

Fun Size

by
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WGA-Registered

OVER BLACK.

TEENAGE GIRL (V.O.)
Bullet Points on a Fluffer's Résumé.

MUSIC: Thin Lizzy's "Whiskey in the Jar"

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Seated at a white desk by the window, her dark hair tied up in a loose, slept-on knot, is WREN (Karen DeSantis, 17). Her soft, pale skin reveals a network of thin blue veins. A pair of old, too-big velour pajamas hangs off her slender, boyish frame. A pretty girl, if you ever catch her smiling.

Wren **writes a list** in her diary, pensive.

WREN (V.O.)
Team player.

We explore the room, a schizophrenic collision of girly youth and teen snark. On the bureau, one My Little Pony mounts another.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Stick-to-itiveness.

Over the bed is a poster of a bronze statue in Dublin's Grafton Street. **Phil Lynott, Thin Lizzy, 1949-1986.**

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Conceive and implement strategies for sustaining growth during periods of inactivity.

Wren chews her pencil and studies the page - a painter in search of her master stroke.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Hands-on. Or off.

She dabs a rubber stamp with ink and stamps the list. It features a grinning 1950's man, thumbs up, and the word "Ace!"

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Wren walks down the hallway with a towel over her shoulder. She passes a door painted entirely black. It THROBS with the pounding of some early morning drum practice.

WREN (V.O.)
Possible Explanations for the Vicious Curse That Is My Brother.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wren undresses, avoiding her own reflection in the mirror.

WREN (V.O.)
*Mom paid secret conjugal visit to
Charles Manson.*

She steps into the shower and we follow. Billows of steam envelop her.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*God's revenge for when I soiled the
baptism well. That's what you get
for waterboarding a newborn.*

We jump through Wren's routine. She shaves her pits, loofahs her face. Her agitation is apparent in her fervent shampooing. Now she rinses her hair, letting the warm water wash over her.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*The doctors missed Dad's colon and
radiated his balls.*

She shuts off the water, but doesn't move. Dad. Wren lets out a long, melancholy breath.

Suddenly, she stops, sniffs. Is someone there? She yanks back the shower curtain.

WREN (CONT'D)
Albert!

Seated on the toilet, butt naked, with the funnies folded in four like the sports page, is ALBERT (8), Wren's brother. Fat cheeks, cowlick hair, feet dangling a foot off the ground, and totally impassive.

Albert holds up a finger: "Be with you in a sec."

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Wren's mom, JOY (42), eats a yogurt at the counter. She's tall, slim and dressed in the latest workout gear. Her highlighted hair is pulled back in a bouncy ponytail. Not bad for her age.

Wren storms in towelling off her hair.

WREN
*Mom! He struck again. God damn
Adolph Shitler.*

JOY

Oh, Hon. He just wants to be close
to you.

Wren digs through a stack of paper by the phone, exasperated.

WREN

Have you signed my application yet?

JOY

What are you applying for?

WREN

Iraqi citizenship. Hello! College
loans?

JOY

Oh. I don't know, have I?

Nothing by the phone. On the table Wren finds a heap of Albert's CRAYON DRAWINGS: race cars with gun turrets, assorted scenes of carnage, an airplane that's taking a poop. Wren flips over a drawing. Of course – it's her application.

WREN

Awesome.

Joy takes the drawing, appraising it like an art buff.

JOY

What is that, some kind of fire-breathing tit monster? So creative.

Right then Albert cruises in wearing tighty whities, galoshes, swim goggles and a cape. He's no taller than four feet, with a belly like a four square ball. He fills a commuter mug with COFFEE and dumps in half a jar of sugar.

Wren looks at her mom like, aren't you going to say anything? Joy puts on her mom face.

JOY (CONT'D)

Boo-Bear? Lid.

Albert snaps a lid on his coffee and climbs onto a chair in the breakfast nook. Wren drops her towel and gathers what remains of the application.

WREN

I'll get another copy from the counselor. Can you just sign the last page?

JOY

Whoa whoa. You cannot go to school
wearing that.

Wren wears a T-shirt that reads, simply, "SUCK MY DICK."

WREN

I definitely can't go not wearing it.

Joy folds her arms. Wren sighs and pulls on the threadbare ARMY JACKET tied around her waist. The grungy old relic could easily have been swiped from a bum that morning.

JOY

(Not much better.)

Much better.

Wren puts on her backpack, anxious to go. Joy flips casually through the application.

JOY (CONT'D)

You've taken six semesters of
pottery?

WREN

Mom!

JOY

Oh by the way, Keevin and I have
been invited to a rager --

WREN

A "rager"?

JOY

-- so I need you to take Albert
trick-or-treating.

WREN

Sorry, I've got plans.

JOY

Sorry, postpone.

WREN

Postpone? You can't just go out any
random night wearing a costume and
pretend it's Halloween. People will
think you're medicating.

JOY

Costume! Crap, I knew I forgot
something.

She fishes a TWENTY from her purse, nodding to Albert.

JOY (CONT'D)

Do you mind? Just no guns, swords or nunchuks, or anything that could be fashioned into a gun, sword or nunchuk.

WREN

Eff this! Why do you get to go out and I don't?

JOY

Because you're 17. And I'm... over 30. And I'm your mother. And I'm not having this discussion. You're watching your brother, I'm raging. The end.

Wren gapes silently while Joy turns back to the application. Over at the table, Albert is two knuckles deep in his nose.

WREN

No.

JOY

Excuse me?

WREN

No way. I'm not missing my last Halloween in Westbrae for *him*. Get him a sitter. Or a Lo-Jack.

Joy exhales through clenched teeth and faces her daughter.

JOY

You know, Karen, I don't ask a whole lot of you. You have no chores, you ignore your curfew. Now you want me to take out loans for 45,000 dollars a year so you can go sleep until noon in another time zone? Uh-uh. You start showing a little responsibility, a little consideration for someone other than yourself, or I'm not signing anything.

WREN

But the application is due tomorrow!

Joy slaps the application closed and holds out the twenty.

JOY

Then I'll sign tomorrow.

Wren grudgingly accepts the twenty. Joy starts tossing random items into Albert's lunch box: a whole block of cheese, a cucumber. Wren makes one last-ditch effort, softening her tone.

WREN
Also, tonight's my night to, you
know... Go see Dad.

She lowers her eyes. Joy gives her a sympathetic look.

JOY
Oh, Hon...
(then)
He's not going anywhere.

Right then, a MAN calls from another room.

MAN (O.S.)
Joy? Have you seen my Dockers?

JOY
In here.

KEEVIN enters in an undershirt and boxer briefs. He's broad-shouldered, sun-kissed, smokin' hot. And about 27 years old.

KEEVIN
Good morning, m'lady.

He bows to Wren with a flourish, then bumps fists with Albert.

KEEVIN (CONT'D)
M'dog.

Joy beams, nodding to a pair of khakis hanging from a chair.

JOY
Freshly ironed.

Keevin pulls them on, his eyes rolling back in a way that can only be described as orgasmic. He actually PURRS.

KEEVIN
Still warm.

He glides over to Joy, whose hands instinctively explore his muscular chest. They mutter through hot breaths.

KEEVIN (CONT'D)
Didn't think I'd see you up.

JOY
Don't flatter yourself.

KEEVIN

Oh, that sounds like a challenge.

They giggle and press together, until, as if no one else is there, they start MACKING. Hard. They fall back against the counter and a dish CLATTERS to the ground. They're undeterred.

Oblivious, Albert empties an entire box of Cocoa Puffs onto the table in search of the prize. Bits spill on the floor.

Alone in her outrage, Wren storms out.

EXT. BUS STOP - LATER

Wren waits for the bus with APRIL (17), future Girl Gone Wild and current star of half the student body's masturbation fantasies. Her well-glossed lips have a way of suggesting recent or imminent fellatio at all times. If she were 30 years older, she'd have a beehive and smoke Pall Malls.

APRIL

I don't know what you're complaining about. If Keevin Kilpatrick was sleeping at my house, I'd never stop sniffing his underwear.

WREN

That's disgusting.

APRIL

Oh, but not when guys do it?

WREN

So you inhaling a man's butt sweat is a crack in the glass ceiling?

APRIL

That's right. I'm the Rosa Parks of kink.

WREN

You mean Susan B. Anthony, or Hillary Clinton.

APRIL

What? No, I insist on my right to sniff men's underwear.

WREN

At the front of the bus?

APRIL

Whatever. So what time do you want to go to Aaron Riley's? I heard his stepmom got him two kegs of Natty.

WREN

Yeah, bad news. My mom stuck me with troll patrol.

APRIL

What?! It's the biggest party of the semester! Only dorks and drama kids don't go.

WREN

She's holding next year over my head, says I need to show some responsibility. Which is rich, right? If she was so responsible, there never would've even been an Albert. Just a psychotic sperm.

APRIL

That's blackmail, Wren. Or extortion... Wait, racketeering?

WREN

Whatever, I can suck up one night of suffering for four years of freedom.

APRIL

So what am I supposed to do?

WREN

You could hang out with me, pick through Keevin's laundry.

The school bus arrives and they climb on.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - CONTINUOUS

APRIL

See, you don't even appreciate it. It's like the Spank Bank opened a branch in your house. Hey, Mr. Combs.

MR. COMBS (50's) is an affable, Hagrid-sized bus driver with a thick "Norf" London accent. He dangles a cigarette out the little side window.

MR. COMBS

Morning, ladies. Big plans tonight?

APRIL

Well *I'm* getting wasted.

MR. COMBS

Good on ya. Young people got to get a feel for the drink, find out before they got roommates if they're the kind to black out and take a dump in the hamper.

WREN

Don't worry, Mr. Combs. April's more of a cryer.

MR. COMBS

Guess it's all the same, eh? You drink enough, something bad is bound to come out. Just remember, girls, if you can't learn to love yourself, who the fuck will?

The girls ponder this as they move down the aisle. A smattering of kids are in COSTUME, mainly nerdy types. There's a Darth Maul, two Lady Gagas, the robot from Futurama, whose stiff cardboard torso is suspended between two seats. They must not have gotten the memo; all the cool kids are in street clothes.

Not for the first time, April winces at Wren's jacket.

APRIL

Christ, Wren, it's starting to smell like buttermilk.

WREN

No, April.

APRIL

Just once. One wash? You're not gonna wash away the memories, just 30 years of armpit.

They pass two skinny guys in full costume, who've been watching furtively since the girls got on.

WREN

Hey Roosevelt, hey Peng.

PENG (16) is the son of recent immigrants from Korea, and their principal means of assimilation. He's dressed as some kind of PATRIOT, in white Little League pants, a women's pea coat and a wig dusted with flour. Paired with these are his usual thick glasses that darken automatically in sunlight. Peng talks twice his size, which is puny.

ROOSEVELT (16) is dressed like he's on SAFARI, in khaki and a pith helmet. Beside him is a large butterfly net. His boyish face sits atop a lanky frame that hasn't caught up with itself. He's soft-spoken, with a simple, almost naive sincerity borne of a very, very loving home.

ROOSEVELT
(unconvincing nonchalance)
Oh hey Wren! Good morning to you.

Wren gives a half smile as they continue on to the back. We stick with the guys. Peng punches Roosevelt in the thigh.

PENG
(sotto)
Dude! You know Mike Dooley?

ROOSEVELT
Goatee in third grade Mike Dooley?
Or vomited on your head at Six
Flags Mike Dooley?

PENG
Goatee in third grade. He told me --

ROOSEVELT
Um, fact check. Goatee Mike has a well-publicized policy of not talking to underclassmen.

PENG
Alright! So I heard him telling Adam Oliphant how this summer when he was knocking boots with Wren DeSantis --

ROOSEVELT
This story is suspect. Knocking boots?

PENG
-- and she drops her drawers and it's like, goosh...

He mimes an explosion.

PENG (CONT'D)
Gigantobush.

ROOSEVELT
What?

PENG

Fuckin' chia pubes, dog. Like she's getting a shoulder ride from Marge Simpson.

ROOSEVELT

I'm sure it isn't blue.

PENG

We're talking full-on ZZ Bottom.

ROOSEVELT

ZZ...? I don't even understand --

PENG

Like ZZ Top, but on the bottom.

ROOSEVELT

OK, I very much doubt!...

(controlling himself)

I very much doubt she has a four-foot beard between her legs, and even if she does, that's her right, as an American, and hey maybe it's not the most appropriate topic of discussion for a public bus.

(beat, can't let it go)

By which I mean the lack of privacy, not the fact it's funded by taxpayers, although I'd be curious to know what kind of municipal codes are on the books about that.

He stares ahead, avoiding his friend's eyes. Peng studies him. After a long beat, Peng leans in, sotto:

PENG

Yo, are you sprung?

ROOSEVELT

Goodbye!

He bolts up and staggers to the front of the still-moving bus.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATE MORNING

Wren slouches at her desk, sullen, while her CLASSMATES goof off. She SCRIBBLES in her notebook.

WREN (V.O.)

Unintended Consequences of Flunking American Lit.

In the background, the TEACHER hands back papers. We can only see his mid-section – Wren's desk-eye view.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*At a loss when Twitter chat turns
 to Melville.*

A GIRL two rows over picks gum out of her hair.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Ineligible for student body president.
 So much for new mascot, Black Jesus.*

She connects eyes with April, who, lined up with the teacher behind her, mimes giving him a BJ. Wren shakes her head.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Thanks to Mom the middle-aged
 skank, parent-teacher conference
 leads to parent-teacher dinner,
 parent-teacher nightcap, and the
 inevitable, intolerable...*

THWACK. Wren's paper lands on her desk. Next to the large red "D" is a STAMP in a familiar style. It features a sad cartoon hobo, palms upturned, and the word "Oops!"

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...parent-teacher breakfast.

PAN UP to reveal Wren's teacher: **Keevin**. He's dressed up as a plumber. A very hot plumber. Keevin gives Wren a disappointed look she pointedly ignores. In the background, Roosevelt and Peng high-five over their papers.

ROOSEVELT/PENG
 Ace!

INT. POTTERY CLASS – AFTERNOON

Wren talks with her flavor-savered pottery teacher, MR. JAKE (32). He wears Carhartts and Birks, plays Sublime in class, and by the tempo of his speech, no doubt smoked his lunch. His "costume" is a pair of those Venetian-blind sunglasses from the 80s. It's the first time we've seen Wren without a scowl.

MR. JAKE
*NYU, sure, I can see you there. I
 used to date a girl who went to NYU.
 She even wore black to the beach.*

WREN

Plus I'm a legacy. Private schools love that crap. They gotta help me out.

MR. JAKE

I think if you're applying for loans, they can assume you're not that kind of legacy. I don't suppose your dad ever endowed a music building?

WREN

No, but the day after Lennon was shot, he and his band broke onto the roof and played Beatles covers until the cops showed up. They thought they were effed, but the cops just came up to request "Let It Be."

Mr. Jake SNAPS his fingers in groovy approval.

Students turn in projects for firing on their way out. A nebbishy TWERP furtively hands in a small clay TURTLE that is actually a badly disguised PIPE.

MR. JAKE

Hold up, Kornblatt.

The twerp stops, busted. He's dressed as what looks like a Jewish Ice Cube, with a thick dookie rope and a pick stuck in his light brown fro. Mr. Jake drapes an arm over his neck.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)

First off, turtles don't have eyebrows. Second, think about your bowl placement, man. No one wants to toke off a turtle's ass.

He holds the pipe aloft for the class.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)

Ladies and bros, let me remind you this is a pottery class, not a bong factory. So please... not so obvious?

Around the room, everyone quickly re-works their pieces.

WREN

My mom says I'm just running away, that you can't escape something that's inside of you. But I'm like, I can escape you always saying that kind of crap.

MR. JAKE
There's always Foothill.

WREN
Junior college? I'd rather eat a turd. Honestly, serve it up piping hot, because you won't catch me within a mile of that tard farm.

MR. JAKE
We could carpool.

WREN
I mean, it's an option.

MR. JAKE
Charlene's dogging me to take the LSAT, make something of myself. But like, there's more to life than just what you accomplish. You know?

Wren nods, savoring this kernel of profundity. Right then, they're joined by AARON RILEY (18). He's waifish, pouty, dressed all in tight black, and wears a BACKPACK SHAPED LIKE KERMIT RIDING PIGGYBACK. Behind him hovers his EMO ENTOURAGE.

AARON
Moving speech, Mr. Jake. Hey Wren.

WREN
Hey, Aaron.

She lowers her eyes, suddenly shy.

AARON
I heart your jacket. Did anyone die wearing it?

WREN
I don't think so.

AARON
Too bad. Did you know that the human brain remains conscious for up to a week after you die?

MR. JAKE
Where did you hear that?

AARON
Mr. Fineman's class.

WREN
Doesn't Fineman teach gym?

Aaron SLAPS OUT A RIFF on an imaginary bass guitar, SINGING along with his eyes fluttering shut, as if possessed. It's strange.

AARON
(singing)
Daka-dop-dow ba-dow.

WREN
Are you OK?

AARON
I'm writing a power ballad about you. It's called Mystery Meat.

WREN
Thank... you?

AARON
I only have the intro, but it's fucking sweet. Maybe I'll play it for you tonight. You're coming to my party, right?

WREN
Well, I have to babysit --

AARON
(slapping his "bass" and singing)
Shaka-kow, I say, gypsy lady in a dead man's coat, sha-bow.

WREN
I'll try to make it.

AARON
And I won't play another note until you do.

He holds his imaginary guitar out in front of him, then "DROPS" it and walks off like a rockstar off stage. Mr. Jake grins at Wren. She blushes and PUNCHES him hard in the arm.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - AFTERNOON

Albert stands motionless at the baseline. He wears a thick headband and uses both hands to hold up an enormous racquet.

Every few seconds, a ball is lobbed at him from a machine on the other side. He barely moves, except to dodge them.

With each passing ball, the aviator-wearing COACH working the machine calls out half-heartedly. It's all very subdued.

COACH

Swing.

Another ball passes.

COACH (CONT'D)

Swing.

And another.

COACH (CONT'D)

Swing.

Albert moves just enough to deflect a ball away from his leg.

COACH (CONT'D)

C'mon, buddy. Swing the racquet.

Another ball passes.

COACH (CONT'D)

Albert?

And another.

COACH (CONT'D)

Swing the fucking racquet.

CUT TO LATER:

His gear all packed up, the coach joins Albert on his side. Albert hasn't moved. The coach looks past him, stretches.

COACH (CONT'D)

Tell you what, champ. I got a lady-friend coming in on the four o'clock bus, so I'm gonna let you work on that serve. Your mom give you the cash?

Albert checks his watch. Still 20 minutes to go. The coach gets his meaning. He rolls his eyes, sighing.

COACH (CONT'D)

Alright, what do you want?

EXT. ASIAN CONVENIENCE STORE NEAR COURT - MOMENTS LATER

The coach emerges from the store with a black plastic bag, checks to see no one's watching, and hands it to Albert.

Grinning, Albert pulls out a stack of MAGAZINES featuring overweight women and titles like "Big'un," "Assman," "Yolanda."

COACH
Little young to start hoggin'.

Albert reaches into the bottom of the bag and comes up with fistful of FIREWORKS. The coach eyes him, wary.

COACH (CONT'D)
You planning some kind of bank heist?

Albert finishes counting his loot and holds out his hand. The coach rolls his eyes and pulls out Albert's change.

INT. HALLOWEEN SUPERSTORE - LATER

It's one of those gaudy shops that pops up in a vacant strip mall every year, then vanishes like a fart in the wind.

Wren and Albert wander through the racks of costumes. She talks under her breath, as MOTHERS shoot her dirty looks.

WREN
Aquaman is not a... fag. His battles just always end up looking like a synchronized swimming routine.

They pass under a shoddy rubber skeleton on a meat hook.

WREN (CONT'D)
Where do these places come from every year? Is there a Public Storage locker somewhere full of headless butlers?

She offers up a Yosemite Sam mask, which Albert refuses.

WREN (CONT'D)
You should be thankful Mom's even buying you a costume. When I was your age, I cut eyeholes in a trash bag and went as a trash bag.
(then)
Here we go.

She grabs a Spider-Man costume - just as Albert grabs a package of his own. It features a ragged prosthetic stump and a pump with fake blood. The label says, simply, "TORN-OFF ARM."

WREN (CONT'D)
That's not a costume, Albert, that's a visit from Social Services.

Albert clutches the package, insistent.

WREN (CONT'D)
Come on, you love Spider-Man. He
looks like a Mexican wrestler.

Off Albert considering this new information, intrigued...

DING-DONG.

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF SUBURBAN HOUSE - DUSK

It's a compromise: Albert is SPIDER-MAN WITH A TORN-OFF ARM. He waits beside Wren at a front door decorated with a sad old rubber spider. In Albert's free hand is a plastic trick-or-treat container shaped like a pumpkin.

April opens the door in whiskers, ears and a tight leotard.

WREN
Sexy kitty again?

APRIL
Last year I was a sexy mouse. What
are you, a homeless prom queen?

Wren is dressed in a dowdy old gown and tiara, with a bouquet of flowers. Over the dress, of course, is her army jacket.

WREN
I'm Carrie.
(crickets)
Sissy Spacek? Stephen King? A
tormented girl uses her telekinetic
power to kill everyone she hates?
(crickets)
Yes, I'm a homeless prom queen.

Albert steps up and proudly spurts blood from his stump.

APRIL
OK that is disturbing. Have you given
more thought to my roofie idea?

WREN
Don't worry, we'll just take him
for a quick lap down Mariposa, then
put him to bed and head back out.
Long as I'm back before my mom, she
never has to know.

EXT. NICE HOUSE - EVENING

Joy and Keevin walk up the path of a fancy Spanish colonial. He's in his hot plumber outfit and she's a CATHOLIC SCHOOLGIRL.

They ring the bell. Joy looks around, impressed.

JOY

Brueder owns this place?

KEEVIN

Yeah right! This is his folks' house.

The door opens and they're greeted by a COUPLE not much older than Joy. Mid-50s tops. They seem slightly put out.

MR. BRUEDER

Hi Keevin. The kids are in the basement.

Music and whooping emanate from the distance. He stands aside to let them pass.

JOY

Hi, I'm Joy.

She smiles and offers her hand. He shakes it limply.

MR. BRUEDER

Mr. Brueder.

EXT. MARIPOSA STREET - EVENING

Something here is different. The mood is warmer, more cheerful, instantly nostalgic. It's the Halloween you remember, but never really knew - a collage of a million collective memories, moments, sounds, all thrown together and bathed in the flickering orange light of 10,000 jack-o'-lanterns.

Mariposa is that street in every town that, as long as anyone can remember, has been the place to be on Halloween. It's PACKED: toddlers and teenagers, cool kids and nerds, neighbors who rarely speak drinking wine together in lawn chairs, watching the parade of tiny vampires, ballerinas and SpongeBobs shuffle past. For three solid blocks, reality is suspended in a kind of living dream.

Wren and April slouch down the middle of the street while Albert runs side missions for candy.

APRIL

This is huge, Wren. If you hump Aaron Riley, we'll be set for senior year. It's like being knighted. By his wang.

Nearby, an offended mother cups her child's ears.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Remember Cindy Damsky? She became like the number one or two girl on the bleachers at lunch. She had to have signing pages added to the back of her yearbook. And all she did was give Aaron an OTPHJ.

(off Wren's confused look)
Over-The-Pants Hand Job?

WREN

You make it sound so romantic.

APRIL

Please, this is politics. Sex with Aaron is our school's military service.

WREN

What's up with that place?

She points to a DARK HOUSE on the corner. It's the one place not giving out candy – a black hole in the swarm of activity.

APRIL

Guess they're not into Halloween.

INT. DARK HOUSE - SAME

A grizzled OLD MAN peers between the curtains at the parade of kids passing outside. He mutters in a low, menacing tone.

OLD MAN

Look at them out there. Little cockroaches, swarming every year like a plague. Is this a soup kitchen? Am I frigging Mother Teresa, condemned to feed the hordes of thankless shits, my only consolation the obesity that will one day suffocate their greedy hearts?

(then)

Don't touch that light!

His WIFE timidly backs away from a lamp. The old man peers back through the curtains, distant.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
They're drawn to the light. They
feed off it.

DING-DONG.

The old man goes rigid. Someone has dared to ring his bell.

EXT. DARK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's Albert, alone on the dark porch. Heavy footsteps approach inside, then suddenly the door is FLUNG open. The old man peers down at Albert with unconcealed contempt.

OLD MAN
What do you want?

Albert hoists his pumpkin pail.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Candy, eh? Something sweet? A bit of nougat, perhaps, drizzled with caramel and smothered in rich milk chocolate?

Albert nods emphatically.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Yes. Yes I'm sure you would.

He SLAMS the door in Albert's face. A moment later, he's back.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Here's a used stamp.

He drops the stamp in Albert's pumpkin and slams the door again. Albert stands motionless on the porch. The old man isn't coming back.

Albert looks around. Arranged around a fountain in the yard is a precious FAMILY OF GARDEN GNOMES. Coiled nearby is a hose.

ANGLE ON THE SIDE STREET:

Where a COP is just parking. He spots Albert.

COP
Hey!

ANGLE ON THE HOUSE:

Albert sees the cop coming and bolts. Hearing the commotion, the old man storms back out. He looks up and stops, trembling.

Swinging from the porch light by a GARDEN HOSE NOOSE is his favorite gnome.

The old man's SCREAM can be heard for miles, as...

EXT. MARIPOSA STREET - CONTINUOUS

...the cop chases Albert through the crowd, passing Roosevelt and Peng as they come out of a HAUNTED HOUSE. We stick with them. Peng wears his dusted wig and women's pea coat, Roosevelt is in his safari get-up. They're twice the age and height of anyone else coming out of the house - and positively giddy.

ROOSEVELT

And the old lady?! With the cat?!

PENG

The cat! Was that thing real or what?!

ROOSEVELT

I don't know I...

(suddenly self-conscious)

...didn't get a good... Hey Wren.

Rounding the corner of the house, they bump right into Wren and April.

WREN

Have you seen my little brother?

ROOSEVELT

Me? Where? In there? Why would you think I was...? No.

APRIL

(to Peng)

What the hell are you?

PENG

I'm Aaron Burr, fool. Dude who shot Alexander Hamilton. Check it: period gat.

Tucked in his belt is an antique FLINTLOCK PISTOL.

ROOSEVELT

Peng's dad collects revolutionary antiques. They eat dinner on pewter.

PENG

Big pimpin', y'all.

WREN
(to Roosevelt)
What are you?

ROOSEVELT
I'm E.O. Wilson.
(crickets)
The naturalist?
(crickets)
He's only, like, one of the pillars
of evolutionary biology. A modern
Charles Darwin, but with this whole
social-constructionist... bent...

He trails off, their perplexed stares like a black hole.

APRIL
I'm gonna go find Albert.

She disappears into the crowd. The others stand in awkward
silence a while. Finally Roosevelt works up his nerve.

ROOSEVELT
I think it's really cool that you
don't feel the need to dress sexy
on Halloween like other girls.

It just hangs there in the air. Peng smacks him.

WREN
Thank you, Roosevelt.

April reappears with Albert in tow.

APRIL
Let's get this over with.

She charges past into the haunted house and Wren follows. They
disappear inside just as the COP emerges from the crowd.

INT. HAUNTED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

It's a Glad Bag and cotton cobweb sarcophagus. A mannequin in
a housecoat rocks in a rickety chair beneath rubber bats hung
from strings. A tinny tape cackles and moans in the distance.

Albert SCAMPERS AHEAD while Wren and April stroll along,
taking care to show their non-fear.

WREN
Where'd you find him?

APRIL

Carving a cock and balls into
someone's jack-o-lantern. Judging
from the detail it wasn't his first.

WREN

He does it every year. I guess it's
like Monet and his water lilies.

Suddenly, a TOWERING FIGURE in a hooded cloak and carrying an axe lurches into the tunnel, blocking their way. He growls.

TOWERING FIGURE

Go no further if you don't want your
brains splattered about the room.

APRIL

Hey, Mr. Combs.

He pulls back his hood.

MR. COMBS

Feck it, is it that obvious?

WREN

A little too articulate. Americans
like their psychopaths semi-
retarded. How's it going?

MR. COMBS

Eh, alright. Some kid freaked out and
shat his Wolverine costume. His mum
said she's sending me the bill. I
told her, take the money and buy the
little twat some karate lessons.

He lights a CIGARETTE. April bums one and they both stand
their smoking in the trash bag tunnel.

APRIL

You hear about Wren and Aaron?

WREN

April!

MR. COMBS

Course I did. Been needling me all
night. Now Karen, heaven knows
there's no force of nature more
powerful than peer pressure, and you
wouldn't be the first young lady
tempted to trade her virtue for
friends.

(MORE)

MR. COMBS (CONT'D)
But you listen here: if that Riley boy starts sniffing around the back door, you bury a foot in his privates. Everybody loves a Cinderella story, but a real princess keeps the party up front.

APRIL
We'll have to agree to disagree on that point, Mr. Combs.

WREN
Well! I have officially been haunted. April, I think we've done our time.
(calling out)
Albert!

She takes off and April follows. Mr. Combs looks down to see two little WEREWOLVES (10) staring up at him, wide-eyed. He takes another drag off his cigarette.

MR. COMBS
Be right with you, lads.

CUT TO WREN AND APRIL:

They hustle through the rest of the house, passing more lame paper-mâché zombies and talking skulls.

WREN
(calling out)
Quitting time, Albert. Let's go!

They reach the end of the house and come out into the BACKYARD. There are a couple miniature Gandalfs, but no Spider-Man.

APRIL
You really should consider one of those electric dog collars.

WREN
He must still be inside. Wait here.

She storms back into the haunted house, her jaw clenched in irritation.

WREN (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Let's go, Albert! You can sit inside a garbage bag at home.

She passes back by Mr. Combs, who's now teaching the little werewolves to SMOKE. They both cough.

MR. COMBS

Easy, now. It's just like drinking
a milkshake.

Wren finally finds Spider-Man in the cardboard graveyard,
petting a TAXIDERMIED CAT. She drags him off by the wrist.

WREN

I want to thank you, Albert. If it
weren't for you always doing shit
like petting a dead cat, I might
never have gone to college.

Spider-Man struggles.

SPIDER-MAN

You're not my mommy.

Wren stops. Did he just talk? She takes a closer look at him,
and only then does she notice the saggy pajama bottoms, the
fuzzy slippers. The two arms.

Wren kneels and pulls up his mask.

This Spider-Man is a SPIDER-GIRL. Not to mention, black.

SPIDER-GIRL

Bitch.

Wren takes off through the house, back toward the front. A
growing sense of dread comes over her. She walks faster and
faster, back through the butcher paper cave, the hall with the
green glowing eyes. No Albert.

In her panic, the haunted house seems TRANSFORMED. That lame
fake crow suddenly looks menacing, that chattering plastic
skull, mocking. The cackling tape echoes louder and louder in
her head. Little kids seem to point and laugh. Her world spins.

Wren backs into a witch with a mop for hair. Shrieking violins!
She flails, getting tangled in a cotton web. The trash bag
ceiling is falling in on her. The fake smoke is choking her.

EXT. HAUNTED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wren bursts out into the night, a lumbering cotton, plastic
spider and Glad Bag mummy. Children SCREAM.

She tears the crap from her face and scans the street. It's
still packed, a living Where's Waldo of costumed kids - with
no fewer than 20 SPIDER-MEN in immediate sight.

Wren runs around YANKING UP SPIDER-MASKS. Kids cry, parents curse. There are freckly Spider-Men - tall, fat, Indian, toothless. One is 40 years old with a mustache.

But no Albert.

Wren reaches the end of Mariposa, where traffic barriers mark the boundary of Official Halloween. Beyond, the crowd thins and the houses are dark. Even the lawns look less green. It's as if there were an invisible curtain separating the warm, happy dream world from cold, hard reality.

Wren peers into the drab darkness. Suddenly it's deathly quiet. Her shoulders slump.

WREN

Albert?

He's gone.

INT. BRUEDER'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - EVENING

Keevin leads Joy through a packed PARTY. There isn't a soul over 30, and some of the girls look just out of college. Most follow the April school of costume design, minus a few years' inhibition. Black bustier + gavel = Judge. White camisole + spatula = Chef. Seeing them, Joy hikes up her plaid skirt.

Out of nowhere, a beefy, red-faced CAVEMAN tackles Keevin to the ground. Joy stands by smiling awkwardly as they wrestle.

CAVEMAN

Say it! Say it!

KEEVIN

(struggling, then relenting)
You've got guns of steel, balls of
brass! I bow before the altar of
your manhood!

The caveman lets up and they come up laughing and hugging.

KEEVIN (CONT'D)

Joy, say hello to my brother by
another mother, Nate Brueder.

Suddenly Brueder, the caveman, is a fawning gentleman. He takes Joy's hand and kisses it.

BRUEDER

At long last we meet. The lovely
Candice.

KEEVIN
(cautioning)
Brue...

JOY
Actually, my name is J--

Right then, another big dude in a BLUES BROTHERS costume joins the group. He wraps a big arm around Keevin's neck.

BLUES BROTHER
Is it true? She's here?

He sees Joy and stops.

BLUES BROTHER (CONT'D)
Oh, Keevin, you found her. You
finally found her...
(dropping to one knee)
Candice.

KEEVIN
Fellas, come on.

JOY
Keevin?

She looks to him for an explanation.

KEEVIN
I used to... the guys seem to think...

BLUES BROTHER
Whoa, think? We saw it with our own
eyes, bro. And we almost went blind.

KEEVIN
Hey Joy, how about a Cosmo?

He tries to drag her away, but Brueder steps in. He's giddy.

BRUEDER
See, back in high school, young
Keevin was a model student. Honor
Roll, Dean's List. And disciplined.
The rest of us'd be out chugging
Olde E from sundown and he'd never
show his face a minute before 10:30.
Even Friday night. 10:30.

BLUES BROTHER

But the night we won State, best fucking lax team in the entire state!, and Keevin goes home to read Faulkner or some shit, we said enough is enough, and went to roust him out of his nerd cave.

BRUEDER

The whole team, all 25 of us, start ringing his doorbell. No one answers, so we go around back. Keevin's room had a big sliding door, and we were gonna break it down and haul his ass out if we had to. Well as we're getting closer, we hear a voice, a woman, and we're all, that little bitch!, he's got a secret girl!

BLUES BROTHER

So we sneak up, thinking maybe we'll catch a little showtime, right? Wittaker even had his camera. We all lean in, crawling over each other to see, trying not to bust up, but it's dark in there, just the glow of the TV going in and out, then suddenly it lights the place up and we see.

Brueder puts an arm around Keevin, who covers his eyes.

BRUEDER

Our star middie, alone on the bed, with a big jug of Lubriderm.

JOY

You mean he was...

BLUES BROTHER

(miming it)

Practicing his stick work.

JOY

So... you caught a teenage boy masturbating. I'd be more surprised if you hadn't.

BLUES BROTHER

Nah, it's not what he was doing. It's what he was doing it to.

BRUEDER

We'd figured 10:30 was his dad's rule, a real hard-ass, but turns out that's just when Keevin was finished, ahem, enjoying his favorite show.

JOY

What, Baywatch? Charlie's Angels, what?

Keevin shrugs, sheepish, and finally looks her in the eye.

KEEVIN

Murphy Brown.

The guys go nuts, jumping on him and laughing. He play-fights back and soon they're on the floor wrestling again.

Joy just stares off.

JOY

Candice Bergen?

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

Wren and April are in a deserted park. Wren is frantic. She checks under the jungle gym, inside the crawl tunnel. April loiters nearby, not helping.

WREN

That little fucker. He does whatever the hell he wants and leaves me to scoop up his crap.

APRIL

This is why from an early age I urged my mother not to have another kid. You never know what's gonna pop out of there the next time.

WREN

This is bad, April. Really, really bad.

APRIL

You are so glass half empty. Now you're free to go hump Aaron.

WREN

I can't think about that right now! I just lost my little brother.

APRIL

Come on, what's the worst that could happen to him?

Wren looks at her like, do I have to say it?

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hey, take it from someone who was almost kidnapped and/or groped five separate times growing up: the kid ain't got it.

WREN

What are you, a pedophile talent scout?

APRIL

I'm just saying. These freaks are out there looking for a blank canvas. For soft, moldable clay. Trying to corrupt Albert is like farting on a skunk.

WREN

It's not Albert I'm worried about. I was supposed to be all responsible tonight, remember? My mom finds out I fucking lost my little brother, there's no way in hell she'll sign my loans.

APRIL

Relax, she's not gonna find out. We'll ask around. I'm sure someone's seen him.

BUZZ-BUZZ.

EXT. SHADY HOUSE - NIGHT

A decidedly grungier part of town. Streetlights are out, weeds grow up through the sidewalk. Where there is a sidewalk.

The porch light comes on and the screen-less screen door swings open to reveal a tall SCHLUB in a too-small bathrobe. He's 25, with a bewildered look on his pasty face. If he's been out of the house in the last week, it was only to score more bud.

It takes him a full ten seconds to notice the four-foot Spider-Man on his doorstep. Albert gives a squirt from his stump.

SCHLUB

Whoa. Wounded in battle?

Albert nods. Yep.

SCHLUB (CONT'D)
Who was it, the Green Goblin or
that lunatic Doctor Octopus?

He asks like he means it, not humoring a child. Albert puts a finger to his mouth like a fang.

SCHLUB (CONT'D)
Venom?! Oh man, you must've been
freaking out!

Albert shrugs. No biggie.

SCHLUB (CONT'D)
Well you're a bigger man than me.
Anyway, it'll grow back soon.
That's one benefit of having
mutated arachnid DNA.

Albert holds up his pumpkin.

SCHLUB (CONT'D)
Of course, you need to feed. Hang on.

INT. SHADY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The schlub scours his place for treats. It's a dark, dank den. Third-hand furniture, carpet ground down by years of shuffling. All the shades are drawn, and the only light is the glow of the 70-INCH FLAT-SCREEN - a monument to stonerly sacrifice.

He searches his cabinets. There's a can of tuna, a flavor packet from a thing of Ramen and a jug of Country Time lemonade mix. A critter scurries to hide.

The schlub nearly grabs a brownie from a half-eaten tray, but reconsiders.

EXT. SHADY HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

The schlub reappears with a sack of C&H Sugar and pours it straight into Albert's pumpkin.

SCHLUB
Just main-line it, right?

Albert nods happily.

SCHLUB (CONT'D)
I'm Fuzzy, what's your name?

From inside the house comes a woman's SCREAM, followed by SHOUTING and GUNFIRE.

Albert peers into the dark room.

FUZZY
You play Aggravated Assault?

Albert jams his arm through his shredded stump and proudly displays two callused thumbs.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
Then come on in.

EXT. SHINGLE HOUSE - NIGHT

Wren and April talk to a MIDDLE-AGED MAN in a bulky cardigan at his front door. He eyes them with growing unease.

WREN
...He's about yay high, full-figured, outie belly button you can see right through a shirt. If you get real close his breath smells like those rail ties, like the pier.

APRIL
Creosote.

WREN
Yeah, creosote. Also, he's dressed like Spider-Man with a torn-off arm.

EXT. STUCCO HOUSE - NIGHT

Now they talk to an OLD WOMAN in curlers.

WREN
Sorry to wake you. We were wondering if --

OLD WOMAN
Wait right there.

WREN
Wait, ma'am, I just...

The woman disappears into the house. A moment later, she returns with a TRAY.

OLD WOMAN
Just one, please.

WREN
Actually, we're not here to trick or treat, we're...

Wren finally glances down at the tray. It's covered with MEAT.

WREN (CONT'D)
You're giving out pork chops?

EXT. BLUE HOUSE - NIGHT

Now they talk to a BLACK COUPLE (40s). Wren shows them a SCHOOL PHOTO of Albert in a sweater vest. His mischievous grin suggests he knows something the photographer doesn't.

WREN
This is before he got really into cheese. Imagine nine or ten extra pounds, mostly up here.

She motions to her chest. April turns to her, realizing.

APRIL
It's true, he does have little man-boobs.

WREN
No seriously, they're at least B-cups.

APRIL
Is your mom concerned?

WREN
She says we shouldn't shame him. But then he saw this movie on Cinemax and started trying to lick them.

APRIL
(like it's common)
Mmm.

BANG. The door slams shut. They stand there staring at it in silence a while.

APRIL (CONT'D)
So can he?

WREN
What?

APRIL
Lick them?

The porch light goes out.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

BUZZ. Now they wait at the front door of a familiar house. No one's answering.

APRIL

I think we should split up, cover more houses.

WREN

Let me guess - so you can go to the party?

APRIL

It's at a house.

She massages the arches of her calf-high boots, groaning.

APRIL (CONT'D)

These fuck-mes are fucking killing me.

WREN

I need your help, April. We need to find my brother.

APRIL

Then we need a car.

Wren hits the buzzer one more time. Nothing. She sighs.

WREN

Alright. Who do we know with a car?

They turn and head down the stairs.

INT. FUZZY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The familiar house is Fuzzy's. He and Albert are sprawled out in beanbags in front of the giant TV playing Aggravated Assault - a game that makes Grand Theft Auto look like Mario Kart.

Under ear-splitting gunfire and screeching tires, we hear the faint DOOR BUZZER, then the girls' footsteps disappearing down the stairs.

Fuzzy pulls off his World War I GAS MASK, the kind with two glass eyeholes. Where the filter should be is a giant BONG.

FUZZY

Did you hear something?

Albert ignores him, finishing off Fuzzy's character in a hail of bullets. Fuzzy convulses with the action, then falls limp.

He considers his tiny companion. Albert's got his Spider-mask pushed up over his forehead now.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
There's a lot of anger in those
little thumbs. Anything you want to
talk about?

Albert just stares at the TV, starts another game. His ON-SCREEN CHARACTER, a thick-necked black guy, announces himself.

ON-SCREEN CHARACTER
Motherfuckin' Ray-Ray. Let's roll.

Albert concentrates on the game, putting Ray-Ray behind the wheel of a big gold Lincoln.

FUZZY
I know how it is. I cage my rage,
too. That's what Philip says. I lock
it up where it can't be seen, but
also where it can't fly away.
(beat)
Philip is my therapist.

Albert rolls down a wide boulevard, scanning for victims.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
I had this girlfriend. Lara. Like
Lara Croft. She was blonde, though.
We used to have a lot of fun
together. Not like that. I mean,
also like that, but not because of
that, or also because of that, but
not only because of that. You know?
It was special.

Albert turns down a dark alley. Thugs huddle around a trash can fire.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
I guess she didn't see it that way,
because she started banging the
lead singer of this death-ska band.
Guy named Barf. His entire left arm
is a tattoo of Joey Ramone made out
of flames. I couldn't compete with
that, so I let her go.

He hangs his shoulders, glum.

In the game, Albert steers right into the front window of a barber shop, impaling the barber on his hood ornament and splattering his face across the windshield like a melon.

RAY-RAY (O.S.)
Yeah, ain't nothin' sweeter than
motherfuckin' payback, 'cept sweet-
ass pussy.

Fuzzy looks up, a light in his eye.

FUZZY
I hear what you're saying, Ray-Ray.
You're saying, grief is like an old
blanket, familiar and safe, but also
the reason you spend Saturday nights
on the couch watching Animal Planet.
You can hide under it, or you can
fold it up, put it back in the linen
closet and face down your sadness.

Albert hits a button on his controller.

RAY-RAY (O.S.)
Whatchoo waitin' on, then? Make a
move, cracker!

Fuzzy struggles out of the beanbag as dramatically as he can. He puffs up his chest and ties his too-small bathrobe like a samurai.

FUZZY
Yes. The time has come to uncage
the rage.

...immediately following one more hit off the gas mask bong.

EXT. MODEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. Jake opens the door to find Wren on his doorstep. He seems preoccupied, stressed, but smiles to see her.

MR. JAKE
Wren? What are you doing here?

He tempers his voice and comes outside, closing the door behind him. When he sees April, he double-takes.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)
April, hey...

APRIL
Hi, Mr. Jake. Do you like my costume?

She bats her eyes and gives a vampish twirl. Mr. Jake looks her up and down. His eyes linger just a little too long.

MR. JAKE
Sure, you're a cat?

APRIL
A cat in heat.

For a moment, Wren feels invisible. They're interrupted by a haggard WOMAN'S VOICE calling from inside.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Jake?

MR. JAKE
Just a second, babe.
(then to girls, grim)
Sorry, we're passing the talking stick.

He's actually holding a STICK. It's apparently not going well.

WREN
I'm sorry to barge in, Mr. Jake, but
I didn't know who else to turn to.
We kind of... misplaced my brother.

APRIL
He might have run away, but we
can't start celebrating just yet.

MR. JAKE
So you need to find him before your
mom finds out.

WREN
(relieved he gets it)
Yes! This would be the nail in my
coffin. Just when I'm almost free.

APRIL
It's like getting caught with a
shiv up your butt the day before
you're up for parole.

MR. JAKE
What can I do?

WREN
Drive us around? He's probably just
up on 3rd, or maybe Elmwood. I don't
know. He's quick for a fat dwarf.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Jake? Who's out there?

MR. JAKE
(calling back)
That's a lot of talking for someone
not holding the talking stick!

He sighs and takes Wren aside, giving April an imploring look.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)
Sorry April, could we...?

April backs away, offended.

APRIL
Oh sure, just talk about me while
I'm right here.

Mr. Jake stands close to Wren and talks under his breath.

MR. JAKE
Charlene found your note.

WREN
What note?

MR. JAKE
You know, "Racehorse Names I Could
Have Sworn Were Sex Moves"? Spanish
Chestnut, Seabiscuit... I guess that
would be like a Hot Lunch on a boat.

WREN
That wasn't a note, that was a
list. And it wasn't intended for
public consumption.

MR. JAKE
In any case, Char wasn't amused.
It's not just the sex stuff. She
really loves horses.

Right then CHARLENE (34) flings open the door. She's thin and blonde, with pretty but harsh features. Dark bags circle her eyes. She takes in the scene in disapproving silence.

She maintains that silence until she's marched up to Jake and YANKED the stick out of his hand.

CHARLENE

If you're not back inside by the time
my cocoa's finished microwaving, you
can make up the cot in the garage.

She stomps back inside, calling out a moment later.

CHARLENE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
56 seconds!

Mr. Jake gives Wren a resigned look.

MR. JAKE
I'm sorry, family bullshit of my own.
Call me if you really get stuck.

He heads inside, but stops in the doorway.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)
By the way, Wren, awesome Carrie
costume.

Wren smiles. Someone finally got it.

Mr. Jake goes inside and shuts the door. They're on their own.

EXT. FUZZY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Albert waits on the passenger side of a big blue SUBURBAN as Fuzzy struggles to steer his key into the driver-side door. He shuts one eye to focus and circles the keyhole.

Finally he gets it and jams it in, but the key sticks halfway. Fuzzy looks up at the giant blue truck, blinks.

FUZZY
Oops.

He yanks the key out.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
Wrong car.

INT. FUZZY'S DATSUN - MOMENTS LATER

Now Fuzzy is folded into the driver's seat of his TINY WHITE DATSUN, Albert at his side. Marshalling all his concentration, Fuzzy pulls slowly out of his parking space.

Suddenly, he SLAMS on the brakes and leans on his horn. He YELLS out the window.

FUZZY
 Slow down, asshole!
 (then, to Albert)
 Can you believe that guy?

The street is empty.

EXT. MARIPOSA STREET - NIGHT

Wren and April trudge back to Mariposa. It's deserted now – the magical glow from before is gone. All but a couple houses are dark, their jack-o'-lanterns snuffed out, their motion-sensor skeletons turned off. Candy wrappers litter the grass.

APRIL
 I saw chub, Wren. Mr. Jake had a
 full-on pajama gopher.

WREN
 You are so full of yourself. Mr.
 Jake isn't like that.

APRIL
 Hey, I know wang when I see it.
 It's one of my talents.

WREN
 Whatever, I have more to worry about.

Wren hurries on, clearly bothered. April stops altogether.

APRIL
 Alright, I wasn't gonna bring this
 up, but it's reached crisis stage:
 I Naired my butt this afternoon and
 now it's chafing something fierce.
 Time to call the police.

WREN
 No way. The first thing they'll do
 is call my mom.
 (then)
 Hey maybe could your mom drive us?
 I mean, if she's...

APRIL
 Upright? She was six tallboys deep
 when I left the house. Has your mom
 ever burped your curfew? It's not
 as awesome as you might think.

Across the street, two people walk along in heated discussion.
 It's Roosevelt and Peng.

ROOSEVELT

It wasn't just NAFTA, but a WTO resolution that endorsed a transcontinental corridor. We can't forget that in our cross-ex.

PENG

Chill, Ro. It's Westlake. Remember last year when that fool Jared Koch was all, "State guardianship statutes supersede a minor's right to self-determination"? Honky please!

By the time April realizes what's happening, it's too late. Wren darts across the street, a smile plastered on her face.

WREN

Roosevelt! Peng! Hey guys, what's going on?

They freeze. Is she talking to a different Roosevelt and Peng?

ROOSEVELT

We were just... going over our strategy for tomorrow's match.

WREN

Fencing?

ROOSEVELT

Debate.

PENG

First junior co-captains in school history.

They share a completely serious high-five.

WREN

Wow. I mean. Wow.

APRIL

Um, Wren?

WREN

So how do you get to the big match? Is there like a team bus?

ROOSEVELT

I drive my car. Well not my, car, but, mine, when I... have permission.

WREN

I thought I saw you rolling a vintage wagon last week at school.

PENG

Roosevelt was actually born in the back seat of that Volvo because his mom has an abnormally spacious pelvis.

Roosevelt shoots him a "what the fuck?"

APRIL

Hey Wren, I just remembered, we have bikes --

WREN

So could you get permission tonight?

ROOSEVELT

Tonight? What's... You want me to drive, the car, that I drive, with you... in it?

PENG

Yo, Ro, we gotta be on the road by 7:20. 7:10 if you want to stop for bagels.

Roosevelt is torn. Peng is right, but Wren... Wren is Wren.

ROOSEVELT

The thing is, I haven't completed my trust window.

APRIL

Your "trust window"?

ROOSEVELT

It's like a second learner's permit, but between me and my moms. For six months I can't drive with anyone outside my immediate academic and/or social circles.

Wren takes a step closer, looks at him with puppy-dog eyes.

WREN

But... we're friends.

She reaches out and very simply, very gently, TOUCHES HIS ARM.

Roosevelt stares at her hand in awe – like a bald eagle just swooped out of the sky and perched there.

April catches Wren's eye and shoots laser beams of disgust.
Peng catches Roosevelt's eye and mimes an exploding crotch.
And Roosevelt just keeps staring at that hand.

INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wren, April, Roosevelt and Peng enter the stained-glass foyer of Roosevelt's dark craftsman house. They follow his lead and remove their shoes, trading them for Japanese slippers.

ROOSEVELT
Is anyone here wearing perfume?
Scented lotion? Deodorant?

April raises her hand, confused.

APRIL
Spring Rain Speed Stick?

This seems to cause Roosevelt a degree of stress.

ROOSEVELT
OK. Just try to keep your arms down.
Fragrances set off Tolstoy's asthma.

PENG
(off April's baffled look)
The cat.

WREN
So what's the plan? We're debate
team cheerleaders or something?

ROOSEVELT
It's OK. You're my friend and you lost
your brother. I never lie to my moms.

They follow him down a hallway lined with Georgia O'Keefe paintings and antique pioneer quilts.

Prominently displayed over a Thomas Moser bureau is a large framed photograph of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.

WREN
Wow, you're really named after
Franklin Roosevelt?

ROOSEVELT
Eleanor, actually.

They round the corner and enter a dark, wood-paneled den lined with floor-to-ceiling books. Seated by the fire, their backs to the group, are TWO WOMEN engrossed in a lively BAROQUE DUET, which they play expertly on bizarre ANTIQUE INSTRUMENTS.

The plumper of the two, BARB (late 40s), is dressed in corduroy overalls and wears her hair in a Ringo Starr bob.

JACKIE (50) is tall and wiry, in a calf-length denim dress and clogs. Chunky wooden beads hang around her neck.

Roosevelt waits for them to come to the piece's end, which they celebrate with an affectionate KISS.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Hey, Moms.

Wren and April share a look.

WREN

(sotto)

I thought he was just talking like Ludacris.

Roosevelt's moms beam at the sight of him. Both speak in mild, restrained tones, as if they lived in a library.

BARB

Roosevelt. I didn't expect you home until the Lehrer Report.

PENG

Hi, Mrs. Thibodeaux.

He says it once for both of them. Jackie admires his costume.

JACKIE

Peng, I see you've inherited your father's passion for early American iconography.

PENG

I wanted to go as Ray Lewis, but my mom started crying. She said Ray Lewis never gave his life so we could come here from Korea.

ROOSEVELT

Moms, this is Wren DeSantis and April...

He doesn't know her last name.

APRIL

Martin-Danzinger-Ross. The only thing
my mom loves more than men is hyphens.

ROOSEVELT

Wren wants to go to NYU.

JACKIE

How wonderful. That's where Barb
earned her third doctorate, in pre-
natal psychology.

BARB

I'm still in touch with the dean
through my heirloom bean club. If
you like, I could put in a word.

WREN

You would do that?

BARB

Anything for a friend of Roosevelt's.

Wren smiles guiltily.

ROOSEVELT

Speaking of. I'm not sure where I am
on chits, but could I borrow the --

JACKIE

(stopping him, finger in the air)
Tut tut. *Sethn ellhnikni gloessa.*

Roosevelt smiles at the others, bashful.

ROOSEVELT

Ancient Greek. It's just this...
fun thing we...

(launching into it with moms)

Tha nthela na daneistu to aytokinhto.

BARB

Giati?

They carry on in fluent Ancient Greek, at one point laughing
together at some remark. But gradually, the conversation
turns sour, and it's clear Barb and Jackie disapprove.

JACKIE

Ochi.

ROOSEVELT

Parakalu?

BARB/JACKIE
Ochi!

ROOSEVELT
As prochwrusoyme!

He turns and stomps out of the room. Wren, April and Peng look at each other: what the hell is going on? After a moment, Roosevelt reappears at the door.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
 I said let's go!

EXT. ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roosevelt stalks out of the house, trailed by the others.

WREN
 What happened?

ROOSEVELT
 It's my fault. I completely blanked on the Ancient Greek for seat belt.

WREN
 Well now what do we do?!

She plunks down on the curb, distressed. Roosevelt hangs his head; he let her down. After a long, apprehensive beat, he swallows hard - and pulls a set of CAR KEYS from his pocket.

ROOSEVELT
 We drive really, really carefully.

INT. FUZZY'S DATSUN - DRIVING - NIGHT

Fuzzy pulls the car to a bumpy stop in front of an apartment building. He nods to a light on the second floor.

FUZZY
 That's Lara's place up there. I know, because I used to have sex with her in it.

Albert wipes a booger on the window.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
 Maybe Barf is up there having sex with her right now. I bet he has really huge balls.

Fuzzy shudders, his imagination getting the best of him.

FUZZY (CONT'D)

Well I'll show them that even a guy with average-to-smallish-sized balls is capable of doing things which any objective observer would agree takes figuratively if not literally large balls.

He reaches into the back and grabs a bulk pack of toilet paper. Albert opens his door, but Fuzzy stops him.

FUZZY (CONT'D)

No, Ray-Ray. This is my war.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Fuzzy gets out. We now see the Datsun is parked in the MIDDLE OF THE LAWN. A good-sized rose bush is pinned under one wheel.

Fuzzy goes around to the back of the building, where he can't be seen from the street. One window is lit on the second floor. He starts hucking toilet rolls up at the roof, but it's a few stories high, and the rolls fall harmlessly back to earth.

INT. FUZZY'S DATSUN - CONTINUOUS

Albert waits patiently. He's added a few boogers to his collection on the window.

A SQUAD CAR stops outside on the street. The cop gets out and approaches the Datsun, stopping to radio in the license plate. When he turns, we get a better look at him.

It's the VERY SAME COP who chased Albert earlier.

Albert's eyes go wide. He ducks and scrambles into the back seat. Just as the cop comes around to the window, Albert squeezes through the armrest hole and INTO THE TRUNK.

EXT. BACK OF THE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The rest of Fuzzy's rolls lie soggy and useless on the grass. With one last dry roll, he rears back and heaves it with all his might.

The roll SMASHES through the lit window.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The roll comes to rest on a coffee table set with wine and candles. The trail of paper catches on FIRE.

EXT. BACK OF THE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The unmistakable dance of firelight flickers in the window above. Fuzzy freezes. He chants to himself.

FUZZY
Big balls, big balls, big balls...

He looks frantically around. What now?! Over by the wall is a garden hose. He turns on the water and tries to shoot it up at the window, but it's too high.

Beside the apartment is a large oak tree. Grasping the running hose between his teeth, Fuzzy starts climbing.

This is likely Fuzzy's first physical exertion in years, and under the best circumstances the climb would be a challenge. With the water splashing, his feet slipping, a pissed-off bird squawking, it's all but impossible. Halfway up, Fuzzy drops the hose, then skids painfully down the length of the trunk.

The window glows with the spreading fire. Fuzzy goes at it once more, clawing his way desperately up the tree. Finally, he makes it level with the window and points the hose. Still too far. With a gulp, he shimmies out onto a thin branch.

EXT. FRONT OF THE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The cop greets an arriving TOW TRUCK.

EXT. BACK OF THE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Dangling from the scrawny branch, Fuzzy aims the hose inside the apartment, soaking the crap out of a stereo, the couch, the rug, a cat. And finally, the fire.

Suddenly, a door inside the apartment opens. A MAN and WOMAN are giggling. Fuzzy readies the hose: he'll get them yet.

The couple prances out in bathrobes, and immediately Fuzzy knows something's wrong. They're both no less than 300 pounds, broad, meaty, long-haired - and SAMOAN.

SAMOAN MAN
What the fuck?

Right then, a BLONDE WOMAN leans out the window NEXT DOOR.

BLONDE WOMAN
Fuzzy?

FUZZY
Lara?

Just as Fuzzy realizes, he's YANKED inside the building by the giant Samoan.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Samoan body-slams Fuzzy on the floor, then raises a massive foot to stomp his face. Fuzzy's still got the hose, and he sprays the Samoan in the eyes just before rolling away.

The big Pacific Islander goes after him, up and over the couch, smashing lamps, throwing picture frames and speakers. Fuzzy has six near-death experiences in under a minute.

LADY SAMOAN
Kill him, Pula'alei, kill him!

There's a pounding at the door.

LARA (O.S.)
Let me at him, Mr. Mahani!

The Samoan's got Fuzzy cornered by the kitchen. He charges, his crazy Haka eyes bulging. Fuzzy sees the hose is wrapped around the table. At the last second, he pulls it taut and the big man trips, going down at his feet.

Fuzzy doesn't wait around. He runs to the front door, flings it open and runs right past Lara. She lands a few blows.

All three chase Fuzzy down the hallway, down the stairs, slapping him, throwing shoes, screaming filthy insults.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Fuzzy bursts out of the apartment, the blood-thirsty trio close on his heals. He rounds the corner to the front. And stops.

The Datsun is being TOWED AWAY. Fuzzy takes off after it. The Samoans are soon out of breath, but Lara is only more enraged.

LARA
That's my car, you fucking prick!

INT. FUZZY'S TRUNK - CONTINUOUS

Inside the Datsun's dark trunk, the voices fade into the distance... as Albert is towed away.

INT. BRUEDER'S BASEMENT REC ROOM - NIGHT

The party's picking up. The twentysomethings are slowly abandoning their martini and stock-talk pretensions for the whooping and beer sloshing of their bygone college years.

Joy's got a whorish NURSE trapped by the bathroom.

JOY

People tend to forget, before she ever became Murphy Brown, Candice Bergen was considered one hot mama. Carnal Knowledge? Starting Over? Even as that reporter in Gandhi she was pretty smoking. I bet Ben Kingsley was fighting back a woody inside those diaper pants the whole time.

The nurse sneers at her like her breath stinks.

NURSE

What's "Gandhi"?

Joy just pounds the rest of her drink.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - DRIVING - NIGHT

It's a not-so-classic, powder blue '92 wagon. Roosevelt drives exactly 25 mph down a quiet road, hands at 2 and 10. He checks his mirrors obsessively and signals a block before easing slowly through empty intersections.

Wren rides beside him, Peng and April in back. They sit in silence as Roosevelt lays down the law.

ROOSEVELT

Rule three, part B: only one passenger may speak at a time, and then at the volume of voice you might use at a dinner party.

PENG

Come on, Ro. Your moms don't even know we got the car, why do we got to follow their rules?

ROOSEVELT

Because one betrayal doesn't excuse another. And I didn't call on you to talk.

WREN

Can we put on music?

ROOSEVELT

Yeah, OK. Just no louder than 14.

Wren beeps through the CD changer.

WREN

These are all books on tape.

ROOSEVELT

That recording of An Inconvenient
Truth is really good. It's actually
Al Gore reading.

Wren keeps beeping. In the back seat, Peng sidles up to April.

PENG

Check it: in addition to an IQ over
140, you might be interested to know
my hips and knees are hypermobile,
AKA double-jointed. I don't have to
tell you what that means.

His ankle's already UP BY HIS EAR when April bolts forward.

APRIL

I got about 10 minutes left in me.
What's the plan?

Right then Wren's phone CHIRPS with a new TEXT MESSAGE. It's from her MOM:

"Bed time for Albert. NO MORE COFFEE! ;-p"

Wren gulps. She sits up with new resolve.

WREN

Let's go to Captain Chicken. He
lives for that stuff.

ROOSEVELT

Despite all the trans fat?

APRIL

I know a place we can ask 200
people if they've seen him.

WREN

We're not going to the party, April.

PENG

Pump it up, Ro, I can't hear shit.

Joni Mitchell sings softly in the background. Peng reaches to turn it up, but Roosevelt swats his hand. The tension rises.

ROOSEVELT

Only the pilot touches the controls.

PENG
You let Wren touch it.

ROOSEVELT
She's the co-pilot. She can operate
the stereo and the dome light.

Peng isn't buying it. He tries again and a little nerd struggle breaks out. Roosevelt pins one hand, Peng goes in with another. He gets the volume way up, Roosevelt turns it way back down.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Stop messing, Peng!

PENG
Stop being a little bitch!

The stereo beeps and shuffles wildly. Peng latches onto the volume knob and Roosevelt tries to pry him off. Finally, with an elbow to his neck, he sends Peng flailing to the back seat.

Roosevelt turns back to the stereo. The volume knob is gone. And it's stuck on EXTREMELY LOUD. They SCREAM over it.

ROOSEVELT
Fantastic! You broke the stereo!

PENG
You collapsed my windpipe!

WREN
It's no big deal! Just put the knob
back on.

ROOSEVELT
Give me the knob, Peng.

PENG
I don't have the knob, Roosevelt.

He gets down on his knees to search the floor.

APRIL
Do not touch my leg.

PENG
Could you please turn on the dome
light, Miss Co-pilot?

A new CD starts. A booming ORCHESTRA. Tension in the car mounts with the ominous music.

WREN
Just turn it off!

ROOSEVELT
I can't without the knob!

APRIL
Find the knob!

PENG
Stop saying knob!

Outside, traffic converges into a crowded downtown area.

WREN
(with deep dread)
Whoa whoa, where are you going?

ROOSEVELT
You said Captain Chicken.

WREN
From a side street, not the strip!

APRIL
(tugging frantically at her door)
I want out! Let me out of this
fucking nerd ship!

ROOSEVELT
Rule 6C: child safety locks must --

WREN
Stop the car, Roosevelt!

ROOSEVELT
Where?!

They're in bumper-to-bumper traffic funneling into a narrow artery. Right then the deafening orchestra dies down, only to give way to the towering vibrato of ANDREA BOCELLI, just as...

EXT. 3RD STREET STRIP - CONTINUOUS

...the powder-blue Volvo enters the big downtown CRUISING SCENE: a 1 mph parade of pimped out Impalas, F-150s and Civics blasting Kanye, T.I. - all surrounded by hundreds of teens on foot, checking each other out, peeping rides, saying whatup.

Every single one of them stops and turns as Andrea Bocelli cuts through the night on a soaring HIGH NOTE. The Volvo has reached the point of no return - doomed to cruise the entire strip.

Wren, April and Peng all sink down mortified in their seats, leaving Roosevelt to bear the brunt of a thousand dumbstruck stares and snarky grins.

He tries to play it off, nodding his head to the "beat" of the opera and waving to some SNEERING GIRLS.

ROOSEVELT

You should hear him live.

INT. FUZZY'S TRUNK - NIGHT

Albert bounces around in the dark as the car rolls over something metal. Then brakes squeak and the motion stops. After a beat, he peeks cautiously through the armrest hole.

Through the dirty windshield, he can just make out the fat, grease-covered TOW TRUCK DRIVER as he hops out of his cab, finishes off a hip flask and tosses it aside with a crash.

The driver stumbles off and Albert emerges from the armrest hole. He's in some kind of junkyard IMPOUND LOT. Smashed cars are piled ten high beside old water heaters and rusting oil drums. Beyond the rotting machines is a bleak industrial zone.

A heavy gate SLAMS home. Albert peers through the window to see the driver slap a thick padlock on the high, barbed-wire fence.

Albert is trapped inside the impound lot.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - DRIVING - NIGHT

Bocelli has mercifully moved on, only to be replaced by window-rattling PERUVIAN PAN FLUTES. Teens come right up to the car to stare at the freaks. Cowering on the floor, April prays.

APRIL

Please, God, if I ever make it out of here, I swear I will never talk to another nerd again.

Right then, the Volvo **STALLS**. Everyone catches their breath. At least the MUSIC HAS STOPPED.

WREN

What's happening?

ROOSEVELT

(realizing)

Enallikth spasmena!

WREN

What?

ROOSEVELT

Broken alternator! They tried
telling me, but sometimes I mix up
my declensions --

HONK. Behind them, an enormous truck on raised shocks leans on its horn. Two MEATHEADS lean out the window.

MEATHEAD 1

Move your fucking shit, shitfuck!

WREN

They must be late for Mensa.

It's all more than April can take. She breaks down SOBBING.

APRIL

I just made it out of the lunch arbor. I was halfway across the quad. All I needed was one lesbian kiss at a party and I was on those bleachers, I was on them!

Peng sees his opening. He sticks his head out the window and screams at the truck.

PENG

What's up, bitches? Why don't you get out your honky-ass truck and have nibble on this fat yellow dick!

For a moment, there's perfect silence. No music. No horn. Not a breath from the crowd.

Then the truck doors open.

PENG (CONT'D)

Start the car, Roosevelt. Start it.
Start the car!

ROOSEVELT

I'm trying! Maybe you'd like to get out and push, Mandingo.

WREN

Crap, it's Mike Puglio. Didn't he graduate?

PENG

Mike Puglio?! I heard he ruptured this guy's spleen during a wrestling match and the kid had to go to prom with his mom so she could drain his colostomy bag.

ROOSEVELT

I heard he started taking steroids shaped like Flintstones vitamins in second grade and one day he killed the class bunny in a roid rage.

PENG

I heard the reason he's so screwed up is his mom is genetically a man like Jamie Lee Curtis and has a blind vagina.

Wren and Roosevelt stop.

WREN

What is a blind vagina?

PENG

You know, it like... just ends.

TAP TAP TAP. Mike Puglio, the meatier of the meatheads, raps Peng's window with his hairy knuckles. He's dressed as an American Gladiator and has veins where no human should.

Peng lowers his window a quarter inch.

PENG (CONT'D)

Yes?

MIKE PUGLIO

Out of the car, pimpledick.

PENG

Sorry, child safety locks.
(to Roosevelt)

Hey, here's an idea. How about you start the car?

WREN

Seriously, Roosevelt. Start the car.

ROOSEVELT

Wow. Thank you for the suggestion.

He's been turning the engine over and over, but it won't take.

Right then the other meathead, dressed as THE INCREDIBLE HULK, SLAMS his fists Hulk-style on the hood. The entire car shakes... then suddenly the stereo speakers ERUPT in PERUVIAN PAN FLUTES.

The car has started again.

WREN/PENG/APRIL
Holy shit, go! Go go go!

Roosevelt peels out, almost running the Hulk over in a cloud of smoke. The parade of cars has left them behind, and the street ahead is clear. The meatheads race back to their truck.

Roosevelt speeds down the street, Rule 2G be damned. They've only got a couple blocks before they hit the cruisers again. Just when they're running out of room, Roosevelt screeches onto a side street – and immediately SLAMS on his brakes.

The road is blocked by a GARBAGE TRUCK.

PENG
Jump it! Jump it!

Roosevelt looks frantically around. What now? Looming overhead is the giant, motorized CAPTAIN CHICKEN mascot, with its eye patch, ruffled shirt and wing-hands raising and lowering a tray of drumsticks (one wing is actually a hook).

ROOSEVELT
(nervously to himself)
Three-point turn, three-point turn.
One, check for oncoming --

WREN
Come on, Roosevelt!

He stomps on the gas and sends the Volvo lurching into the Captain Chicken drive-thru. Then he quickly turns off the car, SILENCING the pan flutes.

Everyone holds their breath as the meathead truck appears in the intersection, then passes right by, never seeing them behind the giant menu shaped like a ship.

The intercom CLUCKS and a thoroughly lifeless GIRL comes on.

GIRL (O.S.)
Welcome to Captain Chicken. What be
your...
(sigh, then half-assed pirate accent)
...arr-der?

WREN

Have any fat, one-armed Spider-Men
been through here?

EXT. IMPOUND LOT - NIGHT

A chubby Spider-leg steps out of the Datsun. Albert eases the door open, peers out. No one there. He darts for the shadows, following the sound of a TV to a small booth in the middle of the lot. He stands on tip-toes to peek through the window.

Inside the dingy shack, the tow truck driver hangs Fuzzy's keys from a peg board, digs a lint ball out of his ample crack, then mixes himself a Mountain Dew and Wild Turkey in a greasy mug. He kicks his work boots up in front of the TV.

On the small black-and-white screen is a Halloween classic: "CHRISTINE." A terrified man is being chased down an alley by a driverless car. The tow truck driver finds this hysterical.

Albert creeps away, weaving through mountains of junk to find the fence. It's 12 feet high, set in concrete and topped with razor wire. A bullet-riddled sign warns of 12,000 volts.

Albert works his way along the fence, looking for an opening. He TRIPS over a paint can.

INT. BOOTH - SAME

The tow truck driver wakes out of a drunken nap.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Fucking rats.

He grabs a crowbar and kicks the door open.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT - CONTINUOUS

The tow truck driver staggers around, listening for sounds.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
Here, ratty ratty. Got you some
nice cheese.

Something creaks and he swings wildly in the dark, SHATTERING a windshield. We see little Spider-feet under the car. Albert darts away.

The tow truck driver pursues the sounds, creaming the shit out of everything in his path. A fridge, a scooter, a Buick.

Suddenly, he stops. The sounds are gone. It's deathly quiet. Then, CREAK. He swivels in time to see the BOOTH DOOR MOVE.

The tow truck driver charges back to the booth, crowbar ready. He flings open the door.

INT. BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Nothing. The booth is empty.

Then he sees it: a KEY MISSING from the peg board. The tow truck driver grins wickedly, reaches behind the desk... and pulls out a very large SHOTGUN.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT - CONTINUOUS

CHK-CHK. The driver cocks his big gun and scans the lot. It's silent. He works his way along the fence, looking for breaches. He passes under a vapor lamp and stops. There's something at his feet. He bends to pick it up. It's a box of RAISINS.

Suddenly, he's bathed in the glare of TWO HEADLIGHTS. A big CADILLAC across the lot roars to life, lays down a patch and launches forward. It's headed right at him.

The tow truck driver raises his shotgun. His finger squeezes the trigger. But then, squinting into the glare, he sees it:

The Cadillac has no driver.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER
(utterly quaking)
C-C-Christine.

Urine trickles down his pant leg, filling his shoe. He trembles, unable to move.

At the last second, just as he's about to be mowed down, the Cadillac swerves and CRASHES THROUGH THE GATE.

As it passes, we see a small, Spider-gloved MIDDLE-FINGER held high in the window.

The big Cadillac carves a smoking arc in the street, side-swipes a couple cars, then races out of sight.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - NIGHT

The drive-thru girl, wearing glasses over an eye patch, looks on in dull bewilderment as Roosevelt and friends roll past the window blasting BOBBY MCFERRIN.

APRIL
That's it, I'm done. Dad? Unlock me.

Roosevelt reaches for the switch.

WREN

No!

ROOSEVELT

You're right, we should park first.

WREN

I need your help, April! You're my best friend!

APRIL

Which is why it's my duty to tell you you're one more world-music jam from total social suicide. Roosevelt?

WREN

Do not let her out!

The car behind them HONKS. April starts to climb out the window. Wren grabs at her ankles.

WREN (CONT'D)

Stop her, Peng!

Peng reaches for her feet.

APRIL

Let me go and I'll let you touch my boob for ten seconds.

PENG

Twenty.

APRIL

Done.

Peng kicks back, pleased.

WREN

Help me, Roosevelt!

ROOSEVELT

I'd really prefer if this could wait till we're in park!

April's halfway out of the window. Wren's got her by the cat tail. A chorus of HONKS blares from behind. Roosevelt pulls forward while simultaneously trying to calm everyone. He's turned all the way around when Peng suddenly screams.

PENG

Watch out!

Roosevelt SLAMS on the brakes just in time.

Right in their path, blocking the exit, is the MEATHEAD TRUCK.

MIKE PUGLIO
Thought you ditched us, didn't you,
asstits?

Roosevelt honks politely. Little toots. He tries to go around them, but they pull forward, revving their massive engine. He backs up and goes the other way, but they block him there, too.

A large CROWD gathers in the street.

Inside the Volvo, Bobby McFerrin's gone falsetto and everyone is yelling at once.

WREN/APRIL/PENG/ROOSEVELT
Just back up! / Go around, over
there! / Fuck this, just ram 'em! /
Dinner party! Dinner party!

They're off the pavement now and on the lawn in front of the restaurant. Inside, customers are pressed against the window. The Volvo's wheels spin out, pelting the building with turf.

Mike and the Hulk are having the time of their lives.

HULK
Fuck yeah! Suck it, doucheturds!

Finally, Wren spots an opening between two parked cars.

WREN
Right there! Go go go!

Roosevelt stomps on the gas. But in the confusion, he never got out of reverse...

EXT. CAPTAIN CHICKEN - CONTINUOUS

The Volvo shoots backward and **SLAMS** into the big metal pole supporting Captain Chicken. The back of the car crumples. Broken glass rains to the ground.

Then, silence. The crowd of hundreds stares in shock. Mike and the Hulk gape in delighted disbelief. Roosevelt slowly wilts.

The only sound in the still night is an eerie CREAK - like metal bending, growing higher and louder, until suddenly...

CRASH! Captain Chicken comes smashing down onto the Volvo.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

The Captain's hook PIERCES the roof between Roosevelt and Wren and the whole back CAVES IN. They react as you only could if a two-ton pirate bird landed on top of your car.

EXT. CAPTAIN CHICKEN - CONTINUOUS

The Captain comes to rest face down on the car, feet dangling off the back. His motorized wings, stuck in the roof, pull his whole torso up and back, up and back, up and back.

In other words, it looks like Captain Chicken is doing the Volvo from behind.

Creak, creak, creak. He keeps going at it, rocking the Volvo's shocks. Even his plastered grin seems a little wider.

The crowd's silence finally breaks - into UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER. People double over, losing it. Mike and the Hulk are out of the truck, pointing, beside themselves. They can hardly breathe.

MIKE PUGLIO

Oh God...! I'm gonna...! I'm gonna
crap my pants!

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - CONTINUOUS

The four stare out at the merciless crowd as the car continues to BUCK with each thrust. Fear and shock turn to shame. Hot, bitter shame. April WEEPS uncontrollably. Roosevelt stares at the wheel, his hands still at 2 and 10. His lip quivers.

WREN

I am so, so sorry. I never meant --

Roosevelt waves her off: don't.

WREN (CONT'D)

I'll tell your moms it was all my
fault. I made you do it.

ROOSEVELT

You didn't make me do anything. I
wanted to.

APRIL

(cry-talking, hysterical)

Oh really?! You wanted to spend
Halloween driving all over town in
a rolling kick-me sign?

WREN
Come on, April.

APRIL
You wanted to destroy whatever
pathetic excuse for a social life
you ever had?

WREN
That's enough!

APRIL
You wanted to get fucked up the ass
by a giant fucking pirate bird?!

Finally she's silenced by a SLAMMING DOOR.

It's a moment before they realize: Peng is out of the car.

EXT. CAPTAIN CHICKEN - CONTINUOUS

Mike Puglio looks up from his laughing fit to see a defiant Peng standing over him in his Little League pants and wig. Peng locks his knees to keep them from trembling.

MIKE PUGLIO
What the...? Look, everybody! It's...
(Charlie Chan accent)
...Reorge Rashington.

The crowd titters. Roosevelt and Wren jump out of the car.

ROOSEVELT
Peng? Get back in the car.

MIKE PUGLIO
Listen to 'em, Reorge, before you
get yourself hurt.

Peng says nothing, just reaches into his coat and pulls out the FLINTLOCK PISTOL.

MIKE PUGLIO (CONT'D)
Uh oh, he's packing heat. Now hang on,
you gotta give me a fighting chance.
Let's settle this like gentlemen.

He reaches into someone's chicken bucket and pulls out a THIGH, gripping it in two hands like a pistol. He stands with his back to Peng.

MIKE PUGLIO (CONT'D)
Count us off!

The Hulk leaps up on the truck's hood.

HULK
One! Two! Three!...

The crowd COUNTS in unison. Mike paces stiffly away from Peng.

WREN
Ignore him, Peng. Just walk away.

ROOSEVELT
Losers talk, winners walk, buddy.

Peng doesn't budge. He strains to hold the big flintlock steady as the crowd shouts the final count.

CROWD
...Eight, nine, ten!

Mike spins around. The crowd holds its breath. For just a moment, there's a glint of wonder in Mike's eye: will he?

No, he won't. The pistol sags in Peng's hand and a TEAR streaks down his cheek.

Mike smirks. He raises the chicken thigh, takes careful aim and pulls the imaginary trigger...

CRACK! A real shot cuts through the night. The crowd gasps. Mike sees the smoke rising from Peng's gun before he realizes:

HULK
Oh, shit! You're fucking hit! He fucking shot you, you're hit!

Mike touches the side of his head and his hand comes back covered in BLOOD. He gags.

We get a quick, gruesome look: his ear is ripped in two and dangles by a wisp of skin. Blood pulsates from the ragged tear.

Peng's determination quickly crumbles. His body quakes and he drops the gun. No sooner has it hit the ground, when...

Mike SLAMS into him like a speeding train - 250 lbs of angry muscle. Peng wilts under the force and Mike is instantly on top of him, stuffing his face into the dirt.

MIKE PUGLIO
Play time's over, asshole.

The crowd shifts into fight mode, swarming around them and chanting. Wren tries to pull Mike off.

WREN
Leave him alone!

MIKE PUGLIO
No way, it's an eye for an eye, an
ear for an ear.

He's got Peng's ear gripped in his meaty fist and looks ready to pluck it right off. Peng is in desperate tears.

WREN
Stop it, Mike! He didn't mean to!

MIKE PUGLIO
Back off, bitch.

He swats her with his free arm and sends her stumbling back. She falls hard on her ass and hits her head against the Volvo. But that's not the worst of it.

Her jacket is smeared with blood.

Wren's face hardens with a cold, steely rage.

Mike never sees her coming. She's horizontal like a linebacker, and knocks him clean off Peng, pinning him to the ground and tearing into him like a woman possessed – punching, clawing, pulling hair. Mike is helpless against the onslaught.

WREN
It's hard enough! It's hard enough
without dicks like you!

She's relentless, driven by an anger way beyond the offense. The crowd turns, cheering this wild woman on, until the Hulk finally pulls her kicking and screaming off his friend.

Mike picks himself up off the ground, bloodied and embarrassed. He ignores Wren, sneering instead at Peng.

MIKE PUGLIO
Fucking pussy. Better watch your
back – next time your girlfriend
won't be there to save you.

He climbs back in the truck. With a whoop and a blast of the engine, they're gone.

The crowd dissipates. Wren goes to help Peng up, but he shakes her off.

PENG
Leave me alone.

Avoiding their eyes, he gathers the flintlock off the ground. The hammer is broken off. Awesome. He stuffs both pieces in his pocket.

ROOSEVELT

Come on, we should go by Wren's house just in case.

They go to get in the car, but Peng hangs back.

PENG

I'm out.

ROOSEVELT

What do you mean you're out? We still have to find him.

Finally Peng looks up. His eyes are full of pain.

PENG

We? Which we? You and me, or you and her?

ROOSEVELT

You and she.

PENG

What?

ROOSEVELT

You and she. It's a subject pronoun, because --

PENG

Whatever man! Until tonight there was no she. Now it's all there is.

Roosevelt is embarrassed to be called out. He laughs nervously.

ROOSEVELT

That's... that's outlandish. I don't even... What..? Just absurd.

WREN

We're a team, Peng. All four of us.

She motions to the Volvo. Only then do they realize: it's EMPTY.

April is gone.

WREN (CONT'D)

Whore!

She pounds the roof. The Captain responds with another THRUST. Peng approaches Roosevelt one on one, pleading.

PENG

We don't belong out here, Ro. We build homemade telescopes. We write letters to our Congressmen. We have a Final Four debate in eight hours.

Roosevelt stops. He'd forgotten all about the debate.

PENG (CONT'D)

Let's go home, man. We gave it a shot, but... we're out of our league.

Roosevelt studies his shoes. Wren can see he's wavering.

WREN

I need your help, Roosevelt.

For a long beat, they stare at Roosevelt from either side, waiting. He can hardly look at Peng when he finally says:

ROOSEVELT

I'm sorry.

Roosevelt gets in and starts the car. Immediately the chipper intro to Paul Simon's "YOU CAN CALL ME AL" blasts forth. Roosevelt pulls out and Peng follows at his window, in TEARS.

PENG

(through sobs)

Bros before hos, dog. Bros before hos.

He's still repeating it as Roosevelt turns up the street and the Captain's thrusting ass disappears into the night.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - DRIVING - MOMENTS LATER

Roosevelt and Wren drive in silence - apart from a THUNDERING Paul Simon. Wren lays a thankful hand on Roosevelt's arm. He looks down at it with a kind of detached curiosity.

WREN (V.O.)

*Early Clues That I Couldn't Count
on April Martin-Danzinger-Ross.*

Wren stares out the window at the passing street lights.

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

Once shoved an entire pack of gummy worms in her mouth in order not to share.

(MORE)

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*When she barfed it all up five
 minutes later it smelled exactly
 like peach yogurt.*

Paul Simon's bushmen click and warble in the background.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Missed my 12th birthday party at the
 go kart track to see Sugar Ray play
 at the mall. I'm not saying go karts
 are all that, but Mark McGrath in
 front of a Sunglass Hut?*

Outside, a lowered, grape-purple CADILLAC DE VILLE pulls up opposite them at an intersection. Wren stares past right it.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Has no nails on her pinky toes. None.
 It's like how Whoopi Goldberg has no
 eyebrows. You're looking at her and
 you're thinking, I don't know what it
 is, but something is terribly,
 terribly wrong. I'm not sure what that
 has to do with April laming out, but I
 thought it was worth mentioning.*

Wren is woken from her reverie by the Cadillac's pounding Mexican OOM-PA-PA MUSIC, which shakes the entire Volvo as it rolls past. She glances at the car just in time to notice a CANDY WRAPPER tossed out the window by the UNSEEN DRIVER. Roosevelt shakes his head.

ROOSEVELT
 Litterbug.

They drive on. Meanwhile, inside the Cadillac...

INT. CADILLAC DE VILLE - DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

...Albert strains to see over the chain link steering wheel of his bitchin' ride. A foot-long Jesus dangles from the rearview. The dash is draped in purple shag.

Soon Albert reaches the same CRUISING STRIP the others were on. He flips a switch and the car BOUNCES. The crowd approves.

Outside, a couple THICK BUTTS with four-inch whale-tails pass in front of his hood. Albert watches, transfixed, as they join other AMPLE HOOCHIES filing into a nearby club.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

The De Ville swerves across two lanes of honking traffic and screeches to a halt in front of the club.

The VALET looks on, perplexed, as a waist-high Spider-Man hops out, hands him the keys and tips him a roll of SMARTIES.

Albert ignores the line snaking around the block and slips right under the BOUNCER'S nose as he's checking an ID.

The people in line PROTEST and the bouncer spots Albert just as he disappears into the dark club. He goes after him.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

It's a Halloween rave. Sweaty, costumed revelers pulse against one another in a swirl of fog and flashing lights.

For a horny little eight-year-old, it's a wonderland. Shrek freaks Christina Aguilera. Yoda is the meat in a Hermione Granger sandwich. Hannah Montana makes out with her alter-ego.

The bouncer catches then loses sight of the tiny Spider-Man in the teeming mass. Soon Spidey disappears completely.

OVER AT THE BAR, a bartender pours FOUR SHOTS for a chick dressed as Sarah Palin. Sarah digs in her purse, pulls out the money, turns back to the bar, and stops.

Now there are only THREE shots.

AT A NEARBY TABLE, a little Spider-hand plunks down an empty shot glass.

A MOMENT AND THREE TABLES LATER, Wonder Woman turns back from a conversation to find her martini drained.

THROUGHOUT THE CLUB, beers vanish and mojitos turn up empty as the phantom boozer strikes at will.

MELT TO:

ALBERT'S POV: Light bends, music echoes. A jiggling gauntlet of ass and titties passes inches before Albert's bleary eyes as he weaves through the forest of flesh. Forget Mariposa; this is Albert's Halloween dream.

INT. VIP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A mangy dude covered in tats and dressed as DOG THE BOUNTY HUNTER is getting friendly with a METER MAID on the vinyl couch. Suddenly, he realizes they're not alone. He's got a VOICE LIKE A BELCH.

DOG
Get lost, bro!

Lurking in the corner is a four-foot Spider-Man. He turns to go.

METER MAID
Wait, let him stay.

She gives Dog a randy grin.

METER MAID (CONT'D)
Midgets are hot.

It. Is. On.

INT. BRUEDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joy picks tentatively through the quiet upstairs of Brueder's house. It's an elegant, Spanish-style house: dark wood, tile, wrought iron. Muffled party sounds continue in the distance.

Joy finds herself snooping. Down a dark hallway she finds a bedroom, flips on the light. It's a boy's room. Pennant flags, trophies, a poster of Kelly LeBrock from *Weird Science*.

On the dresser is a picture of two boys, about 10, in those reversible mesh soccer uniforms. It's unmistakably Brueder and Keevin. Other pictures chart Brueder's evolution into teenage beefcake. The tassel from a mortar board hangs from a lamp.

Joy looks around the room, confused. A stuffed gorilla in the corner wears a beer helmet, while the bed is shaped like a Ferrari. She opens the top drawer of the dresser. Condoms.

That's when it hits her: he still lives here.

VOICE
Can I help you?

Joy slams the drawer and turns. It's Mr. Brueder.

JOY
Bathroom?

He points back into the hall, waits for her to pass, then turns off the light and shuts the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The Brueders are talking in hushed tones when Joy enters.

JOY

May I?

She takes a seat on the couch before they can respond.

JOY (CONT'D)

Sorry, that music!

She makes a crazed face and a knowing laugh. The Brueders share a private, uncomfortable look. Joy fills the silence.

JOY (CONT'D)

You have a beautiful home. I love these old Spanish places. They feel so... old.

Finally, Mrs. Brueder paints on a polite smile.

MRS. BRUEDER

(over husband's obvious objection)

Would you care for some tea?

JOY

Something that isn't beer? Please!

Again her knowing laughter goes unshared. Mrs. Brueder exits and Joy sits in awkward silence with Mr. Brueder, who doesn't bother with the polite smile. He lets her squirm a while.

MR. BRUEDER

So how do you know Keevin?

JOY

Keevin teaches at my daughter's school.

MR. BRUEDER

You have kids?

JOY

Two. Albert is in third grade,
Karen is a senior.

(quickly)

But she's young for her grade.

MR. BRUEDER

Where's your husband?

MRS. BRUEDER

Larry!

She's back with the tea and a plate of cookies. Mr. Brueder stares at these like an unforgivable act of betrayal.

MRS. BRUEDER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. You don't have to...

JOY
No, it's alright.
(a gulp of tea, then)
My husband passed away.

MRS. BRUEDER
I'm so sorry.

JOY
It's OK, it was a while ago. We've --
I've, moved on. Like Keevin says, the
waves'll still be breaking tomorrow.

MRS. BRUEDER
He always has had a sunny
disposition. Even as a baby.

JOY
You've known him a long time, then.

MRS. BRUEDER
Keevin's mother and I were freshman
roommates at Vassar.

JOY
No kidding, my sister went to
Vassar! Sarah Weaver, class of '82?

MR. BRUEDER
You have a sister who graduated
college in 1982?

JOY
Older sister. Oldest. I was the baby
of the family. The young... baby.

MRS. BRUEDER
How many sisters do you have?

JOY
Just the one.

No one speaks for half a minute. Mr. Brueder abruptly stands.

MR. BRUEDER
I've got a six o'clock tee time.

JOY

Yes, I'd better be getting home
myself. If Albert doesn't have his
warm milk, he'll never get to sleep.

They leave the room before she does.

INT. VIP ROOM - NIGHT

The bouncer parts the bead entrance to the VIP room and stops. Arranged before him is a bizarre TABLEAU: Dog the Bounty Hunter, reclined on the couch, with a Meter Maid kneeling in front of him and little Spider-Man spanking her ass with a riding crop.

DOG

Scram, dude. Three cock's a crowd.

BOUNCER

I need to see some ID.

DOG

(side of his mouth, man to man)
Come on, brother. Freaky booty-train
don't fall in your lap every day.

The bouncer approaches Albert.

BOUNCER

Let's see it. Mask off, Webster.

METER MAID

How dare you. As if his people
don't already have it hard enough.

BOUNCER

I don't remember you, either. Let's
go, IDs all around.

Dog bolts up, pants around his ankles. It's ALL hanging out.

DOG

Dude! What! The! Fuck!

BOUNCER

Five seconds, then you're all 86'd.

The Meter Maid pulls her ID from her bra.

METER MAID

So this is what it feels like to be
persecuted.

Dog bends over and fishes his wallet out of his pants, not bothering to pull them up.

DOG

This ain't right, hoss. VIP stands for one thing, and that is Vagina In Private.

The bouncer grins as he reads the IDs.

BOUNCER

Might wanna work that out with your friend, then.

He hands Dog the Meter Maid's license.

DOG

"Lyle Burgis..." That French or something?

A beat, then the Meter Maid finally relents, in a DEEP BARITONE.

METER MAID

Irish, actually. Sorry, pal.

Dog looks down at his still-bare crotch, horrified.

DOG

(to his dick)

This one's for you, Tarzan.

He comes up SWINGING – and drops the Meter Maid with a big hook to the jaw. The place immediately erupts in CHAOS.

BOUNCER

(calling off)

Nick! Bo! VIP room --

He's DECKED by the Meter Maid, whose sleeves are now pushed up to reveal a couple hairy pythons.

The IDs scatter on the ground. Dog's license lands right in front of Albert, who huddles under the couch. He picks it up.

The license reads: "BARF RUNNELL."

Albert gives Dog a second look. His entire left arm is a tattoo of Joey Ramone made out of flames. As the bouncers finally overpower Dog/Barf and drag him off, Albert follows.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

It's one giant BRAWL. Albert ducks and weaves through the melee, recoiling in horror as Frodo catches a beatdown from Zorro and Papa Smurf wails on Tony the Tiger.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CONTINUOUS

The bouncers toss Barf into the gutter.

BOUNCER

Tell your little band you can
forget ever playing here, too.

They head back into the fray. Barf takes it all in stride. He staggers to his feet, kicks the mirror off a BMW just because, and stumbles off down the street.

From the shadow of a doorway emerges a pint-sized Spider-Man. He FOLLOWS.

INT. WREN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wren and Roosevelt enter the dark house.

WREN

Buttmunch?

It's dead quiet.

INT. ALBERT'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They flip on the light. Albert's big, black-sheeted bed lays empty. Wren slumps down onto it.

WREN

I give up. Evil wins.

Roosevelt timidly sits on the edge of the bed a good four feet from Wren. He nearly falls as it sags beneath him.

ROOSEVELT

Your brother has a waterbed?

WREN

He's really excited for puberty...
a terrifying metamorphosis I'll
have the pleasure to witness, now
that I'm stuck here for good.

ROOSEVELT

Come on, your family can't be that bad.

She looks at him like, are you fucking kidding me?

WREN

A few months after my dad died, I walked in on my mom in bed with another man. It was my dad's oncologist. Believe me, it is that bad and much, much worse. You wouldn't understand; your family's perfect.

ROOSEVELT

Perfect? What's perfect about having to celebrate Mother's and Father's Day for both your parents because they reject traditional gender roles? Or boycotting Amtrak because they still use track laid by indentured Chinese servants in the 19th century? I've never even met one whole side my family, who disowned my mom when they found out she was, to quote my grandmother, a "bush pilot." And at least you knew your dad. All I know about Sperm Donor #522 is he's a biochemistry professor at a college that consistently ranks in the US News top 20, and he plays the lute. Do you have any idea how many of those there are?

WREN

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

ROOSEVELT

Even Peng, who's like his family's Jesus, can't talk to his own grandparents on the phone because his mom and dad refused to teach him Korean. They purposely timed his conception so he'd be born on the 4th of July, then his mom drank some weird herbal potion the night before to induce labor but all it did was turn her eyes yellow. He was born on the 5th, and I'm not kidding I think they love him a little bit less for it.

WREN

I guess every family's fucked up in its own special way.

ROOSEVELT

Exactly, but they're the only family you've got, and like it or not, you're hard-wired to be together. It's like ants.

WREN

How on earth is it like ants?

ROOSEVELT

(nodding to his costume)

E.O. Wilson, he hypothesized that since ants are haplodiploid --

WREN

Whoa, whoa. Science and I are sworn enemies. Dumb it down a notch.

ROOSEVELT

Haplodiploid. It means one of their parents only supplies half a chromosome, so siblings share three quarters of each other's genes, instead of half, like us. So ants have a huge genetic self-interest in helping each other out. They're also helping themselves.

Wren's eyes are glazed over.

WREN

One more notch.

ROOSEVELT

You are your family. Your family is you. Friends... they come and go.

WREN

You're still here.

Slowly, their eyes meet. Roosevelt swallows hard. So hard you can hear it. He starts coughing. There goes that moment. Wren stands and paces the room.

WREN (CONT'D)

It's different. We live together, but we're not a real family. My dad was the glue, you know? When he died, we all just kind of fell apart. My brother was still a baby; I don't think he even remembers him. And my mom... my mom just checked out. She also became a giant slut.

(MORE)

WREN (CONT'D)

My family only takes pictures on birthdays, and I swear you can go back eight years and find a different guy in each one. Albert's basically grown up without parents. No wonder he's such a psycho.

Roosevelt nods to the bookshelf.

ROOSEVELT

I was kind of wondering, is that...

WREN

A booger jar? Why yes, it is. This is just this year. The others are buried in the yard, don't ask me why.

(moving down to some VHS tapes)
And here we have Faces of Death, volumes one, two and three. Sometimes he'll hold his own little marathon.

(next tapes)

Way more disturbing? The complete box set from the daytime series Small Wonder. Remember, he's too young to understand irony. And I hope you haven't failed to appreciate the fact that everything is in precise alphabetical order. The crazy ones are always anal. Didn't Jeffrey Dahmer have impeccable dental hygiene?

Something on the shelf catches her eye.

WREN (CONT'D)

That little shit! I've been looking all over for this.

It's a Thin Lizzy album. She yanks it off the shelf and a PIECE OF PAPER falls out. Roosevelt picks it up. There's writing.

ROOSEVELT

(reading)

"Possible Explanations for the Male Nipple..."

Wren snatches the paper away.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

What is that?

WREN

It's a list. It's just something I do to make sense of things.

ROOSEVELT
Have you lost a lot of sleep over
nipples?

Wren ignores him and drops the paper face-down on the bed. Then stops.

On the other side of the paper is a PHOTO – of Wren's DAD. About seven years ago, just before he died. He's in a sound studio, smiling wide with NINE-YEAR-OLD WREN on one knee and a BABY on the other. Baby Albert.

Despite his pallid skin and sunken eyes, Pete DeSantis is a groovy-looking guy, with a short beard, earring, bandana covering his hairless head, and...

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)
Your jacket.

It's the same old army jacket Wren wears at all times, and at this very moment.

WREN
Actually, it was Phil Lynott's, first.
(off Roosevelt's blank stare)
Lead singer of Thin Lizzy? My dad was a sound engineer. He worked on an album of theirs way back. Lynott left it in the studio the last day and never came back, so my dad just kept it. Kind of the same way I ended up with it, come to think of it.

ROOSEVELT
How did he die?

WREN
Heroine overdose.
(off Roosevelt's shock)
Oh, my dad. Adenocarcinoma of the colon, AKA ass cancer. Found out in August, was dead by...
(quietly)
...well, by Halloween.

Roosevelt is startled. He had no idea.

WREN (CONT'D)
I guess it's fitting, like a Catholic dying on Christmas. My dad loved candy. He had stashes all over the house.

(MORE)

WREN (CONT'D)
Sometimes we still find Necco wafers
in dresser drawers. Albert eats
them.

They're silent a while. Roosevelt studies the picture.

ROOSEVELT
You look just like him.

Wren flashes a rare smile.

WREN
Yeah. Just, you know, minus the beard.

ROOSEVELT
No. I mean your brother.

Wren sees the photo as if for the first time. It's true. She's about Albert's age, with the same big cheeks and bright eyes. Apart from her darker hair, they could almost pass for twins.

She's jarred out of her reverie by her PHONE. The Caller I.D. says "April." Wren almost ignores it, but finally picks up.

WREN
What do you want?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - SAME

April is in the middle of a jam-packed Halloween party.

APRIL
He's here!

WREN
What?! Here?! Where?!

APRIL
At the party! I just saw him a
second ago. 54 Adeline. Hurry!

END INTERCUT.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

The party spills outside. People stop and stare as the Volvo-humped-by-a-giant-chicken rattles up blasting GREGORIAN CHANT.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - CONTINUOUS

A hoard of drunk teens in party-worn costumes pack every inch of the house. April rises from an ice luge shot as Wren and Roosevelt enter. She slurs her words.

APRIL

At fucking last! Come on, I just
saw him outside.

She drags Wren off by the wrist, leaving Roosevelt at the door.

ROOSEVELT

Good idea. Split up, cover more ground.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

April tugs Wren outside, where more teens are gathered around the yard and by the POOL. She stops and beams.

APRIL

So?

WREN

So...

She scans the yard, not seeing him.

APRIL

Are you blind? On the diving board.

She grabs her and points. Teetering back and forth on the board like a plank, dressed as Captain Jack Sparrow, is not Albert, but AARON RILEY.

Wren wilts. She should have known.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Didn't I tell you? I'm like one of those
dogs that sniffs out prized truffles,
except I sniff out prized cock.

WREN

I can't believe I actually thought
you found my brother.

She turns to go, but April blocks her path. She sways drunkenly and her eyelids sag half-shut.

APRIL

Now you listen to me. We've been
friends, what, 20 years?

WREN

We're 17.

APRIL

And this is our last Halloween together. Our last! Hal! O! ...een! Now, did I complain when you turned our night into your own personal scavenger hunt?

WREN

Yes. A lot.

APRIL

Did I say a word when you stuck us with the Tri-Lams?

WREN

Many words. Most of them obscene.

APRIL

You've wasted all night searching for that ungrateful troll, now it's time you thought about us.

(deep breath, big news)

Earlier tonight, Aaron's best friend Jonathan brushed my boob, and I'm 99% sure from the hangtime that there was willful intent. Just imagine, Wren. We could be like the Cruises and the Beckhams. Hell, one of us could even get knocked up and throw a Suri in the mix.

WREN

You make it hard to say no. But here goes: N--

VOICE (O.S.)

(singing)

No, no, no, don't leave me hanging like a washcloth in a shower, daka-dow bow.

Wren turns. It's Aaron, floating up with his "bass" in hand. Somehow he manages to make Jack Sparrow even gayer.

AARON

Or maybe, *like a windsock on a pole.* You know, like at the airport.

WREN

What... I don't...

AARON

It's your song, Mystery Meat.
Although, I was thinking of changing
it to The Girl with the Hair. Did
you forget?

WREN

I... I guess I did.

She blushes, suddenly in no hurry. April quietly tip-toes away.

EXT. SCRUFFY STREET - NIGHT

Barf PISSES into an open convertible. Two YOUNG WOMEN scoot cautiously by.

BARF

Hey hey, ladythings, how's about a game of hide the cocktail weenie?

They pick up the pace. Barf calls after them.

BARF (CONT'D)

Just managing expectations!

He rips a big FART and chuckles to himself. Then he shakes it off and stumbles toward the dingy house right behind him.

As he enters and slams the door, a little SPIDER-HEAD pops up behind a car down the street.

Albert works his way toward the house, slips through the rusty gate and eases slowly onto the rotten porch.

He peeks through the dirty window. Barf lies face down on the couch, his pants halfway down, all the lights on.

An enraged ROTTWEILER suddenly explodes into Albert's view, snapping its jaws and soaking the glass with saliva. Albert stumbles backwards, TRIPPING off the porch. Barf stirs.

BARF (CONT'D)

Goddammit, Ozzy! I'm fucking napping!

He stumbles toward the window. Any second, he'll see Albert sprawled out in his yard.

Suddenly, someone GRABS Albert by the collar and drags him into the bushes. Albert struggles wildly, kicking the unseen stranger in the shins, jabbing at the air with his fists.

UNSEEN STRANGER

Easy, easy! It's me, Ray-Ray, it's me!

His face comes into the light. It's Fuzzy.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Roosevelt, carrying a picture of Albert, interrogates a group of sneering teens. He responds to one of the girls, droll.

ROOSEVELT

Yes, I'm a cop. I'm a 16-year-old cop with no facial hair and a safari hat.

The girl make a capital "L" on her forehead - backwards.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

I'll assume that stands for Leader.

He turns to continue his search, and that's when he sees it:

Wren, across the pool, standing close to Aaron. She touches his stomach and he leans in, cooing in her ear.

Roosevelt promptly drops to his knees and VOMITS into the pool.

The entire party grinds to a halt - then ERUPTS in pandemonium. There's just something about vomit. People scream and run aimlessly around, as if a bomb went off.

Wren sees Roosevelt run into the house. She chases after him.

EXT. BARF'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Fuzzy and Albert crouch in the bushes. Fuzzy hugs him.

FUZZY

You're a sight for sore eyes, Ray-Ray. I've been here all night trying to work up my nerve. Check it out.

He presents a brown paper bag. It sags.

FUZZY (CONT'D)

He shat on my life, I'm gonna shit on his.

Albert cups the bag, weighing it. He shrugs, unimpressed.

FUZZY (CONT'D)

Hey, it's the best I could do on short notice. Everyone has such tiny dogs these days.

Albert reaches into his pumpkin and pulls out the black plastic bag the tennis coach bought him earlier.

He empties the fireworks on the ground. There are SMOKEBOMBS, FIRECRACKERS and big fat M-80s. Fuzzy slowly smiles.

They tip-toe up to the porch and unfurl the bag, revealing a mound of sticky shit. Using a twig, they sink an M-80 with a long wick right into the middle of it.

Fuzzy readies the lighter and Albert stands by the doorbell. On three. One, two, three! The bell DINGS, the wick SIZZLES, Ozzy BARKS, Barf YELLS, Fuzzy and Albert sprint for the gate.

They're hardly off the porch when Ozzy comes barreling out of the dog door like a rabid wolf. Fuzzy and Albert run like hell. The giant dog snaps at them, almost getting a piece.

Then, suddenly, he stops. Fuzzy is halfway up the block already, but Albert stops outside the gate to see.

Ozzy is sniffing at the bag of poo. The wick burns his nose and he jumps back, but a second later he's right back in there.

And then... he starts EATING. Just full-on mowing – ravenous, greedy, like he's gone weeks without food and the shit's a bowl of Alpo.

Albert just watches, transfixed. It's like a car wreck. He can't look away. Up the street, Fuzzy is whisper-yelling.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
Come on, Ray-Ray! Let's go!

The screen door snaps open and Barf comes lumbering out. His shirt is off and his big, distended gut sports an elaborate Iron Maiden mural. He spots the bag, picks it up. It's licked clean. No shit, no bomb. He sniffs it. What the fuck?

Barf peers into the darkness. Just beyond the gate, he spies a familiar shape, looming like a specter. Little Spider-Man.

BARF
You.
(then, menacing)
Ozzy? Sick. Balls.

The maniacal canine takes off like a bolt. Every muscle in its body bulges. Rivulets of slobber whip from razor teeth flecked with shit bits. Its lips quiver with hungry anticipation.

Albert stands frozen, unable to move. The big dog bears down. It's nearly his height and twice his weight. In less than two seconds, he'll be devoured.

Ozzy LUNGES. He soars through the air, jaws open wide. Three feet from Albert, two feet, six inches, one... when suddenly:

POP. It's like the sound of a champagne cork released under a towel, muffled but distinct. It's followed by the dull THUD of flesh on concrete.

The dog collapses at Albert's feet. Dead.

Albert stares down at it, stunned. It takes a moment for Barf to realize what's happened. He stumbles off the porch, walking then running. He reaches his dead pet and crouches over it. SMOKE rises from the dog's nostrils. He meets Albert's eyes. They're a foot apart.

In the same instant, Barf LUNGES and Albert turns to RUN. But it's too late. Barf has him firmly by the Spider-collar.

UP THE STREET, Fuzzy watches it all go down from behind a hedge, but he can't muster the courage to help.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Wren runs out of the house in time to see Captain Chicken's raised ass disappear up the street. AL GORE'S VOICE echoes back through the trees. Wren's shoulder's slump.

WREN
I'm sorry.

Aaron appears behind her, obliviously serene.

AARON
That dude's mom was my scout leader.

Wren's phone RINGS. The number is unfamiliar. She picks up.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BARF'S HOUSE - SAME

Barf prowls his scary lair, a grungy riot of death metal art, chains and amps stacked to the ceiling. A giant BATTLE AXE dominates one wall. Barf barks into the phone.

BARF
Who the hell is this?

WREN
What? You called me. Who's this?

BARF
This is Barf. I got Spidey.

The closet door rattles wildly.

WREN

Albert? Oh my God! You're a lifesaver!
Where are you? Wait, it doesn't
matter, I don't have a car. Do you
think maybe you could drop him off?

BARF

Maybe you don't understand. See,
Spidey thought it'd be a good idea
to feed my dog a shit bomb. Know
what that is? It's a shit with a
bomb in it. Now, Ozzy liked to eat
shit. If he was a man, you might
call it his hobby. So you can
forgive him for not pausing to
realize this particular shit had a
bomb in it. Now he's dead.

WREN

I am so, so sorry. My brother, he
doesn't have many good role models.

BARF

Well they got 'em down at juvey,
that's for sure. Ever seen the movie
where Kevin Bacon plays a juvey
guard and makes young Brad Pitt give
him a BJ? It's good, you should rent
it. Anyway I was about to call your
punk brother a ride down there with
Westbrae's finest, but thought his
folks might see another way. Yours's
the only number he'd give, though,
so it's on you, sister.

WREN

What do you want?

BARF

Cash. Dumb bastard cost me 200 new.
Plus he pissed all over my original
Sticky Fingers. That's another hundo,
easy. Call it 400 for my grief.

He hawks a loogie on the floor.

WREN

I don't have that kind of money. I
get 20 dollars a week.

BARF

Then go sell your poon down at the
Arco, I don't care. 26 Grove Street.
You got an hour.

He hangs up. Wren stares at her phone in disbelief. Right then it CHIRPS with a new TEXT MESSAGE. Wren's heart leaps. Maybe Barf had a change of heart? Nope, it's from her MOM:

"Heading home. Hope you're awake – forgot my keys! 8-]"

Wren looks helplessly around. What now?

INT. BRUEDER'S BASEMENT REC ROOM – NIGHT

Phone in hand, Joy returns to find the party in full frat mode – any pretense of sophistication long drowned in a puddle of keg spray. She finds Keevin in an emotional round of quarters.

JOY

You ready to get out of here?

KEEVIN

Leave? We're just getting going!
Come on, dance with me.

He gyrates drunkenly. There is no music.

JOY

I have this weird feeling. I need
to go home.

KEEVIN

You just need to catch up. Come on!

He drags her by the wrist to the keg.

JOY

No, Keevin. I don't... no!

She's serious, but he's not listening. He holds up the tap, urging her on. The crowd cheers. Joy seals her lips, shakes her head. But before she knows it, Brueder and the Blues Brother HOIST her ankles over her head. She instinctively grabs the rim of the keg and Keevin jams the tap in her mouth.

KEEVIN

One! Two! Three!...

The beer flows forth in a deluge. Joy has no choice but to chug. The crowd joins in Keevin's CHANT, cheering her on.

But then slowly, one at a time... they fall SILENT.

BLUES BROTHER
What is that?

Joy's skirt, turned upside down, is hiked up around her ribs... exposing a very sturdy-looking GIRDLE.

BRUEDER
It's some kind of mechanical underwear.

Other guests join the discussion.

GUEST 1
I think it's a back brace.

GUEST 2
It's not on her back, it's on her ass. It's an ass brace.

BLUES BROTHER
Why would you need your ass braced?

Joy squirms, helpless, her ass on full display, her mouth plugged. Keevin is focused on his stopwatch, increasingly thrilled. The whorish nurse from before joins the group.

NURSE
It's a girdle, idiots. My nanna had one.

BLUES BROTHER
What's it do?

NURSE
It squashes down your fat, like if you have a Front Butt.

BRUEDER
Is that the same as a Muffin Top?

NURSE
No, a Muffin Top is when the fat oozes out over your belt, like fatty batter.

They motion to Joy to illustrate.

BRUEDER
I see, whereas a Front Butt is lower and more, well, butt-like.

BLUES BROTHER
What? No, that's a Baby Joey --

JOY
Put me down!

She spits out the tap in an explosion of foam. The guys quickly lower her to the ground, scolded like children. Joy yanks down her skirt, beet-red. The crowd is silent.

Only Keevin is oblivious. He jumps up with his hand outstretched for a high-five.

KEEVIN
Twenty-nine!

Joy ignores him, grabs her coat and stomps out.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Wren sits alone in the passenger seat of a car parked in front of an ATM. Her breath fogs. After a moment, someone gets in beside her and hands her a wad of CASH. It's Mr. Jake. He wears a coat over pajama pants and his hair sticks up.

WREN
Thank you so much. I'll pay you back, I promise.

Mr. Jake waves her off, glum.

MR. JAKE
It's just nice to feel useful.

The elephant in the room. Wren proceeds gently.

WREN
I saw you were on the couch.

MR. JAKE
Yeah, you know, sometimes that big king bed is way too restful. I need two or three remotes in my back to know I'm alive.

He laughs weakly and Wren returns the favor. They're silent a while. He stares off through the fogged-up windshield.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)
You ever feel like you're living someone else's life? Like, we're all stuck inside a giant dollhouse, and one day someone just plucked you out of one room, changed your shirt and your hat, and put you back down in another.

WREN

I think that was an episode of The Twilight Zone.

Mr. Jake smiles. Sadly.

WREN (CONT'D)

But yeah. I mean, from what I remember, the first half of my life was awesome. I know there were always Peanut M&M's. Then it all went to shit. If this is someone else's life, I feel pretty sorry for them.

Mr. Jake smiles at her, this time warmly. Fatherly.

MR. JAKE

You're golden, Karen DeSantis. You know that?

WREN

I...m not sure what you're talking about.

MR. JAKE

Brilliant. Rare. Not like these other kids. Hell, you're hardly a kid anymore. That scrawny freshman, could hardly turn the potting wheel.

WREN

(laughing)

I sprained my knee and had to go to the nurse's.

MR. JAKE

You milked those crutches for six weeks, till I caught you on your skateboard.

(beat)

Now look at you.

Wren studies her hands.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)

Young woman, going off to school, whole new life ahead of her.

WREN

School, right. That's not looking so good.

MR. JAKE

It doesn't matter. Wherever you go,
whatever you do, it's gonna be
spectacular. Because you're Wren...
ready to take flight.

He punctuates this little bon mot with a soaring hand gesture and a stroke of his flavor-saver. Wren looks up, bashful, not accustomed to praise.

WREN

Thanks, Mr. Jake.

MR. JAKE

Please, you're about to graduate.
Make it Jake.

He slowly leans in. Wren freezes.

WREN

What are you...?

MR. JAKE

(nothing but breath)

Don't worry. No one will know.

He kisses her, his two-day beard pricking her trembling lips. Wren's knuckles go white around the wad of cash. It's just a thin, girl's hand, not a woman's.

Until it tightens... into a fist.

CRUNCH! Wren nails Mr. Jake in the face. His nose EXPLODES in a spray of blood as cash flies everywhere.

MR. JAKE (CONT'D)

Agh! You fucking bitch!

WREN

Get away from me!

He stanches the blood with one hand and grabs at her with the other. She jumps out of the car and he falls face down on the seat, so he's looking up through the open door. He sneers, his words thick with blood and snot.

MR. JAKE

Oh come on, like you haven't been
waving it in my face for four
years. Like it's not the reason you
came to me tonight.

WREN

I came because I needed your help!

MR. JAKE

And you got it. Now what about me?

Wren looks down at him, sad, angry. But mostly, disappointed.

WREN

I can't help you.

She throws the REST OF THE MONEY in his face and runs off. He calls after her into the night.

MR. JAKE

Come back here, Wren. Do you hear me, Miss DeSantis?!

EXT. EMPTY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC: Thin Lizzy's "Whiskey in the Jar"

Wren runs and runs, desperate, distraught. The town is asleep. It's just her out there, all alone.

INT. THIBODEAUX FAMILY VOLVO - DRIVING - NIGHT

Roosevelt drives along, morose. He stops at a stop sign. AL GORE'S VOICE rattles the car with a thundering lisp.

AL GORE (FROM STEREO)

...it may not be convenient, but it is true...

In a sudden fit of rage, Roosevelt rears back and KICKS IN the stereo. Bits of metal and plastic fly everywhere, until it finally shuts the hell up. Peace at last.

Outside, a VOICE reaches his ears. A man and woman are arguing. She's trying to get into her car and he's trying to stop her.

Roosevelt realizes: it's KEEVIN AND JOY.

EXT. BARF'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wren arrives on Barf's rotting patio, panting and distressed. She stops. What now? No clue, but she rings the bell anyway.

Barf opens the door immediately. He eyes her up and down, saying nothing, then stands aside to let her pass. He checks up and down the street before closing the door.

INT. BARF'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Wren enters and stops. The room is offensive in its clutter and filth. Half-eaten fast food sits in various states of decay. The couch's stains have stains. The entire wall beside Wren sags toward her under the weight of thousands of vinyl records.

BARF
You got the cash?

WREN
Let me see him.

The closet door rattles. Wren moves toward it, but Barf blocks the way.

BARF
You know, Ted Bundy got his start shoving firecrackers up cats' butts. Kinda can't blame him. Fuckin' hate cats, 'specially the prissy ones with the flat faces. But dogs... a kid kills a dog, maybe he deserves to give Kevin Bacon a BJ.

WREN
I am so sorry about your dog. I'm sure he didn't mean to hurt him.

Barf fights back a tear. Or pretends to.

BARF
Little guy was just doing his job. How was he supposed to know the balls he was getting ready to sick belonged to a monster?

He nods to the corner and Wren jumps back. Ozzy is PROPPED UP in a recliner like a human. His tongue hangs out grotesquely.

Wren takes a deep breath. There's just no way around it.

WREN
I don't have the money.

Barf's demeanor immediately changes.

BARF
Then kindly get the fuck out my house.

He picks up the PHONE, but stops. Did he hear something? Like a sniffing, distant and muffled. Wren knows exactly what it is. It's the first sound Albert's made all night.

He's crying.

WREN

Please. There must be another way.

Barf leers at her body.

BARF

Believe me, if I hadn't already popped two Oxys, I'da gladly hit that cooz in trade.

Wren blinks – not what she meant. Barf starts DIALING. Wren looks desperately around, wracking her brain. Then the wall of albums catches her eye. And it hits her.

WREN

Do you have Vagabonds of the Western World?

BARF

Lizzy? Sister, I was rockin' Mama Nature when you was a tadpole in your daddy's sack.

WREN

Look at the liner notes, top right.

The police dispatcher picks up.

DISPATCHER (FROM PHONE)

911.

Barf eyes Wren, suspicious but intrigued.

DISPATCHER (FROM PHONE) (CONT'D)

Hello? Do you have an emergency?

BARF

Please hold.

He puts the phone down without hanging up and goes to his wall of vinyl. He pulls down a weathered old Thin Lizzy album and flips it open. Inside is a picture of Phil Lynott pointing at the camera.

He's wearing Wren's jacket.

Wren closes her eyes and takes hold of her zipper. For what seems like an eternity, she doesn't move. Then, with tremendous effort, she slowly unzips the jacket, each link like a dagger to her heart. The jacket sags off her shoulders. She seems naked.

BARF (CONT'D)
You don't expect me to believe...

WREN
Look at the pocket.

She throws him the jacket. Stitched to the inside pocket is a threadbare label from a Dublin surplus shop. Barf compares the jacket to the photo. It's unmistakable. They're identical.

The closet door RATTLES like mad. Barf grins greedily, tucks the jacket under his arm, and puts a meaty paw on Wren.

BARF
I appreciate the donation, but some kids just belong in prison.

He steers her forcefully toward the door. Wren struggles, but he's too strong. The closet door goes CRAZY. Wren CRIES OUT for Albert as the closet gets farther and farther away. She failed. She finally found him and she failed.

Suddenly, just as Barf is shoving Wren through the door, a WINDOW SHATTERS somewhere in the house. TWO MORE follow. And now the house is filling with SMOKE. An alarm SQUEALS.

We get a CLOSE UP: little spherical SMOKE BOMBS are flying in one after another, spewing forth their noxious fog.

Right then, someone KICKS IN the back door. Actually, it takes a few kicks, and eventually the use of the handle.

Through the haze, a FIGURE appears. He wears a short bathrobe and two belts over his shoulders like bandoliers. Strapped to his face is a World War I GAS MASK... BONG. He strides into the house distributing smoke bombs.

FUZZY
Yeah, ain't nothin' sweeter than motherfuckin' payback!

Chaos, to the tune of **Thin Lizzy's "Jailbreak,"** ERUPTS.

Barf charges blindly into the smoke, releasing Wren. She feels her way to the closet and frees Albert. He hugs her hard around the waist. Through the smoke, we spot Barf's phone, still OFF THE HOOK. Fuzzy continues on his warpath.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
How you like these tiny balls?

He scatters another handful of smoke bombs. Wren and Albert stumble toward the door. They're almost outside when Albert stops. And turns back.

WREN
No, Albert!

From his unique elevation, Albert navigates easily beneath the worst of the smoke. He finds Barf groping blindly along the wall. With sudden, impressive force, Albert rears back a little Spider-fist and DRILLS Barf hard in the crotch. Barf drops to his knees. And drops the JACKET into Albert's waiting arms.

FUZZY
I got you covered, Ray-Ray!

Fuzzy lays down a string of firecrackers as Albert sprints for the door. Barf is close on his heels, but the deafening CRACKS send him cowering back. Fuzzy leaves the rest of his supply BURNING inside the entryway and shuts the door on his way out.

EXT. BARF'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It sounds like a munitions plant going up in flames as Fuzzy, Wren and Albert run from the house. Reaching the gate, they suddenly stop.

Speeding toward them from either end of the street, sirens wailing, are two POLICE CARS. There's nowhere to run.

FUZZY
(stoic)
I got this.

WREN
Got what? We're trapped.

FUZZY
Could be. Or it could just be one last gut check for a man tired of living his life on mute.

Inexplicably, and with the steely resolve of a soldier preparing for battle, Fuzzy begins REMOVING HIS CLOTHES. First his robe, then his sweatpants, shoes and socks... then his briefs. Soon, Fuzzy is BUTT NAKED. It isn't pretty.

FUZZY (CONT'D)
They can lock me up, but they can never re-cage the rage. Owwwww!

He darts into the street in front of the squad cars, HOWLING. Both the cops' faces register utter bewilderment.

Whatever they were called for, this is clearly more pressing. They fall in behind the pasty, raving manatee.

Fuzzy leads them across the neighbor's lawn and onto a cross street. He's still howling as they DISAPPEAR UP THE BLOCK.

SECONDS LATER, Barf barrels out of the house, screaming and wielding the battle axe from his wall.

He trails off. The street is deserted.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOME KIND OF PARK - NIGHT

Wren and Albert squeeze through a tall, wrought iron fence. It's not exactly clear where they are. They're both somber.

WREN (V.O.)
Things I Would Say to My Dad, If I Could Just See Him Again.

She kneels and pulls a handful of daisies out of the ground.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Why didn't you eat more fucking oats? Red Vines for breakfast? What the hell is that? No wonder your colon disintegrated.

They cross a wide expanse of grass. Cold wind kicks up leaves.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm thinking of becoming a stenographer. Regular hours, recession-proof. You down with that?

They arrive at their destination and stare solemnly down. Wren bends and places the daisies on top of a granite plaque. Etched in the stone are the words: "**PETER DESANTIS, 1961-2001.**" Albert places his pumpkin full of candy beside Wren's flowers.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Did you drop Albert? Or blow pot in his face? Because the kid is wrong. Did you see him kill that guy's dog? Can you see that stuff up there, or is it all cloud recliners and harp concerts?

Wren's lip trembles. She's been fighting it all night, but now her guard finally crumbles. Tears spill down her cheeks.

WREN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I miss you. I miss you, Dad. No one gets it, no one knows. I'm all alone down here, going through the motions, trying to act like it's all OK. But it's not OK! It's not!

Right then, in the still of the night, a VOICE cuts through Wren's thoughts. It's high and clear, and it's been so long since Wren has heard it, she hardly recognizes the voice as Albert's.

ALBERT
Wren?

Wren stops. She looks down, startled, and wipes at her tears.

WREN
Yes, Albert?

His eyes rise slowly to meet hers.

ALBERT
Thanks.

A faint smile creeps onto Wren's lips. She takes Albert's little Spider-hand in hers and they stand there together a while over their father's grave.

DISSOLVE TO LATER:

Wren and Albert squeeze back through the fence. And stop. A CAR idles at the curb.

It's Joy. Alone.

Without a word, she reaches over and opens the door. There's no blame in her eyes, just sadness, sympathy, remorse.

Wren and Albert climb in, Albert in the middle. Joy puts an arm around her two kids, drawing them close as she drives off in silence.

INT. JOY'S CAR - DRIVING - A LITTLE LATER

As they near their house, a figure suddenly FLASHES in the headlights. There's a THUNK and Joy SLAMS on the brakes. The car comes to a violent halt.

They all hold their breath. Outside, it's silent.

EXT. JOY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Joy jumps out to see what happened. A YOUNG MAN is moaning.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)
Ohhh! Ohhh! Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh!

JOY
Oh my God, are you alright?!

She nearly GAGS at the sight of him. Wren gets out to see.

The young man is on his back in front of the car, writhing in agony. His ankle is tucked up at an INHUMAN ANGLE behind his head. Wren double-takes. Is that...?

VOICE
Wren?

She turns. The young man's COMPANION hovers nearby on the curb.

It's Roosevelt, looking guilty.

WREN
Wait, you and Peng were... going to...?

ROOSEVELT
...buy you a little more time.

Wren smiles as it hits her. Down on the ground, Joy tends to Peng, who continues his virtuoso performance.

PENG
I can't feel my asshole. Sweet mother of Jesus I can't feel my own asshole!

DISSOLVE TO:

DING-DONG.

INT. ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE - A FEW WEEKS LATER - DUSK

Roosevelt opens the front door to find Wren fidgeting uncomfortably in a frilly dress and high-ish heels. Her hair is pinned up and there's even a hint of mascara around her eyes. Strangest of all is her jacket - which is nowhere to be seen.

Roosevelt stares at her, perplexed. He wears baggy sweats and thick wool socks with leather soles.

WREN
Is that what you're wearing?

Roosevelt is puzzled, as if it were an existential question.

ROOSEVELT
I am wearing it.

WREN
Hello! Tonight's the Fall Ball.

ROOSEVELT
Fall Ball? I thought you said you'd
rather floss with my taint hair.

WREN
I was just showing off, alright?
For my date.

Roosevelt stares back blankly. He's still not getting it.

ROOSEVELT
Your...?

WREN
You! Christ! Will you go to the
Fall Ball with me, Roosevelt?
There, now go put on some non-
elastic pants.

Roosevelt snaps to and runs upstairs. Wren follows him inside and finds Barb and Jackie in the living room. They're seated 12 feet apart, at either end of a gigantic LOOM, on which they've nearly finished a photo-realistic tapestry of Barack Obama.

Seeing Wren, Jackie GROWLS like a tiger.

BARB
My gosh, Karen, you look like Miss
Marianne Dashwood herself.

WREN
Thanks, Mrs. T. Was she a tranny?

JACKIE
Oh, Karen, I wanted to speak with you
about the upstairs tub. Your bead
work is beautiful, but I'm afraid the
caulk's already begun to split.

WREN
Sorry about that. I'll come by
tomorrow with the silicone stuff.

BARB

Great. I'm sure Roosevelt wouldn't mind a hand cleaning the koi pond.

Roosevelt appears beside Wren in a corduroy coat and a blue tie tied too short. He's adorable.

ROOSEVELT

We're already up to a fender and two taillights. At the current rate, we should be paid off by September.

BARB

Just in time for fall semester at NYU. I forgot to mention, Wren, I saw the dean last week at LentilFest and she's looking forward to reading your application personally.

WREN

Thanks, Mrs. T, but I've actually been thinking... Reed has a great writing program, and it's not so far from home. Someone's gotta keep my brother from killing again.

Roosevelt perks up. This is welcome news.

ROOSEVELT

Reed College in Portland? That's like, driving distance.

Wren smiles at him. Right then, the DOORBELL rings.

CUT TO THE ENTRYWAY: Roosevelt opens the door to find Albert standing there in a little coat and tie. He holds a giant CAT the way that kids do, with its legs and arms dangling awkwardly. It's almost as tall as he is. He hands the cat to Roosevelt.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Thank you, Albert.

(for Wren's benefit)

I didn't realize you were joining.

WREN

Is that alright? My mom had a date.

ROOSEVELT

Yeah, whatever. I'm a... family man.

EXT. ROOSEVELT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The camera STAYS PUT as Wren and Roosevelt stroll up the street, talking casually. Albert trails behind, opening mailboxes, karate-kicking bushes.

ROOSEVELT
So who's the date?

WREN
I don't know, but he had a bald spot and didn't grope my mom in the foyer, so... so far so good.

They're quiet a while, already comfortable enough together not to mind the silence.

ROOSEVELT
We don't really have to go to the Fall Ball.

WREN
Thank you! When you called my bluff with the tie I about yacked.

ROOSEVELT
How about bowling?

WREN
I'd prefer to get through the night without a fungal infection, thanks.

ROOSEVELT
Movie?

WREN
Are you fucking kidding me? If you want to hold hands with someone, call Peng.

ROOSEVELT
OK, what would you like to do?

WREN
We're all dressed up. How about mini golf?

ROOSEVELT
That makes no sense. And I'm afraid of windmills.

WREN
Come on, I'll buy you a churro.

ROOSEVELT

Sure, OK. But only if the fry oil's
non-hydrogenated.

WREN

What do you say, Albert?
(beat)
Albert?

FADE TO BLACK.

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

I gotta get that kid some kind of
bell.