

The Escort
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Draft A

FADE IN:

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - DAY

A sold-out, crowded flight. The CAMERA MOVES through the cabin. We can hear a MAN'S VOICE over the loud-speaker.

VOICE (V.O.)
Flight-time to New York will be two
hours, twenty-six minutes. So sit
back, relax, and enjoy our in-
flight hospitality...

INT. AIRPLANE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

A very cramped airplane bathroom. GARY DECKER, 30's, good-looking, in a white airline uniform, is behind an unattractive, CONSIDERABLY OVERWEIGHT FEMALE PASSENGER. The two are trying to have sex, but it's difficult due to the lack of space in the bathroom, and her size.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER
Come on, Captain. Bring her home.

DECKER
I've found the landing strip, I
just need more thrust.

Decker struggles to find even an inch to move. There is an IMPATIENT KNOCK on the other side of the door.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(calling through door)
Just a minute!
(to overweight passenger)
Turn around. Maybe that will give
me more room.

The big woman starts turning around, but it's not easy to maneuver.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Yeah, like that... Come here,
beautiful...

The big woman is now facing Decker. She is not pretty.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: her face)
No, it was better the other way.
The other way.

There is ANOTHER KNOCK, even more impatient this time.

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

A flight attendant, JANET, 50's and man-ish, with no sense of humor, is KNOCKING on the bathroom door.

JANET
(through the door)
Decker? Decker? What are you
doing in there? It's time to start
the beverage cart.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

DECKER
(annoyed, through door)
Be right there, Janet!

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER
Beverage cart? You told me you
were the captain.

DECKER
I am. You think they give these
wings to just anyone?

Decker touches his CAPTAIN'S WINGS, and they fall from his shirt. They are the plastic kid's kind held on by adhesive.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: wings)
Damn it.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER
I don't believe this. I'm having
sex with a gay flight attendant?

DECKER
Hey, not all of us are gay. Only
ninety-six percent. And you don't
strike me as the picky type, to be
honest with you.

The overweight passenger pulls up her clothes and tries to exit.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER
Back to my two seats.

The large woman tries to exit, but with both she and Decker unable to move out of the way, there isn't enough room for the door to slide open and in.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER (CONT'D)

Move over.

The large woman shoves Decker back and pulls the door into him again -- still trapped.

DECKER

(getting hit by her)

Ow! Jesus! What happened? A minute ago things were so romantic.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER

Just open the door. I'm getting claustrophobic.

Decker tries the door but it will only open a few inches.

DECKER

There's no room for it to slide in.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER

Oh, shit... The walls are closing in on me. Oh, shit.

(woozy)

I think I'm going to throw up.

DECKER

What? No. No!

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER

Oh, shit. Here it comes...

Decker is now starting to panic, himself. They are face to face, and if she gets sick it's going to be all over him. He looks for a place to climb or move, but there is none.

DECKER

No, wait. I have to get out of here.

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER

Oh, shit...

Decker starts desperately banging on the door.

DECKER

Let me out! Let me out!

INT. COMMERCIAL AIRPLANE - OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

JANET
Decker? Is someone in there with
you?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

OVERWEIGHT PASSENGER
(about to get sick)
Oh, God --!

DECKER
LET ME OUT!!!

WE FREEZE on Decker's panic-stricken face as he tries to squeeze his head through a bathroom door that will only open four inches.

CHYRON: "THE ESCORT"

EXT. WILDER FAMILY HOME - PALM BEACH, FLORIDA - DAY

Establishing. A nice home on the coast.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE CAMERA moves through a child's birthday party in full-swing. SIX-YEAR-OLDS running around... A piñata... A face painter... THE CAMERA passes over a cake, and we are surprised to read, "HAPPY 14TH BIRTHDAY, ETHAN!" WE MOVE ON, past more little children playing, and LAND ON --

ETHAN WILDER, 14, pretentious and self-conscious. Wearing a suit and tie, and black framed glasses, Ethan sits alone on a love seat. He looks depressed.

KINGSLEY, Ethan's six-year-old half-brother, approaches Ethan. Ethan stares at him, annoyed.

ETHAN
What is it, Kingsley?

Little Kingsley rears back and sucker-punches Ethan right in the stomach. Ethan lets out a GRUNT.

KINGSLEY
You my bitch now!

Kingsley runs away.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ethan's dad, DR. STEVEN WILDER, 45, a man used to getting bossed around by the women in his life, is in the middle of being bossed around by his second wife, BETH, early thirties, plastic looking. Beth is placing candles on Ethan's cake.

BETH

Go tell Ethan it's time for his cake. And have you talked to him about this weekend yet?

STEVEN

Beth, I don't think now is the time to--

BETH

Talk to him. Now. Go.

STEVEN

All right.

Steven reluctantly goes.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

Steven enters and passes by Kingsley, who has his pants down around his ankles and is PEEING ON ETHAN'S PILE OF WRAPPED GIFTS.

STEVEN

Kingsley!

Kingsley's head turns sharply to Steven, caught.

KINGSLEY

I'm just giving Ethan his present.

Kingsley runs from the hallway. Steven shakes his head and exits into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Steven sits down next to Ethan on the love seat. It's a little forced and awkward.

STEVEN

Great party, son. Really one of your best.

Ethan looks at his dad like he's crazy.

ETHAN

Really? You don't think this feels more like a party for Kingsley?

Steven looks around at all the little kids playing.

STEVEN

No! No. No. Your step-mother just wanted you to have people to celebrate with and Kingsley's friends were available. I told you to invite kids your own age.

Ethan looks away, and we can see that maybe there was no one for him to invite.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Listen, something's come up and I'm not going to be able to take you to New Hampshire.

ETHAN

What?

STEVEN

I have to go out of town for this neonatal conference. It just came up. All of my colleagues are going. There's nothing I can do...

Ethan is clearly upset.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

But don't worry. The airline has people to take care of you. And a representative from your new school will meet you when you land in Boston.

The seemingly cynical fourteen year-old Ethan acts more like a scared child who's on the verge of tears.

ETHAN

I don't even want to go to boarding school.

STEVEN

Ethan... Come on. It's going to be great.

ETHAN

For who? For Beth? Now that she's finally gotten rid of me so there's no trace of your old life?

STEVEN
That is not true.

Ethan gets up and walks off, angry. Steven goes after him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Where are you going? Ethan? It's
time for your cake.

Ethan ignores his dad and continues walking away.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Beth now has Kingsley and the other children gathered by the cake. She sees Ethan approaching.

BETH
Here he comes.
(to Kingsley)
Show time, Baby.

Beth starts LIGHTING THE CANDLES on the cake. Kingsley stands tall, CLEARS HIS THROAT, and begins singing "Happy Birthday" in a full-on BAD OPERA VOICE, complete with excessive vibrato.

KINGSLEY
Happy Birthday to youuuu....

Other kids start to sing, but Beth quickly stops them.

BETH
Wait -- Nobody else sing. I told
King-King he could perform a solo.

Confused, everyone stops singing as Kingsley continues to perform.

KINGSLEY
Happy birthday to youuuuuuuuuuu...

Ethan enters and walks right past them and exits into the back hallway that leads to the bedrooms. A frustrated Steven, who has been following him, gives up.

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

We follow Ethan as he enters and slams the door behind him. He sits on his bed, upset and defeated, as we hear Kingsley finish singing:

KINGSLEY (O.S.)
 Happy Birthday dear Ethannnnnnn...
 Happy Birthday to...
 (up two full octaves)
 Youuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu!!!

INT. UPSCALE OFFICE - DAY

A large corner office. Filled packing boxes yet to be moved are on the floor. A label on top of the boxes reads: "KATE O'DONNELL, PRESIDENT, BLINK TELECOMMUNICATIONS."

KATE, 40'S, no-nonsense, successful business type, picks up her ringing cell phone.

KATE
 Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. ETHAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ethan is on his iPhone, a little nervous. He gazes out his window as cars pull away with the little kids from the party.

ETHAN
 Mom? It's me, Ethan.

KATE
 Ethan, I was literally picking up the phone to wish you a happy birthday. How are you?

Ethan doesn't say anything.

KATE (CONT'D)
 Ethan?

ETHAN
 I want to come live with you.

KATE
 Oh, Sweetheart...

ETHAN
 I promise to stay out of your way --

KATE
 Ethan...

ETHAN
 You can work as much as you want --

KATE

Ethan -- I'm moving to London on Monday. You know that.

ETHAN

I could go with you.

KATE

Oh, Honey. Wouldn't that be great? I would love that. You're sweet.

Kate's other line starts RINGING.

KATE (CONT'D)

Look, work is on the other line. I have to run. But I'll call you back, okay? Happy birthday, Sweetheart.

Ethan's mom hangs up, leaving Ethan disappointed.

INT. MIAMI AIRPORT SECURITY CHECK-POINT - DAY

CLOSE ON

Ethan's step-mom, Beth, is straining to hold the end of a taut leash as if an unseen, giant dog is pulling her from the other end.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

Beth is holding Kingsley ON A KID LEASH. The leash is taut with Kingsley leaning forward at a forty-five degree angle to the ground, like an old Buick hood ornament.

KINGSLEY

(re: restaurant,
longingly)

Wetzels. I want a Wetzels.

BETH

In a minute, baby.

We see Steven, Kingsley and Beth are saying their good-byes to a dour-looking Ethan. Ethan is again in a suit and tie.

BETH (CONT'D)

Now say goodbye to Ethan.

KINGSLEY

No!

(to Ethan, defiant)

Hell-loooo!!!

Beth laughs, embarrassed.

BETH
(to Ethan)
Cute. He doesn't want you to go.
Well, I'll say goodbye from the
both of --

KINGSLEY
Wetzels!

Kingsley takes off running, ripping the leash from Beth's grasp. Beth immediately chases after him, trying unsuccessfully to grab the leash as it drags on the ground behind him.

BETH
King-King? King-King?

Ethan and Steven stare after them for a beat. Steven turns back to Ethan and holds out a CREDIT CARD for him to take.

STEVEN
It's in your name.

Ethan finally reaches for it. Steven pulls it back.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
For emergencies...

He gives it to Ethan.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
You know if I didn't have this work
thing I'd take you. I would.

Ethan refuses to look at his dad.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Okay. Study hard. And try to make
some friends, Ethan.
(then)
Give me a hug.

Steven takes a step to Ethan and hugs him. Ethan doesn't return it.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Are you not going to say good-bye?

Ethan continues to look away from his dad. Steven gives up.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Call me when you land.

Steven nods to a ground crew representative, BRUCE, who has been waiting to escort Ethan through security.

Ethan and Bruce walk away as Steven watches his son go. After a moment, Steven walks out of frame in the other direction, and we are left looking at --

AN AIRPORT TV MONITOR with CNN playing on it.

CNN ANNOUNCER

Category Two Hurricane Kendra made landfall this morning just south of Charleston, South Carolina. As it tracks north, the violent effects of this massive storm could possibly be felt as far as the Chesapeake Bay...

INT. TERMINAL - DAY

A depressed and angry Ethan walks down the terminal to the gate.

He and Bruce enter the gate area where A DIGITAL SIGN reads: "FLT. 662 BOSTON 10:45A ON TIME."

INT. COMMERCIAL JET - GALLEY - DAY

In the rear of the plane, a hung-over Decker THROWS UP into one of the sliding trash drawers.

DECKER

(groans)

DUHhhh....

He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. A FEMALE PASSENGER, waiting to use the lavatory, has seen all of this.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Just because I fly for a living doesn't mean I'm not susceptible to air sickness.

PASSENGER

We haven't taken off yet.

Decker looks at her and nods. There's nothing to really say.

Decker helps himself to an airplane "mini" of Jack Daniels. He chases it with another mini, then quickly hides the evidence as another flight attendant, DENISE, 40's, African American, approaches.

DENISE
A little hair of the dog that
nipped ya?

Decker exhales heavily, trying to shake the cobwebs out.

DECKER
Yeah. How you doing, Denise?

DENISE
Better than you. I heard you got
demoted for humpin' a fatty in the
john and then trying to flush her
down the toilet.

Decker nods matter of factly.

DECKER
Well, she threw up on me and then
passed out and her face went into
the toilet. And then in my attempt
to open the door I climbed on top of
her and accidentally hit the flush
button.

DENISE
What are you doing sloshing around
in the muck with all them hoggers,
Decker? You a good looking white
boy. You don't need to go slummin'
like you got disease or some shit.

DECKER
I'm not slumming, Denise. I'm just
an equal opportunity lover. And
you'd think the airline would reward
me for making their passengers feel
good. Honor me, even. But no, I'm
being punished...

Decker picks up a clipboard with papers on it.

DECKER (CONT'D)
...with paperwork, and freaks with
peanut allergies, and Kosher meal
weirdos...

Decker looks up to see Bruce and Ethan making their way
toward them.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: Ethan, gravely)
And kids. I hate kids.

DENISE
Yeah, and this one looks nasty.

Denise snickers and walks away as Bruce and Ethan approach Decker.

BRUCE
Decker, here's your unaccompanied minor. Ethan, say hello to your in-flight escort, Decker.

Ethan just stares straight ahead.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
All right. Have fun, you two!

Bruce can't get off the plane fast enough. Attached to Ethan's suit lapel is an "UNACCOMPANIED MINOR" sticker with his name on it. Decker looks at the sticker.

DECKER
Ethan... my main man. This your first time flying alone?

Decker goes to clasp Ethan's hand but Ethan doesn't take it.

ETHAN
Is that puke on your collar?

DECKER
There's a good chance. A real good chance it is puke...
(trying to look)
...on my collar...

Ethan eyes Decker with disgust.

ETHAN
It's clear the airline assigned me their best and brightest.

DECKER
Ha. Actually, it was a rough flight in from Charlotte. You know, just because I fly for a living doesn't mean I'm not susceptible to--

ETHAN
This isn't math class, guy. You don't have to show all your work. Just tell me where I'm sitting and leave me alone.

Decker is taken aback by how rude Ethan is.

DECKER

Oh. I'm sorry. Your seat is right here...

Decker quickly opens the door to the bathroom and SHOVES ETHAN INTO IT, slamming the door behind him. Ethan starts YELLING and BANGING on the door as Decker holds it closed.

DECKER (CONT'D)

(through the door)

You like it in there, "guy?"

Denise approaches with some pillows.

DENISE

Where's the kid?

Decker nods to the bathroom with a smile.

ETHAN (O.S.)

Let me out!

Denise can't believe it.

DENISE

Decker...

DECKER

(re: bathroom)

What? Isn't this the place for a little shit?

Denise snorts a laugh and continues on into the galley. Decker finally lets go of the door and it quickly opens to reveal an upset Ethan.

ETHAN

What's your problem?

DECKER

What's your problem? Huh? Huh?

They glare at each other like two petulant kids.

DECKER (CONT'D)

I thought so.

Decker snatches Ethan's boarding pass, and leads him down the aisle.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: boarding pass)
Twenty-four "D".

Decker gestures to an aisle seat. Ethan sits in it, annoyed.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: their lack of
rapport)
I like this. What we have. This
is going to be fun.

EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The plane takes off.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The fasten seat-belt sign goes off with a DING. The plane is above a thick blanket of clouds. A lonely Ethan looks across the row of seats and out the window.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)
Folks, we've reached our cruising
altitude. I'm going to go ahead
and turn off the seat-belt sign so
you're free to move about the
cabin. But we ask that while
seated you keep those belts
fastened...

Across the aisle from Ethan is a very CUTE GIRL with her parents. Ethan notices her and steals glances at her. She looks up and catches him. He awkwardly looks away, shy and embarrassed.

DECKER --

hands a passenger a cocktail, and then approaches Ethan.

DECKER
How you doing, buddy? You doing
okay?

Ethan blatantly ignores Decker.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Look, I think we got started off on
the wrong foot. To be honest, I'm
all banged up from last night. I
was at an airport hotel lounge in
Louisville.
(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)
Ever been to Louisville? Those
Kentucky girls can drink some
Bourbon. I must have had ten, I
shit you not. And drinking's not
all they're good at. Blow-jobs
were everywhere. My point is, I'm
sorry for tossing you in the can.

Decker hands Ethan a pair of CHILDREN'S PLASTIC CAPTAIN'S
WINGS like he was wearing in the opening bathroom scene.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Please accept these on behalf of
myself.

ETHAN
You're giving me wings?

DECKER
Well I'm not giving them to you.
You have to pay six dollars for
them. Part of the airline's effort
to cut costs.

ETHAN
How old do you think I am?

Decker considers Ethan.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
I'll spare you the pain of counting
beyond the limits of your fingers.
I'm fourteen. Did you play with
wings when you were fourteen?

Decker takes the wings back, understanding.

DECKER
No, I played with something else
until I saw blood. Red means stop.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Decker returns to Ethan's seat holding a PORN MAGAZINE. He
looks around to make sure no one sees him give it to Ethan.

DECKER
Quick -- hide it inside your Sky
Mall catalog.

The self-conscious Ethan blushes, totally embarrassed.

ETHAN
Is this porn?

DECKER
It's my only one until we land in
Boston, so don't lose it.

Ethan is worried someone is going to see him with it.

ETHAN
What am I supposed to do with this?

DECKER
(scoffs in disbelief)
What? What are--?

Decker scoffs again, and looks at Ethan like he's a freak.

DECKER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but if you have to ask
what you're supposed to do with
these thunder tats...

Decker quickly snatches the magazine back from Ethan and
opens it to a prime photo of A NAKED PAIR OF BREASTS.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Boom! Right there, look at that...

Decker gets momentarily distracted by the picture, himself.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(snapping out of it)
Then I can't trust you with it.

Decker rolls the magazine up and puts it in his pocket.
Ethan seems at once relieved and disappointed.

ETHAN
Look -- what's your name again?

DECKER
Decker. As in "Double Decker," a
move I patented with two nurses in
Pittsburgh. Maybe you've heard of
it?

ETHAN
Listen to me, because I'm only
going to say this once. Despite
what your airline says, I'm old
enough to travel on my own...

Ethan rips off his "Unaccompanied Minor" sticker and slaps it on the seat-back in front of him.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
...so you don't need to help me,
entertain me, or talk to me ever
again.

Ethan puts on his headphones and closes his eyes. Decker stands there a beat. He can't believe this kid.

DECKER
Fine.
(scoffs)
Nice suit. I didn't know this
flight was landing in 1970. Nerd.

INT. AIRPLANE GALLEY - DAY

Decker is preparing coffee for the passengers. Denise approaches and empties some trash.

DENISE
How's it going with the kid?

DECKER
(defensive)
Who cares? He's a dork. I don't
want to hang out with him anyway.
I mean, if he doesn't like me, then
I don't like him. I don't need
that kind of rejection.

Decker starts to walk off with the tray of coffee.

DECKER (CONT'D)
He's dead to me.

Denise is left surprised at just how sensitive Decker is.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Decker stands with his elbow on a seat-back, hitting on an unattractive, sloppy, slutty-looking passenger in her late forties, CRYSTAL. Her muffin-top is not only spilling over her jeans, but the sides of the seat, as well.

DECKER
...All because you were allergic to
peanuts? You poor thing. Okay,
say we're at a baseball game, and I
eat two bags of peanuts...

ETHAN --

is sitting in the aisle-seat directly behind Crystal. He has been watching in disbelief as Decker hits on her.

DECKER (CONT'D)
And say you and I, you know, we hit
it off...

Decker and Crystal share a giggle.

CRYSTAL
Uh-huh...

DECKER
...kind of like we're doing now.

CRYSTAL
Uh-huh...

DECKER
And we get a little crazy-funky-
awesome together...

CRYSTAL
(knows where he's going)
You want to know if I'm allergic to
your...

DECKER
Yes. Will I shoot to kill?

Ethan can't believe the conversation these two are having.

CRYSTAL
I don't know. But I like living on
the edge.

DECKER
Ho-ho! Me, too. I fly planes.
Flight attendant is just a means to
an end for me. I'm working my way
up to senior flight attendant by
next year, copilot the year after.
At that point, pilot is just a
formality.

Ethan can't help but butt-in and dispute Decker.

ETHAN
(re: Janet and Denise)
So you're saying those flight
attendants will also become pilots?

DECKER

No. They don't have the guts it takes to be Top Gun like me. And who asked you anyway, you little puss-face?

Decker and Ethan glare at each other for a beat. Decker returns his attention to Crystal.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. My point is, I was born to fly these birds --

BOOM!!! There is a quick EXPLOSION and a flash of light on the starboard side of the aircraft.

WIDE SHOT

The PLANE DROPS SUDDENLY. Passengers collectively let out a GASP. There is panic.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

JANET --

is on the phone with the cockpit. She listens for a moment and quickly hangs up. She presses another button TO SPEAK TO THE PASSENGERS OVER THE P.A.

JANET

The Captain has asked that everyone please return to your seats and remain calm.

DENISE --

is doing her best to reassure the people in the rear of the plane.

DENISE

I'm sure it's just a small mechanical malfunction. Nothing to be alarmed by.

DECKER --

We see his attempt to calm the passengers near him.

DECKER

We're going down, people. Something is wrong here. This is not good.

ETHAN --

looks scared. He quickly pulls off the "Unaccompanied Minor" sticker he slapped on the seat-back in front of him, and nervously sticks it back on his suit.

WIDE SHOT

The plane dips sharply again and the passengers let out another GASP.

DECKER --

is freaking out.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: turbulence)
The plane can't hold up much longer. Where are the masks? Drop the masks!

Decker bangs on the overhead. Janet has steadied herself through the turbulence, and reaches Decker.

JANET
We lost an engine. Now quit scaring the passengers and act like a professional.

Ethan can hear what Janet is saying to Decker.

The PLANE SUDDENLY LEVELS OUT. The passengers breathe a sigh of relief. Decker tries to act like he was never scared.

DECKER
(to passengers)
Calm down, people. Please! Need I remind you, flying is safer than driving a car.

Decker rests a hand on a frail OLD WOMAN'S shoulder.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Especially when "Old Lead Foot" here gets behind the wheel. Am I right, Mrs. Cataracts?

Decker continues down the aisle. Crystal stops him.

CRYSTAL
(re: airplane)
What was that?

DECKER

(smug)

I'd say, just by listening to the sound of the thrust... you hear that? It takes a trained ear. I'd say we lost an engine.

The captain comes on the LOUD SPEAKER.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Folks, it appears we lost our number two engine --

Decker holds up his hands, victorious.

DECKER

Called it.

He starts high-fiving some of the frightened passengers.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Totally called it.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

Good news is, we still have two other engines. Unfortunately, they can't take us as high or as fast as we need to go.

The captain checks off temporarily. Decker turns to Crystal.

DECKER

Did I call it or what? Give me a hug.

Ethan butts in.

ETHAN

You didn't call anything.

(re: Janet)

She told you what happened. I heard her.

DECKER

Why don't you shut up, you little shi--

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

So, we're going to go ahead and land at the nearest airport, which happens to be Charlottesville, Virginia. Flight attendants prepare for immediate landing.

DECKER
(to Ethan)
You're lucky I just got an order.

ETHAN
Or what? You'd start crying again?

DECKER
Watch it. I'm serious. I am fully
authorized to use plastic tie
handcuffs on you.
(realizing)
Except I left them in my condo --
damn it!

The plane drops and Decker reacts, scared.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Whoa!

Decker quickly half-crawls/half-walks back toward the front
of the plane.

EXT. RUNWAY - DAY

The plane approaches the tarmac at Charlottesville Airport.
It touches down and BRAKES HARD TO A STOP.

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan breathes a sigh of relief, as many of the passengers
APPLAUD the safe landing.

INT. CHARLOTTESVILLE AIRPORT GATE - DAY

Relief to be alive has quickly turned to frustration. The
passengers are all huddled around the gate counter trying to
find out how they are going to get to their final
destinations. The inundated airline employee working behind
the counter is JUDY, INCREDIBLY PREGNANT.

JUDY
(into P.A. microphone)
Attention passengers from flight
six-six-two with non-stop service
from Miami to Boston... We at
Sunshine Express would like to
assure you that with our "No-
Further-Delay" guarantee we are
going to get you on to your final
destination immediately.
(MORE)

JUDY (CONT'D)

However, it does take a plane to do that and we have none. And with the hurricane suspending all flights, we're looking at tomorrow morning, first thing, fingers crossed.

The crowd reacts with more MURMURS of anger and frustration.

JUDY (CONT'D)

I know. No one likes waiting.
(re: her pregnant belly)
Believe me, this baby's been inside me so long she's going to walk out.

ETHAN --

is in the crowd, anxious and unsure what to do, like a kid separated from his mom in a mall.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Now as part of our "No-Further-Delay" guarantee we'll be providing you with a complimentary night's stay at the luxurious and exciting Airport Motor Inn. The only airport hotel with room for your RV...

INT. CHARLOTTESVILLE AIRPORT GATE - DAY

Ethan is getting pushed aside by the annoyed THRONGS OF PASSENGERS trying to get a HOTEL VOUCHER from Judy. The sky outside has darkened and RAIN starts pounding the large windows in the terminal.

JUDY

(handing out vouchers)
One night free... Room for your RV...

Ethan finds himself unable to even get near the counter. Frustrated, he finally goes around the mass of people and simply walks behind the counter to stand next to Judy.

ETHAN

What am I supposed to do? I'm this...

Ethan is embarrassed to show his "UNACCOMPANIED MINOR" sticker, but does so anyway.

JUDY
(calling out suddenly)
A minor! We have a minor!

Judy grabs Ethan and hugs him to her chest, protectively.

ETHAN
Why are you hugging me?

JUDY
I don't know. My maternal
instincts are off the charts right
now.

Judy starts crying.

ETHAN
Why are you crying?

JUDY
(crying)
I don't know.

Judy holds Ethan at arms length, looking at him.

JUDY (CONT'D)
Where is your escort?

ETHAN
I don't have one.

Judy gasps.

JUDY
But they wouldn't let you on that
plane without one. Somebody had to
have been assigned to you.

Ethan scans the gate and reluctantly points.

ETHAN
He was.

DECKER --

is pulling his rolling suitcase shaped like the HOOD OF A
ROLLS-ROYCE (with the suitcase wheels as front tires), as he
struts across the gate area hitting on Crystal.

DECKER
...what do you say we go back to
the hotel, I get a bag of peanuts
and we play a little Russian
Roulette?

Decker looks up and notices Ethan pointing at him. His face falls.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Shit.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY

Judy is lecturing Decker. Ethan is standing between them. Off to the side, Crystal is waiting impatiently.

JUDY

You can't just abandon your charge,
Mr. Decker.

DECKER

I didn't abandon him. He abandoned
me. And I have abandonment issues.

JUDY

That is unacceptable as an excuse.
Who is the child here?

DECKER

He is.

ETHAN

He is.

Decker notices Crystal starting to leave.

DECKER

Wait -- you're leaving?

CRYSTAL

You look like you have your hands
full. Maybe another time.

Crystal walks away. Decker turns back to Judy and Ethan, annoyed.

DECKER

More abandonment. Great. Thank
you for ruining something very
special.

ETHAN

You should be thanking us. She was
horrible.

DECKER

(glaring at Ethan)
I swear to God, I will pummel you.

JUDY

Mister Decker!

DECKER

I wouldn't really hit him. I just want to.

ETHAN

I don't approve of how he talks to me.

DECKER

I don't approve of how he talks, period.

ETHAN

Oh, so that gives you the right to lock me in the bathroom?

Judy looks to Decker for an explanation. Decker is ashamed.

JUDY

Is this true?

DECKER

I didn't lock him in there. We were goofing around.

ETHAN

Oh, is that what that was? Were we also goofing around when you called me names, told me details of your sordid night in Kentucky, or tried to force me to look at pornography?

Judy is taken aback. She looks to Decker for his response to such accusations. Decker can only glare in disappointment at Ethan. Judy turns back to Ethan.

JUDY

I am so sorry. On behalf of all of us here at Sunshine Express, I promise we will take better care of you with our "Take Better Care Of You" Guarantee. Now why don't you have a seat while Mister Decker and I have a little chat.

INT. / EXT. STEVEN'S MOVING CAR - DAY

Ethan's dad, Steven, is talking over his car's speakerphone as he drives.

STEVEN

Virginia? My God, what happened?

INTERCUT:

INT. CHARLOTTESVILLE AIRPORT - GATE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan is seated in the gate area, talking on his iPhone.

ETHAN

The engine blew up. I almost died.
But it was worth it because in the
end I get to go to boarding school.

STEVEN

Stop it, Ethan. I just want to
know if you're all right.

ETHAN

I'm fine.

WIDE SHOT IN STEVEN'S CAR

Beth is in the backseat with Kingsley, who is dressed like a
thirties paper-boy with overalls and a cap turned sideways.

KINGSLEY

Did Ethan die in a plane crash?

BETH

Quiet, Sweetheart, Daddy is on the
phone.

Ethan is confused when he hears their voices.

ETHAN

What are you doing with Beth and
Kingsley? You told me you were at
a conference.

Beth looks at Steven, surprised.

BETH

You didn't tell him about Lloyd
Gervin?

Steven is clearly busted. He quickly picks up his phone,
taking it off speaker.

STEVEN

(into phone)
Ethan, I didn't want you to be
jealous.

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

An acting agent for kids -- Lloyd Gervin -- has come to Miami to scout for talent, and he's agreed to meet with Kingsley about getting him into the movies.

ETHAN

That's why you couldn't take me to school?

STEVEN

Well these agents are very slick and your step mother was worried he was going to put a contract in front of her and the next thing we know she's sold Kingsley to the circus.

ETHAN

It's where he belongs.

STEVEN

(whispering into phone)
I'm in a really tough spot here, Ethan. But I'm going to see you Parents' Weekend. And Thanksgiving --

Unable to listen any longer, an angry Ethan hangs up on his dad. After a beat, Ethan's phone starts RINGING again and he immediately hits "DECLINE."

Steven gets Ethan's outgoing message on his VOICE-MAIL.

ETHAN (V.O.)

(sighs, then dour)
Leave a message...

STEVEN

(into phone)
You cut out. I'll check with the airline to find out when your new flight is and let the school know. Don't worry.

INT. CHARLOTTESVILLE AIRPORT TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

An upset Ethan puts his phone away and looks over to the other side of the gate where --

A SENIOR AIRLINE OFFICIAL, along with Judy and Janet, are talking privately with Decker. The airline official is clearly LAYING INTO HIM.

The wind has picked up and the RAIN IS FALLING HARD behind them, visible through the large terminal windows.

When the tongue lashing ends, Decker nods and pulls his rolling suitcase over to where Ethan is seated. Decker appears a little dazed.

DECKER
So, uh, I'm done.

ETHAN
What?

DECKER
Yeah. Done. Let go.

ETHAN
Like, fired?

DECKER
Yeah. Finished. Four years here,
it's over. Thanks.

Ethan doesn't know what to say. Decker shakes his head and starts to go. But he turns back to Ethan, upset.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Why'd you have to be such a baby?
When I was your age I would have
killed to have a bad ass flight
attendant show me his porn. Or
talk about girls blowing him. You
know how cool that is? And I
probably would have let you watch
me bang that peanut slut if you
wanted. You know why? 'Cause I'm
a nice guy. And I was trying to be
your friend. Do even you have any
friends?

Ethan can't look at Decker.

DECKER (CONT'D)
No? Well, it's not hard to figure
out why. You're an asshole.
Sitting there in your suit, like my
dad, only you're in a suit. Trying
so hard to look like a man when
it's bullshit. But you fooled me,
because I treated you like one, and
I paid the price.

Decker gives up and starts to walk away.

ETHAN
This isn't my fault.

Decker scoffs.

DECKER
Whatever.

Decker walks off in disgust. Ethan's eyes have welled up with tears.

ON A NEARBY TELEVISION MONITOR --

CNN is reporting.

CNN ANNOUNCER
As Hurricane Kendra continues to bounce up the southern Atlantic coast, beach towns brace for the worst...

Judy --

waddles over to Ethan, rubbing her massively pregnant belly. Ethan wipes his eyes, quickly hiding any evidence of tears.

JUDY
Okay, Ethan, my dear. Looks like you're in luck. We're going to set you up with a really cool escort for the night. His name is Totally Awesome Todd. He does characters, impressions, magic tricks, you name it. And he's going to hang with you until we can get you out of here, m'kay?

Ethan turns to see in --

THE ADJACENT GATE --

TOTALLY AWESOME TODD, 30's, a big goober with a CLOWN WIG, making balloon animals for TWO YOUNG CHILDREN.

ETHAN
(under his breath)
Oh, no...

JUDY
Now sit tight, hon, while I go tell Totally Awesome he's got a new friend.

Pregnant Judy lumbers away in obvious discomfort.

Ethan anxiously looks down the terminal corridor and spots Decker disappearing into the sea of travellers.

JUDY --

is on her way over to the other gate, when she suddenly stops in pain.

JUDY (CONT'D)
(holding her side)
Ohhhh... OH--!!!

ETHAN --

watches as a commotion develops around JUDY IN LABOR. AIRPORT and AIRLINE PERSONNEL descend on her to help.

Ethan takes this in. We see his POV as he considers:

-- Totally Awesome Todd miming going down an escalator to his two young charges...

-- Judy being helped onto a SECURITY CART...

-- The hurricane swirl graphic on the nearby television...

-- The long terminal corridor where Decker has disappeared...

With everyone's attention on Judy, Ethan grabs his rolling suitcase and makes a break for it. He walks quickly down the terminal corridor.

INT. CHARLOTTESVILLE AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

On the "PEOPLE MOVER." A depressed Decker, head hanging, lets the conveyor carry him along as people with destinations and purpose walk quickly past him.

Ethan finally catches up to him. Ethan walks on the ground, keeping pace with Decker, who stands stationary on the "People Mover." Decker is annoyed to see Ethan.

DECKER
What do you want?

ETHAN
What are you going to do now?

DECKER
What do you care?

ETHAN

I never meant for you to lose your job.

Decker only softens slightly, but considers Ethan's question.

DECKER

I don't know. Maybe go back to selling shoes at Nordstroms. But I hate feet.

(at a loss)

I don't know.

ETHAN

Well, I just got off the phone with my dad who said he'd pay you to escort me to my mom's house. It's in Albany. That's where I'm going.

DECKER

I thought you were going to Boston?

ETHAN

My mom was in Boston, on business. But with all the delays, she'll be back home.

DECKER

In Albany?

ETHAN

Yeah. We're moving to London tomorrow so I really need to get there.

The "People Mover" ends and Decker gets off. Ethan stops walking, and they stand there.

DECKER

Why do you want me to take you? I thought you hated me.

ETHAN

I can't get there alone. And am I right to assume you have money problems?

DECKER

Of course I have money problems. What kind of question is that? Do I have money problems...?

ETHAN

Then what do you say?

Decker struggles with Ethan's proposition.

DECKER
Albany... What about Vegas? You
want to go to Vegas?

ETHAN
What? Were you even listening? I
have to get to Albany.

DECKER
But I hate Albany. I hate it. I
have a real problem with that town.

ETHAN
My dad said he'd pay you a hundred
dollars.

Decker scoffs.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Okay, two hundred.

DECKER
Is this a joke?

ETHAN
Well, how much do you want?

DECKER
To go back to Albany?

Decker thinks about it.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Five thousand.

ETHAN
(quickly)
Okay.

DECKER
(stunned)
Really?

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Decker and Ethan enter the train station and pull their
suitcases toward the ticket window.

ETHAN
My dad said you had to carry my
bags.

DECKER
Your dad is high.
(then)
I was thinking I should probably
talk to him, you know, just to make
sure he's down with this. It's a
lot of money. I mean I'm totally
worth it, but still...

ETHAN
He's down with it.

DECKER
I'd feel better just making sure,
you know?

ETHAN
Fine.

Ethan takes out his phone and makes it look like he's dialing
when he really isn't. He pretends to listen for a moment.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
(to Decker, lying)
His voice-mail.
(into phone)
Hey Dad, Decker agreed to our deal
and we're getting on the next train
out.

Ethan shoves the phone up to Decker's face.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Say something.

Decker is suddenly self-conscious.

DECKER
Me? Oh, um...
(into phone, tentative)
Hello...?
(to Ethan, whispering)
What's his name?

ETHAN
Doctor Steven Wilder.

DECKER
(whispering)
He's a doctor?! Why didn't you
tell me? I don't want to sound
stupid.

ETHAN

Too late.

Ethan pulls the phone back.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Call us back if you want. Bye.

Ethan "hangs up" and continues toward the ticket window.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Come on. You don't get your money
unless I get to my mom's in time.

Decker follows.

DECKER

How did I do on the call? You
think I did all right? Seriously.
'Cause I'm not great on the phone.
People say I'm more charming in
person...

INT. TRAIN STATION TICKET WINDOW - DAY

Ethan is paying A CLERK for the train tickets with his NEW
CREDIT CARD. He signs the receipt as Decker stands by.

DECKER

(can't believe it)

Going back to Albany. Shit...

ETHAN

What's your problem with Albany,
anyway?

Decker isn't sure if he wants to talk about it.

DECKER

My ex-girlfriend lives there.
Don't ask me about it.

ETHAN

Why didn't things work out?

Ethan takes the receipt and their tickets.

DECKER

I just said -- It's complicated,
all right?

They start walking toward the exit to the train platforms.

DECKER (CONT'D)
She wanted to get married and I
couldn't pull the trigger.

ETHAN
That doesn't sound complicated.

DECKER
It seemed complicated at the time.
Look, I don't want to talk about
it.

ETHAN
So, what was it? You didn't love
her?

DECKER
Don't you dare say that. I loved
her to death. We were together for
six years. Jen was the best thing
that ever happened to me.

ETHAN
Then what was the problem?

DECKER
What's every guy's problem being
married? It can only be to one
woman.

Ethan nods, but not really understanding.

DECKER (CONT'D)
There was too much unexplored
calzone out there. I wasn't ready
to give that up. And I wasn't
going to cheat on Jenny. That's my
biggest fear in life, being
unfaithful. Like my dad was. I
don't ever want to be that guy.

Decker falls introspective for a beat.

DECKER (CONT'D)
You ever cheat on a girl?

ETHAN
What do you think? I've never had
a girl to cheat on.

DECKER
You a virgin?

ETHAN
I'm fourteen.

DECKER
Have you finger-banged a girl?

Ethan is embarrassed.

DECKER (CONT'D)
No? Do you even have hair on your balls?

Ethan can't believe Decker just asked him that.

ETHAN
That's none of your business.

DECKER
I just want to know what you're working with here. You got serious hair or a couple of plugs?

ETHAN
How old are you?

DECKER
Thirty-four.

Ethan nods toward a few people waiting to board the train.

ETHAN
Go ask one of those people if they think it's weird that a thirty-four year old man is asking a fourteen year old boy about his balls.

EXT. VIRGINIA COUNTRY-SIDE - RAINING - DAY

The train passes through lush, green forest, as the outlying storm from Hurricane Kendra continues to blow.

INT. MOVING TRAIN - DAY

The train is full. Decker is casually flipping through his PORN MAGAZINE (the one he momentarily loaned to Ethan on the plane). Ethan is listening to music on his iPhone but can't help but sneak curious peaks at Decker's magazine. Decker looks up from his magazine and out at the wet, verdant countryside going past. He suddenly perks up.

DECKER

You know, I think this is where
Jack Jouett made his famous ride.
(off Ethan's blank stare)
Jack Jouett? Jack Jouett? You
don't know Jack Jouett?

ETHAN

No, I don't know Jack Jouett. How
many times are you going to say his
name?

DECKER

Oh, you got to know the story of
Jack Jouett. In seventeen eighty-
one, this bad-ass British Colonel,
Banastre "The Butcher" Tarleton,
and his band of troops known as the
Green Dragoons were on the hunt for
Thomas Jefferson after he signed
the Declaration of Independence.
T. Jeff and his boys were hiding
out at Monticello. And this dude,
Jack Jouett...

ETHAN

(being a smart-ass)
What's his name again?

DECKER

Jack Jouett. He spotted the
British and made an insane ride on
his horse, Sallie, through these
woods here, forty miles without
stopping, to warn Tommy Jeff,
Benjamin Harrison and Patrick Henry
that "The Butcher" was coming. The
good guys were able to exit stage
left, and old Jack Jouett became
one of the heroes of The
Revolution.

Ethan studies Decker.

ETHAN

How do you know all that?

Decker shrugs, not thinking much of it.

DECKER

I dunno.

He returns to his porno magazine.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(to himself, re: photo)
Man, I like fake tits...

Ethan can't help but sneak a peak at the magazine over Decker's shoulder. After a long beat:

ETHAN
(re: magazine)
How can you tell?

DECKER
What?

Ethan's a little shy to say.

ETHAN
If they're fake?

Decker opens his porno magazine back up and starts pointing out VARIOUS SHOTS OF WOMEN and their NAKED BREASTS.

DECKER
(re: one photo)
You tell me. Real or fake?

ETHAN
Real?

DECKER
Fake. See the faint scars under the areola...?

Ethan takes a closer look.

DECKER (CONT'D)
I started you off with a tough one.
(re: another photo)
What about these lovely friends...?

ETHAN
Real?

DECKER
Fake. They're as hard as folding a fitted sheet.
(re: another photo)
Okay. How 'bout these partners in crime?

ETHAN
Real?

DECKER
Fake again. Her nipples look like
they were dropped on her breasts
from a second story balcony.

ETHAN
(re: breasts in photos)
Are they all fake?

DECKER
Well, this magazine is called "Big
Fakers" so... yeah.

Decker shows Ethan the cover.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: magazine title)
See? B.F.F.? Big Fakers Forever.
I guess it's not the ideal teaching
tool for this particular lesson...

Decker looks around, trying to figure out how to best
explain. He hits Ethan to stand up.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's take class outside.

ETHAN
What?

DECKER
Get up. Field trip.

INT. MOVING TRAIN - DAY

Decker walks closely behind Ethan as they make their way up
the aisle of the train. They are looking down at all the
SEATED FEMALE PASSENGERS, trying to inconspicuously catalog
their breasts. They WHISPER AS THEY WALK:

DECKER
Left. Against the window...

Ethan looks at a WOMAN, and then down at her large breasts.

DECKER (CONT'D)
See the train jiggle those? Means
they're real. But they're sloppy.
The lesson here being bigger isn't
always better. Believe me. You
let those out of that bra and
they'll run from you like a couple
of feral cats.

ANOTHER WOMAN --

ETHAN
(re: her breasts)
Real?

DECKER
Correct.

ANOTHER WOMAN --

Her breasts are large.

ETHAN
Fake.

DECKER
Good. Look who's getting the hang
of the hangers?

ETHAN
(realizing)
I think my step-mom has fake ones.

DECKER
She single?

Ethan looks at Decker like he's retarded.

ETHAN
No. She's my step-mom.
(then)
I wish she was single.

DECKER
So you could have her?
(finally getting it)
Oh, so your dad wouldn't be with
her -- gotcha.

ETHAN
She's pretty much a nightmare. And
he always picks her over me.

DECKER
Nah, I'm sure there's room in his
life for both of you.

ETHAN
I've never seen it.

It's a rare moment of Ethan opening up, and it's not lost on Decker. He nods, understanding.

DECKER

I had a step-mom. Hated her. But with a little time, she changed. Yeah, she got three to five years for coming at my dad with a steak knife. Prison definitely improved our relationship -- Absence makes the heart grow fonder, all that bullshit. Now, I'm not suggesting it's going to take your dad cheating on your step-mom like mine did, and her trying to cut his nuts off for your relationship to improve, but I am saying people change. Remember that.

Ethan isn't convinced. They move on.

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN IN A SUNDRESS --

Her breasts are large for her slim frame and she is showing cleavage.

DECKER (CONT'D)

(re: her breasts)

Your final exam. You get this right and you're a board certified plastic surgeon. Now take your time... Really think it through... Focus...

Ethan is annoyed that Decker won't let him answer. Finally:

ETHAN

I'm going to say fake.

DECKER

I have no idea. I'll ask her.

Ethan quickly turns anxious.

ETHAN

(stopping Decker)

No! Don't.

DECKER

I'm kidding. I'm not that stupid. You're going to ask her --
(to young woman)
Excuse me, Miss? This young man has a question for you.

Ethan blushes, flustered.

ETHAN

No, I...

He awkwardly pushes Decker out of the way, and moves past.

INT. MOVING TRAIN - DAY

Ethan plops down in his seat, upset. After a beat, Decker sits down next to him, laughing.

ETHAN

I can't believe you did that?

DECKER

Did what? Give you the perfect in with the perfect girl?

ETHAN

You made me look stupid in front of her.

DECKER

No, you made you look stupid. I made you look awesome, until you blew it.

Ethan pouts. Decker can see just how upset he is.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Ah, don't worry about it. You'll get the next one.

They ride in silence for a little as the rain streaks down their window. Suddenly, the TRAIN SLOWS TO A STOP.

ETHAN

Why are we stopping?

Ethan and Decker look outside -- they are still very much in the middle of nowhere.

EXT. VIRGINIA WOODS - TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

A HUGE DOWNED OAK TREE. The storm from Kendra has blown it over and it has fallen across the train tracks. TRAIN OFFICIALS are trying to figure out what to do.

INT. STOPPED TRAIN - DAY

Ethan is sitting alone, sneaking a few anxious peaks at a cute teenage girl seated nearby.

The automatic doors in the front of the car SLIDE OPEN and Decker enters. He approaches Ethan.

DECKER
They're saying it could be three hours before they get the tree off the tracks.

ETHAN
Three hours?

DECKER
No way we're making our connecting train in Philly.

Decker thinks for a beat.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Get your bag.

ETHAN
What?

DECKER
Let's go. The rain is letting up. There's a road that leads into a town over there. I saw the water tower.

Ethan looks out the window. The rain is, in fact, letting up. And he can see the road.

DECKER (CONT'D)
I say we use that credit card of yours to rent a car and drive the rest of the way.

ETHAN
Drive?

DECKER
Yeah. Road trip! Come on.

Decker grabs his bag.

ETHAN
I don't think it's a good idea to leave the train.

DECKER
You're so uptight. I know what I'm talking about.
(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)

If this were a plane and I'm
telling passengers three hours,
behind the scenes they're telling
me we're in T-Barney-Rubble, okay?
I'm serious now.

ETHAN

Really?

DECKER

You want to get to your mom's or
not?

Ethan considers.

EXT. VIRGINIA COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Decker and Ethan are on the side of an old country road
staring up at a water tower. The storm has resumed and it's
POURING RAIN. They look miserable.

ETHAN

There's no town.

DECKER

There has to be a town. How can
there be a water tower and no town?

ETHAN

I don't know. But I don't see a
town.

DECKER

Whoever put this water tower here
is officially the worst water tower
guy in the game. I guarantee you
he was fired after this one.

Ethan is upset.

ETHAN

What are we going to do? I told
you we shouldn't have left the
train.

DECKER

Forget the train. The train was
done. It wasn't an option.

The train suddenly goes ROARING PAST THEM on the nearby
tracks. Ethan throws his bag down in frustration.

ETHAN

I don't know why I listened to you.

DECKER

Stop your crying. I'm sure a car will come along soon. We'll just hitch a ride.

ETHAN

We can't hitch a ride. It's illegal.

Decker has set down his bag and proceeds to PEE on the side of the road.

DECKER

Jesus, it's like I'm with my uptight, five-year-old grandmother. Just because something is illegal doesn't mean you shouldn't do it.

ETHAN

No, that's precisely what it means.
(noticing)
And I can't believe you're peeing like that.

DECKER

Why? 'Cause it's illegal?

ETHAN

No. Because you're getting it on your suitcase.

Decker realizes his pee is in fact rolling on a slope back down into his Rolls Royce bag.

DECKER

The Rolls-mobile! Damn it.

INT. MIAMI HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

There is a long line of over A HUNDRED CHILDREN waiting with their parents to get head shots taken by a PHOTOGRAPHER. A Lloyd Gervin TEAM MEMBER mans a card table, checking in all the kids getting head shots. Steven and Beth enter with Kingsley, who is in a tuxedo.

STEVEN

(in disbelief)

All these kids have a meeting with Lloyd Gervin? I thought this was something special for Kingsley.

BETH
(anxious)
It is. Would you get in line.

KINGSLEY
My tummy hurts.

BETH
It's just nerves, Sweetheart.
You're fine.
(to team member)
Is this the line to get head-shots?

TEAM MEMBER
Yes. That'll be two hundred
dollars, please.

STEVEN
We already paid the woman out
front.

TEAM MEMBER
That was the entrance fee. This is
the head-shot fee.

STEVEN
Another two hundred dollars?

BETH
You're so cheap -- Just pay him.
(to team member)
I saw a sign that said call backs
were tomorrow. What does our son
have to do to get a call back?

TEAM MEMBER
Just buy a head-shot.

BETH
(to Steven)
Hurry -- Get a call back!

Annoyed, Steven gets out his wallet to pay again.

KINGSLEY
I have to make a pooey!

BETH
In a minute, King-King. We don't
want to lose our place.

KINGSLEY
Now!!! The pooey's coming!

EXT. VIRGINIA COUNTRY-SIDE ROAD - DAY

Decker and Ethan trudge along the side of the road. They are drenched. Decker is in the middle of a story.

DECKER

...And then her dad walked in and caught me in bed with her. Let's just say the old man was not happy -
- And when I say old, he was ancient. Like a hundred. Hell, she was seventy-five.

ETHAN

What is with you and nasty women?

DECKER

Who said she was nasty?

ETHAN

You did it with a seventy-five-year-old.

DECKER

Truth be told, she just gave me a hand job. And it wasn't even good. Her arthritis was acting up.

Ethan thinks for a beat.

ETHAN

So, you don't always do it every time you go to bed with a girl?

Decker scoffs.

DECKER

Pfft! No.

(then, covering)

I mean, don't get me wrong, most of the time I drill 'em. Like nine out of ten times there's drillage. But sometimes women worry you'll lose respect for them if they do it right away. Other times you're just too lit, so it's a non-starter. And then other times, as much as you want to do it, and as good as sex feels, putting your head down on a cold pillow and just going to sleep feels even better.

Ethan thinks about this and nods, understanding.

DECKER (CONT'D)
But usually I drill 'em. Good
question.

THE SOUND OF A CAR approaching. Decker and Ethan turn to see
it getting closer. Decker holds out his thumb for a ride.

ETHAN
What are you doing?

The car slows to a stop ahead of them. A friendly man in his
thirties, JERRY, is driving. He waves Decker over as Ethan
tries to catch up.

DECKER
(to Ethan)
Come on!

ETHAN
I'm not getting in that car. He
could have a gun.

DECKER
He doesn't have a gun.

Decker approaches the car.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(to Jerry)
Hey, there!

JERRY
Hop in. Let me just move my gun.

Jerry lifts AN OLD RIFLE off the passenger seat.

INT. / EXT. CAR - DAY

Decker and a nervous Ethan slide into the back seat where
they are surprised to find themselves next to a woman --
Jerry's wife, LINDA. Jerry passes her the gun.

JERRY
(re: old rifle)
Hold this, Mother.

LINDA
I thought you said I wasn't allowed
to use the gun.

JERRY
You're not using it, you're holding
it. Now get in the front seat.

LINDA

I thought you said I wasn't allowed
in the front seat.

JERRY

Just move!

Linda climbs over the seat as Decker and a very concerned
Ethan get settled in. They notice Jerry and Linda are
WEARING PERIOD CLOTHES FROM THE 1800'S.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Where you boys headed?

DECKER

The nearest town where we can rent
a car would be fabulous. How 'bout
you folks?

Jerry starts driving.

JERRY

Headin' to Gettysburg to fight them
Yellow Hammers and Goober Grabbers.
General Lee has his troops on the
move, pushing up from Virginia.
Word is we need all the boys we can
muster to defend an attack on
Northern soil.

Ethan looks at Jerry like he's crazy.

DECKER

Hey, you're re-enactors.

JERRY

We try to stay in character for a
truly authentic Civil War
experience.

DECKER

That's pretty much as cool as it
gets without actually being cool.

LINDA

(offering food)

Would you boys like some hardtack
or a whole pound of salt beef?

Linda holds up NASTY FOOD WRAPPED IN OLD CLOTH. It looks
horrible to Ethan, and he's surprised when Decker takes some.

DECKER
(getting into character)
Much obliged, ma'am.

Linda offers the food to Ethan.

ETHAN
Absolutely not. I don't even want
to look at it.

DECKER
(to Linda and Jerry, re:
Ethan)
I apologize. He hasn't had an
appetite since we fought down in
Chancellorsville.

Jerry and Linda light-up with excitement as Decker has
effortlessly joined in their re-enactment game. Ethan,
however, is looking at Decker like he's lost his mind.

JERRY
Hear that? Our friends fought in
the Battle of Chancellorsville.

LINDA
You brave souls.

DECKER
The Union took many losses.
General Lee outsmarted us with a
daring move whereby he divided his
army in two, and General Hooker
played right into his hands. We
were lucky to escape with our
lives. Right, Ethan?

Ethan stares at Decker.

ETHAN
What are you talking about?

DECKER
(ignoring Ethan)
Mark my words, General Hooker is
going to be replaced with Major
General George Gordon Meade of
Pennsylvania. You heard it here
first.

Jerry and Linda can hardly contain themselves.

JERRY
(breaking character)
Hot damn, you're good! You all are
coming with us to Gettysburg.

Decker laughs, flattered.

DECKER
Maybe another time. We have to get
my friend here to his mom's. He's
sailing across the Atlantic to
London Towne.

Jerry and Linda share a look. Jerry's hand subtly LOCKS ALL
OF THE CAR'S DOORS. Ethan and Decker look at each other
quizzically. And did Linda just aim the gun slightly more
toward them in the back-seat of the car?

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

-- Jerry and Linda's car cruises along.

-- A sign reads "PENNSYLVANIA WELCOMES YOU!"

-- Ethan stares out his window with a "get me out of here"
expression, as if we are in a car next to him.

INT. / EXT. MOVING CAR - DAY

Decker cranes his neck to try to see an approaching exit.

DECKER
I think this exit here looks good
for us... Yeah, coming up here...
Here. Right here-- There it goes.

The car continues past the exit.

JERRY
Shoot, I'll get the next one. I
couldn't get over.

AERIAL SHOT

We can see their car is the only one on the road.

LATER

From an aerial view we see the car approaching another exit.

DECKER (V.O.)
Yeah, this looks good. Just get
off here...

ETHAN (V.O.) DECKER (V.O.)
Right here. Right here. Get off, get off get off!

They pass the exit.

JERRY (V.O.)
(more bad lying)
Oh! That one snuck up on me out of
nowhere. Next one, boys. Promise.

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY

The car is approaching yet another exit. Decker and Ethan are slumped down in the back seat.

DECKER
(to Jerry, defeated)
I don't know about you, but
personally, I find it hard to exit
from the far left lane...

They pass the exit with nary a move to even get over.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Good try, though.

INT. MIAMI HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

Beth and an annoyed Steven watch as Kingsley is finally getting his head shots taken. He is making crazy faces and refusing to cooperate with the PHOTOGRAPHER. The exhausted photographer, however, has taken so many photos of kids he is barely paying attention.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Look this way...

Kingsley purposely looks the other way. The photographer takes a shot.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Good...

BETH
Smile, Kingsley, like we practiced.
(to Steven)
Tell him to smile!

STEVEN
(half-hearted)
Smile.

Kingsley snarls as another picture is taken.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Work it. Good...

Steven looks on, shaking his head in disappointment. His attention goes to a sign that reads --

"LLOYD GERVIN'S TALENT SEARCH. CALLBACKS TOMORROW. EVERYONE WELCOME!"

STEVEN
What am I doing here? I should have taken Ethan to school.

BETH
(to Kingsley)
Really big smile!

The photographer takes the final picture as Kingsley isn't even facing the camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER
That was the winner -- next!

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY

Decker and Ethan continue to ride in the back of Jerry's car, when his LOW FUEL LIGHT comes on.

JERRY
(re: his car)
Damn it. We need to fill up the horse with more feed.

Ethan rolls his eyes, visibly annoyed. Decker notices they are about to pass an exit.

DECKER
It says there's gas at this exit--

Decker and Ethan get tossed to one side of the car as Jerry instantly swerves across three lanes and gets off.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Look who found the steering wheel.

EXT. MOVING CAR - DAY

A quaint Pennsylvania town with a single Main Street. Jerry's car pulls into a gas-station. Out of the farthest reaches of Hurricane Kendra, the weather is now CLEAR AND BEAUTIFUL.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Jerry is at the pump, filling his car up. He's twirling his CAR KEYS on his finger as he looks up at the gas prices.

JERRY
(to himself)
The price of hay around here is not
cheap...

INSIDE THE CAR --

Decker and Ethan watch Jerry from the back seat.

ETHAN
You always hear how kidnapping
victims wind up loving their
captors. Well, I can confidently
say our captors are two of the most
annoying people I've ever been
around. I couldn't hate them more.

DECKER
We're not kidnapped. We've been
"drafted." And don't worry, I
won't let anything happen to you.
At least we're heading north.
(watching Jerry)
We just have to figure out how to
get away from them.

ETHAN
Why'd you have to go and encourage
them, anyway? Now they're obsessed
with you. It's creepy. And how do
you know so much about the Civil
War?

DECKER
I got my masters in U.S. history.
(looking at Jerry)
If we could just get his keys...

Ethan is incredulous.

ETHAN

You have a masters degree and
you're a flight attendant?

DECKER

The only thing I can do with that
degree is teach. What job do you
expect me to have?

ETHAN

I don't know -- teacher?

DECKER

Kids are needy and annoying. I
hate kids. You of all people
should know that.

ETHAN

Then why get the degree?

DECKER

It was a good way to stay in school
and keep drilling for hot college
oil.

ETHAN

You're so weird.

Behind Jerry, Linda exits the Mobile Mart eating from a LARGE
BAG OF DORITOS.

DECKER

Here comes Linda.
(noticing chips)
I didn't know they ate Cool Ranch
Doritos during the Civil War.

Jerry turns from pumping gas and also notices Linda with the
chips. He's not happy about it.

JERRY

Hey! What the hell is that!

LINDA

(mouth full of chips)
Sorry, Jerry, but that food taste
like shit.

Ethan and Decker watch as Jerry proceeds to chase after her,
attempting to take the bag. For her part, Linda tries to
stuff all the chips in her mouth before he can take it away.

CLOSE ON

Jerry has left his CAR KEYS sitting on the trunk of his car.

PULL BACK

Ethan and Decker are eyeing the keys through the rear windshield.

DECKER

Bingo.

Decker readies himself to exit the rear car door.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Get in the driver's seat, I'll get the keys. Just be ready to pull out of here.

ETHAN

Me? I can't drive.

DECKER

Why? You're almost sixteen.

ETHAN

I just turned fourteen. I'm almost thirteen.

DECKER

Just do it.

A reluctant Ethan climbs into the driver's seat.

As Jerry and Linda continue to fight over the Doritos...

Decker slips out the back car door... Takes the gas pump out of the car, grabs the keys from off the trunk, jumps back in, and hands the keys to Ethan.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Go! Go!

Ethan takes the keys and starts the car.

ETHAN

(to Decker, re: car)

What do I do?

Decker leans over into the front seat and throws the gear shift down from "PARK" to "DRIVE."

DECKER

Press the gas.

Ethan looks down and presses the accelerator and the car takes off...

Ethan looks up to drive...

Just as a PICK-UP TRUCK HAULING A HORSE TRAILER PULLS IN to the previously empty pump directly in front of them.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(seeing the truck)
Stop!

Eyes wide, Ethan jams on the brakes, SCREECHING to a halt, just as their front bumper lightly knocks into the pick-up truck's front bumper.

Decker slides forward, slamming into the back of the front seat.

ETHAN
Oh, God...

The doors to the pick-up fly open and out hop TWO REDNECKS, who approach Ethan and Decker. They are both wearing CONFEDERATE SOLDIER UNIFORMS.

REDNECK #1
(calling to Ethan)
What the hell are you doing?

DECKER
Great. Confederate soldiers.

REDNECK #1
We're headin' up to Gettysburg to kick some Union ass, mindin' our owns, when slam! Do you even know how to drive?

Redneck #1 is now at Ethan's window. He glares into the car, pissed off. Ethan is terrified.

ETHAN
Uh...

DECKER
(to Ethan)
Don't worry. He's not going to hurt a kid.
(to rednecks)
Let's just save it for the battlefield, okay, fellas...

Decker gets out of the car and looks up to see Redneck #1 is already DRAGGING ETHAN FROM THE CAR, through the window.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Whoa! Whoa!

Redneck #1 drops Ethan on his feet and punches him in the stomach. Ethan doubles over and falls to the ground out of breath.

DECKER (CONT'D)
What are you doing? He's just a kid.

Decker goes to Ethan and kneels down to tend to him.

REDNECK #1
Where I come from, there's a sayin'... you old enough to drive, you old enough to get kicked in your starfish.

Decker looks up, confused.

DECKER
That's really a saying?

Redneck #1 kicks Decker hard in the ribs. Decker falls over with a grunt.

REDNECK #1
Are you questionin' my verbal heritage?

SMACK! Redneck #1 gets hits across the head with a baton-type stick.

PULL BACK

It's Jerry wielding a dripping WINDSHIELD WASHER.

JERRY
Keep your hands off my soldiers, Confederate swine!

Redneck #2 instantly tackles Jerry, and proceeds to beat him down quickly and effortlessly.

Linda comes over desperately stuffing the remnants of chips into her mouth.

LINDA
(mouth full)
Get off him, you asshole.

Redneck #1 simply shoves Linda, sending her falling over a trash can and behind a gas pump.

Jerry lies on the ground. The two rednecks look down at him.

JERRY
(in pain)
But the South... isn't supposed to win.

REDNECK #1
Looks like we're rewriting history, bitches!

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Decker and Ethan wheel their bags over to where Linda is tending to Jerry, who is still on the ground.

DECKER
(awkward)
So, yeah, uh, we're going to go now. You guys okay?

LINDA
Yeah.
(re: rednecks)
Assholes.

ETHAN
(whispering)
Is it me, or is it weird that they're just... right there?

WIDE SHOT

The two rednecks are three feet away, casually filling up their truck with gas and scratching lotto cards, respectively, as if nothing ever happened.

DECKER
I guess you kick a bunch of people's asses, you still have to live your life.

Jerry struggles to hand Decker a business card from his wallet.

JERRY
No hard feelings, boys. If you're ever passing through the nineteenth century and you want to give me a call, here's my cell...
(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

And if you're on-line later, I'm going to be Tweeting live from the battlefield. I usually die at about five o'clock.

INT. UNITED CAR RENTAL AGENCY - DAY

A small branch of a rental car chain. Decker and Ethan enter and approach DEVON, 30's, a nerdy clerk behind the counter. Devon has just been fitted for ADULT BRACES. Throughout the scene HE ABSENTLY RAISES AND LOWERS HIS LIPS over them, as if they are irritated.

DECKER

Hi. We'd like to rent a Ferrari.

DEVON

We have a PT Cruiser, or the equivalent.

DECKER

I'm cool with that.

(to Ethan)

You cool with that?

ETHAN

Yeah. With the wood.

DEVON

Excellent. I'll just need a valid driver's license and credit card.

DECKER

I'm driving.

(re: Ethan)

Miss Daisy here will be paying.

Decker gives Devon his driver's license and Ethan's credit card. As Devon types information into his computer, Ethan and Decker watch DEVON MOVING HIS LIPS UP AND DOWN OVER HIS BRACES. They are transfixed.

DEVON

Excellent...

(to Ethan)

Would you like to purchase our additional insurance?

ETHAN

What? Oh, uh...

It's clear Ethan doesn't know what that means.

DECKER
You don't want the insurance.

ETHAN
Really?

DECKER
You don't want it. Trust me.

ETHAN
My dad always gets it.

DECKER
It's a sucker's play. Like the VIP
room at a strip club. Throwing
good money after bad when all you
have to do is walk into the
bathroom and jerk off for free.

Ethan is undecided.

ETHAN
(to Devon)
Would you get the insurance?

DEVON
I would get the insurance, yes.

DECKER
Of course he would. He's trying to
sell it to you.

Ethan is still unsure. Finally --

ETHAN
Okay. No insurance.

DEVON
(looking at computer)
So no collision damage waiver? No
loss damage waiver, physical damage
waiver...?

DECKER
(shaking head, annoyed)
No, no, no.

DEVON
Excellent! Now, you said a PT
Cruiser, or the equivalent...
(re: computer screen)
I'm sorry, we don't have any at
this time. Second choice?

ETHAN
A convertible.

DEVON
(re: computer screen)
Hmm... Seem to be out of those,
too.

DECKER
Let's try it this way: what do you
have?

DEVON
(re: computer)
I'm afraid we are all out of cars.
Is there anything else I can help
you with at this time?

Devon smiles a big, friendly, metal smile as Decker and Ethan stand there staring at him, at a loss.

THROUGH THE RENTAL OFFICE'S LARGE WINDOWS --

There is a DING as someone returning a MINIVAN drives onto the lot.

DEVON (CONT'D)
Correction. We have a minivan.

EXT. UNITED CAR RENTAL AGENCY PARKING LOT - DAY

The driver returning the minivan is a shady-looking Armenian man in a white suit, VERNER. Verner is unloading LARGE COOLERS and large (three feet long) Tupperware-style containers from the rental minivan and placing them into a WAITING CAR. The waiting car is driven by another shady-looking OVERWEIGHT MAN in a tank-top. Decker approaches.

DECKER
We're kind of in a hurry, fellas.
(re: cargo)
Let me give you a hand with those
bins...

VERNER
Get the hell away.

DECKER
Whoa --

VERNER
The hell away. Right now. Or I
cut you.

DECKER
Cut me? Jesus. All right...

Decker lets them have their space and walks back, shaking his head. He approaches Ethan, who is finishing the rental paperwork with Devon.

DECKER (CONT'D)
He just said he was going to cut me.

ETHAN
Who?

DECKER
That guy. When was the last time you heard someone say they're going to cut you? Do people even do that anymore?

Ethan shrugs, trying to concentrate on Devon's instructions.

DEVON
...Initial here and here. And then sign here.

Ethan signs his name.

VERNER --

calls to them. He's done.

VERNER
All right, my friends. The car is yours. Love and blessings!

Verner jumps into the passenger side of the waiting car and they take off like they are being chased.

DECKER
"Love and blessings?" Suddenly he's my best friend. People are nuts.

Finished with the paperwork, Devon tears a copy for Ethan.

DEVON
(re: minivan)
Okay, let me just get her cleaned up, and you can be on your way.

DECKER
No time for that, Crazy Lips.

Decker and Ethan walk to the minivan and toss their luggage inside.

DECKER (CONT'D)
We're on a clock. T-minus five
thousand dollars and counting.

DEVON
I don't know what that means.

Decker starts up the minivan and drops his sunglasses down over his eyes. With a devilish grin --

DECKER
It means almost one mortgage
payment on my condo!

Decker punches it and awkwardly PEELS OUT in the front-wheel drive minivan as though it were a sports car. The car swerves, nearly hitting a pole by the exit.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(trying to regain control)
Whoa -- shit.

INT. / EXT. MOVING MINIVAN - DUSK

Decker and Ethan drive very slowly along the main street of this quaint town due to all the traffic lights and pedestrians.

DECKER
(re: the car's GPS)
According to this, we should be at
your mom's by ten.

Decker rubs where he was kicked in the ribs and winces.

DECKER (CONT'D)
How are you feeling? You okay?

ETHAN
Yeah.

DECKER
I'm proud of you. You fought like
a lion back there. We both did.
Ever been punched before?

ETHAN
My little brother. He's my half-
brother. He's always hitting me.

DECKER

Oh, I bet he regrets that. You bring the thunder like you did back there at the gas station?

ETHAN

I'm not allowed to touch him.

DECKER

Your little brother hits you and you don't do anything about it? Oh, no. No --

ETHAN

I can't. He has health problems. He was born premature and his heart didn't develop right. So he gets pampered.

DECKER

He sounds like an asshole.

ETHAN

He is.

DECKER

The best thing you could do for that kid is beat the shit out of him.

ETHAN

Yeah, but his heart could give out.

DECKER

It'd be good for him. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger.

ETHAN

But it could kill him.

DECKER

Still...

INT. UNITED CAR RENTAL AGENCY - DAY

Devon, the clerk behind the counter, is looking at his computer. THROUGH THE WINDOW we see Verner's associate's car SPEED BACK ONTO THE PARKING LOT and SCREECH to a stop. Devon turns to the noise and watches as Verner jumps out of the car and runs inside the rental car agency.

VERNER

The minivan we just had! Where is it?

DEVON

Rented, I'm afraid. Did we forget our favorite mix CD?

Verner grabs Devon by the shirt and pulls him close.

VERNER

Something very valuable and dangerous is in that car. Get it back or I melt down that metal while it's still in your mouth.

Devon covers his teeth with his lips, protectively, in a big, equine-like move.

INT. / EXT. MOVING MINIVAN - DAY

Decker and Ethan continue driving along the main street, but it's slow going.

DECKER

...I wouldn't say it's required. But it's customary to tip the bathroom attendant a buck. And you get a piece of chewing gum. Talk about a racket -- Bathroom attendant. That's gotta be the easiest job in town.

Ethan takes in this valuable information.

DECKER (CONT'D)

What do you want to be when you grow up? And don't say bathroom attendant or I'll feel very stupid.

Ethan shrugs.

ETHAN

I think something with music.

DECKER

You like music? Music's cool. It sounds nice.

ETHAN

What about you?

DECKER

Shit, man, I am grown up.

Ethan gives Decker a dubious look.

ETHAN

Okay, if you could do anything with your life, what would you do?

DECKER

Like a realistic job? Not any fantasy crap like being an astronaut or a fireman?

ETHAN

You can be a fireman.

DECKER

Huh. I guess I could.

(then, answering question)

I don't know what I'd do. Pretty sad, huh?

ETHAN

I think you should be a history teacher.

DECKER

I told you, I hate kids. You --

ETHAN

...of all people should know that. Believe me, I do.

Ethan shakes his head. Decker smiles. Ethan can't help but smile, too.

DECKER

Whatever I do, I got to make some cash. The five thousand I'm getting for this is a real life saver.

Ethan looks guilty at the mention of their "deal."

DEVON --

speeds up behind them in his old Mazda Miata and HONKS, trying to get their attention.

Decker and Ethan finally notice him.

DECKER (CONT'D)

What the hell...?

ETHAN
It's the guy from the rental place.

DEVON
(calling out)
Pull over!

Decker lowers his window.

DECKER
(yelling back to Devon)
We told you! We don't want the
insurance!

Devon continues to HONK and YELL out his window.

DEVON
Pull! Over!

DECKER
But we don't want it! Stop
bothering us!

Decker raises his window back up and shakes his head.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Man, they really give the hard sell
on that.

Decker accelerates through a light as it's changing and they
get away from Devon, who is forced to stop.

CLOSE ON --

A MOUSE scurries along the minivan's floor. We follow it as
it crawls ONTO DECKER'S SHOE and UP INSIDE HIS PANTS LEG.
Decker shakes his leg out with a little shiver.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(re: feeling on his leg)
Eww-ahh...

After a beat, Decker shakes out his leg again, a little
harder this time. Then, after a long beat, he breaks into a
sudden panic.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Holy shit, there's something in my
pants! Dude! There's something in
my pants!

ETHAN
What is it?

Decker comes to an abrupt stop at a traffic-light in front of an outdoor cafe.

A FAMILY --

sitting at one of the tables looks over at the minivan as it SCREECHES to a halt. They watch, mouths agape, as Decker looks down at his crotch and yells at Ethan.

DECKER

Take it out! Take it out! It's in my pants!

ETHAN

I'm not touching that -- It's moving.

DECKER

Grab it! Smash it! Choke it -- I don't care, just make it come out!

Decker is now pounding on his own crotch. He writhes in discomfort, but to the family watching it appears like he's in a strange state of sexual pleasure.

Finally, Decker gets his pants unbuttoned, GRABS THE MOUSE, AND TOSSES IT OUT HIS WINDOW. A relieved Decker appears to the family like he is sated.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Holy shit... Oh, man... That was wild.

Decker drives on, leaving the family horrified. Ethan is now laughing.

ETHAN

You should've seen your face.

DECKER

Shut up. He snuck up on me. Had the mouse presented himself to my face, like an honorable vermin, I would have kicked his ass.

ETHAN

Uh-huh.

(suddenly nervous)

You think there are any more?

Ethan anxiously looks around his feet.

DECKER

Nah.

(re: Verner)

So that's what that weird dude must have had in all those bins -- lab mice. I hope it wasn't radioactive and now my penis starts fighting crime...

Continuing to look around, Ethan sees A KING COBRA SNAKE RISE UP behind Decker's right shoulder, hunting the mouse.

ETHAN

(barely audible)

Snay... Snay-hake.

DECKER

Maybe I do hope that. It's a job, right?

Decker casually looks to Ethan and catches a glimpse of the snake out of the corner of his eye. He quickly turns to it and SCREAMS...

DECKER (CONT'D)

AHHHHHHH!!!

...and drives the minivan straight INTO THE BACK OF A PARKED CAR.

The snake goes flying forward, slams against the windshield, and then lands on the STEERING WHEEL. Decker looks at it, less than two feet from his face. He is frozen with fear.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Don't. Move.

But the AIRBAG GOES OFF from the impact, lifting the snake up and pressing it against Decker's face, cheek-to-cheek. Decker SCREAMS again.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

A TOW-TRUCK --

is lifting the SMASHED MINIVAN up onto its flat-bed.

DECKER AND ETHAN --

are with Devon, who is looking over their RENTAL AGREEMENT.

DEVON

(wincing)

Eww... it says here you chose not
to take the insurance. That's
unfortunate.

Ethan glares at Decker. Decker glares at Devon.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A quaint, turn of the century hotel on the town's Main
Street.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Decker and Ethan drag their bags into a suite. They are in
mid-argument.

DECKER

You need to call your dad and find
out if your credit card covers the
accident.

ETHAN

You're not listening to me. We
have to figure out a way to get to
my mom's tonight. It's a mistake
to spend the night in this hotel.

DECKER

Dude, how many times do I have to
tell you? I checked, and there's
no way out of this town until we
can rent a new car in the morning.

ETHAN

But --

DECKER

I promise you we'll make it to your
mom's in time. Just call your dad.

ETHAN

I can't call my dad.

Ethan puts his head in his hands, freaking out.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

This was such a mistake. I never
should have left the airport.

DECKER

Look, I know you're worried about him getting mad at you, but he'll understand. All you have to say is I was attacked by a King Cobra and he'll be like okay, I get that. No more questions.

ETHAN

That's not it.

DECKER

Then what?

ETHAN

He doesn't know about this.

DECKER

Of course he doesn't, it just happened. That's why you have to call him --

ETHAN

He doesn't know about us. He thinks I'm spending the night at the airport on my way to boarding school in New Hampshire.

Decker is confused.

DECKER

Boarding school? What about your mom? What about my five thousand dollars?

ETHAN

There was no five thousand dollars.

Decker is crushed.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I made it up because... I don't want to go to boarding school.

DECKER

You lied to me?

ETHAN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Decker. I really am. I thought if we got to my mom's maybe she could pay you.

Decker feels like a fool.

DECKER

I suggest you call her, or your
dad, or whoever and tell them to
come pick you up because I'm done.
In the morning I'm taking off and
you're on your own.

Decker exits into the bathroom, slamming the door.

MUSIC CUE: "L.E.S. ARTISTES" BY SANTOGOLD PLAYS OVER THE
FOLLOWING:

-- Ethan knocks on the bathroom door in an attempt to get
Decker to speak to him. After a beat, the door opens and
Decker is in a BATHING SUIT. He walks past Ethan without
talking to him and exits the hotel suite.

-- The CAMERA IS UNDERWATER in a pool. We see Decker enter
frame as he jumps in. WE CUT TO: above the water and reveal
Decker has jumped into a kiddie pool only two feet deep. The
nearby large pool is empty with a "Remodel in Progress" sign
by it. Ethan approaches Decker to try to talk to him.
Decker gets out of the kiddie pool and exits, leaving Ethan.
A LITTLE KID jumps into the kiddie pool and Ethan is
splashed.

-- In the hotel game room, Decker is playing ping-pong with
ANOTHER LITTLE KID. He violently slams the ball in the kid's
face to win the game. The kid exits the table making room
for the next player, who happens to be Ethan. Decker sees
it's him, drops his paddle and walks away. Another KID takes
Decker's place and serves to Ethan, who watches Decker go.

-- Decker is relaxing in the hotel sauna with a few other MEN
IN TOWELS when Ethan enters, in his suit and tie. He sits
down next to Decker, who notices Ethan and gets up to exit.
We see Decker is BUCK NAKED with only a towel over his
shoulder. As he pulls the door open to leave, A MAN happens
to be entering and Decker steps aside to allow him in. In
doing so, Decker inadvertently positions his bare ass in the
face of ANOTHER MAN seated by the door. That man shoves
Decker, pissed off. Decker tries to calm him down before
finally exiting. The remaining men are looking at a
frustrated Ethan, fully dressed, sitting on the sauna bench.
The CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN on him as he starts to sweat,
wondering what he is going to do now.

END MUSIC CUE.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Decker is in line to be seated for dinner. Ethan is behind
him in a fresh suit.

Decker won't look at Ethan or talk to him. A HOSTESS returns from seating other patrons and approaches them.

HOSTESS
How many?

DECKER
(pointedly)
Table for one.

Ethan rolls his eyes.

HOSTESS
(to Ethan)
How many?

DECKER
Don't trust him. He'll lie to you.

ETHAN
One.

DECKER
(to hostess)
Ha! See? He's less than one.
Make him sit on the floor.

HOSTESS
I only have a four-top open. It's
going to be a few minutes.

An attractive woman in her mid-thirties, LISA, gets in line behind Decker and Ethan. The hostess looks to her.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)
How many?

LISA
Two, please.

HOSTESS
We only have a four-top and you're
behind these two.

Lisa smiles at Decker, clearly attracted to him.

LISA
You know, we're happy to sit with
you and your son, if you want.

DECKER
Ha. He's not my son.

LISA

Oh. I thought you two were together. Sorry.

As Decker sulks, Ethan sees a way back into Decker's good graces.

ETHAN

(to Lisa)

We are. We're together.

Decker looks at Ethan, wondering what he's doing.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

He's just a little mad at me right now. We'd love to join you, right Dad?

DECKER

(petulant)

No, we wouldn't. No.

Ethan urges Decker with his eyes -- This woman is pretty.

ETHAN

Dad?

DECKER

(to Ethan)

No. Make me.

(to Lisa, explaining)

It's nothing against you. It's him. I shant break bread with him again.

ETHAN

Come on. I said I'm sorry.

LISA

Yeah, Dad. Have a heart. I'm starving.

(then)

I'll buy you a drink.

DECKER

(quickly to the hostess)

Table for four. Please. Thank you.

(to Lisa)

I'm only doing this for you. I hate to deprive anyone the pleasure of watching me drink.

(to Ethan)

You can't watch me.

(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)
(then, to Lisa)
So are we waiting on your friend,
or...?

Lisa's fifteen-year-old daughter, KENDRA, bounces in to join her mom. She is extremely cute and bubbly.

KENDRA
(re: Ethan and Decker)
Ma? I leave you alone for two
minutes...

Kendra laughs a playful, infectious laugh. A surprised Ethan instantly stiffens at the sight of a hot girl his age.

KENDRA (CONT'D)
(introducing herself)
Hi! I'm Kendra. Hi! Kendra.

ETHAN
(almost to himself)
Like the hurricane.

KENDRA
Ohmigod -- crazy, right? I always
knew I'd be famous.

She mock primps her hair like an old pin-up model as she laughs again. Ethan is instantly smitten.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Decker, Ethan, Lisa, and Kendra are having dinner together. Decker is back to himself, having fun. The mood is lively and friendly except Ethan, who is nervous and stiff. A WAITER approaches their table with a tray of drinks.

WAITER
Jack on the rocks?

DECKER
Right here. Thank you. That's
lovely.

WAITER
Long Island Iced Tea?

LISA
(lifting hand)
Me.

WAITER
Diet coke.

KENDRA
Moi. Merci.

The waiter puts the last drink in front of Ethan.

WAITER
And Shirley Temple.

Decker glares a major look of disappointment at Ethan.

LISA
I love Shirley Temples.

KENDRA
Me, too. Can I have a sip?

Suddenly, Decker isn't so disappointed. He offers a nod of encouragement to Ethan.

ETHAN
Uh... okay.

Kendra takes it and makes a point to drink from Ethan's straw, the whole time looking at him with a flirty smile.

KENDRA
Yum! That is so good.
(to Lisa)
Can I have a sip of yours, too, Ma?

LISA
Just a little one. You have a big day tomorrow.

Lisa slides her Long Island Iced Tea to Kendra.

LISA (CONT'D)
(explaining)
Kendra is in a baton twirling competition. Twirl Mania.

DECKER
That's fabulous. Ethan and I are huge fans of Twirl Mania. Isn't that right, E?

Decker looks to Ethan, but Ethan is captivated by Kendra CHUGGING LISA'S ENTIRE COCKTAIL.

LISA
(realizing)
Kendra -- I said a little one.

KENDRA
(wiping her mouth)
It was all ice.

Decker immediately slides his cocktail over to Ethan and gestures for him to quickly take a sip. Ethan vigorously shakes his head, and mouths, "It's illegal." Decker mouths "DRINK IT!" as he pushes the drink into Ethan's hand. Kendra and Lisa are now looking at them.

DECKER
(re: drink, explaining)
I said he couldn't have a sip but
now it's only fair, so go ahead...

Ethan is on the spot in front of the women. He takes a gulp and starts coughing.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY LOUNGE - NIGHT

Decker and Lisa are drunk and dancing together, twisting and twirling to UPBEAT JAZZ PIANO.

Next to them, Kendra is having fun in her own world, grinding and writhing alone.

Other HOTEL GUESTS are also dancing.

And in the corner, we reveal the TALENTED PIANIST IS ETHAN. He is buzzed and sweaty, his suit-jacket is off, and his tie is loosened.

LISA
Your son is awesome. How long has
he been playing?

DECKER
Uhh... fifteen years. Yeah.

LISA
Fifteen? How old is he?

DECKER
Fourteen. Can I be honest with
you? He's not really my son. I'm
a heterosexual flight attendant
escorting him to his mom's in
Albany.

LISA
Ugh, I hate Albany.

DECKER

Me, too!

They resume dancing together, and Decker spins her out of frame.

Ethan is really good, and the people in the lounge are loving it. He finishes the song he's playing, and everyone CLAPS.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Sing something!

KENDRA

Yeah! Free Bird! Whoo-hoo!

ETHAN

(into the microphone)

Okay. Well, I don't know Free Bird.

(thinking)

Um... Okay.

Ethan starts playing the jazz standard, "Moonlight in Vermont."

ETHAN (CONT'D)

(singing)

*Pennies in a stream... Falling
leaves a sycamore... Moonlight in
Vermont...*

Ethan's VOICE IS ABSOLUTELY AWFUL and we reveal everyone in the room is cringing at him in awkward disbelief. But for the first time, the self-conscious Ethan is too in his own world to notice. Decker quickly approaches him.

DECKER

(stopping Ethan)

Buddy. Buddy. Come on, now.
That's enough of that.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The four of them are back in Ethan and Decker's suite for more partying.

POP MUSIC is playing on an IPOD BOOM-BOX as Kendra is PERFORMING HER BATON TWIRLING ROUTINE for them. But the ceiling in the hotel room is so low that each time she throws the baton high in the air to spin around to catch it, the baton immediately hits the ceiling and ricochets down toward Decker, Ethan, or a lamp-shade.

Undeterred, the low ceiling doesn't stop an enthusiastic Kendra from picking up her baton and completing her entire routine. Decker leans over to Ethan as they watch her --

DECKER

Are you kidding me with this girl?
She's too wonderful for words.

Ethan is mesmerized by her body's every movement.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Now I really think you have a shot here. All those years of practicing alone in the shower have prepared you for this moment. Have you been practicing in the shower?

Ethan nods.

DECKER (CONT'D)

You're ready for this. You can do it. Make your move and be confident. Are you confident?

Ethan looks like he might cry. He sighs anxiously with a forced smile.

ETHAN

Yeah.

DECKER

You sold me.

Decker pats an unsure Ethan on the back, when there is a KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

A WAITER wheels in a room service cart with A CAKE on it, complete with BURNING CANDLES. The waiter, Decker, Lisa, and Kendra begin to sing to Ethan.

WAITER / DECKER / LISA / KENDRA

*Happy birthday to you... Happy
birthday to you... Happy birthday
dear Ethan... Happy birthday to
you...*

The waiter exits. Ethan can't believe it.

ETHAN

How did you know?

KENDRA

How did he know? He's your
freakin' dad.

LISA

Oh -- no. He's not his dad.

Kendra is confused.

DECKER

Your paperwork on the plane had a note about it being your birthday. I was supposed to bring you a cupcake, but I ate it.

Lisa playfully hits Decker.

LISA

That's terrible.

But Ethan is genuinely touched.

ETHAN

Thanks.

DECKER

Go ahead. Make a wish.

Ethan closes his eyes, makes a wish, and blows out the candles. They CLAP for him. Kendra goes to him...

KENDRA

Happy birthday.

...and gives Ethan a real kiss right on his lips.

DECKER

(re: Kendra's kiss)

I'm telling you right now that was what he wished for.

They all laugh.

DECKER (CONT'D)

(to Ethan)

It was, wasn't it? Am I right?
Look at him. I am so right.

Ethan tries to play it cool but can't fool anyone.

LATER

Finished with their cake, Decker, buzzed, has his arm around Lisa. He leans in close to her.

DECKER (CONT'D)

(whispering in her ear)

Hey.

(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)

What do you say you and I go to
your room and take turns making me
feel good?

Lisa laughs.

LISA

Okay. You first.

DECKER

Ha!

(to Ethan and Kendra)

Listen, kids, Lisa and I are going
to take a little walk. Behave
yourselves while we're gone, okay?

Lisa gives her daughter a kiss and whispers something to her
we can't hear. Decker looks at Ethan seriously and gives him
an encouraging nod. Decker and Lisa exit into the hallway.

Now that it's just Ethan sitting alone with Kendra, he gets
noticeably awkward and Kendra senses it.

KENDRA

(re: Ethan's suit)

I really like your style, Ethan.

ETHAN

Oh.

KENDRA

Yeah. The suit's cool...

(looks around room, then)

And this suite is bitchin'.

ETHAN

I got my dad's credit card, so I
just put the room on it. If you
want me to buy you something, I
can.

She laughs at his awkward but sweet gesture.

KENDRA

Thanks. Your dad is super cool.

ETHAN

I've never heard anyone describe
him as "cool."

KENDRA

Really? Ohmigod, he seems super
fun to me.

Ethan realizes she's talking about Decker.

ETHAN

Oh -- Decker, yeah. I guess he has
a certain charm.

There is another awkward beat of silence.

KENDRA

Don't you want to come sit over
here next to me?

ETHAN

Yeah.

But Ethan doesn't move. He's a deer in the headlights.

KENDRA

Well, come here then, silly.

Ethan gets up from his chair and joins Kendra on the couch. She takes his hand and holds it, playing with it, looking into his eyes with a smile. She is clearly waiting for him to kiss her, but Ethan is too scared to do anything.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

You don't want to kiss me?

ETHAN

(laughs nervously)
Why wouldn't I want to kiss you?

KENDRA

I don't know.
(then)
What are you waiting for?

ETHAN

I don't know.

Ethan again laughs nervously.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I don't...

His face falls serious as he slowly, tentatively, ever so hesitantly goes in for a kiss. As soon as his lips touch Kendra's she attacks him, pushing him onto his back, and makes out with him. She finally comes up for air and looks down at Ethan.

KENDRA

You want me to twirl your baton?

Ethan's eyes widen.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Ethan is awakened by the sound of his phone RINGING. He sits up and realizes he's alone on the couch, still in his suit from the previous night. He looks at the ringing phone and sees it's his dad, Steven. Ethan hits "DECLINE."

INT. WILDER FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Steven gets Ethan's now familiar OUTGOING MESSAGE again.

ETHAN (V.O.)
(sighs, then dour)
Leave me a message...

Steven waits for the BEEP.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Hey, checking in before your flight. I hope the airline's baby-sitter was okay and you weren't too bored last night. Oh, and don't worry about being late for school. They said Kendra was really screwing a lot of kids.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ethan stretches and notices A HANDWRITTEN NOTE on some hotel stationery. He reads it, and then puts it in his pocket with a smile. He then gets up and looks around the hotel suite.

ETHAN
Decker? Decker?

Ethan disappears into the bedroom.

ETHAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You in here? Hello?

Ethan reappears. There is no trace of Decker, no clothes, no suitcase. It seems as though, despite their great night, Decker has left just as he threatened he would. Ethan sits down on the couch, suddenly lost and scared.

A CARD-KEY is inserted into the hotel room door and it opens. Decker enters and Ethan quickly stands up, visibly relieved.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
There you are. I thought you left.

DECKER
I got coffee and bagels.

Decker hands over a bag and a coffee to Ethan.

ETHAN
(for not leaving)
Thanks, Decker.

DECKER
Yeah, man. I took ten bucks out of your wallet.

Decker hands Ethan some change. They sit around the coffee table and eat together.

DECKER (CONT'D)
So...? What happened with Kendra last night? You shlam-bang her?

ETHAN
(embarrassed)
No.

DECKER
No shlam-bangery? She blow out your candle for your birthday?

ETHAN
No.
(then)
Why? Is that supposed to happen?

DECKER
It's sort of a rule, yeah. But you kissed her and stuff?

Ethan tries to play it cool.

ETHAN
Yeah.

DECKER
Yeah? Good for you.

ETHAN
And a little more.

Decker is surprised.

DECKER
No shit? A little heavy pet-age?
You animal.

Decker considers Ethan and can't help but smile.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Look at you.

ETHAN
What?

DECKER
You got in a fight, you drove a
car, you got laid. Not bad.

ETHAN
I didn't get laid.

DECKER
Yeah, but nobody knows that. You
always tell people you closed the
deal -- always. Even if you
didn't. It creates an aura about
you that women pick up on.

ETHAN
Did you close the deal with
Kendra's mom?

DECKER
Who, Lisa? Oh, yeah. We hit for
the cycle. We went around the
horn.

Ethan considers Decker, dubious.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(coming clean)
We just kissed a little.

ETHAN
You mean I did more than you?

Decker rolls his eyes. Ethan is clearly proud of himself.

DECKER
We actually talked until the sun
came up. It was nice. Hey, you
know Lisa and I were born in the
same hospital one day apart?
(MORE)

DECKER (CONT'D)
She doesn't remember me, but still.
Pretty crazy.

ETHAN
That reminds me.

Ethan takes out THE NOTE that he found when he woke up.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Kendra asked me to give you her
mom's number.

Ethan tears the note in half, keeping a portion of it for himself, and offering the other half to Decker.

DECKER
Cool.

Decker takes the piece of paper, casually crumples it up, and tosses it in a nearby trash can. Ethan is confused.

ETHAN
What are you doing?

DECKER
What's the point?

ETHAN
You just said you liked her.

DECKER
Yeah, so?

ETHAN
So? She seems significantly better
than the other women I've seen you
interested in.

Decker chuckles.

DECKER
You get laid and suddenly you're an
expert.

Decker is finished with his food. He wipes his hands.

DECKER (CONT'D)
All right, my man. I better hit
the road. It's been interesting.

Decker gets up. Ethan is confused.

ETHAN
You're leaving?

DECKER

Yeah. I have to get back to Jersey
and figure out my life.

ETHAN

Why?

DECKER

Why? I need a job. I need a
purpose. And my dog has to be
clenching his butt cheeks so tight
his tail's popped off.

Ethan is clearly disappointed.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Someone coming to get you?

ETHAN

Huh? Oh. Yeah. My dad said I
didn't have to go to boarding
school if I didn't want to, so...

DECKER

Good. That's what you wanted.
All right, then...

Decker holds out his hand.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Thank you for flying Sunshine
Express. See you on the runway.

They shake hands, as Ethan looks concerned about what he's
going to do now that Decker is leaving.

INT. COMMERCIAL OFFICE SPACE - DAY

A nondescript bullpen of cubicles. An employee, LEORA, eats
a donut as she talks on her headset.

LEORA

Doctor Wilder, my name is Leora.
I'm calling from the Mastercard
fraudulent charge department. Is
this a bad time?

INTERCUT:

INT. WILDER FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Steven is getting a cup of coffee as he talks on his phone.

STEVEN

That depends on what you're about to tell me.

LEORA

Well it seems there's been quite a bit of inconsistent charges on one of your cards, and as a precaution we want to confirm some recent activity. First off, do you know anything about a seventeen thousand dollar charge at United Car Rental in Flintsburch, Pennsylvania?

Steven is stunned.

STEVEN

What?!

INT. UNITED CAR RENTAL AGENCY - DAY

Decker is renting another car. He gives his credit card to Devon.

DEVON

Excellent!

(by rote)

Would you like to purchase our additional insurance?

DECKER

Ha. That's funny.

EXT. UNITED CAR RENTAL AGENCY PARKING LOT - DAY

Devon is on his hands and knees looking under the rear seat of a mid-size sedan. A nervous Decker watches from a safe distance.

DECKER

No snakes, lizards, Gila monsters, Komodo dragons...? I don't want any of that shit in this car, you hear me?

(then)

So how do you like renting cars? I bet you can meet a lot of women.

DEVON

Women and men. I'd say I have a random sexual encounter on average three to four times a week.

The nerdy Devon sits up.

DEVON (CONT'D)
(re: car)
She's all clear.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Ethan is at the ticket window buying a bus ticket. A CLERK has swiped Ethan's credit card.

CLERK
(re: credit card)
I'll try it again, but it says
declined.

Ethan waits anxiously as the clerk swipes the card again.

CLERK (CONT'D)
This card is canceled.

ETHAN
Canceled? But I have to get to
Albany.

CLERK
How about you walk away and I won't
call the cops.

ETHAN
You think I stole that card? My
father gave me that.

CLERK
Well then call your father.

A clerk indicates a phone. Ethan looks at it and then scoffs in frustration.

ETHAN
That's my card.

CLERK
Get outta here.

INT. WILDER FAMILY HOME - DAY

Beth is holding up three of Kingsley's outfits on hangers for Steven's opinion.

STEVEN
I can't talk about this right now.

BETH

Just tell me -- what do you think for call-backs? Rapper with hat turned sideways? Train conductor with hat turned backwards? Or jockey with soft helmet, not turned?

Steven is bemused.

STEVEN

Beth -- I'm sitting here worried something's happened to Ethan. He's not answering his phone, his credit card has been stolen, and you're asking me if I want Kingsley to look like a lawn jockey?

BETH

A lawn Jockey? Nice. This is the biggest day of our son's life and you're worried about Ethan -- who I'm sure left his card somewhere in the airport and is now on the plane not answering his phone. Pick an outfit.

STEVEN

I'm tired of you always calling the shots.

BETH

Pick an outfit.

Steven backs down and relents, as usual.

STEVEN

The conductor.

BETH

Ugh, that's the worst one.

INT. MOVING RENTAL CAR - DAY

Decker is cruising down the main highway out of town, singing his ass off to ALL I REALLY WANT, by Alanis Morissette, which is playing on the car's radio.

DECKER

(singing)

*There I go jumping before the
gunshot has gone off...*

Decker mimes shooting a pistol.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(singing)
Slap me with a splintered ruler...

Decker mimes slapping himself.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(singing)
*And it would knock me to the floor
if I wasn't there already. If only
I could hunt the hunter...*

Decker mimes pulling an arrow from a quiver and shooting it with an imaginary bow.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(singing)
*And all I really want... is some
patience... A way to calm the
angry voice...*

Decker's singing trails off as he squints at someone HITCHHIKING on the side of the road. Decker looks closer as he approaches the hitchhiker. He drives past and sees the HITCHHIKER IS ETHAN.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Ethan, holding out his thumb, sees a car JAM ON IT'S BRAKES and SCREECH to a stop fifty yards past him. He grabs his bag and takes off running for the car.

Ethan approaches the car's open passenger window and leans his head in.

ETHAN
Thanks for stopping.

DECKER
Hey, don't you know it's illegal to
hitchhike?

Ethan is surprised to see it's Decker.

ETHAN
Oh.

Ethan's embarrassed.

DECKER
What are you doing out here?

Ethan doesn't answer. A car HONKS as it passes.

DECKER (CONT'D)
You didn't call your dad, did you?

ETHAN
Why would I call him? If he cared about me he wouldn't have sent me away.

Decker considers this. Another car drives past, slowing down and HONKING. The PASSENGER YELLS something out her window at them, but it's hard to make out what she's saying.

DECKER
(waving the car on)
We don't need any help! Thank you!
(to Ethan)
Suddenly the world is so into helping. Where were they when I was on the side of the road making out with a woman who turned out to have a penis in her pants? No one seemed too interested in helping me then, and I needed serious help.
(then)
So where are you going?

ETHAN
I have three hours to get to Albany and catch my mom before she leaves for London.

DECKER
Three hours, huh?

Decker agonizes for a long beat. He reluctantly caves.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Get in.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN
Really?

DECKER
Yes. Before I change my mind.
(then)
Wait!
(re: his suitcase)
Let me put the Rolls-mobile in the trunk. Nobody sits on the Rolls.

Decker checks for oncoming traffic before opening his car door. When it's clear, he gets out and goes around to get his suitcase off the passenger seat.

Cars continue to HONK as they speed past. ONE SWERVES away from them at the last minute, coming dangerously close.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Whoa! That car almost came onto the shoulder.

Ethan takes a closer look at where they are on the road.

ETHAN

Decker, I think this is the shoulder.

Ethan points to the swath of grass he and Decker are standing on next to the car. Decker presses the key fob to open the trunk.

DECKER

If that's the shoulder then that would mean there are two lanes of traffic going in this direction...

Decker considers the highway in front of them.

As the trunk pops up, we hear the sound of a SEMI LAYING ON ITS HORN. The semi enters the frame and SLAMS INTO THE BACK OF THE RENTAL CAR, pushing it quickly out of frame like a snow plow shoveling snow. A stunned Decker and Ethan are left holding their bags. After a beat, the car's trunk lands on the grass by them.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

We follow Decker and Ethan from behind as they walk along the side of the highway, approaching a rest stop with gas stations and restaurant chains.

ETHAN

You took the insurance this time, right? Decker --?

DECKER

Don't! Don't you ask me that.

Ethan stops and looks at Decker, dumbfounded.

DECKER (CONT'D)

It's a scam, okay?

EXT. REST STOP PARKING LOT - DAY

Decker and Ethan pull their bags through the rest stop parking lot when they pass a familiar sight in front of a Denny's restaurant. Parked head-in is a LARGE PICK-UP TRUCK WITH A HORSE TRAILER attached to the back of it. There is a tiny scuff on the glistening front bumper.

DECKER

Well, would you look at that...

Eating inside at the booth by the window are the CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS who beat up Decker and Ethan at the gas station. The soldiers are clearly harassing a WAITRESS trying to take their order. Ethan is not happy to see them.

ETHAN

Oh, no.

DECKER

I think we've found our ride.

ETHAN

Are you crazy? Those assholes?

Decker looks at Ethan with a devilish grin.

DECKER

Remember the story of Jack Jouett?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. REST STOP PARKING LOT - DAY

The doors to the horse trailer burst open and out ride Decker and Ethan ON THE BACK OF TWO BEAUTIFUL HORSES.

DECKER

Hyah!

With their suitcases strapped to their saddles, they take off over the parking lot and back down toward the highway's grassy shoulder. They HOOT and HOLLER triumphantly as they gallop off.

EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - DAY

The two horses are now so exhausted they have stopped running and can only walk slowly. Decker and Ethan desperately try to kick them to move.

DECKER
Come on. Hyah! Hyah!

But the horses don't respond.

ETHAN
Jack must have had a better horse.

Their horses stop walking all together.

DECKER
Okay, my guy's dishes are done.

It appears that Decker's horse starts moving again.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Wait, there I go.
(realizing)
Oh, no. That's just yours going
backwards.

Ethan's horse has, in fact, started walking backwards.

Ethan and Decker look around and take in their surroundings.
They are adjacent to a vast farm with a quaint farm house set
back off the road.

EXT. FARM - DAY

WIDE SHOT

Ethan and Decker are standing by their horses, talking with a
FARMER. We can't hear what they are saying but we see them
gesturing to the horses and see the farmer inspecting them.
Decker gestures, as if to say to the farmer, he can have the
horses if Decker and Ethan can have something off screen
behind a barn door.

CLOSER

FARMER
It's my wife's. I'll have to talk
to her before I can let you take
it.

DECKER
Fair enough.

The farmer leaves Decker and Ethan and heads into the farm
house. Decker looks around.

DECKER (CONT'D)

You know I used to drive past this farm all the time on my way to visit my ex-girlfriend. I'd get so excited because I knew that meant in one hour, I was going to see her again.

(beat)

And then I'd masturbate into an empty fast food bag.

ETHAN

Now that's got to be illegal.

(then)

You wish you married her?

DECKER

Who, Jenny?

Decker thinks about it.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Yeah. I do.

ETHAN

You're up here. Call her. Tell her you regret dumping her.

Decker shakes his head.

DECKER

I didn't dump her. She dumped me.

ETHAN

Well, yeah, because you wouldn't marry her.

DECKER

No. Because I cheated on her.

Ethan looks at Decker. He doesn't understand.

DECKER (CONT'D)

We were engaged, and one night I got really drunk, and I... I cheated on her.

ETHAN

But you said...?

DECKER

I guess we both lied.

Ethan takes in Decker's confession.

DECKER (CONT'D)

I told myself if I could do that to the person I loved more than anything, then I was just not going to be in a relationship again. 'Cause if you're not in a relationship you can't cheat. And if you can't cheat, nobody's heart gets broken. So that's why I got a hand-job from an arthritic seventy-five-year-old. Because there isn't much chance of a relationship there. And it's also why I threw out Lisa's phone number.

The farmer exits the farm house and approaches them.

FARMER

The wife said okay.

DECKER

Beautiful! You're a good man, sir.

Decker goes to shake the farmer's hand.

FARMER

Sorry, I'd shake your hand but my arthritis.

DECKER

I know how that feels.

MUSIC CUE: "ANOTHER TRAVELIN' SONG" BY BRIGHT EYES PLAYS OVER:

CLOSE ON

The asphalt moving under us as we travel fast on an open road. The camera PANS UP to reveal the hood of a car. It's the iconic hood of a ROLLS ROYCE. As the camera continues to PAN UP, we see it's not a real Rolls Royce, but Decker's rolling suitcase being pulled behind a HOT PINK QUAD RUNNER ATV. Decker is driving the ATV, and Ethan is sitting behind him, holding his luggage.

VARIOUS SHOTS of Decker and Ethan cruising along different roads.

Decker and Ethan pull up to a red stop-light. A BIKER on a motorcycle is already there, waiting for the light to change. Decker looks at him and gives his fellow rider a thumbs up. The biker looks back at Decker and Ethan on the pink ATV and gives them the finger, then speeds away. Decker and Ethan give the biker the finger back and slowly take off after him.

END MUSIC.

INT. MIAMI HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

A SIGN reads "YOU MADE IT! LLOYD GERVIN'S TALENT SEARCH CALL-BACKS!"

LLOYD GERVIN, slick, sits behind a mahogany desk on a Persian rug talking to a FOUR YEAR OLD GIRL. Her feet dangle off the chair.

LLOYD GERVIN
 ...Emancipating from your parents
 is a decision only you can make.
 Sorry, time's up.
 (giving her his card)
 Call me, and I can help put this
 process in motion.

Deep in a line ONE HUNDRED KIDS LONG, Steven, Beth, and Kingsley wait their turn to meet with Lloyd, in the same way a fan "meets" an author at a book-signing. Kingsley is in the rapper's outfit. Steven talks on his phone, upset.

STEVEN
 (into phone)
 Because, the representative from
 his school said he never got off
 the plane.

INTERCUT:

INT. SUNSHINE EXPRESS CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

A CUSTOMER SERVICE REP sits at a cubicle talking to Steven.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP
 Yes, I'm afraid we've lost your
 son.

STEVEN
 How can this happen? Was anyone
 from your airline going to call me
 to let me know?

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP
 I'm sorry, Doctor, but this is a
 big airline and I assure you, your
 son isn't the only child we've lost
 today.

STEVEN

Is that supposed to make me feel better?

CUSTOMER SERVICE REP

We'll find him eventually, sir. But for your inconvenience, I'm going to go ahead and give you a free round-trip ticket to use absolutely anytime, no restrictions, however blackout dates do apply. And you're responsible for the tax.

STEVEN

You're responsible for my son!

Steven hangs up, angry. He looks at a placard on a stand. The sign is like at an amusement park: "WAIT TIME FROM THIS POINT: 1 HOUR!" It has a cartoon likeness of Lloyd Gervin.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Come on. We're going.

BETH

No, we're not. We're minutes away from Kingsley being discovered.

STEVEN

I don't care. I have to find my son.

Kingsley is PICKING BOOGERS from his nose and wiping them on the back of an unsuspecting parent in front of him. Steven grabs Kingsley by the arm.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Let's go, Kingsley.

BETH

What do you think you're doing?

STEVEN

I've put up with your bullshit long enough. It's time we start acting like a normal family -- all of us. And that begins with getting the hell out of here.

With Kingsley in one hand, Steven takes Beth and leads them out of the ballroom. As they go --

KINGSLEY

Suck my dick, Lloyd Gervin!

The parents and kids in-line within earshot GASP at such blasphemy.

STEVEN
You said it, Buddy.

EXT. ETHAN'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Decker and Ethan, on the ATV, pull into a long driveway that leads up to a large modern house. When they get to the house, Decker shuts off the quad-runner. Ethan removes his helmet and hops off the back. He runs up the steps to the door of the house and RINGS THE BELL, excited. After a beat, his mother, Kate, approaches from the inside, and looks out the glass window. She opens the door, stunned to see her son.

KATE
Ethan?

ETHAN
Hi, Mom.

INT. STEVEN'S MOVING CAR - DAY

Steven, Beth and Kingsley are driving home from the hotel. Steven is talking on his phone.

STEVEN
(into phone)
He's where?
(then, relieved)
Thank God, he's all right.

BETH
I told you he was fine. Can we
turn around now?

STEVEN
(snapping)
He's not fine, Beth. He's at
Kate's house. Now shut up for
once! Just shut up! God!

Beth rolls her eyes at the craziness.

BETH
Mr. Tough Guy all the sudden.
You're the worst.

INTERCUT:

INT. ETHAN'S MOM'S HOUSE - SUN PORCH - DAY

Ethan and Decker are sitting watching Ethan's mom, Kate, pace as she talks to Steven on her phone in the living room.

KATE

Steven, I have a car coming in ten minutes to take me to the airport. I am unable to deal with this right now.

STEVEN

You don't have to deal with it, Kate. Just like you've never had to deal with it.

KATE

Don't start with me. I am not the one who conveniently sends our son off to boarding school when it seems pretty obvious he doesn't want to go.

Ethan watches his parents argue, sad. Decker looks at him, feeling awful for him.

KATE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Steven? Steven? Why don't you tell that dumb bitch I can hear what she's saying....

DECKER

Sounds like my parents.

(then)

Come on. I'll take you to school.

ETHAN

What?

Decker stands up and Ethan looks at him.

DECKER

You're better off there, anyway. They have girls there?

ETHAN

Yeah.

DECKER

What! What! You didn't tell me there were girls there.

ETHAN

Yeah.

DECKER

What! You and a bunch of horny girls with no parents around? Are you kidding me? Do you realize you're going to close the deal with every last girl in that school -- even the weirdos and ugly ones. You know why? Because now you know how to land that shit!

Ethan manages a smile.

DECKER (CONT'D)

And you wanted to be here in Albany -- You're crazy. So what do you say? You want to go?

Ethan considers Decker's proposition. He looks at his mom arguing with his dad -- she hits her phone on the counter in frustration. Ethan looks back to Decker and nods, yes.

Decker approaches Kate, who continues to argue with Steven. He tries to get her attention.

DECKER (CONT'D)

Hey. We're going to go.

KATE

(into phone)

Oh, she thinks I'm fake when her tits would have made Isaac Newton reject his own theory of gravity.

DECKER

We're leaving.

KATE

(covering phone)

What?

DECKER

I got him. I'm going to take him to school. So don't worry about it. Go on your trip, or put yourself first, or whatever you people do. I'll make sure he gets to school.

Kate is confused.

KATE
(into phone)
Steven, let me call you back.

Kate hangs up.

KATE (CONT'D)
What do you think you're doing?

DECKER
I can't sit here and watch everyone
reject him anymore. So I'll just
take him. He's a great kid and he
doesn't deserve this. And you know
what else? He doesn't need it.
Because he's a man now and he's
going to be just fine.

Decker turns to see Ethan is behind him, having heard
everything he said.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Come on, buddy. The Pink Lady's
waiting for us. Let's ride.

EXT. ETHAN'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Ethan and Decker walk out in the front driveway toward the
"Pink Lady" ATV when Ethan stops. Decker notices and stops,
too.

DECKER
What is it?

ETHAN
Thanks, Decker. You're a good
friend.

Decker holds out his hand for Ethan to clasp. Ethan takes
it, and Decker pulls him in for a hug.

DECKER
B.F.F, right? Big Fakers Forever?

Ethan manages a smile.

ETHAN
Big Fakers Forever.

A LIMOUSINE has pulled up the driveway to where they are
standing. The driver, RONNY, hops out of the stretch.

RONNY
Hey, folks. I'm Ronny, I'll be
your driver.

The driver grabs Ethan and Decker's two suitcases by the ATV.

RONNY (CONT'D)
These all your bags?

Decker and Ethan look at each other. They can't believe
their luck. Should they do it? Ethan nods.

DECKER
(to driver)
Yes, sir. That's everything.

Ronny goes to put their bags in the limo.

INT. MOVING LIMOUSINE - DAY

Decker and Ethan are seated in the back, smiling.

RONNY
What airline are you flying?

DECKER
Actually, there's been a change of
plan, Ronny.
(to Ethan)
Tell him where we're going.

ETHAN
Windsor Academy in Bedford, New
Hampshire, please.

RONNY
New Hampshire? That'll be quite a
bit extra.

Decker's pouring himself a glass of scotch from the bar.

DECKER
Just add it to the bill. And throw
in a generous tip for yourself.

RONNY
Yes, sir.

Decker looks up and sees Ethan holding out a tumbler for
himself. Decker smiles. He pours Ethan only a sip.

DECKER
Just a drop. I don't want you to
start singing again.

Decker and Ethan clink glasses and sip their drinks in style.

EXT. ETHAN'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Kate exits her front door with her luggage. She looks out into the driveway and it's empty, save for the hot pink ATV. She impatiently looks at her watch, clearly wondering where her limo is.

INT. / EXT. MOVING LIMOUSINE - DAY

A few hours later, the limousine slowly makes its way up a long, winding driveway in bucolic New Hampshire, passing an ENTRANCE SIGN that reads: "WINDSOR ACADEMY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS." Decker and Ethan have their faces pressed against their windows, taking in the scene.

DECKER
Holy shit, this is nice.

They approach the front lawn of the school. It's a beautiful, sunny New England day, and there are KIDS HANGING OUT, throwing frisbees, talking under trees.

A PRETTY CO-ED walks by and checks out in the limo.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Look at that one. Look at her.
She's checking you out.

ETHAN
She can't even see in here. The
windows are tinted.

Decker rolls down Ethan's window and calls to her.

DECKER
Now she can.
(calling to co-ed)
Hey! Hey, you. Come here.

ETHAN
(slightly anxious)
What are you doing, Decker?

DECKER
Oh, you know what I'm doing.

Ethan braces himself as the pretty co-ed approaches the limo.

PRETTY CO-ED

Yeah?

DECKER

I want you to meet someone very important. This is Ethan. He's a bad ass.

PRETTY CO-ED

Hi, Ethan. I'm Anastasia.

In previous moments like this, Ethan would have wilted. But not this time.

ETHAN

Anastasia. That's a pretty name.

PRETTY CO-ED

Thanks.

They share a smile.

ETHAN

I'll see you around.

The limo slowly drives off and Decker is full of pride and excitement for what is clearly a more confident Ethan.

DECKER

Damn! You just crushed that.

(to the driver)

Ronny, did you just see how he crushed that?

RONNY

Yes, sir. It's on.

DECKER

Oh, it is so on. You are shlam-banging that girl tonight.

Decker playfully shoves Ethan, who tries to be cool, but can't help but laugh.

The limo comes to a stop at the visitor parking lot in front of the school's main administrative building.

RONNY

All right. Windsor Academy.

Ronny gets out and Ethan turns to Decker.

ETHAN

So what are you going to do now?

DECKER

I think I'm going to get a job
renting cars. I hear you can meet
a ton of desperate women. And, I'm
very familiar with the rental
insurance programs.

Ethan pulls a CRUMBLED UP PIECE OF PAPER from his suit
pocket, and hands it to Decker.

DECKER (CONT'D)

What's this?

ETHAN

In case you're ready for a real
relationship again.

DECKER

(looks at it)

You pulled Lisa's number out of the
trash.

ETHAN

Well, someone once told me, people
change.

Decker ponders this and considers the paper in his hand.

Ronny opens Ethan's door and Ethan gets out of the limo.
PASSING STUDENTS stare at him, checking him out. Ethan takes
it in and then notices a familiar face. He can't believe it.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Dad?

Steven is standing by a rental car. Ethan is dumbfounded.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

STEVEN

I've come to take you home.

ETHAN

What?

STEVEN

I know you don't want to be here.
So your step-mom and I talked it
over and we want you to come home.
I want you to come home.

(MORE)

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I screwed up, Ethan. It took me a while to realize it, but I screwed up.

Steven tentatively goes to Ethan and then hugs him. After a moment, Ethan hugs his dad back. They finally break and Steven looks up to notice Decker standing nearby, watching.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
Hi. Steven.

DECKER
Gary.

Ethan frowns, confused -- "Gary?"

STEVEN
Thank you, Gary.

DECKER
Please. Call me Decker.

STEVEN
(to Ethan)
So what do you say? You want to come home?

Ethan looks at his dad. And Decker. And the school and the kids.

BLOW OUT TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON

A WHITE DRY ERASE BOARD. A hand holding A MARKER comes into frame and draws A NAKED WOMAN WITH BIG BOOBS. We PULL BACK --

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

-- as the ARTIST returns to his seat. The CAMERA TRAVELS through rows of TEENAGE BOYS AND GIRLS sitting down at their desks, talking, sleeping, getting ready for class to begin. As the camera moves past each kid we expect the next one to be Ethan, but it never is. Finally the camera ends up on --

THE OPEN DOOR TO THE CLASSROOM --

We hold on the doorway for a beat, waiting for someone to come through it. And finally, in walks DECKER.

He drops his shoulder bag down on the desk at the front of class as he talks on his cell phone.

DECKER
(into phone)
Why do we have to tour the
hospital?

INTERCUT:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Kendra's mom, Lisa, is in the kitchen talking on her phone.
Lisa is NOTICEABLY PREGNANT.

LISA
So we know what delivery there is
going to be like.

DECKER
We were born at that hospital,
Lisa. I don't need to see it
again.

LISA
Well, I, for one, don't remember
much about that day.

DECKER
I remember you. It was the first
time I saw you naked. You were
hot. Look, I'm in class. I'll
call you later.... Love you, too.

Decker puts his phone away.

DECKER (CONT'D)
(to class)
All right. Let's get started here.

The class quiets down as Decker notices the artwork on the board.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Who did this? Murph? This your
handy-work?

A student, MURPH, shakes his head, no.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Well, whoever did it, it's
inappropriate. I love it, but it's
inappropriate.

The class chuckles. Decker erases it and starts writing on the board, "THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR."

DECKER (CONT'D)
(as he writes)
Anybody know the story of Jack
Jouett...?

STUDENT (O.S.)
Who?

DECKER
Jack Jouett.

We reveal the student asking the question is ETHAN. He's out of his suit and dressed in the school's casual uniform.

ETHAN
What's his name?

DECKER
Jack Jouett.

ETHAN
Jack who?

DECKER
I swear to God, you ask me his name
again and I will lock you in that
bathroom over there. You know I'll
do it.

Ethan smiles wryly. Decker continues writing on the board.

DECKER (CONT'D)
This is a story of an unlikely
hero...

And as Decker continues to lecture his class, we --

FADE OUT.

THE END.