

**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!

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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...

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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.

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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 HUMPING 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 RAJEEESH.

RAJEEESH  
'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.

RAJEEESH  
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.

RAJEEESH  
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.

RAJEEESH  
You're awake, boss.

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

RAJEEESH  
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?!!

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

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

RAJEEESH  
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?

RAJEEESH  
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)

RAJEEESH

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?

RAJEEESH

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

Owen's other line beeps.

OWEN

That's my other line.

RAJEEESH

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.

RAJEEESH

Go for Rajeesh!

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN

What the hell's happening, Raj?!

RAJEEESH

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 -

RAJEEESH

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:

RAJEEESH

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.

RAJEEESH

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.

RAJEEESH

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?

RAJEEESH

By doing everything in the manual.

OWEN

I still don't know why I got it.

RAJEEESH

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

OWEN

You know about the wedding?

RAJEEESH

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)

RAJEEESH (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?

RAJEEESH

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?

RAJEEESH

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?

RAJEEESH

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, Rajeesh plays HALO on XBOX 360, which he's hooked up to his monitor. Rajeesh 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 gooood...

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 Rajeesh'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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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:

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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:

RAJEEESH (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:

RAJEEESH (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
If no time for Number One, wear  
your dark jeans.

Owen puts on the dark jeans.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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...

RAJEEESH (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 Rajeesh:

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?

RAJEEESH (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?

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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 MOMBIE

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 nerf 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 pickup 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:

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH  
Who?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

OWEN  
You tell me. God, the universe,  
Vindalu -

RAJEEESH  
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.

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

OWEN  
Um, what?

RAJEEESH  
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:

RAJEEESH  
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.

RAJEEESH  
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!?

RAJEEESH  
All good questions.

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

RAJEEESH  
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.

RAJEEESH  
It did. It has.

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

RAJEEESH  
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)

RAJEEESH

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  
wooed 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?

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

Fight for her!

OWEN

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

RAJEEESH (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:

RAJEEESH (V.O.)

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

OWEN

Stop calling me bro!

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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.

RAJEEESH (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  
Ummmm. 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 Rajeesh.

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.

RAJEEESH  
 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.

RAJEEESH  
 Told you it was something big.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN  
Change the course of history?

RAJEEESH  
Everything we do, every moment we  
do it.

OWEN  
That's all you're gonna give me?

Rajeeesh 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