

THE FLAMINGO THIEF

by
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Adapted from the novel by:

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FADE IN:

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - STINSON BEACH - DAY

TIM FORRESTER, handsome, if slightly drained, stands amongst the old furniture, dishes, knick-knacks and doo-dads that vie for space in the dusty, cramped store. He has a BASEBALL HAT pulled low on his head.

The CLERK, a middle-aged hippie, with MUTTON-CHOPS, stands behind the counter, occasionally glancing up...

...as Tim calmly stares at SOMETHING UNSEEN on one of the shelves.

TIM (V.O.)
There are times a man finds
himself wondering - "What am I
doing? Is this really what my
life's become?"

REVERSE ANGLE and we finally see what Tim is staring at - a ceramic FLAMINGO. Twelve inches high, painted a tacky bright PINK, the bird's wings are raised up, as if ready to take off from a patch of green ceramic grass.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
These are difficult questions.
(beat) By the way, "flamingo"
comes from the Latin word for
flame.

With that, Tim GRABS the flamingo and RUNS for the exit.

CLERK
HEY!!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP - STINSON BEACH - SECONDS LATER

Tim bursts from the store, the flamingo clutched in his hand, while the Clerk follows in close and angry pursuit.

CLERK
Stop! Stop! Get back here you son
of a bitch!

But, Tim continues his sprint for freedom, raising the stolen flamingo aloft, a broad adrenalized SMILE crossing his face...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

WOOOHOOO!!

FREEZE ON this image, as we INSERT a superimposed title card - THE FLAMINGO THIEF. Then, we MOVE TO...

INT. WILLIAMS-SONOMA STORE - NIGHT

FOUR MONTHS EARLIER

Wearing a dark suit and tie, Tim and his pretty wife STELLA stroll the aisles of the ubiquitous kitchenware store. This one happens to be located in THE VILLAGE AT CORTE MADERA, Marin County's favorite outdoor mall. It's a post-work evening of shopping and dinner.

As Stella absentmindedly looks at some COPPER PANS...

TIM

(business-like)

So, I told the client, these are depositions and depositions take time, there's a process here. We'll file a motion--

STELLA

Tim, I want a divorce.

Tim pauses, trying to shift gears from the intricacies of corporate litigation to what his wife has just told him.

TIM

What?

Stella is calm, but not emotionless. She's knows the impact of what she's saying...

STELLA

I want a divorce. (beat) I was going to talk to you when we got home, but, then... here we are shopping for a new espresso machine, I'm pretending to look at paella pans, and the thought of a restaurant and holding it in through dinner... it was just weighing on me too heavily.

TIM

I'm sorry.

STELLA

You're sorry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

That it was weighing on you.

Stella doesn't know how to respond - it's so Tim, to apologize when he's the one getting left.

STELLA

(back on track)

I've been unhappy for a long time, Tim. Confused, lonely... I didn't even know how sad I was until I met Derek.

TIM

Derek?

Head spinning, Tim glances at the other shoppers browsing nearby, oblivious to the drama just a few feet away.

TIM (CONT'D)

Who's Derek?

STELLA

(delicately)

Derek Trotter. He's a realtor. I met him at the tennis club.

It's all coming at him so quickly...

TIM

Wait... you play tennis?

STELLA

No. I was meeting a friend for lunch. She plays tennis... that's not the point. (beat) I'm going to move in with Derek.

Just then energetic SALESWOMAN approaches with a boxed ESPRESSO MACHINE...

SALESWOMAN

There you are. Bad news, we're out of the Nespresso Citiz with automatic milk frother. I can order it for you, or I do have the Essenza C100. No milk frother, but...

The Saleswoman trails off, noticing the expressions on the faces of Tim and Stella. Stella is clearly uncomfortable, Tim dazed and disoriented...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM
(confused)
You know, I'm... not sure. (beat,
to Stella) Should we order?

Stella just looks at him in disbelief. Really?

TIM (CONT'D)
(to the Saleswoman)
Actually, can we get back to you
on that?

SALESWOMAN
(cautiously)
Sure, I'll just... put this behind
the counter. It'll be there if you
need it.

As the Saleswoman backs away, we see Tim's hollow
expression, the color draining from his face, and hear...

TIM (V.O.)
I've loved Stella since the first
day we met.

EXT. UC BERKELEY CAMPUS - 18 YEARS AGO - DAY

Through the soft-focussed, sun-dappled lens of MEMORY, we
see college-aged Tim sitting on edge of the SPROUL PLAZA
fountain, studying.

He looks up, as the lovely, college-aged Stella sits down
with a book bag and a copy of the school paper. Their
eyes meet...

TIM
Hi.

STELLA
Hi.

Just those TWO WORDS, then Tim goes back to his studying
and Stella opens her paper. A moment later, his gaze
returns to Stella. Tim catches her eye and smiles warmly.
She smiles back and it's a moment of undeniable
connection, then WE HEAR...

STELLA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'll be moving my things out over
the next few weeks.

Which brings us back to...

INT. WILLIAMS-SONOMA STORE - NIGHT

PRESENT DAY. The Saleswoman has gone. Tim and Stella stand where we'd left them, as Stella continues...

STELLA

I'll do it when you're not there,
I don't want to make this any more
awkward than it has to be.

TIM

Right, that makes sense...

Tim studies his wife for a silent beat, then...

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

Now, there are many ways a man can
react in a situation like this...

Tim suddenly grabs a tray of glassware and THROWS it
against a wall. The glass EXPLODES on impact.

TIM (CONT'D)

Where is Derek Trotter?! He's a
fucking dead man!

(beat, to customers)

What the hell are you looking at?!
A man's wife leaves him, he can't
get upset?!

Then we're back to normal. No shattered glass, no stunned
customers. Tim is still looking at Stella...

TIM (CONT'D)

You can't do this, Stella. Please,
I'm begging you. I don't know what
I'll do. I'll... I'll...

Suddenly, Tim grabs a KNIFE from the cutlery shelf and
slashes it across his wrist, blood SPLATTERING, as
customers SCREAM.

Then we're back to normal - Tim just standing there, like
a man lost at sea in an engine-less boat, storm waves
washing over him.

STELLA

(burdened)

I'm sorry, Tim. I don't know how
else to do this. There's no easy
way...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stella continues talking, but the sound of her voice fades away, as Tim just blankly stares forward...

TIM (V.O.)

It was obvious to me I didn't have the luxury of responding irrationally. With Stella clearly not thinking straight, I vowed not to do anything I'd regret and to remain calm and clear-headed for the both of us.

As Stella continues talking, even though we can't hear her words, it's clear she couldn't be more rational or clear of thought...

The BUZZ of an alarm clock takes us to...

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The BUZZING alarm clock reads 5:30, but Tim's eyes are already open, staring at the empty half of the bed - Stella's half, which has clearly not been slept in. Tim's blank expression does not change as he climbs from bed and turns off the alarm.

TIM (V.O.)

And so, I kept to the normal routine...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAWN

A quiet neighborhood in Mill Valley, filled with good-looking homes inhabited by successful professionals. Coated in sweat, Tim jogs the streets, just as he does every morning...

TIM (V.O.)

And went about my daily schedule...

IN A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS--

We see Tim...

- Showering.

- Putting on a dark suit and tie.

- Eating a bowl of cereal, watching the morning news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- Driving his AUDI SEDAN over the GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE to work in San Francisco.
- Winding through the spiralling parking garage of a large OFFICE BUILDING.
- Walking the halls of his law firm - PETTIS, RAUTH & SILVERBERG - nodding politely to his fellow attorneys.

TIM (V.O.)
Just as I always had. No
deviation, no detour...

We now see Tim...

- Driving home from work.
- Parking in the driveway of his nice house.
- Eating a sensible dinner at the table.
- On the couch reviewing documents for work, while watching TV.
- Going to bed, never straying from his side of the mattress.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Waiting patiently for the
inevitable moment when Stella
would see the error of her ways,
adjust her course, and return
home.

We see the routine of Tim's life play out in FASTER CUTS - alarm clock, jogging, shower, dressing, breakfast, driving to work, parking, working, driving home, eating dinner, reviewing documents, going to bed...

Throughout, Tim's face betrays no emotion and we notice only the smallest variances in the patterns of his life - different running shorts, different versions of dark suits and neckties, different cars surrounding him on his commute, co-workers dressed differently.

The only noticeable change - as we move through time - is that MORE AND MORE ITEMS are DISAPPEARING from the house. Stella, as she said she would be, has been moving out her possessions, slowly stripping away the items and feminine touches that had once made this house a home.

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tim sits on his couch, prepping for the next day's legal work. Art is missing from the walls, bookshelves half-emptied, plants missing, pieces of furniture gone.

TIM (V.O.)

And when Stella did come back, I
would be there to welcome her back
with forgiveness and open arms.

Tim takes a slow look around his house, taking it all in... then BURSTS INTO TEARS. The first emotion we've seen from him since Stella gave him the news.

EXT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - MILL VALLEY - NIGHT

A two story craftsman home, nestled in the towering trees of one of Mill Valley's canyons.

GEORGE, Tim's older brother, opens the front door to find Tim standing on his doorstep, bawling.

GEORGE

(stunned)

Tim?

TIM

She's gone.

GEORGE

What?

TIM

Stella left me.

GEORGE

Oh God, Tim...

George goes to his brother and takes him in his arms. As Tim sobs on George's shoulder, a 12 year old girl, JOY, appears in the foyer.

JOY

Dad, what's wrong with Uncle Tim?
Did somebody die?

GEORGE

Nobody died, Joy. (then, to
someone off screen) Laurie, get
down here! (to Tim) Come on,
Timmy, let's go inside...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

George gently guides Tim into the house...

INT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Still distraught, Tim sits on the couch next to LAURIE, George's wife. Dressed in YOGA CLOTHES, Laurie clasps Tim's hand, while George stands at the wet bar, pouring a large glass of wine. At the doorway to the room, we'll see Joy occasionally poking her head in, listening with concern for her devastated uncle.

TIM

She said she'd been unhappy for a long time and that it wasn't any one thing... just an accumulation of distance and isolation and... I don't know, there were all these words coming at me and I was trying to think and... oh, God.

Tim's tears burst forth again.

LAURIE

Tim... I'm so sorry.

George comes over, putting the wine glass and bottle in front of Tim.

GEORGE

She did this tonight?

TIM

No, four and a half weeks ago.

Laurie and George exchange a look of surprise.

GEORGE

Four and a half weeks ago? And you're just telling me now? Jesus, Timmy, I'm your brother...

TIM

I thought she'd change her mind.

With that, Tim downs his wine in a long gulp. As he pours himself another glass...

TIM (CONT'D)

You saw us, did we seem unhappy? I mean, were there any signs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURIE

It's hard to know what's in
somebody's heart, Tim.

GEORGE

(re: Tim's situation)
Fucking bitch.

LAURIE

George.

GEORGE

Come on, you just expect me to sit
here? Look at what she's done to
him. I've got to express myself
somehow. (beat, frustrated) Fine,
I'm done.

As George grabs another glass and pours himself some
wine, Tim sees Joy peeking into the room.

TIM

(wiping tears)
I'm sorry you have to see me like
this Joy.

Her parents turn with surprise...

GEORGE

Come on, Princess... didn't we
tell you to go upstairs?

JOY

Sorry. I just couldn't leave.

TIM

It's fine, George. Let her stay.
It's out of the bag now. Might as
well be open, right?

With that, Tim downs his wine and we MOVE TO...

INT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Joy sits next to her mother. Tim has another bottle in
front of him and is now quiet drunk. Leaning back on the
couch, emotionally wide open...

TIM

She left me for a fucking realtor.
Derek fucking Trotter.

Laurie and Joy shake their head, feeling so much for Tim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

If it's any consolation, Derek
actually is a pretty good guy.

Laurie turns to her husband - did he really say just
that?

LAURIE

Not now, George.

GEORGE

What? He golfs at the Club, I've
played with the man. Hell of a
player, by the way. (beat) I mean
he's an a-hole for doing this,
obviously, but--

JOY

Dad, seriously...

GEORGE

(flustered)
I'm sorry, I'm trying to offer
comfort. I'm grasping at straws
here...

Laurie puts her hand on Tim's shoulder

LAURIE

Tim, we are always here for you.
You know that, right?

TIM

(touched, nodding)
You guys are so good to me. I
should have told you earlier.

JOY

You told us when you were ready.

A kind beat between Joy and Tim, then...

TIM

Yeah... (beat) Look, I need to get
going. I've got an early partner
meeting and--

Tim tries to stand up, but the wine has left him wobbly.

TIM (CONT'D)

Oh boy...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Whoa, okay... maybe you shouldn't drive. Why don't you spend the night here?

TIM

No, no... I need to wake up in my own bed. Just let me get my equilibrium and I'll be good.

But, it's clear, Tim's equilibrium won't be back for awhile.

GEORGE

(to Laurie)

I'll drive Tim home in his car.
Can you guys pick me up?

TIM

No, no... that's too much. I can't let you do that.

LAURIE

It's okay.

JOY

We're fine, Uncle Tim.

TIM

(drunk, warmly)

Look at her. She's fine. You're fine. Everybody's fine. (beat)
Everybody except me...

And with that, Tim starts crying again.

INT. TIM'S AUDI - NIGHT

George is driving. Tim slumps in the passenger seat.

TIM

I'm sorry. I must seem like an idiot.

GEORGE

Are you kidding? You'd be an idiot if you weren't getting drunk and crying. I'm just glad we could be there...

Tim pauses for a thoughtful beat, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

Do you know where he lives?

GEORGE

Who?

TIM

Derek fucking Trotter. Do you know where his house is?

GEORGE

(warily)

I might... why?

TIM

I'd like to see it.

GEORGE

Oh no... Tim, I'm a Radiologist, not a Psychologist, but I really can't see how that's going to do you any good.

TIM

I just want to see it. My wife moves out, I can't be curious about where she's living? Is it a nice house? Big? Architecturally pleasing?

GEORGE

It's nice. Not too big, big-ish...

TIM

See, you know these things and I don't. That's bothersome. I don't know anything...

George studies his wounded younger brother, then...

GEORGE

(relenting)

Fine...

With that, George makes a quick left turn and guides the car up a winding road...

EXT. DEREK TROTTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A beautiful CUL-DE-SAC. George pulls the Audi in front of an impeccably maintained example of Northern California mid-century modern architecture. One or two lights are on in the house, but no one is visible.

INT. TIM'S AUDI - SAME TIME

Behind the wheel, George watches Tim staring thoughtfully across the street at Derek's house...

GEORGE

Was it what you were expecting?

TIM

I don't know what I was expecting.
(beat, wistfully) So, he's a good
guy, huh?

GEORGE

(carefully)

What do you want me to say?

Tim considers what he'd like to hear, then, with a shrug, he decides on...

TIM

What's with the flamingos?

He points to TWO LARGE PINK PLASTIC FLAMINGOS on the back edge of the front lawn. The two birds are grouped together, almost like a happy couple.

GEORGE

(unsure)

Maybe they're supposed to be
ironic.

TIM

Irony flamingos? Who does that?

George can only shake his head. A silent beat, then...

GEORGE

Can we go now? Laurie and Joy are
probably already at your place.

TIM

Yeah, yeah... it's fine. Thanks
for doing this.

As George drives away, Tim gives a quick glance back at the house and the two flamingos on the lawn.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

George pulls Tim's car onto the driveway. Laurie and Joy are waiting in Laurie's Toyota Land Cruiser.

Tim walks George to their car, the two brothers HUG, then George climbs in with his family. As they drive off...

...Tim's PHONE goes off. He pulls it from his pocket to see a TEXT MESSAGE from Joy - "UNCLE TIM, WE LOVE YOU!"

Through the Land Cruiser's back window, Tim sees Joy WAVING to him. Touched, he waves back.

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In pajama bottoms and a gray CAL T-shirt, Tim stares at his bed, contemplating the space he once shared with Stella. Suddenly, he PUSHES HER PILLOW off the mattress and boldly stakes claim to the middle - new territory.

Tim lies there for a moment, but it's just not working. He pulls his pillow back to his side of the bed, puts her pillow back and settles into his normal position.

But, this isn't working either. Tim lies there for a frustrated beat, then a DETERMINED look crosses his face and the sound of a RACING Audi engine takes us to...

EXT. DEREK TROTTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tires SCREECH, as Tim's Audi comes to an ABRUPT STOP in front of the house, which is totally dark, save for the soft glow of a streetlight.

Tim JUMPS out of the car and SPRINTS across the lawn. A PORCH LIGHT goes on, as if triggered by a sensor, but Tim can't be stopped... he's on a mission.

He YANKS the two FLAMINGOS from the ground and SPRINTS back to his car. TOSSING the birds into his trunk, he JUMPS in his car, pulls a SCREECHING U-turn in the cul-de-sac, and RACES away.

A few LIGHTS go on in the house, but Tim is already long gone. It's a boldly efficient crime.

TIM (O.C.)

Wow!!

INT. TIM'S AUDI - CONTINUOUS

Tim buzzes on the PURE ADRENALINE of what he's done.
Pounding the steering wheel with his hand...

TIM

Wow!! WOW!!

There's a BEAMING SMILE across his face - the first real pleasure we've seen him experience - and it's like he's soaring above the Earth, free of all the pain of the last four and a half weeks, like a man who has suddenly found--

TIM (CONT'D)

(panicked)

Oh shit!

Tim almost misses a sharp turn in the road. He cranks the wheel, the car squeals and skids, and barely manages to get back on course.

His smile is still there, blended with some panic, not quite as triumphant... but definitely still there.

TIM (CONT'D)

(softly)

Wow...

The BUZZING of an alarm clock takes us to...

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The buzzing continues, as Tim sleeps - the clock reads 7:23, long passed his established wake up time. Slowly, he emerges from his slumber and focusses on the time on the clock...

TIM

(startled)

Oh, Jesus...

He jumps from his bed, his hand shooting to his aching head, as he feels the after effects of the previous night's wine. Then, he sees the two flamingos he'd stolen from Derek and Stella's yard and the full events of the evening rush back to him...

TIM (CONT'D)

Jesus!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tim grabs the flamingos and shoves them into his closet, closing the door to hide them. He disappears into the bathroom, we hear the shower go on and MOVE TO...

INT. TIM'S AUDI - LATER

Tim desperately negotiates MORNING TRAFFIC with one hand, while tying his tie with the other.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - LATER

Tim's car weaves through the spiraling garage, then pulls into a spot. Tim jumps from the car and hustles for his building...

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tim emerges from the elevator and hurries towards the CONFERENCE ROOM, where large glass windows reveal a long table, surrounded by seated ATTORNEYS in the middle of a PARTNER MEETING. Tim quickly enters the room...

INT. OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ART PETTIS and DICK RAUTH, the firm's stately FOUNDING PARTNERS, sit at the heads of the table, as Tim makes his way to an empty chair. For the first time in his professional career, Tim is visibly frazzled and he can feel the weight of the eyes lingering on him...

PETTIS

(coolly)

Good morning, Tim.

TIM

(contrite)

Good morning. Sorry I'm late.
Running a little behind. Won't
happen again.

Pettis watches Tim takes his seat, then turns his attention to another attorney...

PETTIS

Now, Paul, suppose you were able
to demonstrate a pattern of non-
compliance, tying in both...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Art continues addressing PAUL, we see Tim glancing at his fellow partners, spinning under the weight of his tardiness, the lie he's just told, and the turmoil in his personal life. Suddenly...

TIM
(blurting out)
My wife left me.

The meeting screeches to a halt. All eyes turn to Tim.

TIM (CONT'D)
She moved out 4 1/2 weeks ago and
is living with a man named Derek
Trotter.

Off their dumbfounded faces...

TIM (CONT'D)
(sinking)
I'm sorry, it's the first partner
meeting I've been late to in 4
years... I thought my tardiness
deserved an explanation. Maybe
not. I don't know. It's been a
confusing time...

Tim trails off and there is a long, silent beat, as everyone stares at him. Particularly, Art Pettis.

PETTIS (O.C.)
The collapse of a marriage is one
of the most traumatic things that
can happen to a person.

INT. ART PETTIS'S OFFICE - LATER

Pettis paces behind his desk in mid-lecture. Tim is seated in a chair across from him.

PETTIS
It can burn a hole in a man, leave
him questioning his past, his
future, even the purpose of his
daily existence. (beat) Your
outburst in the conference
concerned me.

TIM
(nodding)
Like I said, it's been a confusing
time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pettis settles into the chair behind his large desk.

PETTIS
(softening)
So, Derek Trotter... the realtor?

TIM
(nodding)
I didn't even know she knew him.

PETTIS
Well, he's a good man, if that helps. And a wizard with a putter.
(beat, realizing) Probably doesn't help, though.

Tim shakes his head - "Doesn't help."

PETTIS (CONT'D)
Were you at least getting some action on the side? Sometimes that takes the sting off it. A woman who understands discretion and the pressures of a man in your position. A bosomy confidant, perhaps?

TIM
There was no one on the side.

PETTIS
Hmm...

Pettis considers this for a beat. Then, he leans forward, as if about to confide something very personal.

ART PETTIS
Tim, I want to tell you a story about another promising attorney. This was 35 years ago, but, in many ways you and he aren't that different...

Tim nods solemnly, as Pettis continues...

ART PETTIS (CONT'D)
Like you, he was a legal dynamo, practically billed more hours than the rest of the firm combined... he lived and breathed the law. Hell, in many ways, he was the law.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ART PETTIS (CONT'D)

(beat) Until the day he married the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen - half Hungarian, half Navajo - with long dark hair, eyes like jewels and legs that went on for miles. She also had a thirst for booze that could put a seaman on shore leave to shame. (beat, wistful) That young attorney never stood a chance...

Tim is trying to figure out where this story is going...

TIM

Were you the attorney?

ART PETTIS

No, I wasn't the attorney. For Godsakes, Beverly Rose was the love of my life for 42 years! You know that!

TIM

(flustered)

I'm sorry. It's just the way you framed the story... I thought the use of 3rd person was a narrative device.

Pettis SLAMS his hand down on his desk.

ART PETTIS

There's no device, Tim! Come on, I'm talking about Pat Rainey! (beat) Rainey was a partner here back when we were called Pettis, Rauth, Rainey & Silverberg. One of the best attorneys I'd ever seen. (beat, softening) I swore I'd jump through fire for that man...

Another long pause, as Pettis reflects sadly on those bygone days. The SILENCE gets uncomfortable.

TIM

(prompting)

Did you?

ART PETTIS

Did I what?

TIM

Jump through fire for him?

Pettis shakes his head matter-of-factly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ART PETTIS

Never had the chance. That Hungarian-Navajo harlot he called a wife left him for some saxophone player and Rainey lost it. We found him three days later riding a city bus wearing high heels and women's lingerie.

Tim swallows hard, the impact of another man's demise cutting close to the bone.

TIM

Wow, that's not good.

ART PETTIS

No, it wasn't. We had his name off the firm's letterhead within 24 hours. 17 years of legal expertise down the tubes...

Pettis rises from his chair to emphasize his next point.

ART PETTIS (CONT'D)

You've done some great work for this firm, Tim. You're our youngest partner, you bill the most hours, handle our biggest clients... that's the kind of thing that gets a man's name on the front door. Don't let this setback in your personal life jeopardize that. Promise me you won't be like Rainey...

Still unsure what to even make of the Rainey story, all Tim can offer is...

TIM

(flatly)

I promise.

Then, as Pettis continues on about Tim's "responsibility to his clients" and the firm's "legacy of service and professionalism", Tim's eyes are drawn to something on Pettis's bookshelf.

CLOSE ON the shelf - we see books, honorary awards, various other items befitting a man of accomplishment, and a ceramic COFFEE MUG featuring a BRIGHT PINK FLAMINGO.

Tim is transfixed by the bird, no longer listening to Pettis's continuing speech.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I must have sat in that office a
hundred times before and never
seen that flamingo.

INT. TIM'S OFFICE - HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Shaken, Tim exits Pettis's office. He blankly passes his
co-workers, almost as if he doesn't see them.

TIM (V.O.)
Was it new? Had it been there all
along and I'd just never noticed?
Why was I suddenly seeing
flamingos? Was it all just
coincidence? Possibly...

INT. TIM'S OFFICE - LATER

Still shaken, we see Tim at his desk, doing some research
on his computer...

TIM (V.O.)
On the other hand, a quick Google
search and a couple of Wikipedia
entries revealed Carl Jung, the
founder of Analytical Psychology,
and his Principle of
Synchronicity, which states
coincidences are often the result
of the unseen interdependence
between what may seem like two
disparate and independent events.

As Tim stares at his computer, trying to process what
he's read, we MOVE TO...

INT. HALLWAY - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

The office is empty, it seems everyone has gone home for
the night...

TIM (V.O.)
I wasn't even entirely sure what
Carl Jung meant by that.

Suddenly, the door to MR. PETTIS'S OFFICE opens and Tim
steps out carrying his briefcase and HOLDING SOMETHING
wedged underneath his jacket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But, I did know I wanted that
bird.

Tim hurries for the safety of the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

As the elevator descends, Tim pulls the mug from his coat and studies the painted flamingo, an ADRENALIZED SMILE - the same smile from the first theft - spreading across his face.

TIM (V.O.)
That night, I dreamt about
Stella...

INT. CHURCH - 16 YEARS AGO - DAY

The church doors open, revealing a YOUNG STELLA in her wedding dress. She's backlit by radiating sunlight.

On the altar, Tim is AWESTRUCK, as he locks eyes with his beautiful, smiling bride.

TIM (V.O.)
...and how our life once seemed so
wide open, full of ideas and plans
- forgoing children so we'd be
free to travel across Europe, live
on a houseboat, learn to cook
Chinese food...

INT. CLASSROOM - HASTINGS LAW SCHOOL - 14 YEARS AGO - DAY

Tim sits in a classroom full of law students. Tim raises his hand, is called on by the professor...

TIM (V.O.)
But there was also law school to
finish, student loans to pay, the
bar exam...

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S SAN FRANCISCO APARTMENT - 11 YEARS
AGO - NIGHT

Tim, still in his dress shirt and tie after a long day, sits at their kitchen table, hard at work prepping for the next day's work. Legal briefs, depositions, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)
The usual pressures of the law
profession...

In an oversized PFIZER 1999 TOP SALES PERFORMERS T-shirt and underwear, Stella hands Tim a cup of tea, kisses his forehead and heads for the bedroom. Buried in work, he doesn't look up until she's already moving away from him.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And Stella had her own successful
career as a pharmaceutical rep...

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - 7 YEARS AGO - NIGHT

They've now upgraded their lifestyle to the nice home in Mill Valley. We see a spare bedroom, converted into a makeshift art studio, filled with canvasses and paints. Stella works on new piece - it's raw, derivative, modernist - clearly the work of someone just learning how to use her instrument.

TIM (V.O.)
...which she eventually left to
pursue her growing interest in art
and painting.

Tim appears in the doorway, drained from another long day and lengthy commute. Proud, Stella steps back from her canvas, Tim nods and smiles - but he has no idea what he's even looking at.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I guess things just sort of got
away from us.

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - 6 YEARS AGO - NIGHT

In their well-appointed kitchen, Tim and Stella stand over a hot pan of boiling oil, several hand-rolled DUMPLINGS ready to be cooked.

TIM (V.O.)
To be fair, we did try cooking
Chinese food a few times.

Stella drops one dumpling into the oil, which splatters, burning Tim...

TIM (CONT'D)
(in pain)
Oh, shit... hot, hot!

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim is in bed, exactly as we last saw him, except now his eyes are open, staring at the three stolen flamingoes.

We hear a RINGING PHONE, then...

STELLA (O.C.)

Hello...

EXT. SAUSILTO DOCK - DAY

CLOSE ON - Tim, walking with his cellphone to his ear.

TIM

Well, I finally did it, Stella.
You know that houseboat we always
talked about living on? Well... I
just leased one.

PULL BACK to reveal Tim standing on a dock staring at a brown shingled houseboat, with flower baskets hanging from the eaves. Several moving boxes are gathered by the front door.

This is the famed houseboat community of Sausalito, California. Across the bay, San Francisco shines in the afternoon sunlight.

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Now, in an art studio all her own, Stella wears a paint splattered shirt. Canvases and paintings are spread around the room, but we only see glimpses of the work.

STELLA

What? Tim? Why are you calling me
about this?

INTERCUT TIM AND STELLA AS NECESSARY.

Tim stares at the houseboat.

TIM

You should see it, Stella. It's
like a floating cottage. Fully
furnished, kind of a nautical
theme. (beat) And don't worry, I
found a nice Asian couple to rent
our place... they're so excited
about the house.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (CONT'D)

I chose not to mention our recent bumps there, didn't want to dampen their enthusiasm any, but it's okay, because couples hit rough patches sometimes and these storms can also pass and... (beat, re: the view) Stella, it's so peaceful out here. We really should have done this years ago.

Stella pauses, carefully choosing her next words...

STELLA

Okay, Tim... uh, I'm not exactly sure how to say this, but... you're not doing this houseboat thing because of me are you? (beat, gently) Because it... it won't change anything.

Not exactly what Tim was hoping to hear.

TIM

(flustered)

Who said I wanted change? I just want to live on the water... like we always talked about. Because I'm one of those guys who when he says something, he does it. Boom, cross it off my list. (beat) Besides, I assumed you and Derek were very happy up there on your woodsy cul-de-sac in the hills.

STELLA

So, you know where we live?

Oops.

TIM

Uh, well... Mill Valley has lots of woodsy streets, many of them cul-de-sacs. Just sort of threw it out there...

STELLA

Right. (beat) Tim, a couple weeks ago, we had something stolen from our front yard. Did you do it?

TIM

Steal from you? No, I didn't do it. (beat) What kind of something, by the way? Just out of curiosity...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STELLA

Two flamingos.

TIM

I don't know anything about it.

Stella pauses thoughtfully, then...

STELLA

Well, I figured it was probably just some teenagers. But, then, when you said you knew what our street looked like, it seemed a little strange...

TIM

Okay, fine... truth is, I Google Earthed you. Wrong, I know... but, I guess it's just the natural curiosity of a man whose wife is living with another man. I'm sorry.

STELLA

Okay, well... I didn't think you were the stealing type. But, you never know...

TIM

True. Just like I never knew you were the flamingo type. Until now...

STELLA

They were meant to be ironic.

Tim nods. Of course they were.

TIM

By the way, I hear lovely things about Derek. They say he's a fine golfer.

The comment hangs there for an awkward beat, then...

STELLA

Goodbye, Tim.

TIM

Bye, Stella.

Deflated, Tim hangs up the phone and stares again at his houseboat, the wide expanse of bay, and the city shimmering on the other side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

From behind Tim, a man's VOICE...

VOICE (O.C.)

Ahoy, neighbor. Can I interest you
in a mai tai?

Tim turns to see OLAF, whose white beard and wool sweater
makes him look like some kind of Norwegian sea captain.
In his hand, his afternoon cocktail.

OLAF

(re: his drink)

On sunny days, I find a little
taste of the South Pacific helps
transport the mind.

TIM

(flatly)

I'm sure it does, but... no
thanks. I've got some unpacking I
should probably get to...

OLAF

Well, welcome to our floating
neighborhood. You'll never find
more peace than living on the
water.

With a broad sweeping motion, Olaf gestures to the bay.

TIM

(sinking)

You don't say...

OLAF

By the way, the name's Olaf.

But, Tim has already turned, heading for his new home.

TIM (V.O.)

The truth is, I've always hated
boats.

INT. HOUSEBOAT - TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The furnished boat is decorated with an eye for NAUTICAL
kitsch. Tim is in BED, staring miserably at the ceiling,
as a low, but constant, HUM echoes through the boat.

TIM

Ugh... what is that?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Desperate to find a way to sleep, Tim finally rolls over and folds the pillow over his head.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But, in the absence of other
viable living arrangements, I
decided to put on a brave face...

CLOSE ON Tim, head pressed sadly in a pillow sandwich.
His face anything but brave.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... and vowed to make the best of
my new life on the water.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - MORNING

Tim emerges from his boat, dressed for work. A look of disgust crosses his face.

TIM
What the hell...

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal that the waters of the bay have pulled way back and the once floating boats are now mired in a disgusting brown MUCK, cluttered with muscles and clumps of algae. The bright sunlight of the previous afternoon has been replaced by a dull gray marine layer.

Tim sees his neighbor, Olaf, sitting on his dock drinking coffee and reading the morning paper.

TIM (CONT'D)
Olaf, what happened to the water?

OLAF
Low tide. Beautiful, isn't it?
Mother Ocean pulling back to
reveal the treasures hidden
beneath...

Tim looks out at the "treasures". He SNIFFS the air...

TIM
Kind of smells. (beat) How often
is this going to happen?

OLAF
Only twice a day. That smell is
dying algae...

Olaf INHALES deeply, drawing strength from the odor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLAF (CONT'D)
Invigorating, isn't it?

TIM
(decidedly not
invigorated)
It's lovely...

Tim starts up the dock, then turns back...

TIM (CONT'D)
Did you hear a noise last night?
Kind of a--

OLAF
-- humming noise? Like a low
flying plane in the distance?

TIM
Exactly, yeah... you heard it?

OLAF
Humming Toadfish. That's their
mating call. Whole section about
it in your lease contract. (beat)
Don't worry, you'll get used to
it.

Tim looks weak, as he turns to the festering mud flats...

TIM
Oh, God... what have I done?

INT. ART PETTIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Tim and a co-worker, MARK ROSENBLATT, are seated, in mid-conversation with Pettis. Tim and Rosenblatt each hold a folder of documents, while Pettis paces behind his desk.

TIM
I've filed the counter motion,
still awaiting a response. (beat)
They're not letting on, but I
think they want to settle...

PETTIS
Of course they want to settle.
They always want to settle. We're
a country of set...

Pettis trails off, his attention drawn to the items on the shelves behind his desk. Tim watches warily, as Pettis stares for a long beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM
Art?

PETTIS
Hmm?

Another long pause, then...

ROSENBLATT
(gently reminding)
Zeus Juice vs. California Plum...

Pettis turns back to Tim and Rosenblatt.

PETTIS
(distracted)
Right. So... they want to settle?

TIM
(carefully)
I believe an offer is coming, yes.

PETTIS
(uninterested)
Well, I'm sure you've got it
handled. Keep me in the loop...

Meeting over. The distracted Pettis turns back to his shelves, leaving Rosenblatt confused... and Tim very concerned.

INT. OFFICE - HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Tim and Rosenblatt step out, closing Pettis's door.

ROSENBLATT
That was a waste. He hardly said
anything. (beat) We can still bill
the client for that though, right?

TIM
(unsettled)
Of course...

Tim turns and walks past the long window into Pettis's office. Pettis is searching through the items on his shelf. Now, Tim is really concerned...

Frustrated, Pettis turns and heads for his office door. Tim quickly ducks into his own office...

INT. TIM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tim hides in the doorway and peers back into the hallway, as Pettis approaches the desk of his secretary, CATHY.

PETTIS

Cathy, did you move anything in my office?

CATHY

No, sir. You were very clear about that in my interview. I can touch, but not move...

Pettis nods, acknowledging his mandate. Then...

PETTIS

Did the cleaning crew mention breaking anything?

CATHY

As a matter of fact, they did.

Cathy pulls a cracked PICTURE FRAME from her desk.

CATHY (CONT'D)

The photo of you and Mr. Rauth at Pebble Beach. Rosa, the one with the shakes... she knocked it over when she was dusting. (beat) I was going to re-frame it for you.

Pettis glances at the PHOTO - he and his law partner standing on the tee box of Pebble's famed 18th hole - but his mind is still elsewhere.

PETTIS

There was a mug on my shelf...

Pettis trails off, thinking - *When was the last time he'd seen the mug? How long had it been gone? Days? Weeks? Why hadn't he looked at it more often?*

CATHY

Mr. Pettis?

Pettis just shakes his head and returns to his office, leaving Cathy totally perplexed.

CLOSE ON Tim, as he ducks back into his office. What has he done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM
Shit...

INT. OFFICE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Attorneys and staff are leaving for the night. Tim heads down the hallway, passing Pettis's office.

Through the window, Tim can see Pettis at his desk, lost in troubled thought...

As Tim takes this in, we hear the low sound of the Humming Toadfish...

GEORGE (O.C.)
What the hell's that noise?

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

George and Tim sit on deck chairs, a SIX PACK of beer on a table between them. The HUMMING continues...

GEORGE
(annoyed)
Do you hear it?

Staring out at the water, Tim nods.

TIM
(glumly)
That's the Humming Toadfish,
George. Apparently, I missed it in
the least contract.

GEORGE
I thought lawyers were good with
contracts...

TIM
(with a shrug)
Don't tell Pettis. He's already
warned me about slipping...

George listens to the Toadfish for another beat, then...

GEORGE
How often do they do this?

TIM
Oh, just all night. (beat) Olaf
swears I get used to it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tim has clearly not gotten used to it. George settles back and opens a new beer.

GEORGE

So, you really thought moving onto this boat would get her back?

TIM

I'm not sure what I thought.
(beat) Maybe I should have shown more interest in her painting. We could have travelled more... maybe had kids. I don't know...

Tim hangs his head...

TIM (CONT'D)

God... I'm so lost, George.

George rests a comforting hand on Tim's shoulder.

GEORGE

Hey, hey... come on, I'm here for you. Let me help...

TIM

(shaking his head)
You don't even know the half of it, George. (beat) I just want things to be normal again. Can you help with that?

GEORGE

Make things normal? I'm not even sure what the word means.

George takes a pull on his beer.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Happy? I might be able to assist you there. Help you get your mind off Stella? Sure. But, normal? That's beyond my job description...

Tim doesn't understand, he just wants the pain to go away...

TIM

(confused)
What are you talking about, George?

George pauses for a beat, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Would you like to go to an orgy?

OFF Tim's stunned expression, we MOVE TO...

INT. GEORGE'S BOXSTER - NIGHT

George is behind the wheel of his PORSCHE BOXSTER. Tim sits next to him. A live GRATEFUL DEAD CD plays softly on the stereo.

TIM

How long have you been going to orgies?

GEORGE

About a year and a half now. And it's not "orgies", it's one "orgy", once or twice a month, at a nice home in San Rafael. A Radiology colleague told me about it. Good, professional crowd... you'll feel very at home there.

TIM

Does Laurie know about this?

GEORGE

(nodding)

She understands. (beat) Look, I'm a sexual guy, I need stimulation. Laurie, not so much. She likes to be held. Cuddling, sharing the morning paper, conversation... yes. Sex? Not really a priority. And I don't blame her. It's just how she's wired.

TIM

What about all the yoga she does? The deep breathing, the flexibility... I thought yoga people were very sexual.

GEORGE

(slightly bitter)

Some are sexual. Others are just really into yoga. (beat) You know, she's writing freelance for Yoga Journal now? 50,000 words on Downward Dog as a metaphor for life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

That's a lot of words. Must be a long metaphor.

GEORGE

(dismissive)

A long something. (beat) Anyway, Laurie and I worked out an agreement - I go to this swinger party a few times a month, enjoy myself in a safe environment with other like-minded individuals and get things out of my system. Is it normal? Who knows? Is it better than me futilely dry humping her leg while she's trying to sleep?

TIM

(considering)

I guess it would be.

GEORGE

Laurie agrees...

With that, George pulls the car over to park along the wooded road. Several other cars are also parked. Up ahead, we see a LONG DRIVEWAY and the lights of a house.

We hear the DING DONG of a doorbell and MOVE TO...

EXT. ORGY HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door opens halfway, revealing a normal looking MAN in an ADIDAS SWEATSUIT...

SWEATSUIT MAN

Yes?

George and Tim stand together on the front step.

GEORGE

Hi, does Joe Montana live here?

The man smiles and opens the door wider...

SWEATSUIT MAN

Welcome, friends.

As they enter...

GEORGE

(to Tim)

Great password, huh?

INT. ORGY HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Tim follows George inside the house. George pauses to hand the sweatsuit man some money.

GEORGE
(to sweatsuit man)
For both of us. (to Tim,
explaining) The money's just for
refreshments and the DJ. The group
sex is free...

SWEATSUIT MAN
Enjoy your night, gentlemen.

GEORGE
Thanks, Ken.

As George leads Tim deeper into the house...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You'll see Ken out by the pool
later. Guy loves to eat pussy.

TIM
Great. I'll make sure to look for
that.

Tim glances back at Ken, who gives a smiling "thumbs up".
Down the hall, behind closed doors, we HEAR the sound of
the party.

GEORGE
Come on, you sarcastic bastard,
let's get you out of these clothes
and join the festivities.

With that, George ducks into a bathroom and motions for
Tim to follow...

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A large bathroom, with a shower and several CABINETS
where party-goers can store their clothes.

George and Tim take off their clothes and put them in one
of the cabinets. Tim folds his neatly, George simply
balls his up and throws his in.

TIM
So what's the protocol here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

The only protocol is "be cool".
Ask before you touch, wear a
condom, and respect everyone's
boundaries. These are good people -
accountants, dentists, teachers...

George trails off, as he sees his brother naked.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Damn, you've got a good orgy body.

Tim looks down, as if seeing it for the first time.

TIM

Really? What makes a good orgy
body?

GEORGE

Well, your flat stomach for one.
I've got to walk around sucking
mine in the whole time, it's
exhausting. (beat) And you've got
great testicles.

TIM

(looking down)
Hmm, I'd never really given them
much thought.

GEORGE

I think about mine all the time.
Probably because they dangle
unevenly. It's awkward. Especially
dancing...

TIM

You dance here?

GEORGE

Sometimes. Hey, it's a party.

TIM

A party where everyone's naked.

GEORGE

And a lot of people are screwing,
yeah. Don't worry. You'll love it.

Tim considers this for a beat, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM
(thoughtfully)
Thanks, George... for bringing me
here. It's kind of weird, but...

GEORGE
Hey, you know what's weird?
Normal's weird. Now let's go make
some friends.

As George throws his arm around his brother, we STAY ON
Tim's thoughtful face and hear...

TIM (V.O.)
At that moment, it occurred to me
this was exactly what I needed to
get my mind off Stella...

INT. ORGY HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

SLOW MOTION HERO SHOT - two WOODEN DOORS open and Tim and
George stride into a large room full of mingling NAKED
PEOPLE, tasteful decor and San Francisco 49er
memorabilia. Porn plays on the television, while a woman
gives a man a blow job on a nearby couch.

TIM (V.O.)
Something really out of the
ordinary - not illegal or
involving the petty theft of
someone's property - but something
that would snap me out of the rut
I was in and get me back on track.

George waves to people he recognizes from previous
events, while Tim scans the room with new confidence.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
With my flat stomach and great
testicles, this was the kind of
thing that could redefine Tim
Forrester.

EXT. ORGY HOUSE - NIGHT

The party is in FULL SWING. Swingers socialize, dance,
and couple off in a myriad of sexual combinations, while
a nude DJ spins records at a nearby turntable.

Tim sits smiling in the JACUZZI, drinking a margarita,
oblivious to several COUPLES in the water with him. The
couples are all in various STATES OF COPULATION.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)

I was a swinger.

Tim takes a satisfied sip of his margarita, when, suddenly, a WOMAN next to him, who was busy pleasuring a MAN with her hand, reacts with disgust...

WOMAN

Oh, my God... he's peeing!

MAN

What?!

WOMAN

He's peeing on me. This asshole's peeing on me.

Tim realizes they are talking about him - he's the asshole.

TIM

(horrificed)

Whoa, no... it's not like that. I was relaxing--

MAN

(to Tim)

Did you ask her? (to the woman)
Did he ask you?

WOMAN

No, he didn't ask! He just started peeing!

TIM

(horrificed)

It slipped out, I swear. This is my second margarita and the water was so warm, I was relaxed, it just started flowing. But, I would never purposely--

Another man in the jacuzzi takes notice.

MAN #2

What happened?

MAN

(angry, protective)

This jackass just peed on Michelle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

Accidentally, I swear. I never meant
to upset your wife.

Another man breaks off from the woman he was coupling
with in the jacuzzi...

MAN #3

(even angrier)

She's my wife, dude. And she's not
into piss play.

MAN #2

Respect people's boundaries.

TIM

I do. I love boundaries, believe
me. I don't want any problems...

As the offended woman moves into her husband's arms...

MAN

You didn't think peeing on his
wife would be a problem?

TIM

Well, to be fair, I didn't pee on
her. Just near her.

WOMAN

Yeah, but it got on me. And I'm
not into it.

MAN #3

You heard her. She's not into it.

All the women and men in the jacuzzi stare at Tim like he
has committed the ultimate sin.

MAN

This is really not cool.

HOLD ON Tim's mortified face...

TIM (V.O.)

And that's when I was asked to
leave the party.

EXT. ORGY HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A chastened Tim walks back to the house. Behind him, the angry members of the jacuzzi watch his retreat past the other oblivious party-goers, who are still mingling, dancing, and coupling.

TIM (V.O.)
Apparently, the swinging lifestyle
is built on a foundation of trust.
And if a woman can't feel safe in
the knowledge that she won't be
peed on and/or near...

Tim reaches the sliding glass door and opens it.

INT. ORGY HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tim crosses the room, passing more oblivious orgiers...

TIM (V.O.)
...then the whole delicate
structure of the orgy collapses.
(beat) In a way, it makes sense.

Tim reaches the wooden doors at the other end of the room, starts to open them, then pauses... as if finally PROCESSING SOMETHING.

He hurries back to the center of the room and stares in stunned recognition at the bookshelves - there, below a framed, autographed photo of Joe Montana, is a 10" porcelain figurine of a BRIGHT PINK FLAMINGO.

Tim's eyes dart back and forth, from the flamingo to the naked orgiers filling the room, his mind racing - *What is it with all these flamingos? Why is this happening to me? I can't possibly take it, can I?* Tim takes a final look at the bird, then...

TIM (CONT'D)
No. That's crazy.

With that, Tim walks from the room. We STAY ON the wood doors as they CLOSE behind him, HOLDING for a beat, then watch as they OPEN AGAIN and Tim reenters the room.

He goes straight to the flamingo, PLUCKS it from the shelf, then marches quickly out of the room, SMILING the whole way. A seamless theft, the orgiers never notice.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Now dressed, Tim leans against George's car, staring at the stolen flamingo and smiling... still in the adrenalized afterglow of the theft.

In the distance, we see George emerging from the driveway of the orgy house.

GEORGE
(calling out)
What the fuck happened? Did you
touch someone without asking?

Tim slips the flamingo into his coat before his brother is close enough to see it.

TIM
No, I accidentally urinated in the
jacuzzi. It drifted onto some
woman...

GEORGE
Dammit, Tim. Nothing kills the
mood of some hot group shower
action like someone coming
upstairs to tell me my brother has
just been asked to leave the
party.

TIM
Yeah, well... sorry to ruin your
shower.

GEORGE
I wasn't in the shower. I was
watching the group in the shower.
I'm a watcher, not a toucher -
that's my thing. But, still...
news like that is a major
buzzkill.

TIM
Look, I said I was sorry.

George shrugs with forgiveness.

GEORGE
Ah, hell... who am I to lecture
you? At my first swinger party, I
accidentally farted during a 3-way.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(beat) It's funny, a man will let you watch his wife getting tag teamed, but pass gas while you're watching and suddenly you're persona non grata. It's a tricky trail we tread...

Tim, the flamingo still clutched under his jacket, watches his brother ponder the elusive contradictions of the swinger lifestyle, then...

TIM

Can we go home now?

GEORGE

Yeah, sure... of course. (beat)
Hey, we tried, right?

Tim allows himself another small smile, as George pats him on the back and they get in the car.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - EXTRA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tim flips on the light, revealing a sparsely furnished room - a table, a lamp, and his three STOLEN FLAMINGOS.

TIM (V.O.)

Maybe it was just the adrenaline rush - the thrilling moment during the theft when I forgot about Stella and the hole in my heart.

Tim places the stolen orgy flamingo with the other birds, then steps studying his growing flock. As a SMILE creeps across his face...

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

Or maybe Carl Jung was right and it was the Principle of Synchronicity.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Meal finished, a WAITRESS brings the change for his bill, as Tim sips the last of an iced tea and idly flips through a Bay Area MAGAZINE. He pauses in disbelief...

TIM (V.O.)

Whatever it was, one thing was certain...

CLOSE ON magazine - a profile of local wine critic, CHARLES ANGLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We see photos of Angley in his beautiful home. In the background of one photo - a stunning ART DECO FLAMINGO, nearly FIVE FEET TALL.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... this many flamingos do not
enter a man's life by chance.

Tim takes the magazine and heads for the exit. Then, passing the HOSTESS STATION, something catches his eye - a FLAMINGO TOOTH PICK HOLDER - can this really be happening?

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There was simply no point in
denying it.

In ONE SWIFT MOVEMENT, Tim palms the tooth pick holder and slips it into his pocket, SMILING as he walks out.

INT. STORE - DAY

Tim purchases a pack of dark DRESS SOCKS. The SALESGIRL hands him a RECEIPT to sign and a pen - atop the pen, a BRIGHT PINK FLAMINGO.

TIM (V.O.)
And the more open I was to that
fact...

Tim signs the receipt, then quickly pockets the pen. Another SMILE.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Tim walks through the garage, briefcase in hand, pausing when he notices a RUBBER FLAMINGO on someone's car ANTENNAE.

TIM (V.O.)
The more flamingos just seemed to
appear.

Tim plucks the flamingo from the antennae and continues on his way. And, yes, he's SMILING.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tim drives down a wet street in a drizzling rain. He passes a BUS STOP SHELTER featuring a LARGE POSTER of a FLAMINGO - an ad for the Flamingo Exhibit at the San Francisco Zoo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)
It was almost like the universe
was trying to tell me something.

Tim whips his Audi to the side of the road. He jumps out, opens his trunk, grabs a SCREW DRIVER, then runs through the drizzle to the shelter, where he pops open the plastic case and PULLS OUT THE POSTER.

As he runs back to the car, another adrenalized SMILE spreads across his face...

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And though I couldn't quite
understand what the universe was
saying...

EXT. ZOO - DAY

Tim stands with a group of people in front of the FLAMINGO EXHIBIT. About 20 pink flamingos stand together in the muddy recreation of a salt water lagoon.

TIM (V.O.)
I was doing my best to listen.

A chipper ZOO GUIDE addresses the group.

ZOO GUIDE
Another amazing flamingo fact -
the joint in the middle of their
leg, often mistaken for their
knee, is actually their ankle
joint. So when walking or standing
they are really on their toes, not
their feet.

As Tim stares in amazement at the flamingos, a MAN next to him shakes his head.

MAN
That is one weird ass bird.

Tim flashes an ANNOYED look at the man, then turns his attention back to the flamingos.

CLERK (O.S.)
Excuse me, sir? Can I help you
with something?

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

This is the same cluttered, dusty shop from our opening - in fact, we've rejoined that first scene.

TIM
(startled)
Huh?

Tim finds the mutton-chopped Clerk from the opening standing a few feet away from him.

CLERK
Looking for anything specific?

TIM
Me? No, no specifics. Just
browsing. Taking it all in...

The Clerk eyes him suspiciously for a beat, then...

CLERK
Alright... let me know if you need
anything.

TIM
Will do.

As the Clerk heads back to his post behind the counter, Tim turns to a 12 INCH CERAMIC FLAMINGO perched on a crowded shelf - the same flamingo from the opening theft.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
So, getting back to my earlier
question, when a man asks - "What
am I doing? Is this really what my
life's become?" - I think it's
safe to say... the answer's
complicated.

And with that, Tim flashes a quick look at the clerk, then GRABS the flamingo and DASHES for the exit.

CLERK
HEY!!

The clerk takes off after Tim, who is already running out the open door.

Unlike the first time we were in this scene, we now linger in the empty store for a BEAT, listening to the action we've already seen play OFF CAMERA...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLERK (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Stop! Stop! Get back here you son
of a bitch!

TIM (O.C.)
WOOOHOOO!!

EXT. STINSON BEACH - SECONDS LATER

We rejoin the chase to the sound of Tim's POUNDING FOOTSTEPS and the enraged store Clerk pursuing him with ad libbed EXCLAIMS. This is one hippie you DON'T mess with.

Tim darts across the street, cars SCREECHING to avoid him and the pursuing Clerk.

Pedestrians react with shock, as Tim jumps to the sidewalk and runs past them.

CLERK
Stop him! He's a thief!

A bold MAN steps out to block Tim's path...

TIM
(to the man)
Don't stop me, stop him. He's out
of his mind!

Now confused, the Man doesn't know what to do and Tim races by, followed by the livid Clerk.

- Tim darts past a burger stand, tries to leap over a table, but catches his foot and comes down with a THUD. He manages to keep the flamingo from hitting the ground and jumps back to his feet, continuing his escape.

- Tim races through a basketball court, startling the players who are in mid-game. The Clerk is still in hot pursuit.

- Tim cuts across a grassy picnic area, racing past groups of people sprawled out on blankets... and runs SMACK INTO Joy, who is holding a CAMERA.

JOY
(shocked)
Uncle Tim?

Startled recognition yanks Tim from the adrenalized rush of the escape...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

Joy...

But, there's no time to talk. The Clerk is bearing down.

CLERK

Stop him!!

Tim takes off again, the Clerk continues chasing... and Joy is completely baffled.

- Tim sprints onto the beach, which is littered with surfers, kite flyers and dog walkers. Legs churning through the sand, he's finally able to put some distance between himself and the furious Clerk.

- Glancing back, Tim sees the Clerk collapse exhausted to his knees, chest heaving. The Clerk holds up a futile middle finger...

CLERK (CONT'D)

Fuck you, asshole!

Tim simply raises the stolen flamingo aloft...

TIM

WOOHOO!

...and continues to run off down the beach, an exhilarated smile stretched wide across his face, the bird held high like some kind of trophy.

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

It was the best theft yet. And the whole time I was running, I forgot how much I missed Stella and how alone I was.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACH - MINUTES LATER

Tim is still running, across what is now barren sand. The town and the beach crowds are long behind him.

Eventually, he slows to a stop, as if emerging from a daze. Chest heaving, he looks down at the flamingo, then at his leg - his PANTS ARE TORN and his skin is BLEEDING from his crash at the picnic table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Finally, Tim looks at the deserted stretch of beach - the only sound is his HEAVY BREATHING and the CRASHING of the windswept Northern California surf. Realizing just how isolated he's become, he suddenly remembers...

TIM
(sinking)
Oh God, Joy...

As he slowly starts trudging back to town, we MOVE TO...

EXT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Tim pulls onto the driveway. He parks, slips the newly stolen flamingo into the glove compartment, then climbs out and heads for the house, limping on his injured leg.

Tim rings the doorbell. A moment later, Laurie opens the door.

LAURIE
Tim, hi... how are you?

She doesn't wait for his answer, just immediately puts her arms around him.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
It's so good to see you.

TIM
(carefully)
Good to see you, Laurie.

An awkward beat, as Tim tries to gauge if she knows anything about his earlier run-in with Joy.

LAURIE
(confused)
Are you here for George? Because he's still down at the Club...

TIM
No. Actually... I'm here to see Joy.

LAURIE
Joy?

TIM
Yeah, I was in the neighborhood, so I figured I'd stop in, say hi. Is she around?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURIE

Sure, Joy will be thrilled to see you. She just got home. (beat)
She's out back with her camera.
You can just cut through the house...

Laurie motions for a relieved Tim to follow her inside...

INT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Tim steps into the house...

LAURIE

I'd join you guys, but I'm on deadline for this article I'm freelancing. Confining myself to my office...

TIM

Oh, right... the Yoga Journal piece. Sounds interesting. George told me about it on the way to the orgy...

Laurie looks at Tim for a long beat, then...

LAURIE

Yeah... so, anyway, I'll be busy writing.

TIM

No problem, Laurie. Good luck with it.

Then, as he heads for the back door, Laurie notices something...

LAURIE

Tim? Are you limping?

Tim nods without turning around.

TIM

Yes I am. And bleeding.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Tim descends the stairs and enters the WOODS that surround George and Laurie's hillside home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

Joy? Are you out here? It's Uncle Tim.

JOY (O.C.)

I'm down here...

Tim makes his way through the trees, down to a little CREEK BED, where he sees Joy with her camera, quietly snapping photos of leaves, trees, clouds, and twigs floating in the creek. He sits down on a fallen log and watches her for a beat, then...

TIM

What are you doing?

JOY

Project for my photography class. We're supposed to pick a theme first, then take the photos, but I'm kind of doing it backwards...

Tim nods, as she turns and SNAPS a photo of him.

JOY (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Don't worry, I won't include that one in the project.

TIM

Thanks. (beat) Look, about our little run-in today...

Joy shrugs, no big deal.

JOY

I was just down there with a friend from school. Her mom brought us. Don't worry, I didn't tell them I knew you. They just thought you were some guy... running with a flamingo. And being chased.

The accuracy, and strangeness, of that description just hangs there...

TIM

(carefully)

Did you tell your mom?

Joy is almost offended at the suggestion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOY

Uncle Tim...

TIM

(relieved)

Right... well, I guess I should probably explain it to you.

JOY

(sincerely)

You don't have to. I know you're going through something.

Tim nods and they share a gentle smile, as Joy takes a seat next to him on the log.

JOY (CONT'D)

My dad told me you moved to a houseboat.

TIM

It's true, I did. (beat) They say a change of setting can be good.

JOY

Is it?

TIM

Sometimes. When I forget.

JOY

Do you forget a lot?

Tim can only shrug - how does he explain? Then...

TIM

(thoughtfully)

What do you think about flamingos, Joy?

JOY

Flamingos? Never really given them much thought. I know they're pink. Like to stand on one leg.

Tim nods...

TIM

You know, they do it to conserve body heat, so only one leg has to be in the water at a time. Scientists just figured that out recently.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIM (CONT'D)

(beat) And flamingos are the only birds to eat with their heads upside down. I've tried that, by the way. Very difficult.

JOY

You've tried eating with your head upside down?

Tim pauses, realizing how strange that must sound.

TIM

Flamingos have been kind of a big deal for me lately.

Joy gives this thoughtful consideration, then...

JOY

I used to eat my hair when I was young.

TIM

You still are young.

JOY

You know what I mean. (beat) It was a nervous thing, I guess. I used to have a lot of anxiety... would chew it off in big clumps. Drove my mom crazy.

TIM

I bet it did.

It's a tender moment of shared understanding, then...

TIM (CONT'D)

See, the thing is... I've been holding all this inside and I think I would like to explain it to someone. (beat) Can I show you something?

EXT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Tim walks with Joy to his car. She still has her camera around her neck, as Tim opens the car, then the glove compartment, and pulls out the newly stolen flamingo.

TIM

What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOY

I think it's very pink. (beat,
carefully) You stole this?

TIM

(nodding)
I have others. Also stolen.

JOY

Really?

TIM

(regretting the
honesty)
No, I'm kidding. I don't. (beat,
regretting the dishonesty)
Actually, I do.

JOY

Wait, you do have others, or you
don't?

TIM

I do. (beat) Lately they just seem
to be popping up.

Joy turns her thoughtful gaze from her uncle, back to the
bird. She's not judging, just intrigued. Then, as Joy
sets the flamingo down on the ground and focusses her
camera to photograph it...

JOY

I should probably have a stronger
opinion about this.

TIM

So should I. Although, I do think
they might be here for a reason.

JOY

Who? The flamingos?

TIM

(nodding)
It's complicated, but there are
theories that back me up.

He watches her SNAP a couple of photos, then...

TIM (CONT'D)

Have you ever heard of Carl Jung's
Principle of Synchronicity?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOY
(curious)
No...

Just then, George's car pulls onto the driveway. Joy quickly grabs the flamingo and slips it under her shirt before her father notices.

Climbing out of his car...

GEORGE
Timmy, hey... I didn't know you were coming by. I just finished 18 down at the Club.

TIM
Yeah, well, it was kind of a spur of the moment stop. I--

GEORGE
By the way, I wasn't playing with Derek Trotter. Just, you know, in case you were wondering...

TIM
I wasn't wondering.

GEORGE
(distracted)
I saw him, though. Son of a bitch...

TIM
I thought you said he was a good guy.

GEORGE
Relatively speaking, for a wife stealer. (beat) You know that smug bastard just broke the Club Record by two strokes? Where's the justice?

TIM
There may not be any...

GEORGE
(shaking his head)
And supposedly he had no seven-iron in his bag. Choked up on a six-iron all day... birdied two par-3's that way.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(beat) And here I am, fighting a slice from hell, got the yips on anything inside four feet...

Then, before George can drift too far into the private hell of his tortuous golf game...

JOY

(quickly)

Dad, can I sleep over on Uncle Tim's boat tonight? He said it would be okay.

GEORGE

What?

Joy flashes Tim a look.

TIM

(covering)

Joy's never seen the boat. I thought maybe she could spend the night.

GEORGE

(re-engaging)

Right... okay, uh, that could be good. Let me talk to your mom and we'll pack a bag. (beat) Is she still working on that article? Downward Dog as a metaphor for life... can you imagine?

JOY

You know, Dad, some people say golf is a metaphor for life.

GEORGE

With the way I'm playing? God, I hope not.

As George moves for the house, as Joy hangs back for a beat. Handing the stolen flamingo back to Tim.

JOY

I want to hear about this Synchronicity thing...

TIM

I'll explain on the way.

JOY

(smiling)

And I should definitely see the other flamingos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TIM

I agree.

OFF his smile, we MOVE TO...

EXT. DOCK - NIGHT

Tim leads Joy down the dock. He carries her OVERNIGHT BAG in one hand, in the other the stolen flamingo, which he's covered with his jacket.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tim opens up the front door...

TIM

Alright, here we are...

Joy follows him, taking in the maritime-themed decor.

JOY

I like it. Very nautical.

TIM

I know you're just saying that,
but thank you. The furniture came
when I rented it.

Tim leads her down the hall and flips on the lights in an empty bedroom.

TIM (CONT'D)

This can be your room. Not much
here, but we can get some pillows
and blankets and fix a bed. Or, I
can make up the couch...

Joy smiles as she sets her bag down.

JOY

No, no. This room's fine.

Returning the smile, Tim pulls the towel from the flamingo he's still holding in his hand.

TIM

Okay, ready to see the others?

JOY

Ready.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - FLAMINGO ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens into the pitch black room. Tim flips on the lights and Joy's eyes widen, as she takes in the flock, which now includes Tim's latest thefts - the TOOTHPICK HOLDER, the FLAMINGO PEN, the ANTENNAE FLAMINGO and the bus stop POSTER.

JOY
Wow, you've been busy.

TIM
You could say that...

Tim places the Stinson Beach flamingo in with the others, then points to the birds he stole from Stella and Derek.

TIM (CONT'D)
These were my first two. I took them from Derek and Stella's front lawn... I call them Uno and Dos. (beat, re: the flamingo mug) This was my third, I got him from my boss's office...

JOY
And you call him Tres...

TIM
No. I only named the first two. I don't know why...

Tim places his latest theft in with the others, then steps back.

JOY
They look like a family.

TIM
(nodding)
I thought the same thing. (beat)
So you don't think this is crazy?

Joy shrugs.

JOY
I'm 12. My feelings on crazy aren't fully formed yet. (beat)
Isn't that why you told me?

TIM
No, I just thought you'd have the best chance of understanding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Honored to be chosen, Joy slips a comforting hand into Tim's.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - KITCHEN - LATER

Joy sits at the kitchen table, while Tim stands near the stove making HOT CHOCOLATE.

JOY

Okay, here's one last question and then I'm with you... what if Stella and Derek had lawn gnomes? Would you have taken those?

TIM

Why would I steal lawn gnomes?

JOY

Why would you steal flamingos?

TIM

I don't know. They were just sitting out there, so out of place, so pink... I just couldn't stop thinking about them.

JOY

What if the lawn gnomes were pink?

TIM

But, lawn gnomes aren't pink.

The hot chocolate is ready. Tim comes to the table with two MUGS. Taking a seat across from Joy.

TIM (CONT'D)

Look, here's the thing - were those first two birds a petty attempt to lash out at Stella and Derek? Partially, maybe.

JOY

But, then, when the other flamingos started popping up...

TIM

It occurred to me something larger might be happening.

JOY

(trying to follow)
The Principal of Synchronicity...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

Exactly. The hidden connection
linking separate events. A greater
meaning...

JOY

But, why flamingos? Why you?

TIM

That's what we need to figure out.
(beat) Luckily, I have some
books...

With that, Tim reaches back to the bookshelf and takes
down several REFERENCE BOOKS from National Geographic and
The Audubon Society...

MONTAGE:

We DISSOLVE THROUGH a series of images, alternating
between shots of Tim and Joy reading to one another,
exchanging facts about flamingos and shots from the pages
of the books - photographs of flamingos, drawings of
flamingos, flamingo eggs, flamingo babies, flamingos in
flight, flamingos at rest.

All while hearing...

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

That night we learned everything
we could about the flamingo - the
six different species, their
locations, life spans, migration
patterns, nesting habits, mating
rituals. We discovered that
flamingos are actually born white
and it's the pigment in their diet
that turns them pink. And, we
learned that the flamingo has no
natural defenses, safety in
numbers is its only protection.

We see an IMAGE of a large flock of flamingos, bravely
standing together in a marshy lagoon, as crocodiles and
hippos roam the banks.

END MONTAGE

EXT. WATER - MORNING

We move slowly across the marshy low tide line, right at
water level. At first you might even think this was a
flamingo pond...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)

It was hard to comprehend such an animal, standing defenseless on one leg, every day growing brighter, more pink, unyielding to the dangers in the world around it. To me, it seemed insane...

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal Tim, who has waded out into the water of the bay. He is standing on one leg, the rows of docked houseboats behind him.

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

But, Joy saw it differently. She called it fortitude.

The RINGING of a BELL calls Tim to turn back towards his houseboat. Joy is ringing the SHIP'S BELL on his porch.

JOY

Uncle Tim, my dad's here...

Tim waves to George, who stands near Joy on the porch, then makes his way back to the boat.

EXT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - DAY

Tim sloshes through the mud, then climbs up the steps to the houseboat, where Joy stands with her father. George has a NEWSPAPER tucked under his arm.

GEORGE

What the hell were you doing out there?

TIM

I was wading. I've seen the neighbors do it. Figured I'd give it a try...

As Tim hoses his feet off, George glances to the neighboring boats, the only neighbor visible is Olaf, who quietly reads the paper on his boat's porch. As Olaf waves...

TIM (CONT'D)

(to George)

Thanks for letting Joy stay last night. It was fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Anytime. Happy to do it. (beat, to Joy) Did you hear the Humming Toadfish, Princess?

JOY

(nodding)
All night.

George bends down to pick up Joy's bag, then...

GEORGE

You know, Tim... I've been debating whether or not to say anything to you, but... Stella is having an art opening at a gallery in Mill Valley Wednesday night. I know the owner, so... I got an invite. (beat) You'd mentioned you should have paid more attention to her painting, I don't know... but, if you want, you and I could go.

Tim exchanges a look with Joy, who shrugs, unsure...

TIM

Can I think about it?

GEORGE

Sure. Let me know.

George puts his arm around Joy...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Okay, Joy, you ready to go? (beat, to Tim) Oh, by the way... here's your paper. I picked it up on the dock...

George hands Tim the newspaper he had tucked under his arm. It's the local paper, THE MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Be careful, there's a flamingo thief on the loose...

TIM

What?

Tim and Joy exchange a quick look of alarm.

GEORGE

Check it out, front page...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Tim opens the paper, in the lower left corner a headline reads - FLAMINGO THIEF STRIKES STINSON SHOP.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(to Joy, explaining)

Apparently, this guy goes into a store, grabs a 12-inch flamingo right off the shelf, and runs out. The clerk chases him all over town and the whole time the guy is holding the bird aloft and hooting.

TIM

Holding it aloft and hooting... the whole time? That sounds like an exaggeration. (beat, off a look from Joy) I'm just saying... it would be hard to run like that, wouldn't it?

JOY

It does sound a little far-fetched, Dad.

GEORGE

Maybe... I don't know, I'm just telling you what I read. Funny story. And it makes you think... of all things, why steal a flamingo?

Then, George just shrugs... he's a doer, not a thinker.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Okay, Princess, what do you say we hit the record store on the way home, pick up some Grateful Dead bootlegs.

JOY

Please say we won't...

GEORGE

Oh, come on, you love extended jams.

Joy shakes her head - no she doesn't. Then turns to her uncle...

JOY

See you later, Uncle Tim. I'm really glad we did this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Joy and Tim share a warm hug.

TIM
(sincerely)
Me too. And next time, I'll have
the room fixed up for you.

As Joy and George step off the boat and onto the dock...

GEORGE
See you later, Timmy. Hang in
there.

TIM
Will do, George.

A final wave, then George and Joy head up the dock and
Tim turns back to the newspaper.

Sinking as he scans the article, he glances to Olaf,
still sitting on his deck, reading the exact same paper.
Tim looks very worried...

... when a passing SAILBOAT suddenly catches his eye. The
name on the boat - FORTITUDE. Tim stares in awe - 3
months ago, he wouldn't have believed it, but now...

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Even a blind man could see where
this was going. Joy, the
flamingos, the rushes of
adrenaline, and the Principle of
Synchronicity - they were all
leading me to the same place...

Tim quickly turns and steps back onto the dock, calling
out after George...

TIM (CONT'D)
George, hey... you know what?
Maybe I will go to that gallery
opening.

GEORGE
(surprised)
You sure?

TIM
Definitely. I'll pick you up.

With that, Tim steps confidently back onto his houseboat,
looking back to the bay and the passing boat - FORTITUDE.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - FLAMINGO ROOM - NIGHT

As Tim adjusts a few of his flamingos...

TIM (V.O.)
That night, I thought about Stella
and the way our bodies would
always return to one another...

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - 2 YEARS AGO -
NIGHT

Tim and Stella lie in bed, carefully kissing and touching
one another like two people making their way blindfolded
through a room of strange furniture.

TIM (V.O.)
Even after weeks, sometimes
months, of scheduling obstacles,
work conflicts and disparate
sleeping habits... we would
eventually make our way back in
blissful reunion.

STELLA
Ow.

TIM
I know, I'm sorry. It's an awkward
angle...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIM AND STELLA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tim is on top of Stella, his head next to hers on the
pillow, angled awkwardly, like a swimmer drawing a
breath. His eyes squeezed shut, he makes soft GRUNTS with
each thrust of his body.

TIM (V.O.)
She was so unselfish in bed -
quiet, gentle, never requiring her
own orgasm...

Underneath him, Stella stares blankly at the ceiling...

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The missionary position was our
favorite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We hear the classic fuzz guitar intro to George Harrison's WHAT IS LIFE and MOVE TO...

INT. TIM'S CAR - DAY

Tim drives his car to work, singing merrily along with the song - one of the most cheery and upbeat songs of romantic longing ever recorded.

TIM
*Tell me what is my life without
your love? Tell me who am I,
without you by my side?*

Tim's singing trails off, as he turns to see a bus stop bench with a REAL ESTATE AD and the handsome, smiling face of the REALTOR, DEREK TROTTER. Tim's face falls...

Just then, a car HONKS, causing Tim to turn and see - a bright pink VW square back with a personalized license frame - FLAMNGO.

Spirits buoyed, we see Tim smile and resume his singing, while we hear...

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's funny, the way life works,
when you can finally see what it's
trying to show you...

INT. LAW FIRM - DAY

Tim sits at a conference table, surrounded by other lawyers. He gets a TEXT MESSAGE on his phone. It's from Joy - "You're right, they really do keep popping up." She's attached a photo of a FLAMINGO on the back of a woman's T-shirt.

Tim smiles and we MOVE TO...

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - SAN ANSELMO - DAY

An old farm house, now converted into a store, the shop is filled with rare and eclectic furniture pieces - a testament to good taste and a keen eye for quality.

Tim stands in the middle of the store, staring mesmerized at a GLASS VASE with several PINK FLAMINGOS painted on it. The vase is perched on a high shelf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Are you him?

Startled, Tim turns to see MARIE, the attractive owner of the shop.

TIM

Am I who?

MARIE

The Flamingo Thief. (beat) Don't you read the paper? Crazy story...

TIM

Oh, right... I did see something about that. Weird, huh? (beat, quickly) Anyway, I'm actually looking for some furniture for my niece. I'm fixing up the guest bedroom on my houseboat for her and I was hoping to find something nice. She's 12.

Marie smiles warmly.

MARIE

I have a few things that might work, let me take a look in back. Do you mind waiting?

TIM

No, I've got time.

Tim watches her retreat to the back of the store, taking in the gentle flow of hair cascading over her shoulders and the soft rippling of the loose folds of her skirt. Then, as soon as she is gone, he looks back to the flamingo vase. We HOLD ON his focussed gaze, then...

INT. ANTIQUES STORE - MINUTES LATER

Marie comes from the back of the store, carrying an oval MIRROR with a MOTHER OF PEARL inlay. She smiles...

MARIE

You're still here.

Tim stands in the middle of one of the aisles, idly looking at a small music box.

TIM

Were you testing me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIE

(coyly)
I might have been. (beat) So, do
you think your niece would like
this?

Tim studies the mirror, running his fingers over the
shining mother of pearl. It's beautiful.

TIM

She'll love it.

Moved by the care with which Tim studies the mirror...

MARIE

(gently)
I'm Marie, by the way. And I think
I've got a few more pieces she
might enjoy--

TIM

(smiling)
I'll take everything.

Marie is surprised, but Tim seems like a man who knows
what he wants...

EXT. ANTIQUES STORE - LATER

Marie helps Tim load the Audi with several items of
furniture, including a DRESSER, BEDSIDE TABLE, a CHAIR
and the MIRROR. Each item is completely charming and
totally unique... and the Audi can barely fit everything.
The dresser and chair are tied to the roof, the bedside
table lashed inside the trunk, which is unable to close.

As Marie helps Tim tighten the ropes around the
dresser...

MARIE

These are lovely pieces. Your
niece is a lucky girl.

TIM

One of the best people I know.
(beat) My wife and I separated a
few months back. Joy's been very
sweet.

MARIE

I'm sorry to hear that... about
your wife I mean. (beat, offering)
I was divorced two years ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her glow momentarily dims, reflecting on bygone pain.

MARIE (CONT'D)
(thoughtfully)
You know, in a way... it's a form
of death. And you have to go
through the same stages of grief.

Tim considers her theory, then...

TIM
Fortitude.

MARIE
(nodding, impressed)
That certainly helps, yes.

Marie gives a gentle smile, suggesting a beat of
connection... but one of them still has more to travel.

TIM
The universe has a way of giving
us the answers we need. (beat)
Stay strong, Marie... you'll find
yours.

MARIE
(surprised)
Oh, I wasn't meaning me. I was
talking about y...

She doesn't finish, as Tim is already waving goodbye and
climbing into his car. All she can do is return the wave
and offer a warm smile...

As Tim drives off in the overloaded Audi...

TIM (V.O.)
I remember thinking how nice
Marie's smile was and hoped she'd
find happiness one day. (beat)
But, we each have our own journey
in life... and I couldn't worry
about that now.

PULL BACK so in one shot we can see Tim's disappearing
car and Marie watching him for a thoughtful, concerned
beat, then turning and heading back to her store.

The CLINKING of GLASSES and the HUM of CONVERSATION takes
us to...

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The well-dressed crowd MINGLES with the excitement of opening night. The energy in the room signals Stella's first showing is quite a success.

Tim and George enter, Tim wearing one of his typical gray suits, George in a sweater and slacks. Tim surveys the crowd, as George grabs two glasses of champagne from a passing waiter.

TIM

I'm glad we're doing this, George.
I don't want to put too much
pressure on the night, it's just a
start, but I think Stella will see
how I've changed. The break has
done us good...

GEORGE

Right. But, be cool, okay? You've
been talking a mile a minute since
you picked me up. It makes me
worried when you get like this.

TIM

But, I never get like this. This
is the new me.

GEORGE

That's what worries me. Be cool.

But, Tim, already scanning the crowd, isn't listening.

TIM

Where is she? Do you see Stella?

George grabs an hors d'ouvres from a passing waiter, then glances around the gallery. We see him react to something, then, as his eyes move across the room, grow increasingly ALARMED.

GEORGE

(urgently)
Tim, we need to get out of here.

TIM

What?

GEORGE

Let's go. Now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Just then, Tim sees Stella standing with a group of well-wishers. Tim waves...

TIM
(brightly)
Stella...

Stella reacts with surprise, then concern, at seeing Tim.

GEORGE
Come on, Tim. Leave...

TIM
Why? We just got here. Stella is--

GEORGE
The paintings, Tim. The fucking
paintings. This was a mistake...

George grabs Tim's arm, pulling him towards the door, but Tim is now, for the first time, noticing the artwork...

...which is a series of SELF PORTRAITS of Stella - half of them gray and morose, showing a woman alone, in empty rooms and deep sadness, like the work of Edward Hopper only more visceral. The other half show a woman reborn, raw, sexual, bursting with color and the occasional form of a male lover. It's incredible work, suggest the two lives of Stella, one dead and one alive...

As Tim's eyes dart back and forth, we see the paintings in faster and faster cuts. Dazed, he takes an unsteady step...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Tim...

Tim looks over at Stella, who watches from across the room with compassionate eyes. Coming in to stand at Stella's side, an oblivious Derek Trotter flashes a smile and puts his arm around her.

EXT. GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER

Tim bursts through the gallery doors and VOMITS in the parking lot. George hurries out there after him...

GEORGE
What the fuck was that in there?
Who paints that kind of shit?
Depressing, then sexy... that's
not art.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Still hunched over, Tim tries to catch his breath.

TIM
I'm such an idiot. What was I
thinking? I thought tonight would
be good for us...

GEORGE
You never saw her paintings?

TIM
I don't know. Some of the stuff is
new. The other stuff... I guess I
never looked that closely, it was
a lot of gray colors, women
sitting around in shadows... I'm
not an art guy, okay?

Tim uses a handkerchief to wipe his mouth, George looks
up and sees Stella approaching.

STELLA
(carefully)
Hi, George.

GEORGE
Stella...

Tim turns to see her.

TIM
Hello.

STELLA
Hi, Tim. (beat, to George) Do you
think Tim and I could have a
moment?

George glances and Tim, who nods...

GEORGE
Sure. Why don't I go and grab
another drink...

As he passes Stella.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(softly)
Powerful work in there. Very
moving.

As George exits, there is an awkward pause, then...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

(lamely)
Crowd seems to be enjoying your
paintings. Feels like a major
triumph...

STELLA

I'm so sorry you had to see them
like this, Tim. I had no idea
you'd be here.

TIM

Yeah... it was kind of a spur of
the moment decision. I've been
making a lot of those lately.
(beat) So, those paintings, the
sad ones... that was you when we
were together? (beat, off her nod)
I had no idea...

STELLA

(gently)
For a long time, neither did I.

Tim shakes his head, tears running down his face...

TIM

I should have been more aware... I
understand that now. But, I
couldn't see. And I thought maybe
if I came tonight, saw your
work... and you saw me, maybe...

He trails off, realizing the stupidity, then cuts to the
heart of it.

TIM (CONT'D)

When did you stop loving me,
Stella?

All she can do is shake her head and open her arms to
him, as he buries his head in her shoulder...

STELLA

It wasn't you, Tim. I just stopped
loving us.

Tim nods, clinging to her, showing more emotion than he
ever showed the night she left him. And her gentleness
shows she harbors no bitterness and remembers that there
had once been goodness between them. A sweet moment,
until...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

...Tim tries to kiss her. Stella immediately pulls back...

STELLA (CONT'D)

Tim, don't.

Awkward. Any warmth has immediately slipped away.

TIM

Is this because I just threw up?
Or do you really have no interest
in kissing me again?

Stella looks at him for a sympathetic beat, then, placing a hand on her stomach...

STELLA

I'm pregnant, Tim.

As the blood drains from Tim's face, we MOVE TO...

INT. TIM'S CAR - NIGHT

Tim drives in devastated silence. George is next to him.

GEORGE

(stunned)
Pregnant... wow. (beat) Do we know
it's not yours?

TIM

(broken)
Do the math, George.

George can only shake his head...

GEORGE

The spawn of Derek Trotter. (beat, bitter) You should have seen him in there, going on about Stella's use of light and her "Rembrandtian" overtones. Club Champion, realtor, patron of the arts, father-to-be... he's a goddamn renaissance man.

TIM

I think I'm going to throw up again.

George quickly turns on the air conditioning...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Okay, okay... let's just get some
air going. You'll be fine. Just
breathe... keep breathing...

Tim draws some deep breaths, it seems to help a bit.
George's thoughts drift to other matters...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(absent-mindedly)

I think the Flamingo Thief's a
swinger.

This gets Tim's attention...

TIM

What are you talking about?

GEORGE

Remember the guy from the paper?
The Flamingo Thief?

TIM

Yeah, yeah... I remember.

GEORGE

Well, it's funny, because the
other day, the orgy hosts sent out
a group email - apparently a
flamingo was stolen from the house
during one of the events.

TIM

Do they know when?

GEORGE

They're not sure. There's been 8
events this month and... somewhere
in that time, 4 pairs of high
heels were left behind, one
Stanford g-string, a used condom
was stuck in their freezer and
somebody made off with a porcelain
flamingo.

TIM

That's disgusting.

GEORGE

I don't think it was worth very
much, but, apparently, there was
some sentimental value...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

I was talking about the condom.

GEORGE

(as if considering
for the first time)

Yeah... that is gross. We live in
messed up times. (beat,
thoughtfully) Flamingos. At least
the guy knows what he wants, you
know?

Tim studies his brother...

TIM

(carefully)

What are you getting at, George?

George shrugs with confusion.

GEORGE

Who knows? I'm a 47 year old man
who enjoys watching other people
have sex... I could be getting at
anything.

George pauses for a heavy beat, then...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(unloading)

Laurie has no idea about the
swinger parties.

TIM

What?!

GEORGE

I lied before, I've never
discussed it with her.

TIM

Oh, Jesus... George.

GEORGE

I know. See what I mean? It's a
messed up world - freezer condoms,
flamingo thieves, orgies. (beat) I
haven't been back since, FYI, but
I figured I'd better come clean
with you... at least so you won't
say anything to Laurie.

Tim smacks the steering wheel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TIM

Goddamnit, George. I already did tell her.

GEORGE

What?! How did she react?!

TIM

She had no reaction. And I didn't think anything of it. Because I assumed she knew!

GEORGE

Oh, God... no reaction?! See how cold she is? She's internalizing it... she internalizes everything!

TIM

You told me she wasn't sexual and the two of you had an agreement!

GEORGE

Well, she's not sexual... and we do have an agreement. It's just a different agreement than me being allowed to go to orgies. More like the opposite of that agreement.

Then, as Tim turns onto George's driveway...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Hey, in my defense, I never touched anyone. I'm a watcher, not a toucher. You know that...

Tim brings the car to a stop and rests his head on the steering wheel...

TIM

I don't know anything, George. Just please... get out of the car.

GEORGE

Fine, fine... I'm getting out. I thought I'd get a little understanding from you. But, apparently, that's not going to be the case tonight.

With that, George exits the car and starts for the house. Tim quickly rolls the window down...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TIM

Flamingos mate for life, George.
Did you know that?! They mate for
life!

GEORGE

What?

But, the distraught Tim is already backing off the
driveway, and the ROAR of the engine taking us to...

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tim's Audi races along the winding highway.

TIM (V.O.)

It was like everything had
suddenly caved in on me...

INT. TIM'S CAR - SAME TIME

Tim's drained face stares blankly ahead as he drives.

TIM

...and I could only think of one
thing. (beat) Well, that's not
true. I did have a slight pang of
guilt...

EXT. ANTIQUE STORE - DAY

A shot of Marie, from the day Tim visited her store. She
stands smiling at him, the Marin County sun matching her
glow, as she brushes a strand of hair from her face.

TIM (V.O.)

...and a quick vision of Marie and
her smile.

INT. TIM'S CAR - NIGHT

Tim squeezes his eyes shut, erasing the unwanted vision.

TIM (V.O.)

But, the fact is, this had nothing
to do with her...

EXT. ANTIQUE STORE - NIGHT

Tim's empty car is parked in front of Marie's store. For a beat, there is no sign of life in the darkened store - then a side window SLIDES OPEN and Tim crawls out clutching the glass vase with the flamingo painted on it - the same one he'd been staring at days earlier.

TIM (V.O.)
I just really needed that
flamingo.

Tim runs to his car and drives off into the night.

INT. OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tim walks down the hallway, carrying a folder of documents, a notepad and an open magazine.

CLOSE ON the magazine - we see it's the same one Tim was reading weeks earlier in the restaurant, the profile of wine critic Charles Angley.

Tim studies the photo displaying Angley's 5 FOOT TALL FLAMINGO, as he opens a door to a dark conference room...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Tim steps into the room and flips on the light - and is STARTLED by the sight of Art Pettis, seated at the head of the conference table.

TIM
Whoa, Art... didn't know you were
in here.

PETTIS
Just enjoying the darkness. And
the solitude.

TIM
Right... I guess I'm a little
early for our department meeting,
why don't I give you your time...

Tim reaches for the lights, ready to exit...

PETTIS
No, no... you're here. Sit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Damn. Tim carefully takes a seat at the other end of the long conference table. Pettis pauses for a long, dramatic beat, then...

PETTIS (CONT'D)

Pride is a fascinating thing,
isn't it, Tim? The way it drives a
man, leads him to cross oceans,
build empires... but, can it also
be a curse? His undoing?

Tim has no idea where this is going.

TIM

I'm not sure, Art. Not much of an
authority on pride at the moment.

Pettis studies him for a thoughtful moment.

PETTIS

A man needs to look inside
himself. (beat, more insistent) We
all do things. Things are done to
us and we do things... but what is
the statute of limitations on a
man's pain?

TIM

I'm... not sure I'm following.
(beat) Are you talking about my
pain?

Pettis doesn't respond and instead rises from his seat.

PETTIS

(thoughtfully)
At the end of the day, we're just
men. Nothing more, nothing less.

As Pettis heads for the door, Tim's mind spins, then...

TIM

(cautiously)
Art... is there a reason you're
telling me this?

Pettis pauses to put a hand on Tim's shoulder. He lingers for an uncomfortable beat, then exits the conference room. Tim can only stare after him... flabbergasted. Then, as Tim's gaze drifts back to the magazine and the 5 FOOT FLAMINGO...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The following day, the San
Francisco Chronicle ran two
articles of interest...

And we CUT TO...

INSERT SHOT - The San Francisco Chronicle Arts Section.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The first was an Arts review
hailing the stunning debut gallery
showing of painter Stella
Moriarty. She used her maiden
name.

CLOSE ON - The newspaper's photographs of two of Stella's
paintings. One shows an isolated, lonely woman. The
other, a woman reborn... sensual, passionate, alive and
naked. Both are self-portraits.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Her use of light and the emotion
in her work, the product of a
dying marriage, was hailed as a
major triumph.

INSERT SHOT - The San Francisco Chronicle, now turned to
another page, where a headline reads "Flamingo Thief
Strikes Stinson Beach".

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
On page 19, they ran a story
they'd picked up from The Marin
Independent Journal. (beat) One
marriage, two stories.

INT. YOGA JOURNAL HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A group of women, and a few new-agey men, stand around a
group of desks, applauding as a FEMALE EDITOR proudly
holds up a copy of the new issue - it's opened to
Laurie's article "Downward Dog: A Metaphor For Life".

TIM (V.O.)
Laurie's article also appeared in
Yoga Journal that week.

A beaming Laurie stands next to the female Editor.
CHAMPAGNE bottles pop, celebratory glasses are poured...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Apparently, it was very well
received in the yoga community.

LATER

The group is smaller now. Just Laurie, the female Editor and about six others, but they are still celebrating. They've now switched to WINE. A younger man and woman share a JOINT.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And toasted repeatedly at Yoga
Journal Headquarters.

LATER

It's just Laurie and the female Editor now. They stand very closely, as the Editor pours Laurie another glass, then leans in and kisses Laurie on the lips. At first it's tentative, Laurie tries to stop it, then relents as the kiss grows deeper.

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Later, Laurie would claim it was a
desperate response to George's
orgies. Which George claims were a
desperate response to the state of
their relationship.

Finally, Laurie pulls away from the kiss and steps back. She's flushed, panting, confused...

EXT. CHARLES ANGLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Standing in a wooded grove at the end of a gravel drive, the dimly lit home is a beautiful modernist take on a traditional Sonoma farmhouse.

Tim stands next to the house, slowly sliding a window open. As Tim starts to climb through, we...

ANGLE ON a view into the house, where we see a 5 FOOT TALL FLAMINGO standing in the middle of the room. It's the same flamingo from the magazine profile of wine critic Charles Angley. This is his house.

EXT. DOCK - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's dark. The only sounds are the gentle creaking of the docks, the soft DRONE of the Humming Toad Fish and Tim's footsteps, as he carries a large object covered by a blanket towards his boat. He strains under its weight.

OLAF (O.C.)

Ahoy, neighbor...

Tim looks like he's about to have a heart attack.

TIM

(startled)

Olaf, hi...

Awkward silence. Olaf puffs on a pipe, watching Tim struggle with the weight of his hidden object. Finally...

OLAF

You know, the houseboating community believes an individual's right to privacy is sacrosanct. (beat) I just need to know that's not a human body under there.

TIM

It's not a body.

Olaf nods, satisfied.

OLAF

Have a good night.

With that, Olaf returns to the shadows of his darkened houseboat. Relieved, Tim continues down the dock.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens and Tim lugs the covered object inside. He pauses for a beat, then pulls the blanket off, revealing...

...the FIVE FOOT TALL FLAMINGO. The bird's varnished, pink paint glows with an alabaster smoothness.

It's a remarkable flamingo and Tim stares at it in awe, the familiar SMILE crossing his face...

PETTIS (O.C.)

Oh, dammit! Dammit all to hell!

INT. OFFICE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tim and a few shocked co-workers stare into Pettis's office as their head partner swipes his forearm across his desk, sending papers and pens and documents flying.

Pettis notices everyone staring at him and quickly goes to the window, snapping the shade closed.

As his co-workers disperse, Tim catches the eye of Pettis's secretary, Cathy.

TIM

Is he alright?

CATHY

(troubled)

He's been like this ever since his mug went missing. (beat, clarifying) It was a gift from his grandson.

TIM

Oh...

CATHY

(nodding)

Mr. Pettis and his son don't speak, so he doesn't see the boy. It's a complicated web...

He glances back at Pettis's office, now obscured by the drawn shade... but Tim seems to have a new understanding.

TIM

(softly)

What is the statute of limitations on a man's pain?

CATHY

Excuse me?

But, Tim just shakes his head, as the RUMBLE of a Porsche engine MOVES US TO...

EXT. DOCKS - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tim stands waiting as George pulls up. Joy sits next to her father and Tim WAVES as she climbs out with her overnight bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOY

Hi, Uncle Tim...

TIM

Hi, Joy.

George looks out through the open driver side window.

GEORGE

Thanks for doing this, Tim. I know it's short notice, but she really wanted to come tonight. Change of scenery is probably good for her right now...

Tim nods with understanding.

TIM

How are things with Laurie?

GEORGE

Things are fucking messy, Tim. How do you think they are? I sleep on an air mattress in the garage.

TIM

I'm sorry, George.

GEORGE

Ahh, it wasn't your fault. You didn't know...

(beat, to Joy)

Have fun, Princess. Your mom will pick you up.

JOY

Bye, Dad.

Joy waves and we sense a touch of awkwardness between father and daughter. Then, as George drives off, Tim turns to his niece...

TIM

(kindly)

How are you doing?

JOY

Can we put a pin in that question?

TIM

(confused)

Okay...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOY
Have you seen tonight's news?

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

Tim and Joy sit in front of the TV, watching a local news report that is in mid-broadcast.

ON THE SCREEN - A female REPORTER speaks into her microphone. Next to her, Charles Anglely (who we recognize from the earlier magazine) holds a photo of the 5 foot flamingo.

REPORTER
Mr. Charles Anglely, of
Healdsburg, is the owner of the
stolen flamingo and has offered a
personal reward of 10,000 dollars.

The reporter leans her microphone towards Anglely, who holds up the photograph... almost like a parent appealing for the return of a stolen child.

ANGLEY
Whoever has done this, please
reconsider your actions. This is
not about justice or the U.S.
Penal Code, but about the unique
sentimental and emotional power of
a beloved inanimate object. All I
want is a safe, no questions
asked, return of this one of a
kind piece of art.

The reporter nods solemnly and brings the microphone back to her mouth.

REPORTER
Police refuse to speculate if this
crime is related to a theft in
Stinson Beach 3 weeks ago by a man
newspapers have dubbed the
Flamingo Thief.

Joy turns to Tim, who looks like he wants to THROW UP.

JOY
It is related, isn't it?

TIM
(nodding, softly)
He's in with the others...

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - FLAMINGO ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Joy studies the new bird, running her hands over its smooth varnished body, while a crumbling Tim stands against the wall. The reality of his crime sinking in...

TIM

(weakly)

Did you tell anyone else about this?

Joy shake her head, a little disappointed he had to ask.

JOY

Uncle Tim... I thought we'd been over that.

TIM

Right...

As Tim sinks to the floor, Joy looks back to the bird.

JOY

The first news report said the bird was originally commissioned by Frank Lloyd Wright. You know how much it must be worth?

Tim swallows hard, the repercussions of his theft clearly racing through his mind.

TIM

No idea. A lot. Thousands... probably more. Definitely a felony. (beat, explaining) Look, you know I didn't do it for the money. Charles Anglely is a wine critic, there was an article about him and I saw the flamingo in a photo of his house. I couldn't take my eyes off it...

JOY

So, you broke in and took it?

TIM

No, I'd never break in... I found an open window. Fine line, I know, but... (beat, at rock bottom) My God, Joy... what have I done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOY
I don't know, but you're in real
trouble, Uncle Tim.

TIM
(nodding, broken)
Even more than you think...

Tim buries his face in his hands. Joy looks at him with equal parts compassion and concern, then comes over and sits next to him. Putting her hand softly on his...

JOY
(gently)
I heard Stella's pregnant...

Tim nods slowly.

TIM
I guess she did want a family. She
just didn't want one with me.

For a moment, they just sit there, then...

JOY
You can unpin that question now.
The one where you ask how I'm
doing...

TIM
Okay... how are you doing?

Joy pauses a beat, then shakes her head sadly...

JOY
You know, I watch these people in
my house, the yelling, the crying,
the doors slamming, and it's like
this isn't my mom and dad... I
don't recognize them. I don't even
think they recognize each other.
And all I keep thinking is "this
isn't our family, this isn't
us"... (beat) It's not us, right?
It can't be.

And then Joy starts crying. All her maturity and confidence, draining away, as Tim pulls her close.

JOY (CONT'D)
(through tears)
The old us is still there, isn't
it? It can't just be dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Tim's own eyes fill with tears.

TIM
Sometimes people don't realize
they're dead, until it's too
late...

JOY
But, we can come back, right? From
being dead? I mean the flamingo
knows all they have is each other,
why can't we?

TIM
(softly)
I don't know, Joy. I just don't
know...

And there's nothing else to say. Tim and Joy can only
cling to one another, watching the silent flock of
birds...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - JOY'S ROOM - LATER

The room is wonderfully furnished with the items from
Marie's store. From the doorway, Tim watches Joy sleeping
- exhausted by the pain and complexity in her world.

Tim studies her for a SAD, THOUGHTFUL beat, then steps
from the room...

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tim moves quietly down the hall...

TIM (V.O.)
That night, I thought about Frank
Lloyd Wright and flamingos and how
it had all gone so wrong...

He pauses at the flamingo room to study his flock...

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I thought about Charles Angley and
the police and Stinson Beach and
Carl Jung and the Principle of
Synchronicity...

Tim turns the light off, only the vague shadows of the
birds still visible, as he moves down the hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But, mostly, I thought about Joy
 and George and Laurie. And orgies
 and Joe Montana and women who kiss
 women at Yoga Journal
 headquarters. And pregnant artists
 and real estate agents and women
 who have grieved and sell mother
 of pearl mirrors and powerful men
 who miss their grandsons...

As, Tim recounts this list, we JUMPCUT through FLASHING
 IMAGES of everything he mentions and THE FLAMINGOS which
 correspond to each event.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - TIM'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

We're back on Tim now, standing in the middle of his
 room, slowly unbuttoning his shirt...

TIM (V.O.)
 And I tried thinking about what it
 takes to come back from the dead.

Tim pauses with confusion on this last beat, clearly AT A
 LOSS...

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - BEDROOM - LATER

Tim lays in bed, eyes wide open. We hear the soft BUZZ of
 the Humming Toadfish...

TIM (V.O.)
 Finally, I just stopped thinking
 and listened to the Humming
 Toadfish. (beat) I still hadn't
 gotten used to it...

EXT. SAUSALITO BAYFRONT - NEXT MORNING

Establishing shot. We see the row of houseboats, the calm
 water and the gray blanket of the morning marine layer.
 The PURR of passing boats is the only sound...

EXT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - DAY

Tim steps onto the porch with Joy's overnight bag, as
 Laurie walks down the dock and arrives at his boat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM
(gently)
Hi, Laurie...

LAURIE
Good morning, Tim.

TIM
Joy's just finishing up. I made
her breakfast...

Laurie smiles sadly and leans against the porch railing.

LAURIE
You're very good to her, Tim.

TIM
So are you...

Laurie's not so sure. The burden of her troubled marriage
and the effect it's having on her child weighs heavily.

LAURIE
There was nothing between me and
that woman.

Tim nods with equal sadness and takes a spot next to her
on the rail.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
It was just a kiss... a strange,
surprising, exciting, then awkward
and embarrassing, regrettable
kiss. (beat) I don't know why I
even told him. I guess I wanted
him to feel something. Like I did
when you told me about the orgy...

TIM
(feeling guilty)
I thought you knew. (beat) If it
helps, he was a watcher not a
toucher.

LAURIE
So, I've heard...

Laurie wipes a tear, resting her head on Tim's shoulder.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
It's all gone to hell, hasn't it?

TIM
Feels that way sometimes...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They linger for reflective beat, then Joy steps onto the patio and Laurie straightens up...

LAURIE
(putting on a brave
face)
Joy... hi, honey.

JOY
Hi, Mom. (beat) Thank you, Uncle
Tim.

TIM
Good bye, Joy.

Tim puts his arms around her... and she pulls him tight,
WHISPERING in his ear.

JOY
(softly)
I think you need to return that
bird.

Tim nods with resignation...

TIM
I know. (beat) I think I need to
return all of them.

Joy nods with agreement and a shared understanding of the huge task before him. Then, Laurie picks up Joy's overnight bag, takes her daughter's hand and, together, they step off the boat, onto the dock...

As they walk away, Tim looks to the bay, recognizing a
PASSING BOAT...

TIM (CONT'D)
(pointing)
Joy, look... Fortitude.

Joy and Laurie look out and see the boat. Laurie is confused, not quite sure what Tim means, but Joy sees the name and understands perfectly. She's finally able to manage a smile.

INT. TIM'S HOUSEBOAT - FLAMINGO ROOM - DAY

We see Tim preparing his flock for their return...

- Carefully wrapping some of the smaller, fragile
flamingos in paper so they won't break, labelling them,
and placing them in a box with the other small flamingos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

- Placing Marie's flamingo vase into another box.
- Rolling up the poster.
- Covering the Frank Lloyd Wright flamingo with a blanket.
- Putting Stella and Derek's flamingos, his first birds, into a black duffel bag. Pulling the zipper closed...

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Tim heads up the dock, duffel bag over his shoulder, while carrying the large blanket wrapped flamingo. He strains under its weight...

His neighbor Olaf suddenly appears on the side of his boat, observing Tim's load.

OLAF

You sure that's not a human body?

TIM

I'm very sure.

OLAF

(nodding)

That's all I needed to hear. Enjoy your day...

With that, Olaf disappears back into his boat and Tim continues up the dock.

INT. TIM'S CAR - DAY

Tim drives with the boxed flamingo vase and the rolled up poster on the seat next to him. The large, blanket-wrapped flamingo is in the backseat, along with the black duffel bag.

TIM (V.O.)

The plan for the returns was simple...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tim strolls by the counter, pulls the flamingo TOOTHPICK HOLDER from his pocket, places it back on the hostess stand, then heads for the exit...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)
I would get each bird...

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Tim puts the RUBBER FLAMINGO on the ANTENNAE of the car it had once called home.

TIM (V.O.)
Back to its rightful owner...

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Tim places the FLAMINGO PEN back on the counter next to the register...

TIM (V.O.)
As quickly...

EXT. BUS STOP SHELTER - DAY

Tim pops open the poster case, then unfurls the flamingo poster and tapes it back into place.

TIM (V.O.)
And quietly as possible...

INT. STINSON BEACH ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

The site where Tim's dramatic chase originated. Tim strolls the aisles, as the mutton-chopped Clerk, the one who had chased him, peers from the counter, where he rings up another CUSTOMER's purchase. But, he doesn't recognize Tim without the baseball hat.

TIM (V.O.)
Hopefully without being seen,
chased or arrested.

Tim rounds a corner, blocked from view, pulls the CERAMIC FLAMINGO from his jacket, places it on a shelf, then walks from the store.

EXT. ORGY HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Tim walks up to the house, the stolen flamingo hidden inside his jacket, and knocks on the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (V.O.)
Of course, there were certain
hurdles to overcome...

The door opens, revealing a man dressed conservatively in
a YELLOW POLO SHIRT and KHAKI PANTS.

KHAKI PANTS POLO GUY
Yes?

TIM
Does Joe Montana live here?

KHAKI PANTS POLO GUY
(smiling)
Welcome, friend.

He opens the door, allowing Tim to step into the house.

INT. ORGY HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Tim hands Khaki Pants Polo Guy twenty dollars for
refreshments and the DJ, then pauses, a look of concern
on his face...

TIM (V.O.)
Hurdles like... how exactly does a
man return a flamingo to an orgy?

INT. ORGY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The wooden doors open, Tim steps into the room. Naked.

He waves to a few friendly swingers, grabs a drink from a
passing tray - his hands hold no flamingo. Where is it?

ANGLE ON a rearview of Tim - where we see the flamingo
gripped between his butt cheeks.

Keeping his "front" facing the party, Tim inconspicuously
slides along the edge of the room. He sips his drink,
samples a baby carrot from an appetizer tray... until he
reaches the bookshelves. With the autographed Joe Montana
photo looking down on him, Tim reaches back, unwedges the
flamingo and returns it to the shelf...

As Tim quickly leaves, a small smile crosses his face...

TIM (V.O.)
Each return had it's own small
sense of exhilaration...

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP - SAN ANSELMO - NIGHT

We see Tim pry open one of the old farmhouse windows and climb inside the DARK shop with the glass flamingo vase.

TIM (V.O.)
And the hope that, maybe, I could
erase whatever it was I had
done...

INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - SAN ANSELMO - NIGHT

A soft glow from the moon is the only light, as Tim stands on a stool, returning the flamingo vase to its high shelf.

Tim steps down and heads back to the open window. Suddenly, a shadow appears behind him, a woman SCREAMS, a TAZER GUN CRACKLES, then Tim SCREAMS and falls back - body tumbling out of frame, followed by the sound of several THUMPS and BUMPS and CRIES of pain.

THE LIGHTS GO ON - revealing Tim CRUMPLED at the bottom of a short wooden staircase, near a door which must lead to some kind of basement/store room. Blood trickles from a wound over his eye and another on his chin.

Marie appears at the top of the stairs, the tazer still gripped in her hand...

MARIE
(stunned)
Tim?! Oh my God...

TIM
(panicked)
Oh shit...

Clearly in pain, Tim struggles to his feet, looking for an escape route. He tries the basement door, but it's locked. He SHAKES the handle desperately...

TIM (CONT'D)
Come on, come on...

Marie starts down the stairs.

MARIE
Tim, stop!

TIM
I can't, Marie. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tim slams himself against the door, wincing in pain...

MARIE

Tim, please... stop!

TIM

I can't! You don't understand...

Tim jumps for a high, NARROW WINDOW, trying to pull himself up and undo the latch...

MARIE

Stop!!

Then she JABS him again with the tazer. Tim SCREAMS, his battered body dropping to the floor, where he lies in a helpless heap.

TIM

(in pain)

Ow, why did you do that?

MARIE

Why didn't you stop? I said stop.

TIM

I don't know... I couldn't. (beat, defeated) Oh, God... are you going to call the police?

OFF Marie looking at him with kindness, we MOVE TO...

INT. ANTIQUE STORE - SAN ANSELMO - LATER

A hurting Tim sits on a chair, while Marie carefully bandages his facial wounds...

TIM

(humiliated)

So, were you hiding in the dark the whole time?

MARIE

I was in the back room going over bills and I heard a noise. With the lights off, I couldn't tell who it was... (beat) What did you think you were doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

I don't know. I thought maybe if I put the flamingos back, I could undo things, or at least one thing... it's all just gone so wrong.

MARIE

What has?

TIM

Everything. With everybody. And it's been wrong for so long... I just never knew. (beat) I couldn't even see I was losing my wife and I loved her so much. How did I get so numb, Marie?

MARIE

(gently)

I don't know, Tim.

Marie steps back, then sits down, thinking. Finally, with a sigh...

MARIE (CONT'D)

I do know nobody teaches us how to love. We give what we're capable of and sometimes it just isn't enough. Sometimes we get lost and we hurt people when we don't mean to, or we can't be the person they need when they need it most. And sometimes people grow sad, they become distant, and people leave. And, the worst part is... sometimes, you just don't know and there's nothing you can do about it.

It's a terrifying notion... one of the loneliest and hardest realities of the human experience.

TIM

God... if you believe that, how can you go on?

MARIE

How can you not? We still have to love. Without that we're dead...

Tim nods thoughtfully, as the weight of this sinks in. Then, apropos of nothing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

I think my ribs are broken.

EXT. ANTIQUE STORE - SAN ANSELMO - NIGHT

Marie helps Tim to his car. His facial wounds are bandaged now, but he's limping and clearly still in pain.

MARIE

You know, there was a part of me that always hoped you were the Flamingo Thief.

TIM

Why? So you could jab me with a tazer?

MARIE

Well, you did steal from me.

TIM

Fair point.

They pause at the car, Marie noticing the blanket-wrapped object in the back seat. Tim sees that she's noticed...

TIM (CONT'D)

This all must seem so strange to you.

Marie shakes her head.

MARIE

I wanted it to be you because I think any man who only steals flamingos must have an amazing story...

TIM

Or he's lost his mind.

MARIE

(softly)
I don't think that's true.

They look at each other for a long beat, Tim sensing that she knows exactly what he's going through. She's always known...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

You know, when we first met, you tried to tell me about the stages of grief. I probably should have listened...

Marie smiles thoughtfully, then gently places her hand on his.

MARIE

I'm glad you're returning the flamingos, Tim. But, you can't undo the past. All you can ever do is let it go. That's the last stage.

She gives him a quick, but gentle kiss on the cheek. As Tim stands there looking at her, absorbing her warmth, it's like he finally understands.

MARIE (CONT'D)

(re: his injuries)
Are you going to be okay?

TIM

(re: everything)
I hope so. (beat) Thank you, Marie.

The sound of POUNDING moves us to...

EXT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tim stands on his brother's driveway, POUNDING on the garage door...

TIM

George? Are you in there? It's me, Tim...

The garage door GOES UP, revealing George in a pair of surgical scrub pants and a Grateful Dead T-shirt. Behind him, we see an AIR MATTRESS, a small TELEVISION and scattered PERSONAL ITEMS. George stares at Tim's battered and bandaged appearance.

GEORGE

(stunned)
What the hell happened to you?

Ignoring the question...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

George, I need you to help me
return a flamingo.

Now, George is even more stunned...

GEORGE

Oh, my God... you're the thief!

Tim nods.

TIM

Except now I'm taking them back.
Will you help me?

GEORGE

Hell yes, I'll help you... let me
get my shoes.

As George runs back to a pile of clothes near his air
mattress...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(re: his living
arrangements,
ashamed)

So what do you think of my set-up
out here? Not much to look at, I
know...

TIM

(understanding)
Have you talked to Laurie today?

GEORGE

Talked? No... we're in a silent
phase now. Beats the yelling, I
guess. (beat) She dropped off a
space heater this afternoon...

TIM

That's positive.

GEORGE

Or a sign I'll be out here all
Winter. (beat) Joy gave me this
hot plate. Makes a mean Cup of
Noodles if you're hungry...

TIM

No, I'm good, George. We should
get moving...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Right, right... (beat, holding up
his shoes) Found 'em.

Then, as he hustles towards Tim and his waiting car...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

My brother the Flamingo Thief...
this is so cool.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Tim's Audi speeds along the winding highway towards
Healdsburg and Charles Angley's house.

INT. TIM'S CAR - NIGHT

Tim is driving. George sits next to him. The large,
blanket-covered flamingo is still in the back seat.

GEORGE

God, I have so many questions for
you. The how's, the why's...
(beat, thinking) Flamingos... I
mean, it's clearly some form of
acting out, right? Re-channeling
the sense of loss in your personal
life into--

TIM

Wait, are you asking me why? Or
telling me why?

GEORGE

Well, neither. Because, a large
part of me still believes a man's
reasons are his business...

A beat of silence, as George acts as if he's content to
leave his questions unanswered. But, Tim shakes his head,
he knows his brother all too well...

TIM

Don't worry, George. Someday, I'll
explain it to you.

GEORGE

(relieved)
Thank God. I'm going to hold you
to that, Timmy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

I know...

A smile between the two broken brothers and we MOVE TO...

EXT. CHARLES ANGLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A gravel drive cuts through a wooded grove to Charles Angle's house. The house is dark.

Tim's car slowly pulls up, stopping about 200 yards short of the house.

We see his headlights go off...

INT. TIM'S CAR - SAME TIME

George is buzzing with excitement, the adrenaline overtaking his own personal sadness...

GEORGE

Oh yeah, exactly how I pictured it. Tense, dangerous... (beat) You don't know how into the Flamingo Thief I've been, Tim. I followed everything - the articles, news reports. Something about a man with an obscure passion, living outside the law... it really spoke to me. I just kept asking myself, who was this person? (beat) I always pictured you as taller, by the way. Huskier. And possibly European...

TIM

Sorry to let you down.

GEORGE

No, no. In a way, this is better. (beat, excited) So what do we do now...

TIM

Now? Now we take the bird up to the house and leave it.

A silent beat...

GEORGE

That's it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM

What more do you want?

GEORGE

The paper said it's a 20,000 dollar bird. I just thought there'd be a little more to it.

TIM

The guy said no questions asked, George. I've already wedged one flamingo between my ass cheeks, been tazed, fallen down a flight of stairs and possibly broken three ribs. We just need to get it back in one piece and end this thing. Can you help me lift?

GEORGE

(wanting so much more)

Fine...

OFF George's relenting nod, we MOVE TO...

EXT. CHARLES ANGLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tim and George each hold one end of the large flamingo, carrying it down the gravel path towards the house. Their feet SCRUNCHING softly in the gravel...

GEORGE

How are you doing?

TIM

(straining)

Hanging in. Let's get it onto the porch... that'll be enough.

They carry the bird up WOODEN STEPS to the darkened SHADOWS of the back porch and set it down. They pause for a final look at the magnificent creature.

GEORGE

You know, if we were really smart, we'd ask for the reward. They don't have to know you were the guy who stole it, right?

TIM

Good idea, George. (beat) Do your patients know you have thoughts like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

That's the beauty of Radiology, I don't really see patients. I just read their X-rays--

CHARLES ANGLE (O.C.)

Don't move, assholes!

Tim and George turn to see the angry owner of the bird standing twenty feet away from them. He's holding a SHOTGUN.

TIM

Whoa, whoa... okay, let's be cool. No need for the gun. Your bird is safe, just like you wanted. And now we're on our way...

Angle pumps the gun.

CHARLES ANGLE

Stay where you are. Do you have any idea how much anguish you've caused me? The pain? This bird is one of a kind...

TIM

I'm sure it is... and I never meant for any pain. But, you did mention a "no questions asked" policy when you were on TV, so--

CHARLES ANGLE

I'm not asking questions, I'm calling the cops.

The gun in one hand, still trained on Tim and George, Angle pulls a cellphone from his pocket and dials...

GEORGE

Ah, this is fucked...

CHARLES ANGLE

(into the phone)

Hello, yes... this is Charles Angle and I need officers at my home right away...

As Angle continues, Tim realizes something...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TIM

(softly)

The shadows... he can't see our faces. He doesn't know who we are.

GEORGE

What's that mean?

TIM

It means... RUN!

Tim and George turn and make a running leap from the porch, sprinting for the car. Behind them, a shotgun FIRES.

ANGLEY

Stop you bastards!

Another shotgun BLAST, as Tim and George run for their lives.

GEORGE

(freaking out)

Oh, shit! Oh, shit!

Tim, who has now been through a few adventures, remains focussed, powering through his injuries...

TIM

Keep running, George. Just keep running!

A few more SHOTS, but the older man can't keep up with them and they reach the car and jump in...

INT. TIM'S AUDI - CONTINUOUS

As Tim starts the engine and throws the car into gear...

GEORGE

Holy fuck, he shot at us! That psycho shot at us!

Another BLAST, the back window of Tim's Audi BLOWS OUT, but Tim slams his foot down on the gas and they speed off...

Once they are clearly safe, George starts laughing, totally buzzing on adrenaline. Tim joins the laughter... only to wince at the pain in his ribs. George doesn't notice...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah! Waaay better than an
orgy!

Clutching his ribs, Tim studies his brother for a beat,
the word "orgy" still hanging in the air...

TIM

You're done with those, right?

Pulling back from his high, George grows thoughtful, even
serious...

GEORGE

Yeah, yeah... I'm done. I'm done.

OFF Tim's nod of understanding...

EXT. GEORGE AND LAURIE'S HOUSE - DAWN

The sun is just coming in Mill Valley, as Tim's Audi
pulls up the driveway and comes to a stop.

INT. TIM'S AUDI - SAME TIME

The two brothers are quiet for a beat, reflecting on what
they've just experienced.

GEORGE

You sure you don't need help with
the other birds?

TIM

There's only two left. I kind of
need to do those myself.

GEORGE

(nodding)
Right. I get it...

Then, as George reaches for the door handle...

TIM

George, wait...

George stops, as Tim pauses, considering his words.
Finally...

TIM (CONT'D)

You know, at some point, it was
too late for Stella and me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TIM (CONT'D)

I see that now. But, if it's still there with you and Laurie, even just a little bit... that love is worth fighting for. Everyday. Kick the ashes, blow on the sparks and fan them until they flame again...

Tim pauses to make sure this sinks in...

TIM (CONT'D)

It's the only way we stay alive.

A shared moment between the two brothers, the words penetrating deeply. As a tear comes to George's eye, he turns, staring at his house...

GEORGE

(raw)

I know I talk a lot, Timmy, but, truth is... I've always wanted Laurie. She's all I've ever wanted.

TIM

(nodding, believing)

I know. (beat) Thanks for the help tonight, George.

George looks at his younger brother with gratitude, then does his best to give a non-chalant shrug...

GEORGE

(with a shrug)

Hey, that's what big brothers do.

Again, George starts to exit the car, then pauses...

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Okay, I do have to ask one thing... why flamingos? Of all the birds to fixate on, I don't know... why not something more robust? A bird of prey... like a hawk? Or an eagle?

Tim considers this for a beat, then...

TIM

We don't always choose the bird, George. Sometimes the bird chooses us.

George nods and smiles - good point. Then gets out and heads for the garage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Tim sees Laurie and Joy peeking through the front window of the house. He thinks for a beat, then, calling out...

TIM (CONT'D)

Hey, George... why don't you go in the front door?

George pauses, then nods and changes course, heading for the front door. Tim gives a quick WAVE to the faces in the window, Joy smiles at him, then, as he reverses down the driveway, we STAY ON...

...George, as he enters the house, returning to his family. There is still a spark...

EXT. DEREK TROTTERS'S HOUSE - DAY

Tim stands behind his parked car, holding the black duffel bag, while staring calmly at the house. After a beat, he turns, places the bag on the trunk and unzips it, revealing the two original flamingos - Uno and Dos.

Tim pulls the birds from the bag and strolls across the lawn until he reaches their old spot. He pushes the spindly legs into the ground, then steps back to view them one last time...

As he does, the front door opens and Stella and Derek step out of the house.

STELLA

Tim?

TIM

Hello, Stella. I brought your birds back. (beat) I'm sorry I took them. That was wrong.

Stella and Derek look at the birds, Tim's battered appearance, then at each other - *what the hell?*

TIM (CONT'D)

I hope you guys have a wonderful life together. I really want you to be happy.

Tim sounds so pure and sincere, there's no doubt he truly means it. Derek instinctively puts his arm around Stella, but neither has any idea what to say...

TIM (CONT'D)

By the way, Derek, congratulations on the Club Record. Sounds amazing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEREK

Uh... thank you.

TIM

(re: the flamingos)

Take care of these birds.

Tim turns and starts for his car.

STELLA

Tim, wait...

Tim stops and turns back. She takes a step towards him.

STELLA (CONT'D)

The articles in the paper, the
news reports... are you the--

TIM

Flamingo Thief? (beat) No. Not
anymore.

With that, Tim turns again and walks to his car. On his face, the first true expression of peace and contentment we've seen.

INT. ART PETTIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Art enters his office, studying a folder of legal briefs. He circles his desk, about to sit down, when his attention is caught by...

The FLAMINGO COFFEE MUG - now back in it's place on his shelf.

Pettis's hand goes to his mouth. The folder and legal briefs slide from his hand. His eyes well with tears.

For a moment, he stares at the mug, considering a course of action. Then, he sits down at his desk, picks up his phone and dials...

We hear a MUFFLED VOICE on the other end of the line, then Pettis draws a deep, courage-summoning breath and...

PETTIS

Hello, Son. It's your dad...

(beat, breaking) Wait, please...

don't hang up. I have something I
want to say...

As tears flood down Pettis's cheeks and conversation with his once-estranged son begins, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SALT WATER LAGOON - DAY

SLOW MOTION as a flock of BRIGHT PINK FLAMINGOS, wings spread wide, begin to take flight. Backlit by the bright glow of morning sun, their wings almost appear to be on fire.

TIM (V.O.)
Historians believe that, in ancient times, the sight of flamingos rising from the ground, their burning pink wings spread wide, inspired the legend of the Phoenix, the mythical bird that rises from the ashes of death to live again. (beat) I like that idea.

EXT. ANTIQUE STORE - SAN ANSELMO - DAY

Tim walks up the path to Marie's store. It's the best we've seen him look - his wounds have continued to heal, he's wearing a new suit and there's a spark in his eyes, as he holds something behind his back, out of view.

As a delighted Marie emerges from her shop to greet him, Tim smiles and produces a bouquet of BRIGHT PINK FLOWERS.

TIM (V.O.)
Flamingo comes from the Latin word for "flame". (beat) They were leading me here all along...

HOLD ON Tim, as Marie warmly embraces him, then we...

FADE OUT:

THE END