

SOBERED UP

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THE SCREEN IS BLACK

The clean sound of canoe-paddles cutting through calm water.

EXT. LAKE MOHAWK - **FADE IN** - MORNING

We track the front of an ANTIQUE WOODEN CANOE as it makes landfall on the beach. BARE MANLY LEGS, clad only in OLD LEATHER MOCCASINS, stumble out of the boat. An EMPTY WINE BOTTLE falls to the ground next to him.

EXT. QUAIN T LAKE HOUSE - MORNING

JOYCE CLARK, 50s, is gardening. She waves to a FAMILY as they walk towards their boat.

JOYCE

Have fun out there, gang. How 'bout those fireworks?

FAMILY MAN

Best Fourth in years.
(something catches his
eye, concerned)
Joyce, do you know that man?

Joyce turns, perplexed. We ZOOM ON her SHOCKED FACE.

JOYCE

Clay?

The camera turns onto CLAY MASON, 30s, as he stumbles across the yard dressed only in a traditional Native American CROTCH COVERING. A red line of WAR PAINT under each eye and a crudely shaved MOHAWK. -- Clay Mason is not Native American.

CLAY

(slurred speech)
Oh, g'morning Misses Clark. I was
just wondering if Hol--
(hiccup, burp)
Holly was around?

JOYCE

(calls towards house)
Robert... Robert?... *Robert!*

INSIDE HOUSE: HOLLY CLARK, late 20s, very pretty, races to her window, still in her night-shirt. She sees Clay.

HOLLY
 (turns, frantic)
 Dad! Don't go outside!

But it's too late...

FRONT DOOR: It opens, and out walks ROBERT CLARK, a no-nonsense Chris-Cooper-esque father. He's furious.

ROBERT
 (into house, direct order)
 Holly, stay in the house - call an ambulance.

Robert slams the front door. He makes a fist.

CLAY
 (raises hand like Indian saying How)
 Look, Bobby. I just wanted to apologize for last night... and to ask *permission's daughter* to take your hand in marriage--

--SMACK@! We FREEZE FRAME ON: Robert Clark's FIST making contact with Clay Mason's JAW.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (sober, serious)
My name is Clay Mason and I'm an alcoholic.
 (a beat)
It's taken me my entire life to say those nine simple words...

UN-FREEZE: Clay's BODY falls to the ground, his head crashing directly atop a CERAMIC GARDEN GNOME, shattering it.

CLAY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...but sometimes the simplest words are the hardest to say.

CLOSE ON: The smiling face of the GNOME, whose POINTED HAT has successfully punctured the side of Clay's cheek.

FADE TO BLACK.

SOBERED UP

The classic guitar riff of FREE'S "All Right Now" drops as we FADE IN:

EXT. MEMORIAL DAY COOKOUT - **ABOUT A MONTH AGO** - DAY

CLAY MASON, full head of hair, and looking great, blends margaritas for friends and family at his father's summer house over-looking SAG HARBOR.

CLAY
(lifts blender like a foot-
ball)
And he's looking long... long...
can't find anybody and oooh, he
checks down.
(pours blender over
glasses)
It's a screen-pass.

A hot girl named JENNY smiles as she takes her margarita and walks over to her pretty friend, CLAIRE.

JENNY
Clay looks good.

CLAIRE
Yeah, well... you'd have better
luck taming Kiefer Sutherland.

They look over as Clay pantomimes what R-Kelly might look like giving a sex-ed demonstration. They shake their heads.

An older, impeccably-dressed gentlemen, BEN NEWTON, 70, approaches Clay with his TROPHY WIFE. -- Clay rearranges his posture. Responsible, as if he's meeting a dignitary.

CLAY
Mr. Newton. - I was just uh,
demonstrating to these heathens,
(motions to friends)
How not to behave when you've had
too much to drink.

Mr. Newton and his wife laugh.

MR. NEWTON
Well I gotta' tell you, Clay. This
is without-a-doubt, the best damn
margarita I've had outside Cabo San
Lucas. - What is your secret?

CLAY
Tequila.

They laugh.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 But speaking of secrets, sir. I've
 been meaning to ask...
 (charmingly takes his
 wife's hand, admires)
 What is yours?

Wife is flattered. Mr. Newton takes a moment to find an
 answer. He looks at his young hot wife.

MR. NEWTON
 Tequila.
 (they all laugh)
 Lots and lots of tequila.

CLAY
 Well in that case, how about a
 round of shots?

MR. NEWTON
 (cautious)
 I appreciate that, Clay. But if I'm
 gonna' make a toast at my grand-
 daughter's wedding tonight--

CLAY
 Good point, Mr. Newton. - Better
 make 'em doubles.

Clay reaches for the bottle of Patron. -- We move onto Clay's
 father, JACK MASON, 60s. Well-dressed, well spoken, but care-
 free. He is laughing with his business associate, MARVIN.

JACK
 And if that wasn't enough...
 (looks over at Clay)
 This lunatic almost gave his
 grandmother a stroke this morning.

MARVIN
 (chuckles)
 Is that right?

JACK
 (creates the scenario)
 Out she walks, first day a' summer,
 and there's her favorite grandson
 cathin' flies in the hammock -
 pants around his ankles - pecker
 'stiffer than Her Majesties'
 sceptor...
 (they laugh)
 Coulda' flown the flag off the damn
 thing.

MARVIN
(belly laughs, looks at
Clay)
'Junk yard dog just like his old
man.

Jack laughs proudly, as he looks to his son who is shaking
Mr. and Mrs. Newton's hands good-bye as they leave.

CLAY
(gracious)
Thanks again for coming. Best a'
luck on that speech tonight.

They nod, thank Clay, and walk to the car. -- Jack motions to
Clay.

JACK
Clayton!

Clay looks over. Jack playfully waves his empty glass.

JACK (CONT'D)
Get your priorities in order.

Clay nods, smiles, and pours tequila into the blender.

CLAY
I'm working on it.

We ZOOM ON Clay's pleasantly trashed EYES.

DISSOLVE TO:

Those same eyes, but now behind the shield of STYLISH
TORTOISESHELL READING GLASSES. -- An ELEVATOR DOOR opens.
Clay exits.

INT. LOBBY OF OFFICE - MORNING

The iconic logo of THE NEW YORKER magazine is emblazed on the
wall above the SECRETARIES' DESK. Her head perks up. -- Clay
enters, well put together. He pushes his glasses up.

SECRETARY
Oh hey Clay. Mitchell's waiting in
your office.

CLAY
Shit.

He hustles in.

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Clay enters. MITCHELL RYAN, late 30s, is leaned back in Clay's chair with his feet on his desk.

MITCHELL
Top of the morning to ya', buddy.
(looks at watch)
Just in time to catch the end of
Price is Right.

Clay opens ALKA-SELTZER and chews them like candy. Sips coffee, swishes it around, and swallows.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)
(disgusted)
Are you fuckin' serious?

CLAY
Tread lightly. It's been a rough
recovery from the long weekend.

MITCHELL
The long weekend that ended...
(looks at blackberry)
Four days ago?

CLAY
So says the man who's been working
from his Hampton's pad all week.

MITCHELL
(stands up, stern)
The key word here being 'working'.
(picks up magazine proof)
I read your little review of that
new bar, "Design". - We're gonna'
get death-threats if I print this.

CLAY
(at a loss)
What are they gonna' do? Throw a
molotov-cosmo through the window?

Clay looks for a laugh, but nothing. He defends, flustered.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Look, I'm sorry... but a *designer*
vodka bar? Was I that out of line?

Mitchell thinks for a beat, looks at article, and exhales.

MITCHELL

No. - In fact, you were so in line
that I'm choosing you over two
published authors and that prick
from Brown who skateboards to work.

Clay looks up, surprised: *You little dick...*

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Congrats, Mason. You're the new
restaurant and nightlife critic for
the most prestigious magazine in
the world.

Laughter. Sigh of relief. Clay looks at proof.

CLAY

Has Newton approved this?

MITCHELL

It's two paragraphs a week, pal. I
don't need Newton's blessing.

(chuckles)

But it was his idea.

(a beat, shakes head)

Bold move inviting the head of the
corporation to your backyard
barbecue... Nicely done.

CLAY

(proud of himself)

I don't know what to say?

MITCHELL

Well I'd love to waste more of my
day waiting around for ya'...

(looks at watch)

But I'm already late for lunch with
David Sedaris.

Mitchell walks out.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I'll have your assignments sent
over later.

(turns, grins)

And don't make me regret your new
expense account.

He winks and exits. Clay smiles.

CLAY

Come on. Who are you talking to?

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - **LATER THAT AFTERNOON**

There are congratulatory bottles of champagne and scotch on his desk that Clay happily enjoys directly from the bottle.

He looks over some papers and types information into the CALENDER on his computer.

TONIGHT: **Le Petit Cafe, 235 E. 4th St.**

SATURDAY: **Mom's B-Day -- Golf w/Dad @2 in Sag.**

Clay focuses on "MOM'S B-DAY" for a thoughtful second. He turns and looks out his window overlooking the city. He sips his scotch.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - EVENING

Clay walks down the street. He looks at the address in his Blackberry (that's held together with duct-tape) and looks up at LE PETIT CAFE. He walks in.

INT. LE PETIT CAFE - EVENING

It's a classic French Bistro. The MAITRE D does a double-take when he sees Clay.

MAITRE D

(French accent, playful)

Uh oh, here marks the beginning of
the end for us. Don't you still
have a tab open at my last bar?

Clay squints to jog his memory. He's got it.

CLAY

Eduard! It's been a while.

(looks around)

Is this your place?

They shake. Eduard looks around and nods.

EDUARD

For now, yes... How long it
remains, I suppose, is in your
hands now.

CLAY

Word must travel fast in the foodie
underworld. - Who told you I was a
critic?

A beat. Now Eduard is confused.

EDUARD

No, I was... talking about how long this would be my restaurant before you came in, drank everything in sight, and urinated atop someone's table in your undershorts.

Clay is slightly embarrassed/slightly honored by his rep.

EDUARD (CONT'D)

(arm around Clay, walks towards bar)

Tell me, Monsieur... What publication hires a restaurant critic who's been banned from ninety percent of the cities' restaurants?

CLAY

(devilish smile)

Well I guess you'll find out soon enough, won't you?

EDUARD

Avec plaisir.

Eduard calls to the bartender in rapid-fire French in a tone that sounds as if Clay is an old friend.

EDUARD (CONT'D)

Philippe!

(in French, subtitles)

This is the man that every restaurateur in town was alerted of today. - Start him off with a tasting of our best champagne and I'll take care of the rest.

Philip nods. Clay, oblivious to what he said, looks around.

HOLLY CLARK, the girl from the opening of the movie, sits in a stool next to him incredibly intrigued. -- Clay turns and catches her gaze, slightly taken aback, but also taken in.

CLAY

Uh... How's it goin'?

HOLLY

I take it you don't speak French?

CLAY
Why? Did he just defame my
character?

A clever smile forms on her face. She's gonna' have some fun.

HOLLY
So you have no idea what he just
said?

CLAY
No, because...
(*like I just said*)
I don't speak French.

HOLLY
Right...
(shrugs)
That's too bad.

She sips her drink and remains silent, ignoring him.

CLAY
Ok, now I wanna' know.

HOLLY
Well I don't know exactly, but...
(thinks)
Did you fuck his wife or something?

CLAY
(snarfs, bad French)
Pardonnez moi?

HOLLY
Sorry, forget I said anything. It's
just... I wouldn't put anything in
my mouth that comes out of that
kitchen if I were you.

A SMALL MEXICAN BUS-BOY emerges, drenched in sweat.

CLAY
(considers)
I don't know... That looks pretty
damn tasty.

She laughs.

HOLLY
You're disgusting.

CLAY
You started it.

He likes her. Philipe walks over, pops champagne.

PHILIPPE
For the Madame?

Clay turns: *For the madame?*

HOLLY
Oh... no... Thanks. I'm good.

She sips her drink.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I'll just have another Sprite.

CLAY
Sprite, eh? - You don't drink on
the job?

HOLLY
(confused)
Working? What are you talking
about?

Clay steps back... totally mis-read the situation.

CLAY
Oh, I was supposed to meet a, uh...
(leans in, discrete)
Escort. - I thought maybe you
were...
(looks around,
embarrassed)
Sorry for wasting your time.

She wasn't expecting that one. Her eyes widen. Clay grins.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I'm just fuckin' with you.

She laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)
I'm Clay.

HOLLY
Holly.

They shake.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
So tell me something, Clay. - Why
was every restaurateur in town
alerted of you today?

He's confused, but looks over at Eduard and then back to her. He puts it all together and smiles. He holds his glass of fancy champagne, and sniffs and twirls it like he expects someone in his position to do just before answering that very question. -- But she beats him to it.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Lemme' guess... You're some hot-shot wine dickhead?

He spits his champagne back into his glass and laughs.

CLAY
Wine dickhead... I need to remember that.
(puts glass down)
Trust me, I'm not.
(to Philipe)
Hey Philly-boy, can I get a Maker's up?

Philipe nods. Clay turns to Holly.

CLAY (CONT'D)
You sure I can't get you anything?

HOLLY
No, thanks though.
(looks at watch, looks around)
I'm actually meeting someone.

Clay is a bit taken back by that: *Uhhhh...*

CLAY
So what am I, your warm-up?

Holly laughs. Almost feels bad.

HOLLY
Oh my God, no. Nothing like that--

CLAY
Na', na' na'. I see how it is...

Clay nods and smooths out the awkwardness this way:

CLAY (CONT'D)
I'll tell you what, sweet-heart. --
I'm gonna' go drain the liz... and
if I come back and you're still
here, I'll know you're my girl. --
If not, I'll know ya' aint.
Cappice?

She takes a moment to process that earful and smiles.

HOLLY

You had me at drain the liz.

He chuckles and walks towards the bathroom.

EXT. LE PETIT CAFE - NIGHT

A YELLOW CAB pulls up to the restaurant and ROBERT CLARK steps out. He sees holly in the window. She perks up. Waves. -
- He walks inside and through the window we see them hug.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Clay zips up and looks at himself in the mirror. He cuts his losses and sips a flask from his back pocket. *Oh well.*

INT. LE PETIT CAFE - NIGHT

Clay walks through the restaurant and shakes his head when he sees Holly engaged in conversation with an older man. He casually takes his Makers and shoots her a look: *Really?*

HOLLY

Dad, that's the guy that thought I was a hooker.

Robert stands slowly. A no bull-shit look on his face.

ROBERT

Robert Clark. Retired General,
United States Marine Corps.

CLAY

(steps back)

No, I, uh, I mean I did but...

(to Holly)

I thought we established the
humorous nature of--

ROBERT

Why would you ever think that was
funny, son?

HOLLY

(tries to diffuse)

Dad, relax. It's Ok, I was just--

Robert smiles and turns to Holly.

ROBERT
Did you see his face? I thought he
was gonna' have a constitution in
his drawers.

CLAY
I think I just did.

They laugh. Clay offers a casual salute.

HOLLY
At ease, Clay. He's not really a
marine.

A WAITER comes over and motions that their table is ready.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
(to Clay)
Sorry we can't chat longer, but if
you're ever on the Upper East Side,
stop into my shop for a scone.

She hands him a BUSINESS CARD: THE COOK SHOP - HOLLY CLARK -
OWNER/BAKER.

CLAY
Thanks... I love scones.

He shakes her hand and then Robert's.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Pleasure to meet you.

ROBERT
You too, Clint. Take care of
yourself.

HOLLY
(smiles, flirtatious)
Nice meeting you too... *Clint*.

She winks and smiles as they walk to their table. Clay looks
at the business card. There is an ARROW to flip-over. She's
written: **In case my Dad showed up before you could ask:**
Holly: 585-410-5246.

Clay downs his drink, grabs a TWENTY from his wallet and
walks over to Eduard.

EDUARD
Everything alright, Monsieur?

CLAY
This place is great.
(hands bill and motions to
Holly and Robert)
Take good care of that table and
I'll have this place packed for
months.

Eduard looks over and sees Holly. He nods and understands.

EDUARD
Of course, Monsieur.

Clay leaves.

EXT. LE PETIT CAFE - NIGHT

Clay walks outside and hails a cab. The door opens and Peter Gabriel's SOLSBURY HILL is blasting. He chuckles.

CLAY
Nice.

He gets in.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Reade Street Pub. Greenwich and
Hudson. -- And turn this shit up.

The Indian Cabby nods as Clay nips his flask. Peter Gabriel scores this very un-Peter Gabriel MONTAGE: *Climbin' up on Solsbury Hill*.

--Clay enters the SEEDY NYC PUB to welcoming cheers. Clearly a local hero here. Without asking, a shot is slid his way.

--Holly and Robert sit at the table as six waiters give them VIP service.

--Clay is now at the DIGITAL JUKE BOX. He slides a TWENTY in and hits SOLSBURY HILL over and over again.

--Holly and Robert talk and laugh... both hold their stomachs as desert comes.

--Clay is at the bar. The song ends and immediately begins again.

ANGRY BAR PATRON
Come on! Play a different song!

CLAY
 (turns, drunk)
 My money. My music. Your music? Put
 money. This is a free country.
 (singing)
 My heart goin' BOOM BOOM BOOM!

--The tab arrives and Holly opens it: \$29.00. She shakes her head and smiles.

HOLLY
 I got it, Dad.

--Clay is back at the juke-box as a FRAT GUY is being restrained by his friends from kicking his ass. -- Clay is egged on by his pals at the bar, laughing.

CLAY'S PAL
 (wise-ass)
 Clay, 'that juke-box have any Peter
 Gabriel in it?

Clay smiles and hits "Play Next" over and over again.

--Holly sets her alarm for **4:30AM** and gets into bed. -- Her Dad sacks out on the couch.

--Clay is tossed out of the bar with his shirt around his head. Solsbury Hill can be heard blaring.

CLAY
 Dude, deal. It's just urine.

The door slams. Clay gets up and stumbles down the street.

--The sun comes up as Holly raises the gate to THE COOK SHOP.
 -- Her Dad works on repairing broken A/C as she begins baking.

--Clay is now in CHINATOWN, playing checkers with an Asian guy as he drinks a 40. The Asian Man wants Clay to "King him", but Clay refuses.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 King this.

He slides his arm across the table, knocking all the checkers to the ground.

--Clay reaches for his wallet at a bodega and HOLLY'S NUMBER falls out. He looks at it. Smiles.

--Holly's PHONE vibrates atop her purse, but she's too busy baking to notice. MISSED CALL. It immediately vibrates again.

--Clay sits in an alley leaving a message into phone. A CHINESE WOMAN screams at him from a window, in Chinese!

CLAY (CONT'D)
 (into phone, drunker)
 So if you're still out, call me.
 Bring your pops. Let's get butt-
 faced! - Hold on.
 (to screaming Chinese
 woman, he yells)
 Can you stop singing please?

She continues screaming in frantic Chinese.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 That's it, I'm callin' the cops.
 (into phone)
 I'll call you back, Molly.

--Holly behind the counter. Nobody is coming in.

--Clay is on a park bench talking on the phone next to a HOMELESS BLACK WOMAN.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 (into phone, even drunker)
 I'm just really glad I met you. -
 So get over here! Let's get a
 mimosa! - Bring scones!
 (turns to Black Woman)
 You wanna' say hi?
 (into phone)
 Here Holly, say hi to Hot Dog.

He hands "Hot Dog" the phone.

"HOT DOG"
 (into phone)
 'Sup girl. This 'Hot Dog. Your
 boyfriend here is fuckin' crazy
 fucked up.

--Holly hands out samples on the street. People thank her, but keep on her way. Her phone VIBRATES on her purse again.

PETER GABRIEL: *Hey, I said, you can pack my things they've come to take me home.*

FADE TO BLACK.

CONCERNED WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Ugh. It smells like low-tide in
 here...
 (MORE)

CONCERNED WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(startled)
Honey, is that Clay?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - **FADE IN** - MORNING

A YUPPY COUPLE, off for a jog, race down the hallway to where Clay lays passed-out, using his pants as a blanket.

YUPPY MAN
(shakes him)
Clay? Clay? You with us, Mason?
(Clay mumbles)
Atta' boy. Time to get up.

Clay's eyes flicker open. They are completely blood-shot.

YUPPY WOMAN
Should we call an ambulance?

YUPPY MAN
This is nothing. We just gotta' get
him into bed.

He rummages through Clay's pockets to find his keys.

YUPPY WOMAN
Honey, look.

She motions to a DOOR KNOB. There is a KEY in the lock, but it's Clay's TINY MAIL-BOX KEY. They can't help but chuckle as they remove the key-chain and walk two doors down the hall to put the correct key in the correct lock.

She opens the door as he lifts Clay. Clay comes-to a bit and scratches his head as he looks at the Yuppy Man.

CLAY
Oh, hey Billy.

She whispers to her boyfriend.

YUPPY WOMAN
Who's Billy?

YUPPY MAN
No clue.
(to Clay)
Come on, Clay. Up n' at 'em.

They walk him into his apartment that is actually really nice with an amazing view of the HUDSON RIVER.

CLAY
Where am I?

YUPPY MAN
You're home, Clay.

CLAY
Oh...
(looks around)
Thanks, Billy.

He walks over and falls face down onto his bed.

YUPPY MAN
Don't mention it.
(turns to girlfriend)
Now do you see why I didn't want to
set him up with your sister?

She looks at Clay. She feels bad for him.

YUPPY WOMAN
Poor thing...

A beat.

Clay farts.

EXT. SAG HARBOR GOLF CLUB - DAY

Jack Mason is on a golf-cart, talking into cell-phone.

JACK
(into phone)
Clay? Where are you, bud? It's Dad.
Tee-time's in five and we don't
wanna' lose our spot.

EXT. THE COOK SHOP - AFTERNOON

Holly turns the sign: SORRY, WE'RE CLOSED. Robert helps her
close the gate. He can tell she's bummed.

ROBERT
It's gonna' work, Holls.

She nods. She looks at her phone: 17 NEW VOICE-MAILS. She's
concerned and checks them. CLOSE ON: Her shocked face.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun is going down as Jack replaces the flag at HOLE 18. He looks around, not pissed, but a little concerned.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clay is snoring. We TIME LAPSE through the night as he shifts in bed and the sun rises a brand new day. -- His eyes open and he looks over at the clock: **11 AM**

CLAY

Shit!

He grabs a towel and races to the bathroom.

EXT. SAG HARBOR TRAIN STATION - DAY

Clay gets off the train, cleaned up in his golf-gear, his bag over his shoulder as he walks into the village of Sag Harbor, sipping on a roadie.

EXT. JACK MASON'S HOUSE - DAY

Jack sits on the porch reading the paper in a BLACK SILK ROBE.

CLAY (O.S.)

Hey Benihana, get dressed.

Jack looks over the paper. Sees Clay and stands, concerned.

JACK

What the hell happened to you?

CLAY

Me?

(re: black robe)

Since when do you practice Wiccan?

JACK

(humor lost)

I called you five... six times...
didn't you get my messages?

Clay pulls out his Blackberry with duct-tape on it.

CLAY

Oh, Dad, I'm sorry... I woke up and
my phone was dead. Let's talk on
the way. We're gonna' be late.

A beat. Jack is trying to process.

JACK
We're not playing today.

CLAY
We have a 2 O'Clock tee-time. I confirmed is yesterday.

JACK
Yeah, for Saturday. - It's Sunday.
The course is closed for a tournament.

Clay drops his bag. Dumb-struck.

CLAY
I feel awful... I... thought we were playing...
(searches for plausible excuse)
Today.

JACK
Clay, your mom's birthday was yesterday. How could you possibly mix that date up?

Clay looks at the front page of the SUNDAY TIMES. Swallows.

CLAY
Dad, I'm so sorry. I... I got that promotion I was telling you about... I had to work and...
(looks at phone)
This phone's a piece a' shit... I must have just...

Jack is clearly pissed, but he lets it slide.

JACK
Well hey, you got the new job. That's great news, kiddo.
(a beat)
To hell with golf. You're here now... Yanks game's about to start... I'll get a batch of bloodies going and we'll look towards the bright future, eh?

Clay has a totally dejected look on his face.

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE AT NEW YORKER - DAY

Clay sits at his desk working. He's wearing his reading glasses that make him look too smart to be a mess. He kicks back and ponders HOLLY'S BUSINESS CARD. He taps it on his desk, thinking.

He's nervous... bites his lip... He takes a deep breath and picks up the phone, but is saved by the Mitch.

MITCHELL

My lunch just cancelled... Steak
and martinis at the Rainbow Room?

CLAY

God, yes.

Clay hangs up the phone, leans back, huge exhale of relief.

INT. THE RAINBOW ROOM - DAY

They sit at a table next to the window overlooking the city. We catch them in mid-laughter sipping their martinis.

CLAY

...that same Hampton's pad that I
still haven't been invited to.

Mitchell searches for a chummy excuse.

MITCHELL

Listen pal, I'd love to have you
out. But Andrea's into this, like,
perfect life, get your house
profiled in magazine's bull-shit.

CLAY

(laughs)

What's that supposed to mean?

MITCHELL

You know what it means.

CLAY

Come on. That was six years ago.

MITCHELL

It was a tough image to shake,
Mason. - You sixty-nining a caterer
at our wedding reception doesn't
exactly make for an ideal
centerfold in "Better Homes".

They laugh. Mitchell sips his martini and admires it.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

God! Why do martinis always taste
the best when you're not supposed
to be drinking them?

CLAY

(sips)

Lunch has always been the right
time for me.

MITCHELL

I concur. - Three martinis at *home*?
Wifey looks at me like I just
crawled out of a needle exchange.

This strikes a chord with Clay, as if the remote concept of
"settling down" has been a lingering thought.

CLAY

Really? She's changed that much?

MITCHELL

It was gradual...

(runs down the list)

First came the yoga, and that was
fine - But then I woke up one day
and everything in the house was
free-range...

(Clay laughs)

Christ, even my kid's diapers are
grass-fed.

Clay laughs. Sips.

CLAY

And what do diapers have to do with
martinis?

MITCHELL

More than you'd think.

(a beat)

There's just not a lot of room left
over in Andrea's *Brave New World*
for my cynical martini-laced...

(searches)

Vibe.

Clay gets it and this troubles him.

CLAY

So you guys really don't cut loose
anymore?

MITCHELL

Sure we do...

(looks on bright side)

I mean, we split a bottle a' red
when we watched Hurt Locker, but in
all honesty...

(raises martini glass and
reflects upon it)

You appreciate the sun a lot more
when it's not always shining.

(he sips, *ahhh*)

Believe it or not, I heard that in
a yoga class.

Clay chuckles and looks outside at the sunny day.

CLAY

Well then here's to sunny days.

Mitchell nods. They drink.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE ACROSS TOWN - DAY

Holly sits having lunch across from her girlfriend, KRISTEN,
30s. Kristen is trying desperately to tame her misbehaving 5
and 6 year old kids who are playing with their food.

KRISTEN

Keep this up and I'm dropping you
both off in the Bronx on our way
home.

Holly laughs. Kristen returns to the conversation.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

Well you're getting your number
changed and that's all there is to
it.

HOLLY

He hasn't called back. I think he
got the point.

KRISTEN

But you need to get the point. You
seem to have an irresistible
compulsion towards these high-risk
lunatics...

(she sips her wine)

(MORE)

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

And I know what you went through with your father - But you're way too smart - and pretty - to be a cliché that's drivin' by a need to nurture fuck-ups.

HOLLY

Eloquently put.

(she thinks)

There was something about him. He was the first guy I've met in a while that didn't take himself retardedly serious.

KRISTEN

Oh, well, believe me, that much is clear. I've heard those messages and if that's the kind of guy you're looking for - congrats - You found your Yoda.

HOLLY

(laughs)

No, I know... I just--

KRISTEN

You just wanted to take in a rescue. But all you have to do is go to the kill-shelter and adopt one. - Believe me, they're a lot easier to tame than the ones that come in human form.

(to kid)

Don't fuck with me, Julian.

Holly laughs.

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - DAY

He's chilled after a good martini session as he looks over his notes. He thinks and smiles as he types under the heading: LE PETIT CAFE... **Do you ever wish you spoke French?**

He looks up at Holly's card and smiles.

He picks up the phone. Dials.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE ACROSS TOWN - DAY

Holly's phone vibrates on the table. She looks at it: *Uh oh.*

KRISTEN
Give me the phone.

HOLLY
I'm not going to answer.

KRISTEN
Give me - the phone.
(she answers, mock polite)
Hey Clay!

INTERCUT TO CLAY: He's slightly confused.

CLAY
Uh, hey. How did you know it was me?

KRISTEN
It's this neat-o new phone app that leaves a certain impression when a desperate maniacal low-life calls someone seventeen times in the middle of the night.
(a beat)
That's right, loser. - Never call this number ever again.

Clay swallows nervously: *What the hell is this?*

CLAY
Is this Holly?

KRISTEN
No, mother-fucker. This is Kristen.
-- Oh, and if you happen to bump into Hot Dog, please send her my very warmest regards.

She hangs up. A beat.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)
(polite, to waiter)
Could I get another Chardonay please?

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - DAY

He looks at his phone like it'll detonate if he touches it. He scrolls through his CALL LOG: Office, office, Dad, missed-call, and then endless calls within minutes to 585-410-5249. - His face is white like he just saw a ghost -- A WOMAN walks past his office door. He looks up and clears his throat.

CLAY
Uh, Sharon?

She stops and pops her head in, clearly in a rush.

SHARON
What's up, Clay?

Clay thinks: *How best to put this?*

CLAY
Let me ask you something.
(casually creates the
scenario)
A guy you just met drunk-dials you
seventeen times in a night. --
Would there be any way that you
could ever see him as anything
other than a complete psychopath?

SHARON
Uh...
(clucks tongue three times
to think)
No.
(a beat)
Anything else?

CLAY
No. That's it, thanks.

She hustles off. -- The camera pulls back outside the window,
until Clay's becomes just one in a million little cages
containing New Yorkers with a problem.

CAT STEVENS: *Another Saturday Night and I aint got nobody...*

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Clay knocks a ball down the fair-way. His Dad follows it,
smiles and tosses him a cold can of beer.

INT. READE STREET PUB - NIGHT

A group of SOCCER HOOLIGANS are standing at the end of the
bar doing a count-off and back-and-forth rowing motion.

SOCCER HOOLIGANS
One... Two... Three...

The camera moves back as they slide Clay down the bar, shirtless and some-how oiled up, crashing pint-glasses over. He flies off the end of the bar. They all laugh.

...if I don't find a honey to help me spend my money, I'm gonna' have to blow this town.

Clay emerges, arms-raised. A perfect 10. They cheer.

AN HOUR LATER: Clay is tossed out of the bar, soaking wet.

INT. NYC BODEGA - NIGHT

Clay, trashed, ponders a cooler filled with 40s. But this time he debates. He grabs a GIANT WATER instead.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He stands at his bed, pounds the water, and crashes.

..How I wish I had someone to talk to... I'm in an awful way.

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - MORNING

He removes two ALKA-SELTZER tabs and chews them. Then a nip of his flask, a sip of coffee, swishes and swallows. -- A really annoying eager-beaver intern-girl, TAMMY, walks past his office holding a BOX.

TAMMY
(mouth-full)
Hey, Clay. You want a bran-muffin?

Clay covers his mouth.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
Are you OK?

CLAY
I'm fine, Tammy. I just can't think of anything more revolting right now than a bran-muffin.
(looks up, eyes blood-shot)
Please don't take it personally.

TAMMY
Oh, sorry...
(she looks in box, finds renewed enthusiasm)
How about a raisin custard tort--

CLAY
How 'bout some diaper-shit? You got
any diaper-shit torts--

He holds his stomach. *Ugh*. Points to the door.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Out... outoutoutoutoutout.

She quickly paces down the hall as we hear the sound of
vomiting from his office.

INT. NEW YORKER LOBBY - **A FEW HOURS LATER**

Clay walks in, laughing with Mitchell. Looking fresh.

MITCHELL
I told you you'd feel better after
a Turkish bath and a bottle a' bub.

Clay nods and they part ways. He passes the COFFEE/KITCHEN
AREA and sees Tammy doing intern tasks. Clay stops and enters
with a charming smile and his glasses on. Ready to make good.

CLAY
Offer still stand for that bran-
muffin?

TAMMY
Uh, you sure you can handle it?

CLAY
Come on... I don't let a little
morning sickness get between me and
my bran. You know that, Tammy.

She smiles. She opens the box and hands him a bran-muffin.
Clay takes a bite, chews and admires muffin.

CLAY (CONT'D)
That's fuckin' delicious. Bran-
muffins usually taste like--

TAMMY
Diaper-shit?

CLAY
(laughs)
Yeah. Exactly.
(chews more, impressed)
Where'd these come from?

TAMMY
My sister's bakery.
(clever)
Why? Think you might want to review
it?

Clay pauses a moment as if sets in what he's capable of.

TAMMY (CONT'D)
She would love you forever.

CLAY
It's not called the Cook Shop, is
it?

TAMMY
No. Brantastic.

CLAY
(nods)
I'll see what I can do.

Clay exits and walks towards his ASSISTANT.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Can you find out if anyone's
written any compelling pieces about
a bakery called the Cook Shop?

She nods. Clay enters his OFFICE. -- A moment later his
assistant walks in.

ASSISTANT
There's nothing in any significant
print. Just a few Yelps.

CLAY
Yelps?

ASSISTANT
You know, Citysearch... random
stuff people write...
(looks down at print-out)
"Stopped here to use the toilet,
which was squeaky clean"... "best
muffins I saw were on the chick
behind the counter"... "Bummed to
hear they might be closing", this
last one says.

Clay smiles.

CLAY
 Go up and bring me a sample of
 everything they got.
 (hands cash)
 I need this back before three.

She nods, takes the cash and leaves.

THAT NIGHT: Clay samples a plethora of treats as he writes.

INT. THE COOK SHOP - **ABOUT A WEEK LATER** - MORNING

Holly is in the basement working. Her employee, JESSE, races downstairs out of breath. Can't believe it.

HOLLY
 Did we get robbed?

JESSE
 (shakes head)
 I need your help. We've got like a
huge morning rush.

HOLLY
 What?

Holly follows Jesse upstairs. The place is slammed with people from all walks of life. She races behind the counter.

FLASH FORWARD: A variety of New Yorkers place orders.

LOUD NEW YORK GUY
 Yeah, lemme get five-a-dem wild
 berry scone thingies...

--A CONSTRUCTION GUY:

CONSTRUCTION GUY
 (mouth full, impressed)
 You bake da cream-cheese right *inta-*
da-bagel?

--TWO OLD JEWISH WOMEN:

JEWISH WOMAN
 We read ya' article in the New
 Yorka' and came all the way from
 Lynnbrook.

ZOOM ON: Holly's face.

HOLLY
 Did you just say The New Yorker?

--It's a bit later and things have chilled a bit. Jesse walks in laughing and reading *The New Yorker*.

JESSE

You're not gonna' believe this...

(reads)

Despite sounding a little too much like DEA slang for a meth-lab, new kid on the block The Cook Shop might as well be, that's how deliciously addictive their--

--Holly grabs the magazine. She looks: *THE COOK SHOP HEATS THINGS UP* by Clay Mason.

HOLLY

You gotta' be kidding me.

She looks at the classic cover: *THE NEW YORKER*. She can't deny it. She's impressed.

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - **A FEW DAYS LATER** - EVENING

Clay is kicked back, drinking a beer, bs'ing with Mitch.

CLAY

...and it took three bouncers to get this lunatic outa' there...
I've got a very simple solution for getting kicked out of a New York City bar...

(as if it's the most logical answer)

...I go to the one next door.

Mitch laughs. A SECRETARY chimes in on Clay's intercom as Clay sips his beer.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

Hey Clay. There's a Holly Clark here to see you.

But he doesn't spray his beer, he just gulps and gulps until it's gone. A nervous look in his eye.

CLAY

(rapid, into intercom)

Is she with a cop or a detective?
Someone who looks like a cop or a FED? Or someone named Kristen? Or a dude named Robert that looks like a skinnier, white Danny Trejo?

SECRETARY (O.S.)
 (slight chuckle)
*Uh, I don't think so, should I ask
 if she's expecting a guest--*

CLAY
 --No. Just give me a sec.

Clay bites his lip as he thinks. He picks up their empties and puts them in the trash.

MITCHELL
 What the hell are you mixed up in,
 Mason?

CLAY
 It's a long story... Depending on
 how this goes, I'll tell you if I
 have an ending.

MITCHELL
 Never a dull moment, Clay.

He exits. Clay looks over at some unopened dress-shirts on his couch. He reaches for one.

FLASH FORWARD: Clay is leaned back in his chair, looking out the window, a brand-new shirt on with visible crease-folds.

HOLLY
 Is Hot Dog chained up?

Clay shuts his eyes and exhales. He turns in his chair.

CLAY
 (into intercom)
 Julie, can you make sure that Miss
 Dog is properly restrained in the
 storage closet...

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Excuse me?--

CLAY
 Could you see if we have any Sprite
 in the kitchen for Miss Clark?

HOLLY
 (smiles)
 I'm surprised you remembered.
 (takes note of Clay's
 creased-shirt)
 Nice shirt.

Clay looks down. Sees the creases. Rationalizes.

CLAY
Yup... I have my cleaner give me
that... *new-shirt* look.

She nods and diverts the awkwardness as she looks along the wall that has FRAMED NEW YORKER CARTOONS. She reads one.

HOLLY
(smiles)
Are these yours?

CLAY
Sort of. - You know that contest in
the back of the magazine where you
send in your best cartoon caption?

HOLLY
(amused)
You won that?

CLAY
A few times... That's how I got
here.

HOLLY
As a cartoonist?

CLAY
I can't draw worth shit. They just
brought me on board to help out
when the cartoonists have...
cartoonist block, I guess.

The secretary enters and hands Holly her Sprite.

HOLLY
Thanks...
(looks around, impressed)
So you became a staff-writer at the
New Yorker... by accident?

CLAY
Story of my life.
(motions to sofa)
Have a seat.

HOLLY
No, I can't stay. I just came to
give you this...
(hands bakery box)
Thanks to you I have to get back
and train my new night-staff.

Clay opens the box and looks in: *Smells good*. He closes it.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
 According to you, they're the *best*
reason to go above 14th Street
since Central Park.
 (Clay smiles. She looks at
 her watch)
 But I really have to get going--

CLAY
 (stands)
 At least let me walk you out.

She hesitates. He puts on his linen-blazer and his beat-up leather messenger bag over his shoulder.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 Come on. I'm leaving anyway.

She nods. He leads her out and shuts his light off.

EXT. ELEVATOR DOOR - **OPENING** - EVENING

Clay and Holly exit the packed elevator and walk through the crowded CONDE NAST LOBBY.

CLAY
 Look, I wish I had any recollection
 of leaving those - what I'm sure
 were - very frightening messages...
 but I don't.

HOLLY
 I believe you.

CLAY
 I'd just gotten a promotion... one
 thing led to another... I bumped
 into some old friends...

They enter the REVOLVING DOOR and EXIT onto the SIDEWALK:

HOLLY
 Ah yes, the screaming Chinese
 people -- This is your posse?

Clay stops and looks around the BUSY NYC STREET.

CLAY
 Wild nights, Holly.
 (she stops)
 Van Morrison sings about 'em.
 (MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

The new job. You seemed like a nice cherry on top. Sweet Peter Gabriel song in the cab. One too many shots on an empty stomach... the invention of the cell phone, but come on...

(lays it down)

Haven't you ever drunk dialed anyone before?

She snarfs: *So we're calling it drunk-dialing???*

HOLLY

Sure I've put my foot in my mouth, but your messages were hardly...

(she thinks, exhales, chuckles slightly)

Look, I don't drink.

Clay fumbles on that one for a moment and makes an involuntary Deniro expression. He coughs.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

I know that's hard for people to wrap their heads around, but--

CLAY

So you don't drink anymore? Or you don't drink because you don't drink?

HOLLY

I don't drink because I can't drink.

CLAY

(perplexed)

Can't?

HOLLY

Did you ever see *The Fly*?

CLAY

Twice.

HOLLY

Well that's not far off from what too many copper enzymes do with anything stronger than red meat.

Clay nods and thinks.

CLAY

You turn into Jeff Goldblum?

She laughs, but lays it down:

HOLLY

Clay, I don't mind drunk people.
And I'm not here to judge, believe
me. - But your...

(searches for right word)

Level of intensity, is just
something I really don't wanna' be
around anymore.

A beat. This hurts. -- Holly shrugs and walks to the street.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

She raises her hand to hail a taxi. A cab stops. She opens
the back door. Clay follows after.

CLAY

No, I'm sorry.

(she stops)

The night got a little out of hand
and I probably thought I was being
funny, and that in some ass-
backwards way you'd find it
charming...

(a beat, she didn't)

But, Holly. That's not me.

(scout's honor)

If anything, I'm a couple long-
necks, let's see what's On-Demand
kinda' guy.

(holds door open)

And I'd really like to show you
that.

HOLLY

I believe you're not a mental-
case... and what you did for me was
very, very nice. But--

CAB DRIVER

Clock's tickin', honey.

CLAY

(to cabby, direct)

Chill.

(to Holly)

Come on, let's start over. No
Chinese people. No Hot Dog... Just
a quiet dinner. - Low intensity.

She half-smiles.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 If you change your mind, you can
 call me.
 (he hands card)
 If I don't hear from you, I'll
 understand...
 (clever smile)
 But I will be forced to do a cover-
 story on the Cook Shop.

She considers.

HOLLY
 It does sound like a Meth Lab,
 doesn't it?

He grins. She takes the card and puts it in her purse. --
 Clay shuts the door and waves as it drives off. -- CLOSE ON
 HIS FACE: An expression of uncertainty.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - **A FEW NIGHT LATER** - NIGHT

Clay, cleaned up and looking sharp for a date, paces around
 his apartment nervously. He ponders his liquor stash, but
 instead opens his fridge for a long-neck. -- He checks
 himself out in the mirror -- messes with his hair a bit --
 changes a few different shirts -- A tight v-neck sweater with
 no under-shirt, metro-look. Flexes "Blue Steel".

CLAY
 No fuckin' way.

He laughs, takes it off and grabs an old polo-shirt. -- He
 walks to the fridge for another beer, but stops, slams the
 fridge door and looks in the mirror. Shadow boxes.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 You can do this, champ.

He grabs his keys and exits the apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Clay walks out and sees the YUPPY COUPLE who helped him into
 his apartment last week. He's a little awkward without a buzz
 and they're a little awkward, well, because it's awkward.

CLAY
 Hey, Billy.

The couple look at each other: *Who the hell is Billy?*

CLAY (CONT'D)
 Listen, I'm in a rush, but...
 (looks for words, snaps
 finger, he's got it)
 Enjoy your night.

Clay turns and walks out. They roll their eyes.

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

Clay walks down a bustling West Village street towards a BUSY RESTAURANT... all sidewalk seating at capacity. His phone VIBRATES in his pocket and he looks.

TEXT FROM HOLLY: **2 hour wait at that spot. At cool spot two blocks away - Polcino's - Love this place!**

Clay thinks: *Polcino's... Polcino's...* He gets it.

CLAY
 Fuck - me.

He paces quickly down the street.

INT. POLCINO'S - NIGHT

Holly sits at the bar in a restaurant that couldn't be more chill. Clay enters, takes a cautious look around, but nobody seems to notice him. He sees Holly and tries to find charm.

CLAY
 Hey...

He kisses her cheek.

HOLLY
 Hey yourself... Have you ever been here?

CLAY
 (looking around)
 I don't *think* so...
 (nods, approves)
 But I'm into it.

The BARTENDER walks out from the kitchen and does a double-take when he sees Clay. He shakes his head.

BARTENDER
 No... Absolutely not.

HOLLY
(turns)
Excuse me?

BARTENDER
(to Clay, disbelief)
You've got some big balls showing
your face around here.

CLAY
(slight recognition)
Wait, how do I know you?

BARTENDER
Don't play dumb with me, tiny-
dancer.

Holly's confused. Clay takes a deep breath and tries to figure out the best way to play this one.

CLAY
Come on... It was just a, uh...
pick-up basketball game. You're not
still--

Bartender picks up a WOODEN CLUB.

BARTENDER
Out!

Holly grabs her purse.

HOLLY
Come on. Let's just go.

CLAY
(looks back)
It was just a pick-up game, man.

BARTENDER
Pick up game? What the hell's the--

CLAY
Just a pick-up game.

They walk out. The bartender shakes his head. A WAITRESS approaches confused. She looks out the window.

WAITRESS
Isn't that the guy that tried to
fight Elton John when he refused to
sing a duet with him?

The bartender looks over at a PIANO in the corner with missing keys and a cracked-top.

BARTENDER
(pissed)
Yeah.

OUTSIDE: Holly looks to Clay with breathless confusion.

HOLLY
This is low-intensity?

Clay laughs it off and tells his version of the story.

CLAY
This bozo's still cryin' about some
b-ball game from years ago. I
blocked a shot. He called foul, but
these black-dudes on my team almost
knifed him.
(shrugs)
Technically, it was a foul, but you
know... that's street-ball.

HOLLY
Why did he call you tiny dancer?

A beat. *Good question.*

CLAY
It was my nick-name on the courts.

She shakes her head and exhales. *Not so sure...* Clay is a little nervous, but he wipes his forehead and smiles.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Now let me ask you something,
Holly.
(a beat)
Do you like pulled-pork?

How can she not be charmed?

EXT. BUBBY'S RESTAURANT TRIBECA - NIGHT

Clay and Holly enter. The bartenders and waitresses all smile and greet Clay with open arms as he introduces Holly.

FLASH FORWARD: Clay exits the bathroom and walks towards Holly who sits at a table in the laid-back southern-themed restaurant. Clay starts doing something animated with his hands, like he's making an invisible snow-ball. She laughs.

CLAY

(picks up where he left
off)

But nobody told me you're supposed
to pass the ball. So I got kind of
a bad-vibe from the glow-stick
mafia for being some kind of
invisible ball-hog raver.

(she laughs)

It just wasn't my thing.

HOLLY

Well I wasn't exactly a made-member
of the glow-stick mafia... It's
just what my friends did.

The waitress comes over and looks at their empty glasses.

WAITRESS

Another round of lemonades?

They both nod.

CLAY

I told you it was amazing.

She smiles. Thinks.

HOLLY

You know, you can drink if you want
to. I'm not Betty Ford.

CLAY

(leans back, considers)

Of course... But it's a school
night.

HOLLY

Ok, good.

(she thinks)

You seemed a little jumpy earlier
pushing the lemonade on me, school
boy.

CLAY

(*what can I say...*)

First date jitters.

She nods. There's a brief silence. Clay nods to a beat going
on in his head and starts: *untce, untce, untce, untce* as he
forms the invisible ball and passes it. She takes it and
explodes with laughter as Clay starts moving like that girl
in that old annoying car commercial.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(singing)

Just breath...

(they laugh)

I can't believe you were into that rave shit.

(she nods)

Could your copper enzymes process the E, the K, the G or whatever other letters the kids were snorting back then?

HOLLY

(laughs)

No. I just danced. It was really fun.

(makes a point)

I don't doubt I missed out on some wild nights like Van Morrison sings about...

(Clay laughs)

But it wasn't an option. -- So I had to find alternatives.

CLAY

Alternatives?

HOLLY

Painting... hiking... getting banged-out by the hockey team.

Clay nods casually.

CLAY

(*and...*)

Baking.

She laughs and nods.

CLAY (CONT'D)

You know I used to play hockey, right?

HOLLY

I'm kidding, Clay. But just because I wasn't blacked out at parties doesn't mean I was an angel.

Clay chews his food and thinks.

CLAY

(bad Steven Tyler)

You're my aaaaaangel... come and save me tonight... ight... ight...

She shakes her head and laughs. He wipes his mouth with a napkin, stands, smiles and excuses himself.

HOLLY
Drain the liz?

He nods.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Cool... Can you take Steven Tyler
with you?

He laughs and walks towards the bathroom and makes eye-contact with the bartender who nods, indicating some type of sketchy pre-arrangement.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - NIGHT

Clay whistles "Angel" as he pees into the toilet. He casually lifts his hand up to the shelf above the john. He feels around. The camera moves up: There are THREE GLASSES. Two already empty that he's already knocked back, and one full. He grabs the full one and gulps it down.

CLAY
(Al Pacino impression)
Hoo-ahh.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Holly sits looking out the window. She sees something peculiar sliding towards her in the reflection. She turns, stunned, as Clay MOON-WALKS almost better than Michael Jackson through the tables. He twists, does that leg-shake, stands on his toes, pulls up his pants, dips his head.

CLAY
Who's Bad?

Tables and staff clap and laugh. It was too perfect to be embarrassing and Clay's clearly on his home-turf.

HOLLY
Part of me wants to hit you right now, but that was without-a-doubt one of the best moon-walks I have ever seen.

CLAY
(sips lemonade, smiles)
Wait 'til you see my dolphin.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens and they both walk in, laughing. She looks around. The place is so big with amazing views of the city.

HOLLY
Whoa! Charlie Sheen over here.

CLAY
Charlie Sheen?

HOLLY
Isn't there a movie where he has a sick apartment with a view?

Clay laughs.

CLAY
Don't get too excited. I don't make that much.
(looks around)
This place is rent-controlled from the 70s - My mom was a real-estate broker and this was where she lived when my parents split up.

HOLLY
Where is she now?

Clay points up, casually.

CLAY
Upstairs.

HOLLY
Ok, isn't that kinda' borderline still living at home?

CLAY
No, I mean way upstairs. Like, a thousand flights up.

HOLLY
Clay, I'm sorry...

CLAY
No biggy. I was a kid. It was a while ago. She was a great gal, but don't worry - I don't pull out the scrap-book until the second date.

She smiles. She looks at a photo of Clay and Jack on a boat.

HOLLY

What about your Dad?

CLAY

He moved from the city a while back
and lives out on Long Island.

HOLLY

Retired?

CLAY

Might as well be. He's a
"consultant". Who he consults and
what he consults them about, I have
no idea, but whatever it is, it
involves a lot of golf and
apparently...

(examines photo)

...really short shorts.

She laughs. Looks at the picture of them on the boat.

HOLLY

Where are you guys here?

CLAY

There...

(looks closer)

I believe was off the coast of New
Zealand. -- We traveled a lot after
mom checked out. I wish I could do
it more, but one day you wake up
with a job and... responsibilities
and... life moves pretty fast,
Holly. If you don't--

HOLLY

(laughs)

I got it, Ferris.

(looks at another picture)

Ok, what is this?

CLAY

(slightly embarrassed)

Yeah, there was about a week when I
thought I wanted to be an actor.

CLOSE ON: A BLACK AND WHITE PORTRAIT of Clay with a very
serious expression on his face.

HOLLY

I'm definitely going to need one of
these.

CLAY

Take this one... Here, I'll sign it
for you.

He takes it out and grabs a pen. Writes: **For Holly. Keep
cookin, good lookin'. Clay xoxo.** He hands it to her.

She smiles. -- There is a moment of silence.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(looks around)

You know, I think I've got my
hockey equipment stashed around
here somewhere if you--

She kisses him. He walks backwards, and they land on the
couch. She removes her blouse and he digs in. -- The camera
moves up onto a FRAMED PHOTO of JACK NICHOLSON smiling in his
gold helmet on the back of a motorcycle from EASY RIDER.

CUT TO:

CLAY AND HOLLY LAYING IN BED TOGETHER - **SAME NIGHT**

She is fast asleep, her arm draped over his chest. He's
smiling. He looks over and quietly gets out of bed. -- He
walks to the kitchen in his boxers and pours himself a
SCOTCH. -- He walks out onto his patio and looks out onto the
city and contemplates his life... He chuckles.

CLAY

Charlie Sheen...

He sips his drink and looks out over the city.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Don't fuck this up.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND SUBWAY STATION - **THAT WEEKEND** - DAY

Clay and Holly exit and look out onto the beach, boardwalk,
rides of Coney Island. Clay loves it.

CLAY

I haven't been here since I was a
kid.

HOLLY

So you've never shot the freak?

CLAY

What do you mean, like heroin?

She grabs his hand.

HOLLY
Follow me.

EXT. SHOOT THE FREAK - DAY

A real Coney Island attraction, SHOOT THE FREAK, you pay to aim and shoot a LIVE MOVING TARGET with a paint-ball gun as he runs around an obstacle course. -- Clay aims but keeps missing. Holly shakes her head and walks over.

HOLLY
You gotta' anticipate the freak's
next move.

She puts her arm around his and aims for him.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Pull!

He does and hits the freak. People cheer. She aims again, and this time through her POV we see a TWO INCH SPOT between the freak's mask and his chest-pad where his throat is exposed.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Pull!

Clay does. The freak grabs his throat: *Aguhgah!* and rolls to the ground. People cheer louder. Holly aims.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Again!

THE FREAK
Alright! You got me you crazy
bitch!
(to attendant)
Hey Frankie! What the fuck?

The guido attendant, FRANKIE, preoccupied with some juicy Coney Island guidettes, sees this and races over.

FRANKIE
Alright, 'dats enough Oswald.

He takes her gun.

HOLLY
Come on, we paid for those rounds.

CLAY
Yeah, it's not our fault your boy's
a shitty freak.

Frankie shakes his head.

HOLLY
Well can I at least get my t-
shirt!?

She motions to the "I Shot The Freak" T-shirt, but Frankie is already attending to his wounded freak.

FRANKIE
Take a hike, psycho!

Clay and Holly walk off, laughing.

CLAY
(runs down the list)
Painting... hiking... *sniping*.

She laughs.

LOU REED'S "Coney Island Baby" plays coolly as we DISSOLVE:

-Clay and Holly, arms raised, screaming with excitement, as the Cyclone roller-coaster descends in slow motion.

-Clay at a BEER CONCESSION at a Brooklyn Cyclone's baseball game. He orders a beer, looks around, and rips it in like four sips... he really needed that.

-He walks through the crowd at the ball-game holding two peanut-bags. He spots Holly. She smiles. -- They cheer.

-The sun sets as Clay sits at a table on the Boardwalk. He looks over at Holly ordering food from RUBY'S BAR AND GRILL. He removes a FLASK. He opens it, swigs, but it's empty. He looks over at her as she walks towards the table, smiling, holding clams. He smiles, but also swallows how sickened he is with himself. Under the table, he tosses the flask in the sand.

-EXTERIOR SHOT: Clay and Holly ride the Subway. She has a GIANT STUFFED HOT-DOG. He puts his arm around hers and she leans onto him as the N TRAIN rides over the MANHATTAN BRIDGE and descends into the tunnel entering the city.

LOU REED: *Coney Island Baby... man I swear I'd give the whole thing up for you.*

INT. CLAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Clay is kicked-back on his sofa talking into a DICTAPHONE.

CLAY
 (into dictaphone)
 Clay's goals: -- Bloody Marys:
 Sunday Morning only...
 (he thinks)
 Fuck that. Saturday and Sunday
 only. -- And try to cut out gin
 even if it means no Tom Collins at
 El Quiote.
 (clucks tongue to think)
 Invite Holly to Sag Harbor for the
 Fourth...
 (a beat)
 But is that too soon? - It might
 be.
 (a beat, he nods)
 Try to get through one week without
 drinking during lunch... How does
 it feel? Could I go two weeks?

There is a KNOCK on his door. Clay sits up and sees Mitch.

MITCHELL
 Liquid lunch?

Clay thinks. He looks at the tape-recorder.

CLAY
 Fuck...
 (into dictaphone, with
 conviction)
 Plan starts tomorrow.

He gets up.

MITCHELL
 Since when do you have a plan?

Clay laughs: *Good point.* They walk out.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Mitch and Clay exit. Not hammered, but buzzed. Mitchell hails a cab. One stops and Mitch opens the door. -- Clay looks across the street at MODELL'S SPORTING GOODS. There is a paint-ball gear display in the window.

CLAY
You know what? I gotta' run a few
errands. I'll be back later.

MITCHELL
Whatever's clever, Clayton.

He shuts the door and drives off. Clay hails another cab.

CLAY
(to driver)
Coney Island.

The cab drives.

EXT. THE COOK SHOP - **A FEW HOURS LATER** - AFTERNOON

Clay approaches, a REALLY NICE GIFT BAG in his hand. He's cool, a nice glow from the martinis and a few pops in Coney.

INT. THE COOK SHOP - DAY

There's a good crowd. Jesse is working the counter. A MAN IN WORK CLOTHES fixes a cooler- his back to Clay.

JESSE
You must be Clay.

CLAY
I am. How did you--

She points to the wall: His HEAD-SHOT is hanging up. He smiles: *What a gal...*

GIRL
Have you been in anything lately?

CLAY
Yeah. Have you ever seen Shoot The
Freak?

She shakes her head, *no*, but laughs.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Clay?

Clay turns. Robert was the man working on the cooler. He stands, wipes his hands on his pants, and extends to shake.

CLAY
Mr. Clark. How are you?

ROBERT

A lot better if I could fix this damn thing.

Clay looks over at the broken cooler and nods.

CLAY

I like it. Holly's putting you to work. Is she here?

ROBERT

'Just missed her. She had to drive out to East Hampton to meet some restaurant that wants to carry her desserts.

CLAY

That's great.

Robert nods and looks around.

ROBERT

(sincere)

Hell of a thing you did for us, Clay.

CLAY

Us?

ROBERT

We nearly went bankrupt helping Holly open this place.

CLAY

(modest)

I only helped spread the word. If she didn't have the goods, people in this town wouldn't be coming back.

Robert nods. He looks down and notices the gift.

ROBERT

What have you got there, son?

CLAY

Oh, this is... this...

Robert's eyes are held on the card that clearly says HOLLY.

ROBERT

I'm not a dumb-shit, Clay. I know my daughter has relationships with men.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(smiles, eases tension)
And as long as it doesn't contain
fancy underpants, I'd be glad to
pass it along to her.

CLAY
(fair enough)
I believe I could entrust this into
your hands.

Clay passes the gift. There is a brief silence.

ROBERT
Well hell, Clay. I'd buy ya' a
beer, but I've gotta' fix this
piece a' shit cooler before the 5
PM train.

CLAY
Rain check?

ROBERT
I look forward to that.

They shake. Clay exits.

LATER THAT NIGHT: Holly walks into the bakery. She sees the
bag. She opens it. She looks up at his HEAD-SHOT and smiles.

LOU REED: (Reprise): *Coney Island Baby*.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A record is skipping. Clay is passed out on his couch, all
the lights on, a half-bottle of SCOTCH on the table. There is
a LOUD KNOCK on the door. He comes to. *Huh?* Another knock.
His hair is a mess.

HOLLY (O.S.)
Clay?

Clay gets up and shakes the cobwebs out. Notices the bottle.

CLAY
Jus' a sec.

He quickly takes the bottle and puts it away. He runs the
sink and sticks his head under, putting a towel around his
neck like he just got out of the shower.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Sorry, just got out of the shower.

She smiles and walks in wearing a long rain-coat.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Still raining?

She stops, confused.

HOLLY
When was it raining?

CLAY
Oh, I... thought I heard some
pitter-patter earlier. No?

She shakes her head, and then notices something.

HOLLY
Tough day at the office?

CLAY
Huh?

She turns, steps aside, revealing EIGHT EMPTY BEER BOTTLES scattered around the kitchen that Clay hadn't noticed or remembered.

CLAY (CONT'D)
(laughs, shakes head)
Those jerks...
(walks over and throws
them away)
These bums from the office. No
decency. They treat my pad like
it's a redemption-center.

She smiles, undoes the belt on her rain-coat.

HOLLY
Well it's a good thing they left.

She removes it, wearing nothing but a black I SHOT THE FREAK T-SHIRT. Clay smiles. They kiss. ZOOM-ON Clay's EYE'S. He's into it, but he's hurting.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - **FOLLOWING MORNING**

Holly is fixing breakfast in her t-shirt and looks over at Clay who looks like SHIT. He's able to justify his pale looks and expression with what he's just heard on his VOICEMAIL.

CLAY
Shit!

HOLLY

Are you OK? You don't look well.

He rubs his eyes. Exhales.

CLAY

My Dad's in Santa Fe and he rented
our house out for the weekend. --
I've never missed a Fourth of July
out there in my life.

Holly's not quite sure how to comfort him.

HOLLY

I'm... sorry...

Clay rubs his eyes, a little too stressed for that type of
let-down, but shakes it out.

CLAY

It just sucks because I was
actually...

(looks up, hopeful)

Gonna' see if you wanted to maybe
head out there this weekend? - I
mean, I know we kinda' just met,
but...

She thinks it's sweet.

HOLLY

Not at all. - I'm sure it would
have been a blast... but I already
told my mom that I'd come home this
weekend.

CLAY

Oh, oh, yeah... totally.

Holly smiles.

HOLLY

Uh, oh... was that a where's my
invitation?

Couldn't be further from where he's at, but forces a smile.

CLAY

Busted.

HOLLY

Trust me. You don't know "too soon"
until you've had a we kinda' just
met let's spend a long weekend at
my parent's house weekend.

He nods. Leans back, eyes closed.

CLAY

(eyes closed, uninspired)
When are you headin' up?

HOLLY

I think tomorrow after work.
(she walks around kitchen)
Sarah's really kicking ass right
now, so she'll be good to run the
shop on Thursday...

She looks into the eggs and thinks for a moment.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Is it psychotic that I'm gonna'
miss you?

Clay doesn't answer. She looks up. Clay's neck is tilted
back. His mouth wide-open as he lets out a gigantic SNORE.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - **FOURTH OF JULY** - DAY

CHICAGO: *Saturday, in the park, I think it was the Fourth of
July...*

The streets are empty. Clay exits his building in shorts and
Hawaiian shirt... blinded by the SWELTERING SUN.

We MONTAGE on Clay as he walks through the grocery store
filling his cart with burgers, buns, charcoal, beers,
margarita mix, and bags of ice.

CLAY

(into phone)
Yo, it's Clay. I know it's last
minute, but if you're in the city,
I'm having a cookout on my roof
today. Hit me up.
(another call)
So if you or anyone you know is in
the city, definitely swing by.
(another call)
Hey man. Long time. No talk...
(another call)
Should be a good time, so...

--Clay walks past the READE STREET PUB, hands filled with bags, and stops to talk with two LINGERING DRUNKS smoking outside. He tells them about the party. They nod.

INT. PENTHOUSE OF HOTEL GANSEVORT - DAY

Mitchell is in downward-dog, in a private yoga session with his wife, ANDREA. He hears his phone vibrate and looks next to his mat: CALL FROM CLAY.

Without stopping as he transitions into standing-bow position, he clicks ANSWER and talks through his BLUE-TOOTH.

INTERCUT to Clay setting up a bar on his roof.

MITCHELL
Mace! Happy Fourth!

The uber-zen FEMALE YOGA INSTRUCTOR and ANDREA are appalled:
Really?

CLAY
(surprised)
Mitchell, oh, my bad. I was
scrolling through my phone. I meant
to call someone else.

MITCHELL
No worries, but you actually caught
me in the middle of a Lotus pose...
Can I get back to you?

CLAY
Nothing pressing. We'll catch up
next week. Enjoy the Hamptons.

MITCHELL
I wish. The kids wouldn't shut up
about fireworks, so I got the
penthouse at the Gansevort.

He looks out at the amazing view.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)
It's fuckin' dope up here.

And now the Yoga Instructor and Andrea have had it.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR
Mitchell, this is really disruptive
to your practice.

As he perfectly transitions into a flawless down-ward dog.

MITCHELL

You call that disruptive? That was money.

The instructor rolls her eyes. Clay laughs.

CLAY

Well listen. I'm having a barbecue on my roof today. Bring the kids, I'll even whip up some Shirley Temples.

MITCHELL

(laughs)

Namaste, my man. I'll be in touch.

He hangs up. He and his wife transition poses.

ANDREA

(quietly)

Who the hell is "Mace"?

MITCHELL

That was Clay, babe. 'Having some cook-out today.

This even gets her to stop yoga. She's delighted.

ANDREA

Clay? How is he?

The instructor exhales obnoxiously. Not a yoga-breath.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

(to instructor)

For what we're paying, I found that breath to be a little offensive.

(to Mitchell)

How come you never have him out to the house? - You're not still upset about what he did at our wedding are you?

Mitchell transitions and inhales deeply.

MITCHELL

'Course not. I love Clay.

(exhales)

On my terms.

EXT. CLAY'S ROOF - DAY

He's behind the bar, almost like at the Memorial Cookout.
He's on fire, doing his foot-ball pass trick...

CLAY
But, ohhh. He checks down.
(pours drinks)
It's a screen pass.

But there's not laughter this time.

DRUNK MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Ga' any Cutty?

The camera turns and the only party Clay has is the two
GREASY DRUNKS he saw outside the Reade and their small posse
of toothless 50-somethings. It's a bad scene.

Clay looks at his watch, and up at the sweltering heat. He
wipes the sweat of his forehead... He's noticeably bummed and
downs a margarita in one long rip.

EXT. CLAY'S BUILDING - DAY

Mitch and Andrea stand at the entrance with their two kids, 8
and 10, both dressed as preppy as their parents. Andrea has a
bottle of wine in Fourth of July gift-wrap.

MITCHELL
This is just a quick hello, Andy.
(looks at watch)
I'm not missing my massage.

ANDREA
(shakes head)
You're such a diva.

They walk in, met by DOORMAN.

DOORMAN
You here for Clay?
(they nod)
Go right on up.

They enter the elevator.

ROOF: Clay is sitting in a chair, his feet in a kiddie-pool,
head leaned back, crushing a Corona. He wets a towel and puts
it on his head.

The ROOF DOOR opens and Mitchell and his family walk in.
Mitchell and Andrea both examine the scene with shock.

Two drunks are in mid-discussion.

DRUNK

So I said, give me back wha's mine
bitch, or go back ta' Boise!

The other drunk laughs a revolting smoker's laugh/cough which becomes full blown dry-heave. Andrea is horrified. -- Clay gets up and races over to them.

CLAY

Mitchell! Andrea! You made it!
(looks around,
embarrassed)
Sorry, I'm kinda' just getting set
up here.

ANDREA

Clay... it's... so... great to see
you.

She musters a half-hearted hug and kiss and hands him the bottle of wine.

CLAY

Oh, this wasn't necessary.
(looks towards bar)
What can I get for ya'?

Mitch looks around. His two kids have already made contact with one of the drunks.

DRUNK 2

Wanna' see a magic trick?

MITCHELL

No, no, no, no...
(he paces over and picks
up his kids)
There's no magic here.

He carries them over to Andrea.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Wait here with mommy.

KID

I wanna' see magic.

MITCHELL

We'll see magic later...
(to Clay)
Clay. A word?

He steps away. Clay follows.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

What is this?

(Clay speechless)

You call me... tell me to bring my
kids... and you're up here chillin'
with fuckin' drifters?

Clay looks around at the pathetic drunks.

CLAY

Sorry. They're from the bar
downstairs. They helped me carry
some ice up... More people are on
the way.

MITCHELL

(examines scene)

Not gonna' lie. That kinda' scares
me.

They hear a dry heave. Everyone turns and one of the drunks
vomits in the baby-pool. Andrea turns her head in disgust.

KID

(scared)

Daddy.

MITCHELL

(claps hands, rounds up
troops)

Alright, that's it. Bus is leavin'.

CLAY

Mitch, I'm--

MITCHELL

No hard feelings. Last minute
parties don't always pan out.

Clay exhales. Looks at Andrea: *I'm sorry.*

ANDREA

It was great seeing you, Clay.

(she walks out, but stops,
turns)

By the way... congrats on the new
job.

Clay nods. She walks out with Mitchell and the kids. Clay
looks over at the drunk rinsing his face in the pool.

DRUNK
(to Clay)
Ga' any more Cutty?

A beat. He looks around at how pathetic this scene is.

CLAY
Party's over.

INT. HOLLY'S LAKE HOUSE - DAY

Holly is finishing up a phone conversation. She's excited.

HOLLY
(into phone)
Ok, great. Talk to you Tuesday.

She hangs up. Her MOM and DAD are eager to hear what's up.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
The owner of that Hampton's
restaurant? - Wants to have me as a
guest on his cooking show.

Her mom screams! Robert folds the paper.

ROBERT
Well how about that.

Holly's mom, JOYCE, walks over and hugs her.

HOLLY
This is so weird. Three weeks ago I
was going out of business and now
I'm gonna' be on TV.

JOYCE
That's how it happens, Holly. The
right people just get discovered.

HOLLY
Well they aren't exactly etching my
star on Hollywood boulevard, but...
(she thinks)
I should call Clay. Technically,
he's the one who "discovered" me.

ROBERT
Yeah, what's he up to this weekend
anyways?

HOLLY
'Just in the city.

JOYCE
Doesn't he have a family?

HOLLY
His Dad's in Santa Fe, so...

JOYCE
Poor thing. He's probably dying of
heat stroke.

HOLLY
(considers)
We talked about coming up here, but
we've only been dating a few weeks
and I didn't want it to be weird.

JOYCE
Don't be silly, Holly. That's what
the pull-out couch is for. You're a
grown woman, you certainly don't
have to be married to have your
friends up.
(to Robert)
You've met Clay.

Robert thinks.

ROBERT
Of course. That's what the pull-out
couch is for.

He goes back to reading the paper.

INT. CLAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clay sits with his head next to his A/C as he drinks
margarita directly from the blender. It's half-empty. He's
got a bummed-out buzz goin'. His PHONE RINGS. It's Holly.
Clay is almost relieved. He answers. Intercut.

CLAY
You just made my day.

HOLLY
(smiles)
City's that hot?

CLAY
You have no idea.

HOLLY

Well there's a 3 O'Clock train to Awkwardsville if you wanna' be cool.

CLAY

(perks up, eager)

Really? Why the change of heart?

HOLLY

Danny Montaine wants me to be a guest on Montaine's Flame and now my mom won't stop talking about meeting the guy who "made it all possible".

CLAY

(laughs)

Montaine, eh???

(bad impression)

Blizam!

HOLLY

(laughs)

Yeah, well... Now she's acting like it's her civic duty to get you out of the heat.

CLAY

That would be great. - What train do I take?

FLASH FORWARD: Clay exits his apartment with a duffel bag. The camera pans over onto the kitchen counter... the blender of margarita is empty.

INT. HUDSON NEWS - GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Clay is definitely buzzed as he grabs some magazines and looks at the ice-filled cooler of 24 oz. Budweiser cans. He looks up at the INDIAN WOMAN behind the counter.

CLAY

Can you still drink on the Metro North?

EXT. TRAIN - **MOVING** - DAY

Clay drinks a beer as he looks out the window and slips into:

DAYDREAM: He's sitting on Holly's front porch, that in his version is a GIANT ADIRONDACK CABIN over-looking a GIANT LAKE. Robert reaches in slow-motion like a beer commercial and pulls out an ICE COLD BEER. He's manning the grill.

ROBERT
How about another cold one, son?

CLAY
It's always Miller Time for me,
Bobby.

Holly emerges from the lake in a SKIMPY BIKINI and shakes her head as she runs towards him, breasts juggling.

ROBERT
How do you like your bison?

CLAY
Bloody as hell, Bobby. Bloody as
hell.

ROBERT
Man after my own heart.

The dream is interrupted as we hear a TRAIN CONDUCTOR:
Wassaic... last stop on da' train... eh pal. Rise n' shine.

RETURN TO REALITY: This "daydream" was actually a DREAM as Clay startles awake: A large line of DROOL hangs from his open mouth. He's pale and totally out of it. A large RED-LINE across his face from sleeping on the window's ledge.

CONDUCTOR
Last stop, Chief.

CLAY
Huh? Where am I?

He looks around... completely out of it.

CONDUCTOR
Wassaic...
(a beat)
Take your trash wit'cha.

Clay looks down. THREE EMPTY 24oz. BUD CANS. Clay hurts bad and looks like he has the flu.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Holly stands next to her families' BEAT UP WAGONEER. She looks around, a little confused: *Where is he?*

Her face drops and the camera turns to show Clay, disheveled, pale, and confused.

HOLLY
What the hell happened? You look
like Billy Joel.

CLAY
I've got a really bad nap-hangover.

HOLLY
Nap hangover?

CLAY
You know, when you meant to take a
ten minute cat-nap but instead you
sleep for two hours and wake up in
another dimension.

HOLLY
Well, are you OK?

CLAY
I'll be fine after a Miller High
Life and a bison burger.

HOLLY
Huh?

CLAY
(a little curt)
Forget it.

She shakes it off and gets in the car. Clay gets in, the door
is kinda' hard to open and rust is flimzy at the bottom.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Sweet ride.

He slams the door.

INT. WAGONEER - **DRIVING** - DAY

The radio is playing that annoying pop-song from a few years
back, "*Califoorniaaaa... here we cooooooome!*"

CLAY
Fuck - off.

He turns the radio off kind off aggressive, leans his head
against the window and exhales.

HOLLY
Ok, what's your deal?

CLAY
I can't fucking stand that song.

HOLLY
Neither can I, but you're acting like a girl on her period with diarrhea.

CLAY
I told you already. I don't *nap* well.

HOLLY
(mock-drama)
Well you're awake now. And one breath at a time we'll get you back.
(chuckle)
Ok?

Clay just stares out the window like she just talked him through some serious shit.

CLAY
(sniffs, nods)
Alright.

She's not so sure... something's up and she doesn't like it.

EXT. CLARK'S HOUSE - DAY

Holly waves to her neighbors. Everyone's smiling and friendly. Clay looks around.

CLAY
I gotta' piss so bad.

She shakes her head and gets out. Clay exits the car and stretches. Holly looks into the car and it occurs to her...

HOLLY
Didn't you bring anything?

CLAY
What, like a gift?

HOLLY
No, like a change of clothes...
(looks him over)
Deoderant?

CLAY

Oh, shit.
(he looks back)
I left it on the train. Damnit.

HOLLY

(cuts loss)
Come on, we'll call them inside.

CLAY

Yeah, I'm sure customer service is gonna' be real attentive to our needs at 5PM on Fourth of July.

HOLLY

What are you gonna' do? Wear my dad's clothes all weekend?

CLAY

(uh...)
Ever heard of a store?

She's at a loss.

HOLLY

(under-breath)
Who invited this guy?

Robert walks out the front door, much like he does at the beginning of the movie, but a bit more welcoming.

ROBERT

There he is.

Clay's uncharacteristically stiff and Robert takes note.

CLAY

Mr. Clark. How are you?

ROBERT

Fine. Just fine. Glad you could make it.

A sliding door opens and Joyce walks out, like a mom. They shake hands.

JOYCE

Welcome, Clay. You must have been dying in that city. I just read it was over 100.

CLAY

(looks around)
Yeah, it sucked.

Not the response they had in mind, but Clay is oblivious.

JOYCE

Well it's great to finally meet
this mystery man who has made all
these exciting things possible for
Holly--

Clay looks out to the small lake.

CLAY

So what do you call that out there?
(they all turn)
A lake or... pond... what do they
call a body of water that size? - A
little lake?

JOYCE

(nods)
Sure, Clay. You could call it that.
- The Indians called it Lake
Mohawk.

CLAY

Ah, yes. Lake Mohawk... The Mighty
Mo. - The Hawk! - You guy's have
jet-skis?

They all look out to the small quiet lake.

ROBERT

It's more of a canoeing lake, Clay.
Now what can I get for you?

CLAY

You know, when I'm in a lake
setting like this... nothin' better
than a cold beer.

Robert nods, but cautiously.

ROBERT

Of course.

JOYCE

Come on in, Clay. Let's see what we
got.

CLAY

(to Holly and Robert - bad
Schwarzenager impression)
I'll be back.

Robert and Holly look at each other: *Huh?*

INSIDE HOUSE: Joyce looks through the fridge.

JOYCE

I would have stocked the fridge if
I knew you were coming, but the
Country Store closes at noon on
holidays.

(she moves some things)

But I'm pretty sure we've got a few
beers left over from Bob's poker
night. - And you're in luck.

(she turns)

One left. Do you like the micro-
brews, Clay?

She hands him a bottle of Pete's Wicked Summer Bullshit in
slow-motion. He takes it.

CLAY

(forced smile)

So long as it's cold.

(looks around)

But if there's some warm ones,
that's fine too. - I actually like
to taste the hops in these micro-
brews at their natural temp. You
know, experience the true essence
of the barley.

CLOSE ON: A BEAD OF SWEAT runs down Clay's forehead. ZOOM ON:
Joyce's mouth as it moves in slow-motion w/ zombie-effect.

JOYCE

I think that's the laaaaaast one.
The laaaast one. The laaaaaast one.

The crack of her opening it, breaks his transe. She hands it
and he takes a generous sip: *Ahhh*.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I know that feeling. Nothing like a
cold beer on a hot night.

CLAY

(sips, nods, cheers)

Happy birthday, America.

PORCH: Clay walks out. Robert is lighting the grill. Clay
looks over at Holly sitting in a basic, ordinary chair.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Now that looks like a comfortable
chair.

He walks over. Robert takes note of how empty his beer already is.

HOLLY
Feeling better?

CLAY
Like a new man.
(looks around)
This'll be great. A nice
dinner...put the dishes away... and
then I would just love to pop on
into town and buy you all some pie
and coffee.
(buddy-buddy with Robert)
We'll make that an Irish coffee for
the lads.

Robert gives Holly a strange look.

ROBERT
That's nice of you, Clay. But we
got a front row seat here and
you're not gonna' wanna' miss the
fireworks over the lake.

CLAY
Good call. Then we can head into
town. Right, Holly?

He slaps his hand on her knee. She's not into it. At all.

JOYCE
Unfortunately most things will be
closed except the Mohawk Tavern.
And that gets a bit of a rough
crowd after dark.

CLAY
Nonsense, Joyce... That's the
heartbeat of America.

Robert nods and his picture of the situation becomes clearer.
Nervously, Holly bites her lip, as if she sees this too.

JOYCE
I suppose we could--

HOLLY
We'll see where the night takes us.
I can always go into town with Clay
if you're not up for it--

Robert clears his throat. Sternly.

ROBERT
Why don't we play it by ear.

CLAY
(snaps, points to Robert,
winks)
That's the only way to play.

He raises his hand for a high-five. Robert reluctantly meets it. Holly is like, *what?* -- Joyce leans into Holly, discrete.

JOYCE
Is he on drugs?

FLASH FORWARD: They sit around the dinner table. Awkward silence: the sound of chewing and forks and knives. Clay is struggling, staring into his food. He nods.

CLAY
Yup... This is the best bison I've ever had.

ROBERT
It's not bison.

HOLLY
You said that earlier. Where did you get bison from?

CLAY
This isn't bison? I thought it was bison...
(takes bite)
Tastes like bison.

ROBERT
It's just your basic cheeseburger, Clay.

CLAY
Oh no, there's nothing basic about this. - Now I know where Holly gets her culinary skills.

Joyce notices that Clay is sweating.

JOYCE
Are you alright, Clay? I was actually going to go in for a sweater.

CLAY
(sipes forehead)
It must be from the city.
(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

I've always been really sensitive
to the heat. It sticks with me.

(a beat)

Are you from the city, Mrs. Clark?

HOLLY

You know I'm from Albany.

CLAY

Oh, I didn't realize that your
mother and everyone was from there.

JOYCE

Third generation.

Robert zeros in on Clay's hand, shaking, as he holds his
fork.

CLAY

(well how about that)

Third generation Albany. - That's
really exciting. Did you know any
politicians or have family that
were into politics? - Ever met any
Cuomo's?

Holly spits out her drink.

HOLLY

What are you talking about?

JOYCE

Holly.

HOLLY

No, mom. I wanna' know what's going
on here.

Clay exhales like he's about to crumble. He swallows.

CLAY

I don't know what's going on. We're
just talking New York politics.
What's going on with you?

Holly shakes her head and takes her plate and gets up.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(stands)

No, Holly. Let me get that. I'll do
the dishes.

HOLLY
It's a paper plate, Clay. And I'm
just getting more noodle-salad.

And for the first time we get Clay's POV: His vision trails,
delirious from withdrawal.

CLAY
I'm happy to do the dishes...
(looks around)
What do you got here? Machine? Hand
wash? I'm the dish master.

He reaches for Joyce's plate.

JOYCE
Clay, no. I'm still eating.

CLAY
Oh, sorry. I guess I'll just, uh,
get started on mine and then come
back and maybe you'll be done
eating and I can do your dishes
then.

He walks into the house. Panic-attack breathing.

JOYCE
I'm worried, Holly. Does he need a
doctor?

ROBERT
He needs a drink.

JOYCE
What do you mean he needs a drink?

ROBERT
You know damn well what I mean.

Robert stands and looks at Holly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
How did you not see this?

HOLLY
(firm)
Dad. I'll handle it.

INSIDE: Clay is leaned over with one hand on the counter, the
other on his forehead, quietly breathing.

CLAY
Getittogether - getittogether -
getittogether.

He turns when he hears Holly's footsteps.

HOLLY
Sorry, Clay. I knew it was too soon
for this.

CLAY
(gipes sweat)
I'm just trying to be a good guest
here.

HOLLY
It's all good. But you and I are
going back to the city right now.

CLAY
(looks around)
I just need a minute.
(thinks)
Would it be weird if I took a
shower?

HOLLY
Clay, no, it's cool. We can talk
about it in the car. Come on...

CLAY
No, you know what?
(he looks around, looks
outside at Robert and
Joyce, and back to Holly)
I just need to get the fuck outa'
here.

He turns and walks out.

HOLLY
Clay, wait.

CLAY
(stops, turns)
And I don't need you.

The door slams. She starts to follow after, but is stopped by
Robert who grabs her arm. He holds her.

ROBERT
Let him go, Holly. There's nothing
you can do. Just let him go.

HOLLY
(into his arms)
I knew it, Dad... I convinced
myself that I was wrong.

ROBERT
This isn't your fault.

Robert looks out at Clay as he walks towards the road. There is anger in his eyes, but also understanding for what he's going through.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EARLY EVENING

Clay is delirious, but relieved to be out of there. He looks back towards the house.

CLAY
Eesh.

He turns and walks down the road. Crickets and seccades buzz.

FADE TO BLACK.

The sound of kids partying and laughing.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - **FADE IN** - EARLY EVENING

A smoke-filled car filled with kids in their early 20s is driving down the winding road. Case of beer. Couple dudes. Couple chicks. They smoke, drink, and shoot bottle-rockets out the window.

The driver turns, taking his eyes off the road.

DRIVER
(reaches for joint)
Yo man, lemme hit that.

Passenger sees something.

PASSENGER
Dude! Watch out!

Driver turns, slams on the break and skids as CLAY turns. - The car hits him like a football tackle. He is knocked up onto the windshield, and when the car stops completely, Clay flies forward onto the road. A NON-DEADLY HIT.

DRIVER
Holy shit! Holy shit! Holy shit!

The girls in the back scream!

PASSENGER
(frantic)
Drive! Just drive!

DRIVER
(panic)
I'm not gonna' "just drive" and
then start getting scary notes next
summer!

They look over the hood. Clay is still alive and moving.
After a few moans and groans, slowly gets up, turns and looks
at them, and then turns back and walks down the road. -- The
kids all get out of the car in awe.

PASSENGER
Dude! Dude! Are you OK, man? Hey!
Where are you going?

DRIVER
(panic)
He's going to the cops! He's going
to the cops! - Please, don't! I'll
pay you. My parents are rich.
Whatever you want.

Clay stops and turns. A deathly serious look in his eye:

CLAY
How about a lift to the Mohawk
Tavern?

UB40: *Red, red, wine... Stay close to me...*

INT. MOHAWK TAVERN - NIGHT

Clay hangs out shots to everyone around him at the crowded
bar on the lake and leads a sing-a-long.

Just one thing helps me forget...

EVERYONE IN BAR
Red! Red! Wine!

One of the dudes from the car in on his cell-phone.

DUDE 1
(into phone)
You gotta' get over here now. We're
at the Mohawk hanging with this
chill mother-fucker from New York.
(MORE)

DUDE 1 (CONT'D)

- Yeah, John hit him with his car,
but he wasn't even mad. All he
wanted was a lift to the Hawk.

(looks to Clay holding
court at the bar)

Now he's got a tab down and buying
the whole bar drinks...

(holds phone up to bar)

Red! Red! Wine!

Clay takes his tequila shot and sucks the lime.

CLAY

Wait, wait, this my favorite part.
(breakdown - bad Jamaican
accent)

*Red red wine you make me feel so
fine keep me rocking' all of de'
time...*

The bar chants to the beat as Clay sings.

EVERYONE IN BAR

Clay! Clay! Clay! Clay! Clay!

Clay drops to the floor and there is a moment of concern as
the people around him shout to clear a path, but when they
do: Clay DOLPHIN'S across the floor with perfection. -
Everyone cheers! Clay rises and the BARTENDER motions to him.

CLAY

What's on your mind, sunshine?

BARTENDER

I just wanted to let you know, your
tab's almost at a grand.

CLAY

Good look, but we're ridin' this
pony into the sunset.

BARTENDER: *Whatever you say, pal.*

An explosion of BRIGHT LIGHT fills the bar. Clay turns as
everyone moves out to the bar's packed patio overlooking the
lake. FIREWORKS fill the sky. -- People cheer.

TWO DRINKS LATER: Clay emerges from the bathroom with a few
of the dudes. He is rubbing his nose.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Whoo! That's some serious cheese!

The kid nods. One leans into the other.

KID
(discrete)
He thinks it's blow.

They shake their heads and laugh. But whatever it is, Clay is feeling it and loving it.

FIVE DRINKS LATER: Clay's at the bar. One of the girls from the car, NOT VERY ATTRACTIVE, is enamored with him.

UNATTRACTIVE GIRL
So what were you doing walking by
yourself in the middle of nowhere
on Fourth of July?

CLAY
(over-dramatic)
I've been trying to find and answer
to that question my entire life...
But when I woke up and saw you, I
finally found what I've been
looking for.

UNATTRACTIVE GIRL
(heart melts)
You're so mysterious.

She shuts her eyes and Clay leans in for a kiss. They make-out. The group of DUDES behind Clay see this and: *Oooh!*

One of the dudes taps Clay on the shoulder. Clay leans in.

DUDE 2
Pardon the interruption, but I feel
obligated to do you a solid here...
(discrete)
I think that chick you're with just
blew some dude in the bathroom.

Clay steps back. He thinks and nods.

CLAY
Thanks for the heads up, brother.

DUDE 2
No doubt.

They fist-pound and Clay turns right back around and moves in for another kiss. The dudes are speechless.

DUDE 2 (CONT'D)
This guy's a legend!

LAST CALL: The bar empties as Clay whispers sweet nothings to the girl. He's no longer wearing a shirt.

UNATTRACTIVE GIRL
(excuses herself)
I'll be right back and then we'll go.

CLAY
Right on.

She walks to the bathroom. Clay's new posse comes over.

DUDE 3
Yo. There's a bon-fire party at our boy's house... Apparently they have mad shrooms.

CLAY
Word. Let's roll.

And without even looking back to the bathroom, he leaves.

EXT. CABIN ON LAKE - NIGHT

It's an old A-FRAME WOODEN CABIN with a huge BON-FIRE overlooking the lake. A JEEP pulls up Clay hops out of the back with the dudes.

CLAY
(looks around)
Who's got the boomers?

TWO HOURS INTO SHROOMING: A massive bongo-drum circle has formed as Clay sits wide-eyed looking around and talking to a TRIPPING DUDE.

TRIPPING DUDE
So, like this whole land is sacred Indian ground. There were warriors... battles... The souls of the Mohawk are all around us. Can you feel it?

Clay looks around... As his vision trails on the kids dancing, his mind's eye transforms them into ACTUAL INDIANS dancing around the fire.

CLAY
I can feel it.

THREE HOURS INTO SHROOMING: The bon-fire is fading, and the vibe is chilling, but Clay is PEAKING as he sits in (what looks like) some kind of "trust-circle". A TRIPPING GIRL holds a candle.

TRIPPING GIRL

(heady)

...that's when I realized that John Lennon was right... All you need is love... love is all you need.

She passes the candle to Clay in ceremonial fashion.

TRIPPING GIRL (CONT'D)

What about you, Clay? Do you believe in love?

Clay stares into the candle's flame... His eyes widen... He pulls some grass from the ground and rubs it on his face.

DUDE 1

Oh, shit man. He's bugging.

(hands bottle of wine)

It's all good. Sip this... It'll help contain your restless spirit.

Clay takes the wine, puts it to his lips, tilts back and downs like two glasses. *Whoa*.

DUDE 1 (CONT'D)

You are so official.

Clay nods. He looks back into the candle.

CLAY

I think I've finally found love... but I'm running away from it.

DUDE 1

You gotta' run towards that shit.

CLAY

I've gotta' run towards it...

(nods)

I've gotta' run towards it...

He looks over into the window of the A-Frame house. Above the fire-place, an ANTIQUE WOODEN CANOE is mounted- as well as an assortment of Native American art and artifacts.

Clay gets up and walks towards the house.

DUDE 1

Where you going, man?

CLAY
Towards it.

TRIPPING GIRL
That's so beautiful.

Clay enters the house and his tribe follows after him. He climbs up onto the fire-place and grabs the canoe.

DUDE 3
(moment of clarity)
Whoa, wait. That's my parent's expensive shit!

TRIPPING GIRL
(calms)
This is bigger than your parents, Jeremy... Let it be.

Clay lifts the DECORATIVE CANOE, about half the size of a conventional canoe, and drops it to the floor. He takes a huge sip of wine and sizes up the LEATHER INDIAN SKIRT and MOCCASSINS encased in glass on the wall.

CLAY
Warrior.
(turns to kids)
Warrior.

He takes a moment to size-up how to get inside before realizing that punching the glass is the best way: *Crash!*

DUDE 3
(covers eyes)
What is happening right now?

DUDE 1
I don't know. But I'm starting to freak.

Clay takes the skirt and moccasins into another room.

NOT TOO LONG LATER: The sun rises over the lake. The gang looks out in amazement.

CLAY (O.S.)
I'm ready.

They turn. Bugged-out laughter: *Oh - my - God.*

Clay stands with a crudely shaved mohawk, dressed only in the leather dress and moccasins.

TRIPPING GIRL

Wait.

She reaches into her purse, removes lip-stick and applies it under his eyes and down nose. War paint.

CLAY

I want you to be the one that marries us.

TRIPPING GIRL

(verge of tears)

I would be honored.

Clay stumbles outside and looks out over the lake. He points to a FAMILIAR HOUSE: The Clarks.

CLAY

Journey.

The dudes look at each other.

DUDE 1

I love you, dude. But this is your journey now.

EXT. CLARK'S HOUSE - MORNING

The front door opens and Joyce Clark walks out with her gardening tools.

EXT. A-FRAME HOUSE - MORNING

Clay pushes the small canoe into the lake and gets in. He sits in the middle and starts paddling, taking breaks to drink his wine.

The dudes stand on the porch and shake their heads.

DUDE 1

This guy is on auto-pilot like I've never fucking seen.

DUDE 2

Where does he think he's going?

DUDE 3

I've got a telescope inside.

LAKE: Clay is almost to shore as he paddles with determination across the small lake.

A-FRAME PORCH: Dude is looking through telescope.

DUDE 3 (CONT'D)
Oh - my - God.

Through the POV of the scope, Clay makes land-fall. He finishes the wine, stumbles out and drops the bottle.

DUDE 1
What is it?

DUDE 3
(worried)
He's going up to the Clark's house.

DUDE 1
What!?

Clay approaches Mrs. Clark as her neighbor motions towards him with concern. She turns... *Clay?*

DUDE 3
This is not good. This is not good
at all...
(startled)
Oh, shit! There's Mr. Clark!

The other dude grabs the telescope and looks.

DUDE 1
He is not a happy camper.

Through the TELESCOPE we see Clay get drilled.

DUDE 1 (CONT'D)
Ohhhhh!

DUDE 2
What happened?

Clay's head smashes the GARDEN GNOME.

DUDE 1
He just got dropped by Mr. Clark! -
I don't think he's moving... I
don't think he's moving... Dude, I
think he's dead.

FADE TO BLACK.

DUDE 1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I am never eating mushrooms again.

The sound of MEDICAL EQUIPMENT BEEPING.

31 HOURS LATER

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - **FADE IN** - DAY

Clay sits on the edge of the hospital bed. His mohawked head buried in his hands. He looks up to reveal stitches on his cheek, a swelled jaw and a black eye. -- A DOCTOR stands over him looking at his chart.

DOCTOR

So you have no recollection of how you got here?

CLAY

The last thing I remember was getting hit by a car and going to the Mohawk Tavern.

DOCTOR

(shocked)

Wait, you were hit by a *car*? - When was *this*?

CLAY

Yesterday, I think... maybe around 7. It was still light out.

DOCTOR

And you didn't go to the hospital?

CLAY

It just felt like a bad hockey check.

DOCTOR

Well that might explain the concussion a bit more, but it could have come from any number of things...

(reaches for something)

We extracted this from the side of your face.

Doc holds up the smiling head of the GARDEN GNOME.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You fell on this after Mr. Clark struck you upon your attempt to enter his residence.

CLAY

What?

DOCTOR

The Clark's have dropped the trespassing charge, but your blood-alcohol content Mr. Mason...

(no-nonsense)

Was near lethal. - With an extraordinary level of psilocybin and traces of methamphetamine.

Clay is speechless and noticeably scared.

CLAY

Meth?

DOCTOR

(nods)

We got a hold of your father--

CLAY

Wait, my father knows about this?

DOCTOR

He's on a flight back from Santa Fe as we speak.

Clay stares into space. The Doc closes his chart.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Clark is here now and wants to have a word--

CLAY

What?

DOCTOR

He's the one that admitted you. If you're not ready for a visitor, I can--

Clay shakes his head. Thinks for a moment. Nervous.

CLAY

Fuck it. Let's get this over with.

The Doc nods and walks out. Clay turns when he hears footsteps that stop at his door. He turns. Sees Robert.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Mr. Clark, I have no idea what--

ROBERT

Shut up and listen.

(stern)

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I don't live my daughter's life for her and I'm not gonna' live yours for you.

(a beat)

But I will end yours if you ever take another drink and go anywhere near her. - Do you hear me?

CLAY

Robert, whatever happened, I can assure you--

ROBERT

I will find you and I will end you.

Clay swallows nervously.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But I don't think it's gonna' come to that, because you've already got one foot in the grave...

(he takes a few steps closer)

Look at yourself, son.

Clay turns and catches his CONTORTED REFLECTION in a PAPER-TOWEL DISPENSER. His blood-shot eyes beneath the mohawk... The strand of stitches across his face, swollen lip and eye.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You've got a serious problem that's gonna' kill you if you don't do something about it... And you might take more than a garden gnome along with you.

Clay exhales as he looks at his reflection. He turns.

CLAY

Why do you care?

ROBERT

Because after talking to your father, I've got a feeling that nobody else does.

A beat. Robert swallows and nods. Sincere.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I've been there, Clay... and in much worse shape than you.

(he swallows)

Didn't Holly ever tell you why she doesn't drink?

Clay now realizes why: *Whoa*. He nods.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Get your ass into rehab.

Robert puts his hat on and walks out. Clay buries his face in his hands.

CLAY
Jesus Christ.

EXT. HOSPITAL - **THE NEXT DAY**

A BLACK BMW speeds up to the hospital and skids. Jack Mason gets out and races inside wearing a Santa Fe motif jean-shirt and cowboy hat.

INT. CLAY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Clay sits in bed, his head now completely shaved, as he eats lunch in silence staring out the window. Jack enters.

JACK
I got here as quickly as I could.
(takes note of stitches
and black eye)
Goodness gracious. That's the last
time I leave you alone on Fourth of
July.

Jack races over and hugs him. He's at a loss for words as he examines Clay's condition.

JACK (CONT'D)
(looks around)
Detox unit, huh? What the hell
happened?

CLAY
I don't know - And to be honest,
I'm getting a little tired of not
having an answer to that question.

JACK
Well we can talk about it in the
car. - We'll get back to the
homestead... throw some steaks on
the grill and put this little bump
in the road behind us. Whataya'
say, kiddo?

Clay lowers his head. Thinks for a moment and turns to Jack.

CLAY

I say for a consultant, you give pretty shitty advice.

Jack is stunned.

JACK

Come on. We've seen tougher times than this--

CLAY

Yeah, we have. And you know what we do about it?

(a beat)

We whip up a hi-ball and laugh it off like it never happened.

JACK

We don't let the bastards get us down, Clay. What the hell's gotten into you?

He picks up the garden gnomes head.

CLAY

This has gotten into me. It was jammed into my face, Dad! And I don't even remember it.

(he thinks)

A few inches higher and we might not be having this conversation at all.

(stands up, passionate)

Two inches. - Two inches and you might have been down a son and a wife.

This hits Jack hard. He takes a step back and thinks.

JACK

I'm sorry, Clay...

(he thinks)

All I ever want is for us to be happy. - I guess it's been a while since I've had someone around to teach me how I'm supposed to do that.

Clay nods.

CLAY

Me too.

INT. REHABILITATION CLINIC - **A FEW DAYS LATER** - DAY

Clay sits in a circle-discussion. He's not ready for any of this. There are all kinds of people at the clinic and it appears to be a high-end facility.

A PREPPY GUY is talking in the circle- someone you'd never expect to see in rehab. His hair is parted over, completely covering his fore-head.

PREPPY GUY

...but it was never a problem. I never hit my kids. I never cheated on my wife. A paid my taxes on time and even managed to coach my daughter's tennis team.

(a beat)

And then one morning my son woke me up on the couch and I had this tattooed on my forehead.

He pulls his hair back to reveal a CRUDE TATTOO of an UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS on his forehead. There are moans and inhales of shock from the group. Clay's eyes widen: *Nicely done*.

PREPPY GUY (CONT'D)

The last thing I remember was having drinks at the club in Westchester.

It's Clay's turn.

COUNSELOR

Clay, are you ready to share something?

Clay thinks... looks around and shakes his head, *no*.

INT. CLAY'S DORM ROOM - DAY

He's sitting up in bed, looking at the phone trying to work up the courage to make this call.

INT. MITCHELL'S OFFICE AT NEW YORKER - DAY

Mitch is at his desk, typing. His assistant chimes in.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

(intercom)

I have Clay on line one.

Mitchell picks up the phone, livid.

MITCHELL

You'd better be writing one hell of a piece on the Mohawk Tavern!
 (looks at memo)
 Accounting just sent me a memo about a five-thousand dollar expense? - I hope you had a damn good time, because that's the last--

CLAY

Mitch, I'm in rehab.

A beat.

MITCHELL

Rehab? - What happened?

Clay looks out as the sun shines brightly into his room.

CLAY

The sun was shining all the time.

Mitchell remembers their chat.

MITCHELL

Christ, I... are you OK?

CLAY

I'm not sure how I am, or who I am for that matter. I haven't been three days sober since I was eighteen.

(a beat)

All I know is I don't think I'm coming back to New York anytime soon.

Mitchell nods.

MITCHELL

Whatever you need. I'm here.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A counselor talks to Clay. Clay has two weeks growth of hair. His wounds are subsiding.

COUNSELOR

Nobody's going to force you to talk here.

(looks into file)

But I see here that you're a writer.

CLAY

Hardly. I scribble notes and drunk wise-cracks on bar napkins that get strung together by an editor who likes having a drinking buddy during lunch.

COUNSELOR

Well try scribbling some sober wise-cracks. You need to do something to communicate how you're feeling... even if it's only to yourself.

Clay nods.

INT. CLAY'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Clay's at his desk. There are some papers scattered around as he writes. THE GARDEN GNOME sits atop a page as a paper-weight.

A counselor enters.

COUNSELOR

Hey Clay. Here's that TV schedule you asked me about.

Clay takes it.

CLAY

Thanks.

INT. TV LOUNGE - DAY

Clay is watching Danny Montaine's cooking show "Montaine's Flame". Danny is a flaming gay "bear" cooking host. Holly is next to him. She feeds him a bite of a danish. He makes a growling sound like a grizzly bear as he chews.

DANNY

Girl, that is so effin' delish, there is only one word I can think to describe it and I think you all know what that is. Audience?

AUDIENCE

Blizam!

The camera is on Holly who is laughing. Clay smiles as the camera zooms in on her shaking her head at the absurdity of it all. She plays along.

HOLLY
 (to audience)
 A little effin' louder!

AUDIENCE
Blizam!

HOLLY
 I still can't hear you!

AUDIENCE
Blizam!

HOLLY
 One more effin' time for the folks
 at home!

Clay leans in and joins.

CLAY
Blizam!

Rehab people turn. A BLACK SECURITY GUARD comes in,
 concerned, but sees everything is cool. Looks at TV.

BLACK SECURITY GUARD
 Oh, *blizam!* I love Montaine's
 Flame.
 (notices Holly)
 Damn. I'd like to blend her batter.

CLAY
 (laughs, looks around)
 Dude, chill. There's sex-addicts
 here.
 (lowers voice)
 But between you and me, I have.

BLACK SECURITY GUARD
 With her?
 (cool black-guy impressed)
 For reals? You still up in that?

Clay looks around like it's the most obvious answer.

CLAY
 Uh, I'm in rehab.

The security guy laughs.

BLACK SECURITY GUARD
 No sleep 'til Brooklyn, baby-
 that's why you're here...
 (MORE)

BLACK SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
get your shit straight, you'll get
up in that ass again.

Clay laughs... looks around the facility.

CLAY
You fuckin' rule, dude.

They fist-pound. The first great laugh he's had in a while.

INT. CLAY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

About a month of hair. He's writing more in his journal and notes and papers plaster his wall. He's getting into it. He'll write something and leans back... he'll laugh.

INT. GROUP SESSION - DAY

A patient is finishing up.

PATIENT
(inspired tears)
...but I think I'm finally ready to
face tomorrow and try again.

Everyone claps. It's Clay's turn. The counselor doesn't expect anything, but he has to try.

COUNSELOR
Clay?

Clay gathers his thoughts and leans forward, resting his elbows on his knees.

CLAY
You know, I've been sitting here
for a month now and I've kept my
mouth shut because, in all
honesty... my problems are an
insult to rehab.
(turns to upside-down
cross guy)
I mean, you have kids.
(turns to petite woman)
And you killed someone.
(a beat)
Here's what I got: My mom died when
I was a kid. Yeah, it sucked. And
my father dealt with it by being
more of a good-bud than a father
figure.
(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

It aint sexy, but I suppose it
paves a road that could lead me
here.

(a beat, he looks around)

But you wanna' know my real
breakthrough here?

(he leans in, chuckles)

I love catchin' a buzz.

Some slight laughter.

COUNSELOR

Well you must have regrets.

CLAY

Sure I do. - But there's a lot more
that I don't regret.

COUNSELOR

Such as?

CLAY

Such as, the time I came-to in the
middle of South Carolina in a New
York City taxi... and the look on
my friend's face when I got out of
that same cab onto Bourbon Street.

(laughter)

Or the time I got so bent with
Steven Tyler at a bar on the Lower
East Side and then read in the
paper the next day that he'd
checked into rehab.

(impressed laughter)

And I definitely don't regret
whatever happened the night that
got me here, because I know damn
well that they're telling stories
at the Mohawk Tavern about the guy
who expensed a five-G bar-tab to
his corporate account.

(a beat)

I love that shit.

The counselor is about to make a point, but Clay stops him.

CLAY (CONT'D)

But you know what? - That's all I
am. I'm nothing more than a funny
story that people like to tell.

There's a slight crack in his voice. He coughs it out.

CLAY (CONT'D)

I finally met this girl that I think wanted to be part of my real story, but I was too scared that without being the outrageous mess, there wasn't a whole lot left to tell.

(a beat)

And I was right. There isn't. - But I think the good news is, I get to start from scratch and find out who the hell I really am. - And that's my only option.

He looks around the clinic.

CLAY (CONT'D)

If I end up back here in a few months or a few years, it better be for something like the rest of you have gone through. Because if not, the only story that people are going to be telling about me...

(a beat)

Is what a pathetic loser I am.

INT. MITCHELL'S OFFICE AT NEW YORKER - DAY

Mitchell is working.

CLAY (O.S.)

Liquid lunch?

Mitchell perks up.

MITCHELL

Mace! Holy shit! You look...

(searches for right words)

Rested. It's making me a little nervous.

Camera turns on Clay. He does. His hair is short and tight. He's got a healthy glow and even dropped a few pounds. They hug.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

(looks at watch)

I'd love to be your first enabler, but I'm already late for a lunch with Shepard Fairey.

CLAY

No worries. I just came to drop
this off.

He hands him a manilla envelope.

MITCHELL

What is this, your manifesto?

CLAY

It's my piece on the Mohawk Tavern.
Sorry it's late.

MITCHELL

(examines)

This better be a million dollar
story.

CLAY

More like five-thousand.

MITCHELL

(laughs)

You know we took that out of your
severance, right?

CLAY

(nods)

I saw that.

MITCHELL

Fuck it. Most of the best writers
at this rag have been hired and
fired half a dozen times... I hope
I can welcome you back soon.

CLAY

Well I don't think I should do bars
and restaurants for a while.

MITCHELL

Oh, don't worry. You won't be.

They laugh.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

So what's the plan?

CLAY

(considers)

Right now the plan is to find a
plan.

Mitch nods.

MITCHELL
Well make it quick. I'm hard
pressed to find company that
doesn't shit when I reach for that
third martini at lunch.

CLAY
You're a sick bastard.

Mitch laughs and slaps him on the arm.

MITCHELL
It's good to see you, pal.

Clay nods and watches Mitch walk down the hall.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)
(turns)
By the way, Andrea was asking about
you.

CLAY
Oh yeah?

MITCHELL
Yeah. We're having a party next
weekend out at our beach house.
(Clay lights up)
She wanted the number of that
catering company you used for
Fourth of July... 'think you could
fax that over to me when you get a
sec?

Mitch laughs and Clay nods, chummy laughter. He turns to
Mitch's assistant and shakes his head.

CLAY
You know what I just realized for
the first time?

ASSISTANT
What?

A beat. Clay watches Mitchell walk out.

CLAY
Mitchell kinda' sucks.

Everyone within' earshot laughs.

Clay shakes his head and leaves.

SECRETARY
(to friend, impressed)
Clay looks good.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Mitchell sits in the cab and removes the document. "THE LONG WALK TO THE MOHAWK TAVERN" by Clay Mason. Mitch chuckles as he reads the first few lines: **My name is Clay Mason and I'm an alcoholic. It's taken me my entire life to say those nine simple words, but sometimes the simplest words are the hardest to say.**

Mitchell continues reading.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE COOK SHOP - DAY

Clay stands across the street looking over at the bakery. Business is booming and he smiles as he watches Holly talking to customers and them laughing at what she's saying.

He takes a deep breath, about to walk over, but shakes his head, no.

CLAY
I'm gonna' need a drink for this.

INT. READE STREET PUB - DAY

The door opens and Clay walks in. The neighborhood drunks all perk up and nod.

An Irish bartender smiles.

IRISH BARTENDER
Clayton! We were just havin' a
laugh about you. - Jamison?

Clay thinks. He pulls out his wallet.

CLAY
Nope. Just came to close out my
tab.

IRISH BARTENDER
Where the hell 'you off to?

Clay looks out the window. The first falling leaves of Autumn flurry past the window.

CLAY
That's a good question.

The bartender nods. He walks behind the register and fishes through the unpaid tabs... retrieves Clay's and then another... and another. The bartender tears them up.

IRISH BARTENDER
You're all paid up, Clayton. We'll call it even for the memories.

Fair enough. Clay opens his wallet and takes out a c-note. He puts it on the bar.

IRISH BARTENDER (CONT'D)
What the hell's that?

CLAY
For all the time's I forgot to leave a tip.

IRISH BARTENDER
(laughs)
Oh, I'm afraid I'll have to get back to you with a final figure on that, my friend.

Clay laughs. He knocks his knuckles on the bill.

CLAY
Well then at least buy these guys a few rounds on me...

The bartender nods and pours shots for all the bar-flies. Clay watches the Jamison empty into the glasses like it's a beautiful woman undressing. He laughs.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Fuck. I'm definately gonna' need a drink for this.

He shakes his head and waves to everyone.

CLAY (CONT'D)
Cheers, fellas.

Clay walks out.

DRUNK
He'll be back...

The bartender watches Clay walk past the window. He has an all-knowing look in his eye as he dries a pint glass with a bar-rag.

IRISH BARTENDER
No lads. I'm afraid he won't.

EXT. JACK MASON'S HOUSE - DAY

Jack is sitting on the front porch, his legs crossed as he reads the paper and sips a beer.

CLAY (O.S.)
You need to get your priorities in order, Dad. This porch looks like shit.

Jack is startled. He puts the beer down and gets up, thrilled to greet Clay who is examining the chipped paint.

JACK
It's good to see you, Clay.

He walks over and they hug. Jack looks at Clay's bags. He's a little overwhelmed.

JACK (CONT'D)
Are you dropping those off? Do you have time for a, uh... what's going on? Are you out of that clinic there? Are you going back? What's the...

Clay looks around and over at his dad's beer. He takes a breath, the kind that says *this isn't going to be easy, but this is home*.

CLAY
If it's alright with you, I thought I might stay here for a while... you know...
(looks at chipped paint, and then at his Dad)
Fix some things around the house.

Jack nods and smiles. He hugs Clay again and holds it.

JACK
That's terrific. - That's just great news, Clay.
(slight tears, sincere)
That is great news, son.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JACK MASON'S BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

Jack and Clay stand over the grill, cooking steaks.

JACK
(uncomfortable)
So, you know, Jeter's lookin' good,
but I still don't know if uh, they
can handle Tampa Bay's--

Clay laughs.

CLAY
Jesus Christ, Dad. Go grab a beer.

JACK
(half-smiles, relieved)
You sure?

CLAY
I've gotta' learn to deal with this
sooner or later... but listening to
anymore of your sober Yankee stats
is gonna' make me relapse.

Jack laughs. He walks inside, but stops. He smiles.

JACK
You know what, Clay? If Yankee
stats is all I got sober, then I
think we both have a lot of work to
do.

He walks back over to the grill. The camera pulls back slowly
on them. It's awkward, but we get a feeling that one turn-
over of a steak at a time, they're gonna' make it work.

JACK (CONT'D)
So what the hell were you thinking
charging some broad's house dressed
as a Comanche Indian?

Clay laughs...

CLAY
It was Mohawk actually...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOHAWK TAVERN - **A FEW MONTHS LATER** - DAY

The first snow starts to fall as a few bar patrons sit and drink at the Mohawk. A LOCAL walks in, reading an open magazine, and shaking his head in disbelief.

LOCAL
Jimmy, you aint gonna' believe
this.

BARTENDER
What?

The local chuckles. He opens the magazine to a feature story.
THE LONG WALK TO THE MOHAWK TAVERN by Clay Mason.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Clay Mason? How do I know that
name?

LOCAL
You remember that lunatic that
picked up everyone's tab on Fourth
of July?

BARTENDER
Of course... we got his tab hangin'
behind the bar.
(he looks)
Yeah, Clay Mason. He wrote about
us?

LOCAL
He wrote about whatever he could
remember from his - escapades would
be putting it lightly - but his
last bar tab, his biggest bar tab
was right here at the Mohawk
Tavern.
(a beat, he looks around)
He made us famous.

A drunk from down the bar leans over.

DRUNK
Is his tab still open?

They all laugh. The bartender starts reading.

INT. CLARK'S HOUSE - DAY

Robert is sitting by the fire reading THE NEW YORKER. He shakes his head, and even chuckles a little. Get's to the end and closes the magazine, noticeably moved.

Joyce walks in.

JOYCE

What are you reading, Bob?

ROBERT

You don't wanna' know...

(looks at article and
chuckles)

This guy might be our son in law
one day.

EXT. HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM - **FOLLOWING FEBRUARY** - DAY

Clay and his father are laughing in the back of a rick-shaw, both tanned, and appear to be enjoying some long-overdue traveling together. They both have beards.

Clay's phone rings. He looks at it: CALL FROM MITCHELL.

CLAY

One sec, Dad.

(he answers)

Mitch?

INTERCUT.

MITCHELL

You still around the world in
eighty days?

CLAY

Ho Chi Minh City. Next stop, Bali.

Mitchell thinks.

MITCHELL

Well change of flight plan, pal.

CLAY

What are you talking about?

MITCHELL

The reception's been great on that
Mohawk thing of yours... You ready
to take another long walk?

Clay smiles. Caught totally off-guard but into it.

CLAY
Where to?

EXT. JAPANESE BEACH - DAY

Clay is sitting atop a long-board in the waves off the coast of Japan with two Japanese surfer dudes, interviewing them.

CLAY
So who are some of your favorite
American surfers?

The Japanese guys look at each other and smile.

JAPANESE SURFER
A, Mr. Patrick Swayze and Keanu
Reeve.

CLAY
Works for me.

They all look back at the wave coming in and start to paddle. They stand up and Clay can actually hold his own.

FLASH FORWARD: They carry their boards across the beach in their wet-suits. The Japanese guys smile at Clay.

JAPANESE SURFER
Now time for you saki-bomb.

CLAY
Now time for you saki-bomb.
(chuckles, shakes head)
I start doin' saki, this party
might end up in North Korea.
(a beat)
But I've got a pretty hefty expense
account... so don't be shy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEWS STAND - **SPRING TIME** - DAY

A stack of NEW YORKER MAGAZINE'S lands on the side-walk. We ZOOM on the top feature story on the magazine's WHITE
OVERLAY: "Hang Yen: An Exploration into Japan's Burgeoning Surf Culture" by Clay Mason.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JACK MASON'S HOUSE - **THE FOLLOWING SUMMER** - DAY

Clay is mowing his dad's front lawn in an open Hawaiian shirt. Beard is gone, he looks like a million bucks. - He looks up and does a double-take. He turns off the lawn mower with an "I'll be damned" look on his face.

Holly is standing on the side-walk.

CLAY

Don't I know you from somewhere?
(he squints to jog his
memory)
My apologies, but my memory's a
little hazy. I had an altercation
with a garden gnome last summer.

She laughs.

HOLLY

I was driving past here the other
day and I saw you... but I pussied
out.

CLAY

What brings you to this side of the
Island?

HOLLY

I opened two new shops this summer.
One in Montauk... and another,
literally, right around the corner.
I actually had a funny feeling that
I might see you.
(looks at house)
So this is the place?

CLAY

This is it.

She considers.

HOLLY

Might have been a different
weekend.

CLAY

Or worse. - Let's just say I'm not
running for office in Sag Harbor
anytime soon.
(a beat, she nods)
But congrats on the new Cook Shops?

HOLLY
Thanks. - Cook Shop East.

CLAY
I like it. The east takes a little
edge off the meth vibe.

She laughs.

A beat.

HOLLY
I'd be lying if I told you I
haven't been reading your articles
in the New Yorker.

CLAY
And I'd be lying if I told you that
I didn't know there was a Cook Shop
East right around the corner from
my Dad's house.
(a beat)
I walked past there the other day,
but I too, pussied out.

She smiles.

HOLLY
Your piece on meditation in India's
nursery schools was hilarious...

The camera starts to pull back and up on them talking.

CLAY
I genuinely loved the meditation
and considered staying, but it's
kinda' hard to maintain your chi in
India when most of it ends up in
the toilet.

She laughs and the camera pulls back further up over Sag
Harbor and the village.

CLAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So is my head-shot still up?

HOLLY (O.S.)
That's actually why I was stopping
by... I wanted to see if you had a
few more for the new shops.

CLAY (O.S.)
I think there's a few collecting
dust in the attic...
(MORE)

CLAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 You wanna' come in and see if we
 can't dig some up?

A beat.

HOLLY (O.S.)
 I really shouldn't. I've got a
 really bad nap-hangover.

CLAY (O.S.)
 I know that feeling.

Credits roll over boats pulling in and out of Sag Harbor.

The sun is shining brightly.

JOHNNY NASH: *I can see clearly now the rain is gone...*

END CREDIT MONTAGE OF CLAY'S "ESCAPADES" THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

--Clay is trashed at the bar of a really quaint respectable restaurant. The bartender is actually laughing, until:

CLAY (CONT'D)
 Have you ev'r see Phantom of the
 opera?

BARTENDER
 It's been a while. Why?

CLAY
 This's my favorite part.

Clay stands on his stool, jumps across the room, onto a chandelier and rips it down, crashing onto a dinner table.

--Commuters are waiting for an NYC Subway. They shrug when they see it's an express-train bypassing their stop, but all look up when they hear a man screaming - The train flies past, and Clay is hanging on to the back in his boxers:

CLAY (CONT'D)
 Whoo hoo! Comin' through!!!

Mixture of horror and "only in New Yawk" awe from waiting commuters as they watch Clay disappear into the dark tunnel.

--An Airplane stewardess stops suddenly as she pushes her snack-cart down the aisle.

STEWARDESS
 Oh my God.

She turns to the stewardess behind her.

STEWARDESS 2

What?

STEWARDESS

Oh my God.

Stewardess one points to Clay. He is conked out in his aisle-seat, head back, snoring. She points to his pants. There is rapidly growing dark wet stain forming in the lap of his khakis. -- The Stewardess nudges him.

STEWARDESS (CONT'D)

Sir... Sir...

CLAY

(comes to, delirious)

Oh. Hey.

(looks down at empty cup
on his tray, holds it up)

Could I get another screw-driver?

--A group of civilized people are grilling in their back yard and Clay rips through their hedges, trashed, naked, in a golf-cart. They scream.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Anyone seen a white ball?

He stops, looks around for one second, hits the gas and exits through the other hedges.

We hear the family next-door scream.

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

Anyone seen a white ball?

--Clay and Steven Tyler, beyond wasted, arms around each-other, singing drunkenly over the juke-box. Clay has one of Steven's scarves around his head.

CLAY/STEVEN TYLER

*You're my annnnnnnngel. Come and
save me toniggggggght.*

--Clay is swimming, floating on his back, doing a relaxed back-stroke and smiling, basking in the sun. The camera moves back, up over the water, revealing the STATUE OF LIBERTY.

--Clay funneling beers with the kids on the way to the Mohawk Tavern...

--Clay storms into the Mohawk Tavern... directly to the bar and slams down the his card.

CLAY
 Drinks - on me.
 (motions around bar)
 For everyone.

The crowd around him churns with disbelief. He raises the first shot.

CLAY (CONT'D)
 (to bar)
 You're gonna' remember this night.

The camera moves out of the bar and over the lake as
 FIREWORKS EXPLODE OVER THE SKY.

JOHNNY NASH: *Bright, bright, bright... sunshiny day.*

THE END.

