordinator. The Misses has a
 special request for you re: the
 nuptials. And she wants to tell
 you herself. So call her cell. I
 just texted you the number...

Owen's cell phone BUZZES.

BLAIR (CONT'D)
 FYI, we have ex-Navy Seals working
 security who know 111 ways to kill
 you, so I wouldn't give the number
 out if I was you...ooh, look at
 the pretty dolphins!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Owen's in bed, staring up at the ceiling. Mumbling:

OWEN
Special request? To get back
together? For me to be her last
before...? I mean I was goood...

INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

With a DEPECHE MODE POSTER on the ceiling above him,
Owen, 18, is on top of Hayden, 18. He THRUSTS, COMES,
and APOLOGIZES. Pretty much all at once:

OWEN
Ugh! Oh! Sorry!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen collapses onto the couch. Switches on the TV.
Grabs his cell phone. Looks at the TEXT from Blair:
HAYDEN'S CELL #. Dials it. As a CNN story comes on:

CNN ANCHOR (ON TV)
Nobel Prize Winner and People's 50
Most Beautiful Covergirl Hayden
Bell will be married in Kauai on
New Year's Eve in what is sure to
be the wedding of the year...

HAYDEN BELL (V.O.)
Hello?

Owen immediately hangs up his phone.

OWEN
(softly)
Shit.

He looks at his phone. Debating. Looks at the manual.

OWEN (CONT'D)
This is ridiculous. I used to
take baths with this girl. I
don't need a manual to call her...

He dials her again. Straight to VOICEMAIL:

HAYDEN BELL
Hi, it's Hayden. Sorry I missed
you. Leave a message and I'll get
back to you as soon as I can...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Hayden. Sorry about, I was in a bad cell...been a long time. Your assistant said to call so here I am. Calling. I guess you have a special request for me. So, call me...this is Owen. Gray.

He hangs up the phone.

CNN ANCHOR (ON TV)

The guest list is a who's who of celebrities, Nobel Prize-winners, and world leaders.

OWEN

And Owen and his mom and dad...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Owen's staring at himself in the mirror. Looks over and scans the manual on the counter, hearing Rajeeesh's voice:

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

With that hair and beard combo, you're basically telling the world "I give up." What's next? You start wearing sweats everywhere?

Owen grabs a SCISSORS. Takes a final look.

OWEN

Fuck it.

He starts chopping off the BEARD. As his face transforms, MUSIC corresponds to each new look:

- Starting with THE LIFE & TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS, then KUNG FU FIGHTING for the Fu Man Chu, 70'S PORN CHICKA-WOW-WOW for the mustache, Jimmy Buffett's PENCIL THIN MUSTACHE, to BABYFACE (you got the cutest little)...

Owen then turns the scissors on his hair. Again we see a series of different looks as he wets it down and plays with it: ED GRIMLEY, the FAUX-HAWK, COUSIN IT. Until:

EXT. OWEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

Owen walks out to his car again in the morning. Without the Elmer Fudd hat. He looks like a totally different person. Short, sheared hair. Clean shaven. For the first time, we see how genuinely handsome he is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's carrying a big POT of BOILING WATER.

RAJEESH (V.O.)
"How to Clean Off Your Ice-Covered
Windshield."

Owen tosses the water onto the WINDSHIELD...which
COLLAPSES under the weight of the snow and ice. Falling
in one solid piece right into his front seat.

RAJEESH (V.O.)(CONT'D)
Make sure you clean off all the
snow first. That shit is heavy.

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen, now driving a car with no windshield - or one in
the back seat to be exact - is still scanning the manual
as he drives.

RAJEESH (V.O.)
Be really nice to everyone you
interact with.

Owen stops at a four-way stop just as a MINI COOPER does.
He is about to gun it when he thinks better of it. WAVES
the guy ahead...

OWEN
No, no. Go right ahead...

The little Mini turns right. Owen follows it thru side
streets. Whoever's driving is doing so like a blind
grandmother. Owen starts getting annoyed:

OWEN (CONT'D)
DRIVE YOUR FUCKING CAR!!

Owen glances at the manual next to him. Takes a deep
breath. Trying to stay calm...

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Owen pulls into a gas station behind the Mini Cooper. As
Owen gets out, so does the Mini's driver: Blonde hair.
Blue Eyes. 6'5" and JACKED. He is THOR.

Owen takes one look at him and quietly thanks the manual
for not freaking out on the guy while driving behind him.
As they pump gas next to each other, Thor leans over and:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOR

Sorry I was driving like a jackass
back there.

OWEN

Oh, no worries, man.

THOR

Starting a new job today. Still
trying to find my way around. I'm
a trainer at that gym down the
street. We're giving away free
training sessions if you're
interested...

Owen notices a giant LIGHTNING BOLT TATOO on Thor's
enormous bicep. He looks at it oddly. Like he's seen it
before...

INT. OWEN'S SATURN - MORNING

Owen's frantically flipping through the manual. Stops.
On a PICTURE of a LIGHTNING BOLT.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Follow the lightning where it
takes you...

INT. GYM - MORNING

Owen is following Thor around an upscale gym. Full of
tight, beautiful bodies.

THOR

So first off, you gotta stop
playing with yourself so much.

OWEN

Excuse me?

THOR

I tell all my clients. Makes you
lazy. Think about it. How are
you right after sex? Asleep in
what, 5, 10 seconds?

OWEN

I've never fallen asleep after
whippin' up a batch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THOR

Still takes a lot out of you.
Every time you get the urge, come
here instead. Use that energy for
something positive. Have you
lifted weights before?

OWEN

Yeah dude. I lifted all the time
in college.

THOR

How long ago was that?

Owen sucks in his gut. Puffs out his chest.

OWEN

Not that long.

THOR

Don't worry. We'll start easy.

OWEN

We don't have to start easy. I
think I can handle one workout...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Owen's on his couch, every inch of his body covered with
ICE PACKS. Clearly unable to move. Paging through the
manual. When the PHONE RINGS. Owen groans. Rolls off
the couch. CRAWLS over to the phone.

OWEN

Hello?

INT. CARA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Cara is hanging pictures in her newly decorated office.

CARA

Are you playing hookey?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

A personal trainer tried to kill
me. I think he might be a Nazi.
Or a Viking.

Cara starts laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN (CONT'D)

It's not funny. I really screwed
up my back.

She starts laughing harder.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I'm just going to rest today.

Still harder.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Okay. Really glad you called.
I'm hanging up now...

CARA

Wait! I'm sorry. I actually
thought you were skipping because
I'm your boss now and you figured -

OWEN

I wouldn't do that to you.

She smiles, loving that about him.

CARA

So SI's gonna print my hockey
story, but they have notes. Which
are a complete mystery. Why did
it have to be hockey? Any other
sport. Badminton, skydiving -

His CELL PHONE buzzes. Across the room. He groans
again. Slowly moves towards it.

CARA (CONT'D)

Maybe we could go over them when
you're feeling better?

Owen looks at his cell. HAYDEN BELL. He's frozen. Says
nothing. Which makes Cara think he's not interested.

CARA (CONT'D)

Or not.

OWEN

No, it's just, someone's -

CARA

I should let you rest. Feel
better, okay?

She hangs up. Just as Owen grabs his cell. Which now
says: MISSED CALL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

Fantastic.

His cell buzzes again - NEW MESSAGE. He listens as Hayden says:

HAYDEN (V.O.)

Hi Owen. I didn't want to leave this on a message, but we keep missing each other, and the wedding's getting so close...

Owen sits up expectantly.

HAYDEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was initially going to be small and now it's huge and last minute and you're the only person coming who's really known me since all this whatever happened...

A pause. Owen's nervous, excited.

HAYDEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It'd mean a lot if you'd...give a toast.

Owen's face falls. THAT was the special request?

HAYDEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Also your mom said you're bringing someone. I can't wait to meet... them. And I need their name for the place setting. So call me.

He clicks his phone shut. Sits down at his computer. Pulls up a CALENDAR. Counts the days to New Years. There aren't many.

OWEN

Oh I'm in trouble...

He opens the manual. HOW TO ASK OUT & TAKE OUT THAT GIRL IN YOUR OFFICE. He hesitates. Flips ahead a few pages. Forces himself to get up and head out the door...

INT. WHOLE FOODS - PRODUCE - DAY

Owen's in the crowded upscale grocery store. In the produce section. Manual in hand.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

How to Get Rid of Your Gut & Man Boobs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He asks a young CLERK.

OWEN
Are these organic prunes?

The Clerk looks at him like he's insane. Nods.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - FROZEN FOODS - DAY

Owen is in front of the frozen foods. Staring longingly at the BEN N JERRY'S. The young Clerk walks by and -

CLERK
You're drooling, sir.

Owen snaps out of it.

RAJEESH (V.O.)
And you gotta eliminate the cause
of your overeating...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Owen is standing over the toilet. CRYING. Holding a little PLASTIC BAGGY of POT, and dumping it out. He flushes it down. Crying harder...as he PUFFS ON A JOINT.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Owen tosses out Oreos. Still crying. Replaces them with fruits and vegetables, still PUFFING on a JOINT...

EXT. SIDE STREETS - MORNING

Cruising through minimal traffic, Owen sees McDonalds in the distance.

RAJEESH (V.O.)
Watch "Fast Food Nation" and
"Supersize me."

Thinks about it. Shudders. Drives on past...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Owen's bedroom is transformed. His bed against the opposite wall, facing the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Waking Up. Throw away your alarm clock. Move the bed as shown on the diagram below. Crack the window slightly. Leave the blinds open a quarter turn...

Sun breaks through the blinds. Light softly hits Owen's face. BIRDS CHIRP outside the cracked window. Owen opens his eyes. Wakes up. Easy. Jumps out of bed. Looks down at his substantial morning wood. And...

INT. GYM - DAWN

Owen is on the Elliptical Cross Trainer machine in a nearly empty gym. The clock on the wall says 5:45 am...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Owen's on his back in his shower. Wrench in one hand. Manual in the other. Studying a DIAGRAM. He takes the wrench to the shower head. Turns it once. Stands up. Satisfied. Turns the water on and -

WATER EXPLODES out of the showerhead like a FIRE HOSE. TILES SHATTER everywhere...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Owen's head is sticking out of the now SIX FEET of WATER in his bathroom. Mrs. McGreevy is there, standing on the toilet. Screaming at him.

MRS. MCGREEVY

I don't care how, just fix it!

OWEN

I am not a janitor! I have a degree in computer engineering! I could be very important soon!

MRS. MCGREEVY

I'm impressed. Now SHUT IT OFF!

Reluctantly, Owen swims over to the wall. Sticks his arm in a hole where the tile was. Searches for a pipe. Finally, just closes his eyes and PULLS. We hear the WATER STOP. Relieved, Owen looks up at Mrs. McGreevy.

OWEN

I didn't do it on purpose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. MCGREEVY

I know. It's just...I have a, a date tonight.

OWEN

Good for you. That's great!

MRS. MCGREEVY

I need to get ready. And I haven't found anyone to watch Wrinkles...

Wrinkles swims by, doing the doggy paddle. Giant STUFFED ANIMAL DOG in his mouth. Owen looks at Mrs. McGreevy.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Revolutionary!

INT. MRS. MCGREEVY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen comes into Mrs. McGreevy's apartment carrying a BROWNIE PAN. Mrs. McGreevy walks out in a new dress, and wearing make-up for the first time that we've seen. She looks nervous, but really pretty.

OWEN

You look nice, Mrs. McGreevy.

She feels like she does and so she allows herself to believe him. And she glows.

MRS. MCGREEVY

I shouldn't be too late. It's just dinner and a movie.

OWEN

Don't worry about me. I'm got this brownie mix I've been saving. I'm just gonna throw 'em in the oven and watch some TV.

MRS. MCGREEVY

I already fed Wrinkles, so he shouldn't be a bother. He likes to keep to himself...

INT. MRS. MCGREEVY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Owen is taking the brownies out of the oven. Wrinkles is in a corner of the kitchen, humping his stuffed animal like mad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

I used to be like you. Now I just
hit the gym. Check out the guns...

Owen flexes. He actually does look thinner. More toned.

OWEN (CONT'D)

And this is the last of my famous
pot brownies. God can smote me
all he wants. I wasn't throwin'
these babies away -

Wrinkles stops humping and runs to the door. Just as
Mrs. McGreevy comes through it.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Hi, you're back early.

He sees from her face that it didn't go well. She's
trying to hide it. He sets the brownies on the stove as
she comes into the kitchen.

OWEN (CONT'D)

You okay?

She nods, but clearly isn't. Then, quietly:

MRS. MCGREEVY

He said I looked a lot different
than my picture.

OWEN

Oh God. Oh I'm so sorry.

Owen finds himself going over and giving Mrs. McGreevy a
hug. She fights tears. Clearly devastated.

MRS. MCGREEVY

The brownies smell good.

She goes to the stove and cuts herself a square.

OWEN

Don't um -

She devours a big piece. Sees the look on Owen's face.

MRS. MCGREEVY

What? What's wrong?

OWEN

Nothing, it's just...don't be mad,
but these are pot brownies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. MCGREEVY

Pot? You mean like grass?

OWEN

If it makes you feel any better,
tonight is the last time I'm doing
it. My life's about to change.

MRS. MCGREEVY

I never tried it before. How will
I know if it's working?

INT. MRS. MCGREEVY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mrs. McGreevy and Owen are on her couch, LAUGHING
HYSTERICALLY.

MRS. MCGREEVY

Oh, Owen. This is the most fun
I've had since my Ralph died.

OWEN

How long ago was that?

MRS. MCGREEVY

17 years this May. He was my best
friend, my lover. My whole life.

OWEN

So how do you deal with it?

MRS. MCGREEVY

It's worst around the holidays.
At least I got to have it though.
Most people don't ever know what
it's like. Loving someone who
really loves you. They'd be too
afraid of anything that good...

Owen takes that in, and...

INT. HIP PARENT - MORNING

Owen is walking purposefully through the Hip Parent
halls. Focused. He arrives at Cara's office door.
Takes a last glance at the manual, a deep breath, and...

INT. CARA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen comes in and looks right at Cara. She barely
recognizes him, with his new hair and clean shaven face,
as he blurts out:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

You want to have dinner with me tonight? We can go over the SI notes, celebrate your promotion. It's overdue.

Bam. He nailed it. Confident. Strong. Perfect. She has a strange look on her face as she smiles and:

CARA

Um, no. Thanks.

Owen's face falls. Cara points to the couch behind him.

CARA (CONT'D)

Owen Gray, this is Alex Cole.

Owen turns to see the guy from the Forbes cover sitting on Cara's couch. He's even better looking in person. And is wearing a suit and camel hair coat that costs more than Owen makes in a year. He is ALEX COLE.

ALEX COLE

Irwin? How are ya?

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen walks back into his office. Equal parts humiliated and enraged. Calmly picks up the phone. Dials. And:

OWEN

Rajeesh, you lousy lying motherf -

CARA (O.S.)

Owen.

Owen stops. Looks behind him. At Cara. And then:

OWEN

Call you back.

He hangs up with Rajeesh.

CARA

Sorry about that. You surprised me. And Alex just popped in -

OWEN

I understand. Company policy -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARA

(pointed)
But since I am your boss now, we
should get together to discuss IT
stuff, right?

OWEN

(finally getting it)
Absolutely!

CARA

Great. So I'll call you later.
(mock official)
Now get back to work.

He nods. She walks out. Then pokes her head back in:

CARA (CONT'D)

Love the new look, by the way.

Owen looks at the manual...and beams.

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cara is walking around her bedroom in a bra and panties.
On the phone with Owen.

CARA

Owen, I have to know where we're
going so I know what to wear.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen is walking around his apartment. In his underwear
as well. Reading the manual: FIRST DATE. 670 WRIGHT
BLVD. 6:15 P.M. MAKE SURE YOU PEE FIRST.

OWEN

It's, uh, a surprise. Just make
sure you pee first...

CARA (V.O.)

What? Why?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

(reading the manual)
I really can't say. If it helps,
I'm dressing "casual cool."

CARA

Oh, are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Yes...any idea what that is?

She laughs.

CARA

See you in a bit...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen stands in front of his closet. Manual in hand:

RAJEESH (V.O.)

How to Dress Casual Cool for First
Date. One: Buy new clothing.

The rest of the page is BLANK. Owen turns to the next page. It's BLANK too. He turns to the next page:

RAJEESH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If no time for Number One, wear
your dark jeans.

Owen puts on the dark jeans.

RAJEESH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Without the silk boxers. P.S.
What the hell are you doing with
silk boxes?

Owen takes off the dark jeans. Takes off the SILK BOXERS he's got on underneath. Puts on regular boxers. Puts back on the dark jeans...

EXT. CARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's walking up the steps of Cara's cute brownstone.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

How to Be On Your First Date.
Make the conversation about her.
If you have to talk about you, be
brief and completely honest about
absolutely everything. She's way
too smart for your bullshit.

She opens the door. Wow.

OWEN

You look amazing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's startled by the compliment. And the honesty. And loves both. She's also startled to see good he looks. And means it when she says back, almost shy:

CARA

You too...so what's this big surprise? Dinner and a movie?

INT. DHC-6 TWIN OTTER PLANE - DUSK

Owen and Cara are sharing the passenger seat of a small plane. Flying over the city as the sun sets. It's impossibly beautiful. Piloting the plane is NORM, a Guatemalan guy. Cara and Owen talk through HEADSETS:

CARA

This is magnificent! But why'd I have to pee first?

INT. DHC-6 TWIN OTTER PLANE - MINUTES LATER

Cara and Owen are at the edge of an open door to the plane. Wearing PARACHUTES. Norm is there with them, going over last minute instructions. Which Owen and Cara are too terrified to pay any attention to.

NORM

You're strapped together, but hold on tight. Once you're out, count ten and pull. You'll get yanked up good. Then just head towards the big red pillow. Questions?

Owen and Cara both just stare out the door, giving no indication whatsoever they heard a word Norm said. Owen looks at Cara. Shouts over the deafening sound of the engine and wind coming in through the open door:

OWEN

I'm afraid of heights.

CARA

I'm afraid of death! If we die, I'm gonna be pissed at you in heaven.

NORM

On three. Uno, dos...THREE!

Cara and Owen don't move for a long moment. Until they LOCK EYES, GRAB ON TO EACH OTHER TIGHTER, and ROLL OUT THE DOOR...

EXT. THE OPEN SKY - DUSK

Owen and Cara are FREE FALLING, holding onto one another. They count to ten, quickly, and Owen pulls the cord. Their PARACHUTE shoots out and yanks them up in the air.

Slowly, their terror gives way to disbelief, and then to childlike, unbridled ecstasy. They glide through the bright orange sky. Owen steering as Cara wraps her arms around him.

EXT. LANDING TARGET - DUSK

Owen guides them towards a giant inflated RED PILLOW sort of target. Lands them softly in the center of it. They get up and stare at one another in disbelief of what they've just seen and done.

CARA

Oh my God!! That was -

OWEN

Unbelievable!

CARA

My adrenaline is still...

OWEN

How do you top that?

CARA

I don't know.

OWEN

Seriously. What do we do next?

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Off Cara's primitive, guttural ORGASMIC SCREAMS, we're CLOSE on a big ball of covers in her bed. Owen sneaks out from under them and checks the MANUAL. Cara squeals with pleasure as he heads back in...

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Owen and Cara are in her bed. The first moments after the first time. They're both in exhausted, sweaty bliss.

CARA

I've had this body for 28 years,
and even I don't know how to do
what you just did to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Owen glances at the manual he's stowed under the bed.

CARA (CONT'D)

I have to go to New York in the morning.

OWEN

Just use me for sex and run away.
I see how it is.

She laughs, kisses him.

CARA

All of the magazine heads are meeting with Alex Cole.

OWEN

How is that guy?

CARA

I don't know him very well. He's a fan of my writing though, so he's clearly a genius.

Now it's Owen's turn to laugh. And to kiss her.

CARA (CONT'D)

I really do have to get some sleep, okay?

She shuts off the light. They lay in silence in the dark. Until:

CARA (CONT'D)

Owen?

OWEN

Yeah?

CARA

We should probably keep this between us for now, okay?

OWEN

(pause)

Sure. You're the boss.

CARA

Some boss. First week running the magazine and I do -

OWEN

The IT guy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARA

How'd that happen anyway? You becoming the IT guy for Hip Parent Magazine?

OWEN

After college I got a computer consulting job. Seemed okay. Get out on my own, travel. They send you all over the world.

CARA

Where'd they send you?

OWEN

China.

CARA

Really? How was that?

We're CLOSE on Owen as he recalls...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CHINA - FLASHBACK

A sprawling office space. Thousands of CHINESE MEN and WOMEN, all at tiny desks, typing furiously at computers. Shouting Chinese at one another. Owen in the midst of it all. The only non-Chinese person in the entire place.

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

OWEN

I wasn't there long. A headhunter said Ned was looking for an I.T. guy. I wanted to move back so...

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Always steer the conversation back to her. Women want to feel heard. Like you are listening. Like you understand them.

OWEN

How about you?

CARA

I was in school and snuck into this conference in New York. Met Ned and somehow convinced him to hire me.

OWEN

And now you have his job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARA

Because you wouldn't tell him his son was a compulsive masturbator.

OWEN

I didn't have the heart.

CARA

Such a nice boy.

She yawns. Closes her eyes.

CARA (CONT'D)

Good night, nice boy.

OWEN

Good night.

Owen watches Cara in the little bit of light from the window. A few seconds later, she starts to breath deeply. Asleep. Owen grabs the manual from under the bed. Gets up quietly.

As Owen heads into the kitchen, we stay on Cara. Once Owen's gone, she opens her eyes, wide awake...

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Owen's alone in Cara's kitchen, whispering with Rajeeesh:

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

Did you do it, you sly dog? Bury the bone in her backyard? Show her something in her size? Take a dirt road and put in a highway?

OWEN

It was amazing, okay? But she got weird afterwards. Asked me not to tell anyone. I think this is a bad idea, Raj. She's my boss now!

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

Stop ruining this. Just cause one girl stuck it in your ear ten years ago doesn't mean they all will.

OWEN

How do you know about that?

RAJEEESH

Just keep following the manual. Tomorrow morning's huge, bro.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

It is?

Owen flips through the manual. Reads. Stops.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Are you sure about this, Raj?

RAJEESH (V.O.)

What did you just get done doing?
Now either grab your sack and do
this or stop calling me. The
choice is yours...

INT. CARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Cara comes in to find the table set for breakfast.

CARA

What's all this?

OWEN

Breakfast. Sit.

He slides a perfect omelette onto her plate as she sits.
Pours her hot coffee.

CARA

I have to go in -

OWEN

25 minutes. I called you a cab.
Would've taken you myself but I'm
having a small windshield problem.
I can pick you up when you get
back on...

CARA

Friday.

OWEN

It's a date.

She's obviously impressed. Takes a bite of her omelette.

CARA

You cook too!

OWEN

I can follow a recipe...turns out.

Owen checks his watch and turns up the TV in the kitchen.
Almost instantly, Hayden Bell and her WEDDING PREP pops
up on the TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARA

How amazing is this girl? You know they're talking about her running for president once she's old enough? That wedding's gonna be insane...

RAJEESH (V.O.)

The moment will present itself. You will know when it does...

OWEN

I'm going.

CARA

To Hayden Bell's wedding?!

OWEN

She moved next door to me in 2nd grade. We kinda grew up together.

CARA

Shut up!

OWEN

It's weird she's getting married. I actually proposed to her once.

CARA

WHAT?!

Woops.

OWEN

It was like ten years ago. Just a stupid college thing. Like streaking or taking a Women's Studies class.

Cara doesn't look so convinced.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Come with me. Be my plus one.

She hesitates. Long enough for it to be uncomfortable.

OWEN (CONT'D)

You do realize I'm just asking you to go to the wedding, not to actually get married there?

CARA

I'm sorry. It's just...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

The company policy thing? I know
it's a problem. I didn't want to
bring it up, but -

CARA

It's not that. I just worked
really hard to get where I am.
People think about you differently
when they know who you're dating.

(beat)

You know what? Forget it. I'm
the boss I can do what I want.
I'd love to come.

OWEN

Really?

She kisses him.

CARA

Really...

They start making out. Cara climbs on top of him right
there on her kitchen table...

OWEN

You have to go soon...

CARA

In twenty three minutes.

OWEN

Dirty!

She giggles.

CARA

What are you gonna do without me
for the next few days?

INT. GYM - MORNING

Owen's dripping with sweat as he pushes himself in the
gym...

INT. FUBU STORE - DRESSING ROOM - MORNING

Owen's in front of the dressing room mirror wearing a
BRIGHT YELLOW TUXEDO. We PULL BACK to find him in FUBU,
the hip hop clothing store. The only white guy in there.
He's already on his cell phone:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Raj, is there a reason I have to show up to this wedding looking like Cedric the Entertainer?

RAJEESH (V.O.)

My bad, dude. Apparently the Fubu opened last weekend. There was no way we could have known at time of printing. There is an Addendum I can send you -

OWEN

I don't have time for an Addendum, Raj. Just tell me where to get the tux...

INT. ELIAS TAILORS - DAY

Owen's in a little hole in the wall tailor shop. ELIAS, an elegant Italian man in his 70s, is pinning and pulling at Owen's pants.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen, now wearing the tux he got from Elias, is looking at himself in the mirror. He looks fantastic. But his smile fades as he realizes:

OWEN

Me? I'm the IT guy for Hip Parent magazine. I work in a windowless storage closet. Sometimes I fix the copier. And you? The King of Sweden. Really? So lots of windows where you are then..."

INT. HIP PARENT - OFFICE KITCHEN - DAY

The communal Hip Parent kitchen is filled with Knitting Women, Young Mommies, Becky and Susan, all having lunch, gossiping, feeding their babies. Judging each other.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

How to Stop Being Everyone's Personal I.T. Bitch.

Owen bounds into the room. Conversation stops. He looks and acts like a different person. The hair, the body, the confidence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Hi. Just wondering if anyone needs an extra pair of eyes on a story? I've helped Cara a little bit, and I'd love to do the same for any of you. So let me know.

He walks out. The ladies all look at each other.

YOUNG MOMMIE

Who was that?!

SUSAN

I think it was Owen.

She and Becky exchange glances.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Owen's shooting baskets with a little mini hoop and nurf ball. Draining shots from all over the room. On SPEAKERPHONE. With his Mom.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)

Oh, honey, we are so excited to see you. Did you call Hayden?

OWEN

Left a message with her assistant this morning. And guess what? I'm bringing someone. My plus one.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)

Oh, Owen. That's so nice. Now what's his name?

OWEN

Her name, Mom. Her name is Cara.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)

Really? A girl?

We hear a MAN'S VOICE in the background.

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hang on, honey...your father wants to know if she's your...beard? I don't know what that means.

OWEN

I'll see you guys soon. Tell Dad I said hi. And I'm not gay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN'S MOM (V.O.)
I will, dear. He says...he loves
you no matter what.

Owen turns off the speaker. Keeps shooting hoops. Then senses he's being watched. Turns to see a LINE out the door of various women, all holding ARTICLES...

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Owen happily tapes a sign outside his door:

- ARTICLE HELP: FREE; PERSONAL GADGET TECH SUPPORT:
\$10,000/15 MINUTES.

A few of Owen's CO-WORKERS, holding their Blackberries and Ipods, frown as they read the sign...

INT. HIP PARENT - SUSAN'S CUBE - DAY

Owen's with Susan at her desk, pouring over her article. Becky passes by. Susan sees her and says, loudly:

SUSAN
Let me buy you a drink tonight.
For all your help...

OWEN
I can't tonight. I have plans...

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Owen is walking towards his car, manual in hand. Scanning the table of contents.

OWEN
Second date, second date...

He gets to his car, which is on FIRE. And has been for some time.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

EDDIE (O.S.)
I called the fire department!

Owen turns to see Eddie behind him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
They're on their way...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Who the hell did this?

The fire explodes a little.

EDDIE

Dunno. Who'd you piss off?

OWEN

(dawning on him)

Oh my...God?

EDDIE

What? You know who did it?

OWEN

No. Maybe. I don't know...

(beat)

What am I gonna do? I have a date tonight.

EDDIE

Guess you can make Susan drive.

OWEN

I'm going out with Cara.

EDDIE

Cara? Isn't she dating our boss?

OWEN

Cara is our boss, Eddie. Unless you mean Ned?

EDDIE

Nah. She never dated Ned. She blew him, but she never dated him -

OWEN

WHAT?!

EDDIE

You never heard that? She went down on him in the bathroom of the Midtown Hilton at some convention.

OWEN

Bullshit. She's not like that.

EDDIE

I don't know. I think you get a few mint juleps in her, it's a whole other Kentucky derby...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

No way.

EDDIE

How else do you think she got hired as a feature writer right out of school? And became head story editor so fast?

OWEN

So who's she dating now?

EDDIE

Alex Cole.

(off Owen's look)

Think about it. He gave her the hockey story for SI. I play pick-up with All-Americans. She doesn't know the blue line from blue balls. Then he put her in charge...

Owen starts to have a sinking feeling maybe Eddie's not so full of shit after all.

OWEN

I'm supposed to pick her up at the airport.

Eddie and Owen look at Owen's smoldering car.

EDDIE

I'll take you. If you don't mind Alex Cole's sloppy seconds. And... you stay away from Susan.

OWEN

She's all yours, Eddie.

EDDIE

Cool. So you want a lift?

Owen fingers the manual in his pocket. Hears SIRENS in the distance.

OWEN

Thanks. I'll figure it out...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

As a FIRE TRUCK douses his car, Owen's scanning the table of contents. Scanning. Scanning. Flipping pages. Getting nervous. Panicking. It's not there. He reaches for his phone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAJEESH (V.O.)

'Sup, Owen?

OWEN

Someone set my car on fire, Raj.

INT. CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Raj is throwing darts at a PARIS HILTON, BRITNEY SPEARS & LINDSAY LOHAN DARTBOARD he's got up in his cube.

RAJEESH

Who?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

You tell me. God, the universe,
Vindalu -

RAJEESH

Aren't you doing everything in the
manual?

OWEN

I thought I was. But my manual's
fucked again anyway. There's
nothing in here about my car or my
second date with Cara.

RAJEESH

Because those are problems arising
post-manual publication, bro.

OWEN

Um, what?

RAJEESH

The manual can't predict the
future. It only applies to things
that existed when it was printed.
Asking Cara out, getting a date
for the wedding. That's why
there's a date/time stamp on back.

Owen looks at a DATE/TIME STAMP on the back of the
manual. WEDNESDAY 2:13 A.M. Right around when he
ordered the Svelte-Belt.

OWEN

What about the stuff that's
happening now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAJEESH

There you're on your own, chico.

OWEN

You're fucking me, Raj, you know that? Cara's expecting me to pick her up. I don't have her cell. She's just going to be waiting for me at the curb.

RAJEESH

Maybe you should call a cab.

OWEN

How's that going to help me? Where am I supposed to take her after? What am I supposed to wear? How do I get around now!?

RAJEESH

All good questions.

OWEN

What about me being chosen?! What about the universe wanting all the things in the manual to happen?

RAJEESH

Looks like the universe wants you to figure it out on your own now.

OWEN

Dammit, Raj! You said if I did everything in the manual my life would change.

RAJEESH

It did. It has.

OWEN

You said something amazing would happen to me at the wedding.

RAJEESH

I think maybe it will.

OWEN

Maybe?! And what if I can't sustain all this stuff without a manual? Could that amazing thing be that I get malaria and die?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAJEESH

That would be pretty amazing.
Especially cause there's no
malaria in Hawaii.

Owen SNAPS his phone shut. Tries to stay calm.

OWEN

Okay. I can do this. I've been
on second dates before without a
manual. They always went fine...

INSERT:

- A GIRL PUKES all over Owen just as he goes to kiss her.
- Owen's in bed with another GIRL after sex. He's
staring up at the ceiling. She's SOBBING UNCONTROLLABLY.
- Owen walks another GIRL to her front door.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Your husband?

The door opens to reveal a HUGE MEATHEAD GUY, he sees
Owen, snarls and PUNCHES HIM IN THE FACE.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

OWEN

I'm so fucked.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Owen is pacing in front of his building. Keeps checking
his watch. Then sees car lights careening towards him...

It screeches to a halt. Inches from Owen. A LIMO. Or at
least it was back in the 70s. From the rust on the door
and two missing hubcaps, it's had a rough go of it since.

The driver's side door opens. Out steps MORTY GOLD. In
a CHAUFFEUR'S SUIT and HAT that's at least as old as the
car. And four sizes too small. Morty himself has got to
be 90. But he's spry.

MORTY

Whaddaya say, kid?

OWEN

You're with Gold Plated Limos?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORTY

With? I am Gold Plated Limos.
Morty Gold, at your service.
Started the company with my
brother Milton back in '72. Took
it over when Milt moved to Boca in
'83. Now she's all mine.

Morty pats the car. A hubcap falls off.

OWEN

She's a beaut, Mort.

MORTY

Tell me about it. The kids today
go crazy for her. Have a look see
inside...

He tries to open the door for Owen, but it's jammed. He
tugs and tugs on it.

MORTY (CONT'D)

She's a little temperamental.
Might want to try easing in
through the moon roof...

INT. MORTY'S GOLD PLATED LIMO - NIGHT

Owen falls into the limo through the roof. Picks himself
up and looks around:

It's like your grandmother's Lauderdale condo. Avocado
shag carpet. Orange curtains. Plastic on the seats. A
tiny little TV. Morty gets in front. Puts on a pair of
GLASSES six inches thick. Calls back to Owen:

MORTY

Airport, right? Picking up
someone special?

OWEN

Until this car scares her away.

MORTY

Leave it to me. This is my town.
I got connections everywhere. The
name Morty Gold is like...

OWEN

Gold?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORTY

Just like this baby. Many men
wooded their sweethearts in the
back of this sweet chariot, if
you're picking up what I'm putting
down. My own kids were conceived
not far from where you're sitting.

Owen looks around, disgusted.

MORTY (CONT'D)

And don't fret about music. I got
just the thing to set the mood.
The kids today go crazy for it...

Morty pops in an old 8 TRACK. Cranks it up. It's VAN
HALEN. PANAMA.

EXT. AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - NIGHT

Cara's at the curb in front of baggage claim. The High
Point airport is tiny, almost deserted. A single squad
car is there, with a COP asleep in the front seat. The
limo pulls up along side Cara. Morty yells out to her:

MORTY

Hop in, young lady! The flatfoots
don't let you dilly-dally.

She gives Morty a horrified stare. Owen pops his head
out the moon roof.

OWEN

Cara, it's me! Come in through
here. The doors don't work.

She gives him a look, clearly in no mood for this.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Hand me your bags.

Owen reaches for her bag just as she tosses it. Tagging
him square in the face.

OWEN (CONT'D)

OW, SHIT!

CARA

Sorry. Did I hit you?

OWEN

Just in the face. Take my hands.

She grabs Owen's hands. He pulls her up and...

INT. MORTY'S GOLD PLATED LIMO - NIGHT

Cara falls head over ass into the limo. On top of Owen.
As she climbs off him, he sits up. Wipes his nose.

OWEN

I'm bleeding.

MORTY

Don't you bleed on my seats!

Cara looks around into the bizarre limo.

CARA

What is this thing?

Morty pulls out of the airport, Van Halen still blaring.
He sings the breakdown part of the song:

MORTY

"Yeah, we're runnin' a little bit
hot tonight. I can barely see the
road from the heat comin' off...I
reach down between my legs n' ease
the seat back..."

He looks at Cara and Owen in the mirror.

MORTY (CONT'D)

You two lovebirds have a
destination? Or should Uncle
Morty show you his old haunts?

CARA

This guy's your uncle?

OWEN

Somebody blew up my car. I had to
rent one.

CARA

From the set of Sanford and Son?

OWEN

It was kind of last minute. Where
do you want to go?

CARA

Um, home.

OWEN

Oh. You don't want to go out?

CARA

I'm exhausted, Owen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Awkward, uncomfortable silence. Owen starts bleeding again. He wipes the trickling blood from his nose. Holds his head back. Pinches.

MORTY

So what'll it be? Smokey hip jazz club? Take in a show? We're just an hour from the Windy City. You name it, Morty'll make it happen.

CARA

Just drop me off at home.

The smile on Morty's face disappears. Owen pinches his nose harder. Winces. Pissed. The TV is showing more Hayden Bell wedding prep. Owen and Cara both see it. Try not to.

EXT. CARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Morty stops in front of Cara's building. She climbs out from the roof. Owen hands her all her bags. Not knowing whether he should bother getting out. Not knowing anything. Cara gives him a half-hearted wave.

CARA

Thanks for picking me up.

OWEN

Yeah. It was a blast.

CARA

Don't make me feel guilty.

OWEN

I wasn't. Maybe you're feeling guilty about something else...

CARA

What's that supposed to mean?

OWEN

Nothing. Good night.

CARA

Owen, I told you. I'm just not in the mood to go out tonight. I'll call you over the weekend, okay?

Owen watches her disappear inside. He looks at Morty.

OWEN

Feel like getting a drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORTY

I know just the place. Quiet.
Somewhere we can talk...

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A dark club. Music BLARING. Dance floor packed with gyrating pretty people. In the middle of it, Owen and Morty. Completely shitcanned. Owen's pouring his heart out, at the top of his lungs:

OWEN

How do you just blow off the
second date?!

MORTY

The second date's a biggie.

OWEN

It's everything! We're actually
not supposed to date in the first
place. Everybody gives me shit
about caring, but I didn't make
the rules.

MORTY

Can't dip your wick in the company
ink, kid.

OWEN

Yeah, only guess what I just found
out?

MORTY

She's been getting dipped?

OWEN

One convention center bathroom at
a time...

MORTY

She sounds like bad news, kid.

OWEN

Yeah....the thing is, I really
like her. The other night, we
were talking. She starts kissing
me -

MORTY

She kissed you!?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Yeah, but this voice in my head went, "wait." I actually wanted to keep talking! Or, I at least wanted to talk to her just as much as I wanted to get it on! You ever felt like that about anybody?!

MORTY

Once. I married her!

OWEN

She's funny too. How many women do you know who are really funny?!

MORTY

Carol Burnett.

OWEN

You know her?!

MORTY

No.

OWEN

Fuck it. Let's get another round!

Owen turns and runs right into Susan. She lights up on seeing him, and is clearly just as drunk as Owen is.

SUSAN

Hey! You made it!

Owen's excited to see her in that drunk, recognizing a familiar face kind of way. They lean in close and shout at each other.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I thought you had plans!

OWEN

They fell through!

SUSAN

Lucky me for!

They smile drunkenly at each other.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Wanna do shots?

OWEN

Great idea!

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Owen opens one eye. Tries to remember where he is. What happened the night before. It all hits him at once. Along with the drymouth and pounding headache.

He slowly feels around the bed, trying to determine if there's anyone next to him. Doesn't feel anything. Relieved, he looks over. No one. He's alone.

OWEN

Oh thank God.

He lays there a moment. Hears VOICES in the kitchen...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

He staggers out of the bedroom. Stops when he sees Morty making PANCAKES. Susan, in a t-shirt and Owen's SILK BOXERS, is on the couch. She jumps up when she sees Owen. Kisses him good morning.

SUSAN

Hey sleepyhead!

MORTY

Hungry, kid? First batch of hotcakes will be up in a jiff.

Owen looks around his place. Still trying to remember what happened last night. Still not having much luck.

SUSAN

Morty was just telling me how he and his wife met. They worked in the same office. Like us.

Owen glances at Susan.

OWEN

Wife?

MORTY

She passed seven years ago this May. Looked a little like your landlady, tell the truth.

Owen's too baffled to process this.

SUSAN

Mrs. McGreevy. She came by last night, remember?

He doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You must have already passed out.
I tried to wake you up. I was
right about to make the magic
happen.

OWEN

So we didn't -?

SUSAN

Next time. I told Morty how we're
not supposed to date. Becky was
in the club though. Eddie too.
Sure they'll blab to the office...

OWEN

Eddie?

SUSAN

I hear Cara's pretty cool about
that stuff, if you know what I
mean.

Owen's head hurts.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Guess we'll find out on Monday...

INT. HIP PARENT - MORNING

Owen walks into the office. Sees Cara coming towards
him. He tries to be friendly, upbeat:

OWEN

Hey. How was your weekend?

She walks past him without a word. Towards her office...

INT. CARA'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen comes into Cara's office. She's arranging papers on
her desk. Doesn't even look up at him.

OWEN

Look, I don't know what you heard,
but I did not sleep with Susan.

CARA

I'll alert your biographer.

OWEN

So you're just gonna be the boss
now? That's what this is?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARA

Maybe if I do my job you'll actually do yours. Instead of writing articles for my real writers. Telling everyone you write all mine.

OWEN

I never said that.

CARA

Well they all think it.

OWEN

Why do you care what they think?

CARA

Cause my reputation here matters -

OWEN

Your reputation is that you blow all your bosses -

CARA

What!?

OWEN

Oh c'mon. I heard about you and Ned. Hopefully with Alex you've upgraded to the floor of his limo.

That stops her cold.

OWEN (CONT'D)

You should have at least been honest with me.

CARA

I - look who's talking! You think I don't know you're still in love with her?

OWEN

With who?

CARA

Oh please. I do everything but show up naked in your office for two years and you never once ask me out. Suddenly the girl you proposed to is getting married and you're all over me?!

OWEN

That's not what this is about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARA

Right. I'm sure you were really worried about company policy.

OWEN

I asked you to the wedding because I want to go with you.

CARA

Then why'd you ask Susan, Owen?

(off his look)

She told the whole office. Spent the morning talking to Vera Wang's assistant. Vera's gonna hook her up with a dress, so you should probably take her.

Owen obviously doesn't remember inviting Susan. Has no idea what to say. And can't believe this is happening.

OWEN

So that's it? You and I are just done?

Something makes him walk over to her. He can see how hurt she is. Tries to get her to look at him. Finally she does. Actually looks like she might kiss him. So he leans in closer. And she SLAPS him ACROSS THE FACE.

CARA

Now we are.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Owen's on the floor of his office. Staring up at the ceiling. Talking to Raj on speaker phone.

OWEN

What the hell do I do now?

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Fight for her!

OWEN

She's dating Alex Cole! And she blew Ned in a hotel bathroom.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

I don't care if she blew him in a truckstop and streamed it online. That girl cares about you, man.

OWEN

She hit me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAJEESH (V.O.)

You gotta ask yourself, bro: are you avoiding this like you avoid fixing shit -

OWEN

Stop calling me bro!

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Because you genuinely don't want to do it, or because you're so used to being miserable you can't handle being good at anything or having anything good in your life?

Owen doesn't respond for a long moment. Until:

OWEN

I'm sorry, what? I was picturing Cara blowing Ned in a truckstop.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

Owen -

OWEN

You know from here it's like your voice is coming right outta the ceiling. Kind of like you're God.

RAJEESH (V.O.)

I am.

OWEN

Really? Then can you smote me now? Get it over with? It can't get any worse, right?

Owen's computer PINGS, indicating a NEW EMAIL arrived. He gets off the floor and checks it. Subject line:

- THIS CHICK IS THE REAL DEAL.

He shrugs, clicks on it. Having a hard time giving a shit about anything at this point. The email opens and a BEAUTIFUL GIRL fills the screen. Saying:

BEAUTIFUL GIRL

Hi there. I'm here to tell you about Owen Gray...

OWEN

Uh oh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEAUTIFUL GIRL

Owen Gray gave me the CLAP! He's a
dirty man-whore with a tiny dick!
Stay away from him! Anytime you
hear the name Owen Gray, just
think: BURNING WHILE YOU PEE!

MUSIC starts. TALKING HEADS' BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE,
only with Beautiful Girl singing BURNING WHILE YOU PEE.
Over and Over. Owen immediately hits delete. The song
stops. But then his email starts FLASHING - MESSAGE
SENT, MESSAGE SENT. Owen tears out of his office.

INT. HIP PARENT - MORNING

He comes into the cube area. And can only watch as each
computer gets the email. BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE/BURNING
WHILE YOU PEE fills the office. Everyone is laughing
hysterically and eyeing him with disgust.

Owen spots Eddie standing at his cube. Celebratory grin
on his face. Gleefully FLIPPING OWEN OFF. Ms. Patterson
walks out of Cara's office, humming the tune. Owen sees
Susan in a conference room, on the phone...

SUSAN (V.O.)

I've been on hold for three hours,
Owen! With Vera Wang's head
assistant! Three!

INT. HIP PARENT - CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Owen's in the conference room with Susan. Who's pointing
at a speakerphone and losing it. The speakerphone is
playing YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT.

OWEN

Uno, dos, three.

SUSAN

What?!

OWEN

I'm really sorry.

The speakerphone music stops. Susan is getting more and
more hysterical.

SUSAN

You're...sorry? You're fucking
SORRY?! How could you do this to
me, you FUCK?!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I already told everyone I was going. I posted it on my Myspace page!

Silence for a long moment. Until, from the speakerphone:

VERA'S ASSISTANT (V.O.)

Susan? Uh, I have Vera on the other line. But it sounds like I should tell her to forget it now?

Susan and Owen freeze. Both staring at the speakerphone. And then Susan picks up the PHONE and WHIPS it across the room. TAGGING Owen with it right SMACK in the head.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's on the couch, BLOODY PAPER TOWEL to his head, half-heartedly flipping through the manual, still holding out a hope. He realizes none of this is in there. CHUCKS it across the room. The TV's on CNN:

CNN ANCHOR

The Hayden Bell wedding is days away -

OWEN

Does anyone report real news anymore?!

He switches the channel and:

INFOMERCIAL VOICE

Tired of the life you're leading? Do find yourself wondering, "How did I get here? Is this all life is about?" Well, wonder no more! The Svelte-Belt is here!

Owen sits up, energized. Grabs his credit card. Dials. Hears the familiar AUTOMATED VOICE...

OWEN

Yes! My fucking problems are solved!!!

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Every inch of Owen's apartment is filled with UPS BOXES. Stacked to the ceiling. Actual SVELTE-BELTS and bottles of DR. ZERO'S P-PILLS strewn everywhere. NO NEW MANUALS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Owen's on the couch. Popping P-PILLS from a huge jar. SVELTE-BELT hooked up to his chest and head. His phone rings. He doesn't even flinch. The machine picks up:

BLAIR (V.O.)

Owen, it's Blair from Hayden's office. Calling to confirm the spelling of your plus one: C-A-R-A K-L-E-I-N. Also you need to call Hayden A-S-A-P about the toast. Don't make me call again. We do have other guests, you know. I for one -

Owen gets off the couch and casually walks over to the phone. RIPS it out of the wall.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Owen wakes up by the perfect light of the sun. Birds chirping. He turns on the shower, watches hot water pour out. Takes off his shirt. Examines his thinner, more muscular self. And sighs, utterly miserable.

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Cara's in Owen's office. She's got her winter coat on, and is holding a black wheeler carry-on suitcase. He's at his desk, popping P-PILLS.

CARA

You don't have to do this.

OWEN

It was a significant security breach. I have to deal with it when no one's here. I'll start tonight, be done by New Years. It's my job, remember?

CARA

What's that smell?

Owen looks at the P-Pill bottle.

OWEN

Might be my new cologne. You likey?

CARA

It smells like cat pee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

That's nice.

CARA

Owen, it's Christmas -

OWEN

Eddie left me no choice.

CARA

He's feels bad. About the virus.
And your car.

OWEN

What about my car?

CARA

He's the one who blew it up. He's
very sorry.

OWEN

So it wasn't...

CARA

How've you been getting around
anyway?

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - GARAGE - DAY

Owen and Cara are staring at Morty Gold's LIMO.

OWEN

I'm watching it for Mort while he
visits his brother in Boca. Then
he's going to watch my place while
I go to the wedding.

CARA

I heard you disinvited Susan.

OWEN

Yeah, well, I never wanted to go
with her...

He says it, asking her. She pretends otherwise:

CARA

I'll be following-up on my
cheerleader story. Apparently
there was some popping incident.
Sort of defeats the purpose of
Alex giving us the week off, but -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

I'm sure you'll find a way to have
Alex make it up to you.

She turns to go. He calls back to her.

OWEN (CONT'D)

I would've quit this job for you!

She stops. Turns back.

CARA

Me too. But it's a little late
for that now...

Owen watches as Cara disappears into the parking garage.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen opens the door to his apartment. Comes in. Lonely.
Dejected. Walks into the living room to find candles lit
everywhere. Soft music on. And Mrs. McGreevy on the
couch. In GARTERS.

OWEN

Mrs. McGreevy?

MRS. MCGREEVY

I could smell you all the way from
my apartment.

Owen looks at the P-Pills bottles scattered around.

OWEN

You could?

MRS. MCGREEVY

Ummm. Your scent. It's driving
me wild.

OWEN

It is?

MRS. MCGREEVY

It calls to me in my sleep.

OWEN

What does it say?

MRS. MCGREEVY

That the turkey isn't the only
thing that needs stuffing this
Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Owen hears a muffled PANTING in the corner. Sees WRINKLES there, pumping away at his STUFFED ANIMAL. Owen turns and walks out...

INT. OWEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Owen's in his office, watching the server hum. Picking at the FROZEN CHRISTMAS DINNER on his desk. Listening to the radio play CHRISTMAS SONGS. As IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR ends, the DJ says:

RADIO DJ
Next, why we can expect more
suicides than usual this
Christmas...

Owen switches off the radio. Walks out of his office...

INT. HIP PARENT - NIGHT

Owen comes into the main room. Walks around the various cubes. Enjoying that strange feeling of being the only person in a place usually filled with people. He ends up in front of Cara's office.

INT. HIP PARENT - CARA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Owen sits at Cara's desk. Sees the new Sports Illustrated open to her hockey article. Even though it's done, in print, Cara has marked it up with RED PEN in the margins with things like: WEAK. COULD BE BETTER. BORING.

Owen's about to get up when Cara's phone rings. He jumps, startled. Doesn't recognize the caller ID. Pauses, hesitating. Finally picks it up.

OWEN
Hello?

INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT

We're with LAUREN GOLDSTEIN, 30s, corporate hot. She's on her phone in the back of a black town car. Cruising down the FDR.

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN
Hello, this is Lauren Goldstein
from Rolling Stone magazine. I'm
trying to reach Cara Klein.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Cara's not here now. Can I -

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

Are you her assistant?

OWEN

No, we work together.

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

Do you know where she is? It's nothing bad. She's getting a shot at becoming a contributing editor. Sort of a tryout.

OWEN

For Rolling Stone?

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

Yep. But she won't know who she's meeting beforehand. It's how we do it. Give you a hotel and a room number and say go talk to who's there and write up 1000 words about it.

Pause.

OWEN

Does the interviewee know who's interviewing them?

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

Just that they're from Rolling Stone.

Owen gets a mischievous look on his face.

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN (CONT'D)

So, I have to tell her where to go. Do you have her cell -

OWEN

You can give me the info. She checks in with me all the time.

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

You sure? It's really important she gets this.

OWEN

Oh she'll get it all right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

Okay, tell her it's room 223 in
the Drake Hotel Chicago. Friday
at 10:30 a.m.

OWEN

Is Alex Cole buying Rolling Stone?

LAUREN GOLDSTEIN

No. Alex just got her the
interview. So, Merry Christmas.

Owen hangs up the phone. He looks up at the ceiling.

OWEN

Happy fucking New Year!

INT. MORTY'S GOLD PLATED LIMO - MORNING

Owen's driving Morty's limo on the freeway when he passes
a sign that says CHICAGO 42 MILES.

OWEN

Me? I a writer for Rolling Stone
magazine. Yes, it is cool...

He remembers something. Excitedly grabs his cell.
Dials. It rings and rings...

OWEN (CONT'D)

Hayden, it's Owen. Blair asked me
to call. I'm on my way to Chicago.
I got a gig writing for Rolling
Stone. Anyway, sorry I keep
missing you. I'll be happy to do
the toast. Call me back...

INT. DRAKE HOTEL - LOBBY - MORNING

Owen's in the lobby, testing TAPE RECORDERS, EXTRA TAPES,
NOTEBOOKS, PENS. Out of habit, he pages through the
manual. Nothing. He stuffs it in his bag...

INT. DRAKE HOTEL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE ROOM 223 - MORNING

He comes down the hallway. Before he can even get to
Room 223, two huge SECURITY GUYS stop him:

SECURITY GUY 1

Can we help you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Owen Gray. From Rolling Stone.

SECURITY GUY 2

Is she expecting you?

OWEN

Uh, yes. She is.

Security Guy 1 taps on the door to Room 223. A SECRET SERVICE looking guy answers.

SECURITY GUY 1

Rolling Stone.

Secret Service slams the door. Owen just stands there, waiting. After a long moment, the door opens again.

SECRET SERVICE

You're from Rolling Stone?

OWEN

Yep.

SECURITY GUY 1

You want me to frisk him?

SECRET SERVICE

No, it's fine.

OWEN

Maybe some other time.

Security Guy 1 snarls as Owen follows Secret Service in.

INT. DRAKE HOTEL - ROOM 223 - MORNING

Owen walks in to the massive suite. Sees the magnificent views of the lake. Beautiful fresh cut flowers on every table. Tray after tray of delectable food. The whole room flawless. He instantly feels terrible.

OWEN

(to himself)

What am I doing here?

SECRET SERVICE

She's almost ready for you. We don't have a lot of time, as you can imagine it's very busy today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Right. This might sound strange,
but I'm actually not supposed to
be here.

SECRET SERVICE

What do you mean?

OWEN

I'm just filling in. The real
interviewer is -

HAYDEN BELL (O.S.)

Owen!? Is that you!?

Owen turns to see HAYDEN BELL come out from the bedroom.
In her WEDDING GOWN. Looking absolutely radiant.
Surrounded by gushing BRIDESMAIDS.

OWEN

Hayden?

Blair, Hayden's bitchy assistant, is there too.

BLAIR

Wait, Owen? As in wedding Owen?

HAYDEN BELL

I just got your message. You're
writing for Rolling Stone?! About
me? Did you know -

OWEN

Not until now.

Blair gets a phone call and rushes out.

HAYDEN BELL

That's amazing?! Guys, this is
Owen. We grew up next door to
each other. Come give me a hug!

Owen goes over to her and does. As she wraps her arms
around him, he spots her ENGAGEMENT RING. Easily 5
karats. Blinding. She catches him looking at it.
Immediately feels uncomfortable. Tries to hide it.

HAYDEN BELL (CONT'D)

Give me a sec and we can get
started. I can't believe this!

OWEN

Actually, Hayden, there was a mix
up. I'm not the one who should -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BLAIR

(still on his phone)
Hayden. Your flight's getting
pushed up. There's weather coming
in and they want to get you out
now.

HAYDEN BELL

Now now?

BLAIR

They're saying wheels up in
thirty.

HAYDEN BELL

All right. Jeez, Owen, well - do
you want to fly down with us?

OWEN

Uh, I still have some things I
need to do.

BLAIR

Hello, like confirming the
spelling of your plus one?!

OWEN

Yeah, about that?

More ASSISTANTS swarm Hayden, helping her out of her
dress and leading her towards the bathroom.

HAYDEN BELL

Listen, don't worry. We'll find
time at the wedding to do the
interview, okay?

OWEN

No, you don't understand. I'm not
the one who's supposed to do the
interview. Cara Klein is.

HAYDEN BELL

Cara Klein? So what are you the
advance team?

BLAIR

Isn't Cara Klein the name of your
plus one?

OWEN

Um...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAYDEN BELL

Perfect! The three of us can just do the interview in Kauai! You're on for the toast, though, right?

OWEN

Uh, right.

HAYDEN BELL

I'll see you in two days...

INT. MORTY'S GOLD PLATED LIMO - DAY

Owen's tearing down the freeway, on his cell.

CARA (V.O.)

You've reached Cara Klein at Hip Parent Magazine. Leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

OWEN

Cara, it's Owen. I hope you're checking messages because I don't have your cell. Rolling Stone wants you to interview Hayden Bell. There was a mix up, and...

Owen sees a sign for GAS CITY. Turns off at the exit...

OWEN (CONT'D)

It's a long story so just call me, okay? I left a message for Lauren Goldstein at Rolling Stone to call you, and I'm on my way to try and find you now...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Owen's in the bleachers of a high school football stadium, watching FRESHMAN CHEERLEADING practice. Each of them has the most enormous FAKE BOOBS. All in a line, big, bigger, biggest...

Next to Owen in the bleachers is SALLY, who has one giant fake boob and GAUZE where the other used to be.

SALLY

She left a few hours ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

Did she say where she was going?
Or anything about Rolling Stone
maybe?

SALLY

Sorry.

Owen nods. Lost.

SALLY (CONT'D)

She did say something about going
to meet this guy from work.

OWEN

Did she tell you his name?

SALLY

No, but I thought you said you
worked with her?

OWEN

I do. But, I'm not the only one.

SALLY

Are you her boss?

OWEN

Other way around.

SALLY

Oh.

OWEN

She's going to meet her boss?

SALLY

(pause, apologetic)
I think they're spending New
Year's together.

Owen gets up to go. Then stops. Turns back.

OWEN

You know real boobs beat huge fake
ones every day of the week, right?
And guys who think otherwise
generally live in their moms'
basements and masturbate like
spider monkeys?

SALLY

I do now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

Cool.

INT. MORTY'S GOLD PLATED LIMO - DAY

Owen's driving home. Pleading with Rajeeesh.

OWEN

I'm asking you to help me! You got me into this. I was happy before the manual.

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

You were miserable.

OWEN

I was miserable, but at least I was happy...

(beat)

You know what I mean.

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

You did this because you wanted to, bro. Because you wanted your life to mean something. Or to at least believe it could again.

Owen pauses. Then, a little more calm:

OWEN

I can't be the first person in history to freak out, Raj. There has to be something you can do.

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

There is one thing...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Owen's in a dimly lit high school gym. With a dozen MEN and WOMEN on metal folding chairs in a big circle. One by one they each stand and tell their stories. The first is ALLAN, bald, wire rim frames, jittery:

ALLAN

I spent last year re-creating my old problems. Using the manual to solve them again. Got back with my ex-wife so I could use the manual to realize I should divorce her again. I loved realizing that...

JANICE is 29, cute. And a total basket case.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANICE

I'm know I'm supposed to meet the one, I just don't know who the one is. When I meet a guy, I always call Sanji, my rep. Ask him if the guy's the one. Sometimes I think Sanji's the one...

ED is 60. And long gone.

ED

Can you tell me what to do? Can you tell me what to do? Can you tell me what to do?

And then MAUREEN, 50s. Kind, maternal.

MAUREEN

I know how many of you feel about this, but I just want to say: I'm going to find my Happiness Addendum.

The group reacts with MURMURS and SHOUTS of approval and disapproval.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

We've all heard the rumors. But I have it from a reliable source that it's true. Each manual was written with an Addendum. Tells you to do three things and you're happy for the rest of your life.

ALLAN

I heard that doesn't apply to all manuals!

MAUREEN

If the back of your manual says, "printed on recyclable paper in Gary, Indiana," then I know where your Happiness Addendum is.

JANICE

Sanji told me this is a bunch of bullshit. A hoax!

MAUREEN

Believe what you want. I'm leaving in the morning. Anyone who wants to come with me, meet here at eight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

You can see every face in the group considering this.
Owen looks at the back of his manual:

- PRINTED ON RECYCLABLE PAPER IN GARY, INDIANA

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Owen's walking through the parking lot when he passes -

OWEN

Ned?

Ned Nash is walking towards his car. Trying to keep a low profile by wearing huge SUNGLASSES at night. Corey Hart style. Only succeeding in drawing stares from everyone he passes.

NED NASH

Owen, hey. How are ya?

OWEN

What are you doing here?

NED NASH

PA meeting. Pornoholics
Anonymous. Gail makes me go.

OWEN

Listen, I'm really sorry about -

NED NASH

Don't worry about it. If it makes you feel any better, I helped Eddie torch your car. So maybe we call it even...?

OWEN

Sounds fair.

NED NASH

So how's work? I heard Alex put Cara in charge. She's a sweet girl. Talented. You know I met her when she was still in school?

OWEN

The New York Hilton, right?

NED NASH

That's right!

OWEN

Let me ask you something -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NED NASH

She spent the whole night with me
and Gail, taking care of Timmy.
He was so sick with the flu.

OWEN

(realizing)
In the...men's bathroom....?

OWEN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It was all bullshit, Raj!

INT. CALL CENTER - NIGHT

A frizzy-haired woman braces is on with Owen. She is
FRAN. What she lacks in intelligence she makes up for
with pep. She has PEREZHILTON.COM open on her computer.

FRAN

This is, Fran, Owen. Rajeesh is
on vacation. I'm covering.

EXT. CARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen's outside Cara's apartment. Pacing.

OWEN

Fran?! Fran?! I need to speak to
Rajeesh.

FRAN (V.O.)

About the wedding?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

How do you know about the wedding?

FRAN

Rajeesh left me his notes about
you.

OWEN

His notes?! What do they say?

FRAN

"Go the wedding."

OWEN

Wonderful. Anything else?

FRAN

Lemme see...um...no.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN
Unbelievable...

Owen tries Cara's buzzer again. It rings and rings with no answer.

OWEN (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Why didn't she just tell me!?

FRAN
She probably wanted you to trust her. Women like that.

OWEN
Fran, when will Raj be back?

FRAN
I can't tell you that.

OWEN
Well where did he go?

FRAN
I can't tell you that either. If you have any manual-related questions -

Owen snaps his phone shut. A group of CAROLERS walk past, singing I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. Owen sees them and...

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Owen walks back into his apartment to find his door open. Suspicious, he pushes it open carefully. Peeks his head inside. And sees....Morty and Mrs. McGreevy GOING AT IT on his couch. Wrinkles mimicking them in the corner. Without a word, Owen walks right back out the door.

EXT. OWEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Owen's on the floor outside his apartment. Leaning against the wall. Having a heart to heart with Fran.

OWEN
What do you know about the Happiness Addendum?

FRAN (V.O.)
It's supposedly possibly true!

INT. CALL CENTER - NIGHT

Fran is PHOTOSHOPPING HER FACE onto JESSICA BIEL'S BODY, in a picture where Jessica is holding hands with JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE.

OWEN (V.O.)

Supposedly possibly?! Can't any of you give me a straight answer?!

FRAN

I don't think life works like that. But we can give it a shot.

OWEN (V.O.)

Fine, lets. First, if I don't go to the wedding, am I gonna be struck by lightning or fall down an elevator shaft or otherwise be smote by God or anyone else?

FRAN

Well, Rajeesh probably let you believe that to light a fire under you. But I've never heard of it actually happening to anyone.

OWEN (V.O.)

So did the manual come from God? Or was it just Vindalu?

FRAN

I don't know. That cat is crazy.

OWEN (V.O.)

And me being chosen? Is that bullshit too? I mean how many manuals are even out there?

FRAN

They just hit 20 in circulation. But almost no one reads them.

OWEN (V.O.)

20 manuals? That's it?

FRAN

20 million. Not counting the MidEast and North Korea, where they basically send one to everybody, hoping one will get through. Mostly they go to the U.S. A bunch to England, but those are really just about orthodontia.

INT. OWEN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Owen gets quiet for a moment. Considering this. Mrs. McGreevy and Morty are still going strong inside.

OWEN

What if Rajeesh was right? What if something monumental's supposed to happen to me at the wedding?

FRAN (V.O.)

Sounds like all that's gonna happen is you're gonna make an ass of yourself. Have you even written your toast yet?

OWEN

I was gonna wing it.

FRAN (V.O.)

In front of that crowd?! Movie stars and presidents and news anchors and rock stars? They'll be expecting you to say something clever and witty and poignant. You don't strike me as any of those things.

OWEN

You ever do any motivational speaking, Fran?

FRAN (V.O.)

Who's your date?

OWEN

I don't have one.

FRAN (V.O.)

No date, no toast. And you're the IT guy for Hip Parent magazine?

OWEN

Yeah. Though I sort of told the bride I write for Rolling Stone.

FRAN (V.O.)

Well, it's a toughie. And if you got a feeling about how your life's supposed to turn out, you gotta trust that. But I'd go with the Happiness Addendum. What could be better than happiness?

EXT. KAUAI - DUSK

Off the incredible beauty of an entire PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA playing VIVALDI'S FOUR SEASONS, we get our first look at Hayden Bell's wedding:

Under a giant white silk TENT, hundreds of tiny lights line pathways through a sea of tables filled with the most breathtaking array of flowers, food, and drink. All of it right in the sand, literally feet from the ocean.

Owen walks in, looking dashing, James Bond-like in his tux. He takes in the unreal beauty of the scene. The sun setting over the ocean. The music. It's remarkably peaceful, serene.

BLAIR (O.S.)

Where the hell have you been!?

Owen turns to find Blair at his side. Clipboard in hand, headset on. A complete twittering disaster.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

We are seconds away from speeches!

Owen looks behind Blair and finds two familiar faces in the crowd: Owen's Mom and OWEN'S DAD, who's basically an older, thicker version of Owen.

OWEN

Okay. Just let me say hello to some people first.

BLAIR

Uh, excuse me, we are not on your schedule here, selfish.

OWEN

Just give me a minute and I'll be there, okay? I promise.

Owen leaves Blair and heads off towards his parents. Working his way through the crowd to their table. They light up at seeing him.

OWEN'S MOM

Hi honey, how are you? You look terrific, my goodness! So thin! Are you eating?

OWEN

Not right now.

OWEN'S DAD

How are ya, son?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Owen's Dad KISSES HIM ON THE MOUTH. Owen notices his Dad has a RAINBOW FLAG PIN on his lapel.

OWEN'S DAD (CONT'D)

Your mother's drunk off half a champagne cocktail. She keeps threatening to go over and pinch Ted Koppel's ass.

OWEN'S MOM

It was a whole one, not a half!

Owen's Dad introduces Owen to a big, good-looking blonde guy in the chair next him. He's CHIP HESTER.

OWEN'S DAD

Owen, say hello to Chip Hester. He was down here on business, so Hayden said to bring him along.

Owen and Chip shake hands. Owen's Mom introduces Owen to the table. All of them are OWEN'S PARENTS' FRIENDS:

OWEN'S MOM

And you remember the Ozbarts, the Kaplans, Dr. and Mrs. Snow, the Fergusons.

All these couples, the same age as Owen's parents, wave at Owen. Owen's Dad focuses Owen on Chip.

OWEN'S DAD

Owen, Chip's Dad Phil and I are in the same golf league together.

Owen nods at Chip. Then the couples start asking Owen questions. Talking over one another. Owen tries to answer as much as he can. It's like a Jeopardy lightning round about your life.

MR. FERGUSON

Owen, how long has it been since you were home last?

OWEN

Uh, it's been a while.

MR. KAPLAN

Owen, do you know a girl in High Point named Sue?

MRS. KAPLAN

Are you seeing anyone special?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. FERGUSON

What do you think about little
Hayden getting married?

MRS. OZBART

What magazine are you working for?

OWEN'S MOM

Hip Parent.

MR. KAPLAN

You know Hayden's a big star now?
They say she can barely go outside
without being mobbed.

MR. FERGUSON

Hayden's hip all right.

MRS. FERGUSON

Hayden's Mom said Rolling Stone.

DR. SNOW

Rolling Hip?

MRS. OZBART

I fell last year and broke my hip.
You don't even want to know...

MRS. KAPLAN

I saw the Rolling Stones in
Cleveland once.

Across the room, in her gown, is Hayden. Looking like a
40s movie star. Classy. Elegant. Stunning.

OWEN

Would you excuse me please? I
need to say hello to the bride.

He heads off towards Hayden. She sees him and rushes
over. Blair is behind her, shadowing her every move.

HAYDEN

There you are!

OWEN

Wow. You look -

HAYDEN BELL

Thanks. You too. Great tux.

They look at each other, neither of them saying a word.
Both knowing that in another lifetime, all this could
have been about them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BLAIR

Hayden, if we don't do speeches
now, we'll have a cake melting
fiasco on our hands and girl,
there isn't enough Xanax on this
island for me to deal with that.

Owen offers Hayden his arm. She takes it and he escorts
her towards a big stage right at the water's edge....

EXT. KAUAI BEACH - WEDDING STAGE - DUSK

Hayden gets up on stage and joins RON, her strapping
fiance. They hold hands and together look like the
poster couple for genetic engineering. Owen stands
behind them, in front of a JAZZ BAND setting up.

Hayden clinks her glass into a mic. The crowd hushes as
all eyes turn to her and Ron.

HAYDEN

Hi everyone. Ron and I want to
thank you all for coming so far to
celebrate with us. We feel very
loved. And we want to keep that
feeling going, so we're forcing
people to come up here and say
nice things about us. In other
words, lie.

Genuine laughter from the crowd.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

The first person who's going to
lie to you is Owen Gray. I've
known Owen since second grade. He
was my best friend and, truth be
told, the first boy I ever kissed.
He's here tonight with someone
named Chip though, so I don't know
what that says about my kissing...

Big laugh from the crowd. Owen freezes at this. WHAT!?
He looks out at the crowd, at his parents. And Chip, who
gives him a little waive.

HAYDEN BELL

Ladies and Gentlemen, Owen Gray...

Owen walks up to the stage. Shakes Ron's hand. Gets a
hug from Hayden. She covers the mic as she hands it to
him, and whispers in his ear:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAYDEN

You'll always be my first...
everything.

OWEN

I don't have a speech.

HAYDEN

So wing it. Just say something
from your heart...

Hayden walks off to join Ron by the band. Owen takes the mic. Looks out over the crowd. A thousand of the most famous faces ever assembled. From every industry. All looking up at him:

OWEN

Uh, I'm Owen Gray...

Owen pauses. Looks back at Hayden. Then out into the crowd again. This time he sees:

CARA. Staring up at him. Something happens to him the moment he sees her. His entire face changes. He locks in on her so intensely, he barely notices she's next to Alex Cole. After a long silence, Owen says:

OWEN (CONT'D)

I wasn't sure I was going to make
it here tonight. But now I know
why I was supposed to. I -

A loud POP! interrupts Owen. Followed immediately by all the POWER going off at once. It's instantly almost pitch black under the tent. The sound of the waves crashing is deafening. Ron yells out, but can barely be heard:

RON

Everyone please be calm! I'm sure
we just blew a fuse. We'll have
it back up shortly.

The waves continue to crash. People quickly get anxious, frightened by the darkness. Soon half the crowd is on its feet, shouting for loved ones, moving towards a house in the distance with its lights on.

Owen can sense people leaving. He calls out into the crowd:

OWEN

CARA?!

Nothing. He looks down at the mic in his hand. Yells to where he thinks Ron might be:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN (CONT'D)

Where's the generator?

The voice calling back to him is Blair's:

BLAIR

It's not the generator! The entire system is computerized. There must be a glitch with the software.

Owen looks up at the sky.

OWEN

Fine! I get it!!
(beat, to Blair)
Show me where it is!

HAYDEN BELL

Owen? What can you do?!

Owen cries out into the darkness:

OWEN

I'm the IT guy for Hip Parent magazine!

BLAIR

I know where it is. I helped the band hook up their gear by it earlier.

OWEN

Show me!

Owen follows Blair's voice. Finds him and they jump off the stage, wind their way through tables. Owen can sense the crowd thinning out. Shadows of guests are visible heading towards the house in the distance.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Where is it? Hurry!

BLAIR

It's right over here!

They come up on a maze of snake-like wires all running through a central COMPUTER. Owen stands over it, trying to see in the dark. He feels around. Tinkering. The waves still crashing loudly behind him.

After a moment, Owen grabs the mic he's still holding onto. And yells out into the darkness again:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OWEN

CARA KLEIN!

A pause, and then faintly in the distance:

CARA

What?

Owen POUNDS the computer. And as the POWER and LIGHTS FLASH back on, Owen says into the mic, his voice booming over the crowd:

OWEN

I love you.

The crowd erupts as the beautiful lights glow again under the tent. Owen looks back at Hayden. Then turns and heads off in the other direction...

Owen scans the crowd for Cara. Finally finds her. Standing next to Alex Cole. He pushes his way through the people now making their way back to their chairs. Finally gets to her. They stare at one another. Until:

CARA

Alex, can you...?

Alex gives Owen a cold stare. Reluctantly walks off.

OWEN

So? How'd you like my speech?

CARA

I'm moving to New York.

OWEN

Was it that bad?

CARA

I got the Rolling Stone job.

OWEN

Congratulations. How did you -

CARA

Alex knows Jann Wenner. I met him here this morning. Right before I interviewed Hayden. Had to explain why I missed her in Chicago -

OWEN

I'm sorry. It was an incredibly shitty thing to do and I just...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

OWEN (CONT'D)

didn't know what I was doing or
what really mattered. I tried to
fix it, but -

CARA

Well, luckily Alex did.

OWEN

Alex is a powerful guy.

CARA

Yeah, he's kinda perfect.

A slight pause. She looks back at Alex across the room.

CARA (CONT'D)

I don't love him though...

A sly smile creeps across Owen's face.

OWEN

I know exactly what you mean.

He leans in and kisses her. Softly at first. Until it
becomes something more. They lose themselves in each
other. Forgetting everything and everyone around them.
Owen's Mom turns to Owen's Dad, as they watch this:

OWEN'S MOM

You owe me fifty bucks.

Owen's Dad shrugs apologetically to Chip.

INT. BEACH ESTATE - MEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Owen comes into the bathroom and sees the only open
urinal is next to Alex Cole. He walks over to it.
Unzips. Alex looks over at him.

OWEN

Sorry about...everything. I love
her. Have for a while.

ALEX COLE

That it?

OWEN

What else is there?

ALEX COLE

You tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OWEN

(pause)
I quit.

ALEX COLE

Well, saves me having to fire you
I guess...

Alex Cole flushes. Walks over and washes his hands.
Ignores the ATTENDANT there. Takes a mint. Looks at
Owen in the mirror.

ALEX

So what's the story with that Chip
guy?

Owen pauses, dealing with his considerable surprise.
Then:

OWEN

I could probably introduce you...

ALEX

I'll be at the bar.

Alex Cole walks out. Then the door to the one of the
stalls opens. OPRAH WINFREY walks out. Looking regal in
a beautiful couture dress.

She washes up. Tips the Attendant. Who Owen notices for
the first time is a good-looking young Indian guy.

As Owen walks over to the sink, Oprah leaves. Smiling at
the Attendant and calling back as she goes:

OPRAH

Night, Raj. Talk to you soon...

Owen freezes. Stares at the Attendant.

RAJEESH

What? Oprah? She has to use the
men's bathroom. Girl cant get a
moment's peace in the women's.

OWEN

Raj???

It's him. In a uniform, with a t-shirt underneath that
says ESCAPE. TRAVEL. LIVE.

RAJEESH

Told you it was something big.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN

Change the course of history?

RAJEESH

Everything we do, every moment we
do it.

OWEN

That's all you're gonna give me?

Rajeesh extends his hand. The moment Owen touches it,
shaking it, something extraordinary happens:

A WAVE of IMAGES rushes over Owen. Too fast to process,
he can only get a sense of it. We see it with him, the
outcome of all the choices he's made with the manual, and
the interconnectedness of it all:

- Owen and Cara moving into their New York apartment...
laughing hysterically as they shower together with no
shower curtain...
- Owen and Cara in the crowd at a small wedding for Morty
and Mrs. McGreevy...showering them with rice...
- Owen proposing to Cara in central park...Cara walking
down the aisle at their own wedding...being showered with
rice themselves...
- Owen and Cara in a hospital, holding their new baby
boy...
- Owen and Cara singing to their infant son in his
crib...
- Owen front row with Cara at a concert, watching the
lead singer...backstage as Cara interviews the band...
- Owen reading Cara's articles for her...then beaming as
they open Rolling Stone to see her name in print...
- Owen teaching computers to his young son...
- Owen, an older man now, a professor teaching computers
at NYU...one STUDENT raising his hand...
- Owen's Student putting on a SPACE SUIT, walking out to
board the SPACE SHUTTLE...a much older Cara and Owen
watching it proudly on TV...
- Flashes of dozens of other tiny moments and monumental
events that make up a life. Owen's life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Rajeesh pulls his hand back and the images evaporate like smoke. Owen takes a long moment to recover. Looks at Rajeesh, finally understanding.

OWEN (CONT'D)

Oh my...God?

Rajeesh smiles. Looks Owen in the eye. And then,
Rajeesh WINKS.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END