

Pickleballs! - The Movie

written by

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FADE IN

INT. CHIP COX'S RV, VAN NUYS, CA-DAY

Chip Cox (64) is fast asleep-unshaven in a too-small, stained t-shirt with his formidable belly on display. He is abruptly awakened by a device mounted on his dashboard, an Amazon Echo. He calls it "Lexus".

LEXUS

Good Morning your highness. Would you like to enjoy another hour of snoozing?

CHIP

Yea-and play my favorite song while yer at it-yer the only multi-tasker I really know any more...

LEXUS

Yes, your highness. Playing "Billionaire."

"Billionaire" by Bruno Mars starts to play.

Chip rubs his eyes and scratches his protruding stomach. He gazes about his RV and adjusts his package, positioned snugly inside a dated Nike jock strap.

He smells his hand, chews on one of his nails, and spits it out. He momentarily mumbles along with Bruno, closes his eyes, and drifts off to sleep with a smile on his face.

An 80's video plays. Initially we see "snow" on a dated TV. Bad graphics dance across the screen that fades to black...

SUPER: "30 for 30: Inside Cox!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This is the bizarre tale of tennis legend Richard Cox, a man of extraordinary talent and gumption. You may know him as Chip.

We see old photos of Chip as a baby. His dad looks disappointed and his mom grimaces in pain.

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

Richard Cox was born in Van Nuys, California to Woody and Lovey Cox.

Old home footage displays Chip being held by his father and he cries the entire time. His father passes Chip to his mom, and he is immediately consoled.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Lovey was not amused that Woody named their son Richard.

INT. LOVEY TALKING HEAD

LOVEY
 Woody thought calling him "Dick" was comical. My hustler husband knew just what he was doing.
 (staring upwards)
 God rest his soul. You don't name your son Richard, without knowing someday everyone will call him Dick

She shakes her head in disgust.

LOVEY (CONT'D)
 But not me. Always called him Chip.

She smiles.

LOVEY (CONT'D)
 Still do.

A screenshot of Lovey holding baby Chip smiling at the camera

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Even at an early age, Chip showed promise of uncommon athleticism.

A crappy home video projects baby Chip. He holds a ping pong paddle and laughingly smashes items across the living room.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It seemed that Chip Cox was destined to be a true tennis hero.

The screen goes black.

We see old footage of Russia and cut to photos of baby Boris.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Enter Boris Baryshnikov. While Chip Cox basked in the California sun, Boris endured the harsh climes of Siberia.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He was the son of a hard-line
communist father, hellbent on
spreading his altruistic beliefs to
the farthest reaches of the earth.

We see a picture of Boris' father.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Boris also showed signs of tennis
stardom as a youngster.

A bad picture is shown of Baby Boris clutching a potato.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
As Chip and Boris progressed, they
perfected their signature styles.

A more mature Chip serves with all of his energy, screaming
as he strikes the ball. He aces it and runs around yelling.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Whereas Chip's aggressive, in-your-
face style was apparent early on,
Boris took an imminently different
path. Boris learned how to play
tennis by smashing potatoes against
a wall with a racquet-that oddly
resembled a hammer and sickle.

A video clip plays of Boris.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Boris developed his unorthodox
serve out of self-preservation.

Boris holds his arm up in an exaggerated fashion, hesitates
momentarily, and then ferociously strikes the ball.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Serving with a common approach
would have been the death of him,
and clearly distinguished Boris
from other tennis pros of the era.

A video clip plays of Chip.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Chip advanced through the ranks
rapidly. He was better suited
facing older, more accomplished
players.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Beginning at a small venue in Van Nuys, he moved on to exclusive country clubs, where he showcased his brash arrogance, terrible temper, amazing court vision, and..

A bad call is made on one of his serves. Chip flips out.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ... notorious trash talking.

Chip is screaming at the official.

CHIP
 My vision is better than perfect-my shot was IN for the W-IN-and you blew it-like.. your nose! Com'n!!!

Chip sits on the other side of the net ready to serve.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Here come's your busboy AND BIG BOY Platter-time to get served!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Some considered Chip to be edgy and determined; others thought he was just flat-out obnoxious. Chip's tyrannical father Woody limited him to a \$1.00 a week allowance, which helped satisfy Woody's infatuation with rolling the dice. Chip, meanwhile, parlayed his menial income into a small fortune with his shrewd gambling tactics.

News headline: Woody dies in a mafia related incident...

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Then tragedy struck one night when Woody paid the ultimate price with his life at an Italian trattoria. Posthumously to honor his odd father, Chip vowed to become the greatest tennis player in the world, which meant taking risks-and played a huge role in Chip's meteoric rise to stardom.

We see more videos of Boris.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Boris, meanwhile, worked tirelessly for everything he earned.

Boris, about age eight, stands alongside Nikita Khrushchev seconds before Nikita is deposed by Soviet guards.

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

In one of his final acts leading the U-S-S-R, Premier Nikita Khrushchev brought young Boris to Moscow, where he was secretly trained at the Sports College Under Moscow—otherwise known as SCUM. There he developed into a world-class athlete in the city's subway tunnels. Unlike its fabled stations, there was little in the way of glamour.

Boris dodges huge rats and rail cars to develop his talent.

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

Boris' style was cool and mechanical—the antithesis of Chip's. It matched his brooding personality perfectly.

Boris takes a sip of tea and looks directly at the camera.

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

Boris's surname led many to believe he was related to the famous Russian dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. Not so, and it embarrassed Boris to no end—especially when Mikhail defected to Canada in 1974.

Old footage of Boris appears from a post-match interview.

BORIS

No-am no relation to that capitalist defecting dog-or should I call him dancing dog? Funny, eh?
(smiles)
If he not happy in beloved Soviet Union he can dance from Montreal to Vancouver for all I care!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Baryshnikov and Cox—a study in contrasts...soon these two opposites would meet unexpectedly.

Chip screams with triumphant jubilation at his win.

CHIP

Call your televangelist cause you
need a MIRACLE to win today baby!

Chip swings wildly and the ball goes in. He yells maniacally.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Chip Cox remains undefeated in
Paris! No one in tennis history has
achieved this amazing milestone!

EXT. ROLAND-GARROS STADIUM, PARIS

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

On the famed clay courts of Roland-
Garros Chip Cox was most legendary.
Like Jerry Lewis movies, the French
confounded the world by taking the
brash American to heart.

Headline from Le Monde and newspapers in several languages,

Miracle on Clay: Will Cox EVER Lose?!!

NARRATOR (V.O)

Chip's stunning first major victory
in 1972 was followed by six
straight wins in France. He
returned to the fabled court in
1978 for an epic clash with Boris.

Video of Boris missing and the video goes to black and white.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But Boris faced a difficult climb.
He lost several matches before
returning to his winning ways.

Boris smiles and is surrounded by a group of reporters.

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

The two forces oddly teamed up one
night for a doubles match we
wouldn't soon forget.

Camera flashes at him as paparazzi hold microphones close.

BORIS

The USSR will crumble before I
stoop to playing on the same side
as Cox, the capitalist pig.

We see Chip surrounded by even more press.

CHIP

Boris, the commie pinkie said that did he? Well, I'll play with him when American flags fly in Moscow and they figure out that McDonalds is the healthiest food around!

Chip pauses, then continues.

CHIP (CONT'D)

The tennis net is an iron curtain- we'll NEVER be on the same side.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The French open, 1978.

Chip and Boris are on the same side of the net.

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

To this day how these two ended up on the same doubles team remains a mystery. Some say their managers made the deal as a publicity stunt; others claim it was in their contracts. One thing's for certain: neither of them were amused.

Chip and Boris are not speaking to each other; Chip screams in English and Boris retorts in Russian.

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

Even with extreme teammate issues, the pandemic pair proceeded to win the French doubles championship.

A medals ceremony displays flags of the Soviet Union and USA being hoisted simultaneously. To compromise instead of their respective national anthems the theme song "From Russia With Love" plays. Chip and Boris do not congratulate each other.

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

Who could ask for a stranger-or better-stage? The undefeated Chip wins WITH Boris, fresh from a shocking win streak of his own.

The screen goes red.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Two days later, Chip faces an awkward test: his flawless singles championship record is on the line versus his doubles partner, Boris.

The screen goes black. Chip (mid-scream) appears on screen as a caption of Boris staring at the camera slides in next to him. The letters VS appear between them in 70's style font.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The 1978 French Open.

The crowd erupts as Chip enters the court. He is draped in Nike attire and his tan is magnified under the lights. Chip flexes his rippling muscles with braggadocio for the cameras.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
At the time, there was speculation
that Cox might be the greatest
athlete in sports history-or GASH!

A Sports Illustrated Cover touts Chip as Athlete of the Year.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But the unheralded Boris was fast
and capable in his own right.

Boris enters the arena and proceeds to proudly point to his Russian Bear logo on his uniform. Boris yanks his billed cap over his tussled black hair and smiles at the camera.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
While Boris was a French Open
surprise story, he was no slouch.

Chip blows a kiss to the crowd, who adore the returning king.

In the front row of the stands rooting for Chip is his well-endowed fiancée, LACEY UNDERHILL (26), daughter of his hometown tennis club's president.

Chip blows a kiss to Lacey. She craves the attention and waves excitedly to him and points at her huge engagement ring. She then blows him a kiss...Chip daydreams...(Barry White's "My First, My Last, My Everything" plays in the background). In slow motion, Chip imagines he and Lacey holding hands on a beach. She drops his hand, unties her bikini top, and seductively sways into the water with her back to him. In chest high water Lacey faces Chip, and entices him by flipping her bikini bottom in the air when ...

Chip suddenly grabs himself as a ball crushes him in the groin. He glares at Boris, who holds his hand up apologetically for hitting him with a practice serve.

Chip wags his finger at Boris, gingerly shuffles off the court, and gathers himself in a chair before the match.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A tenuous start to a Cold War
 championship for the ages-the
 tennis titans made things chillier
 with their juvenile shenanigans...

The match features quick cameos of the two in action.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Despite Chip's aggressive serves
 and volleys, Boris answers every
 drop and cannon shot with equal
 aplomb. Chip then resorts to his
 customary trash talking...

CHIP
 Were you born this bad-or did
 Stalin teach you?

When Boris serves, Chip promptly returns, and is yawning...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Seven hours of intensity-the final
 point...a hush enveloped the arena.

Three viewing boxes are prominently displayed.

Proud Premier LEONID BREZHNEV and his Soviet entourage
 support their warrior & his long fight against the American.

ROCCO, the Mafia chief, is pictured with his enforcers-all
 over-sized Italian men who smoke cigars in a luxury box.

In the last box, Lacey sits with her parents. All three
 groups sit with great anticipation of the final match point.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It was later revealed that Rocco
 placed a huge bet on Chip that
 erased a \$500,000 gambling debt
 Chip and Woody had owed to Rocco.

The arena is silent. Boris is focused. Chip clenches his jaw.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Match point.

Chip pounds a serve up the middle and the ball nicks the
 line. OTTO, HEAD REFEREE, pauses, looks at Chip, and calls...

OTTO
 IN!

Chip jumps for joy and screams in triumph!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Chip had won his 6th straight
 singles title on French clay!

Chip beats his chest and struts around the court-imploing
 the crowd to rise and cheer him on. He boldly displays his
 signature, double-fisted flex salute.

Rocco and his Italian mob hug each other while the buxom
 Lacey jumps up and down to capture the camera's attention.

The communists collectively hang their heads. Boris also
 looks down in shame-knowing this is a bad sign for him.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The trophy ceremony commenced.

Chip stands center court with Lacey alongside of him-she
 holds the giant winner's check as Chip raises the trophy over
 his head, mocks his rival, and shouts into the microphone...

CHIP
 I won again! I am the GREATEST
 tennis player alive in PRO-
 creation!!!

Chip pauses and smiles a big cocky smile.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 My victory proves that no stinking
 Russian can beat a true 'Merican!

NARRATOR
 Chip taunted the small faction of
 the crowd which didn't support him.

Chip starts chanting

CHIP
 USA...USA...USA...

Chip tears off his shirt and flexes his amplified muscles.
 Boris looks down at his shoes while Otto stares at Lacey, who
 is excitedly bouncing up and down.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 It was obvious to viewers that Chip
 had been using steroids and Boris'
 shame of losing didn't last long.

The crowd tired of Chip's pomposity and began to whistle in
 unison. The head referee Otto reminds Chip...

OTTO

Mr. Cox-you are in France-not
America.

Chip ignorantly thinks the whistles are supportive of him.

CHIP (TO THE CROWD)

Thanks everybody. Marci Buckets!
Really...you are almost.. kind
enough. Regardez-moi. This...
(flexing his muscles)
is what me and my doctor created..
(Austrian accent)
Arnold my man-eat your heart out!!

The audience whistles became even more pronounced.

As Chip brags and flexes, Boris appears embarrassed and anxious. He wipes his bushy mustache standing alongside Chip. Boris is overcome with disdain for the American and frantically searches for the nearest exit. Without warning he suddenly grabs Chip's trophy and runs off with it!!

Boris scampers into the tunnel of the stadium to the stunned crowd's cheers. A shirtless Chip frantically chases Boris into the tunnel and they disappear. The crowd goes ballistic!

The camera pans to Lacey, who is engaged in a tussle for the winner's check with Otto. He retains it as Lacey tumbles to the ground, briefly exposing herself...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Well, I'm not sure how to describe what just happened-an epic battle, for sure! Chip Cox, the six-time champion, wins yet again but may have overly exposed himself by taking off his shirt. His commie contestant steals the trophy and they vanish, while Chip's fiancée also showed some serious skin, mister! Not a moment we expected!

The crowd bellows as Lacey, realizing she is now in the spotlight, takes a bow and fancies a slow curtsy. As she strolls away with Otto and the check, she intentionally poses as the announcer does play by play...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...And now Miss Lacey has moved on
 to a gum wrapper, and..well... I can
 see..it appears she's also picking
 up a cigarette butt..Otto loves
 every bit of it-& he's not alone...

The next scene is the cover of newspaper headlines:

Newspapers start to fly into the black screen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 The match made headlines globally.

Le Monde (morphed from original French): Cox Loses Mind-and
 Title-After Failing Drug Test!

New York Post: Soviet Steals French Open Trophy & Keeps It!

Playboy:(Picture of Lacey bending over) In Glee over G!

US News: From G-O-A-T to Goat: The Defeat Of Chip Cox

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Although this was a very rough
 ending for Chip, I'm sure we've not
 seen the last of him.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV, VAN NUYS, CA - DAY

Chip is sleeping fitfully in his RV which he lovingly calls
 his "Aceship". It's his baby and all he has to his name now..

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV

LOVEY COX (83), her hair in curlers, pounds on Chip's RV.

LOVEY
 Chip, CHIIII-P, Are you still
 sleeping?! It's almost 11 am!
 Amazon delivered a box for you.
 Could it be that book you wrote?
 Good heavens...it stinks in here!!

CHIP
 Huh? Maaa. I told you not to bother
 me in here when, I'm uum...working.
 Wasn't sleeping-was just focusing
 on my, ugh, lesson plan for today.

LOVEY
 (disgusted)
 Lord have mercy on my child...
 please come and get some breakfast.

Chip takes the Amazon box from his mother. He places it on his bed and unsuccessfully tries to open it with his bare hands. Instead he takes a small kitchen knife from a drawer.

He carefully slices the top of the box, and pulls out the volume with great anticipation. It's indeed his book, titled "The Greatest Singles Champion--It Takes Balls To Play,".

At the bottom of the book, the author is listed as "Dick Cocks." Chip is mortified over the mistake. He bursts out the door in his t-shirt and underwear.

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV - DAY

Chip follows the power cord from the RV to where it is plugged into the garage outlet. He stops to pee in the rose bushes next to the garage. It takes time to get his stream going, so he mumbles encouragement to himself.

CHIP
 Com'n...you can do it... damn
 urologist..my pee is piss poor-
 jeeez...com'n little dickie, let's
 water these flowers...that's it...

He begins to hum.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 I wanna be a billionaire...so
 freaking bad...

While peeing, he gazes into the window of the garage and sees his old trophies scattered about on an old ping pong table. He slowly hobbles into his mother's house to use the phone.

INT. LOVEY COX'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Her kitchen is kitschy, which is no surprise for a woman in her 80's who's lived alone for decades since Woody's death. Chip hears his mother in the bathroom. He grabs the wall phone while clutching the book, and removes a folded piece of paper from inside. He examines it and reaches for the phone.

CHIP
 Five-one-three, area code.
 Cincinnati, all right...

He presses the buttons, then waits.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Yes, is Malcolm Mordecai in?...I'm
 speaking with him? Well, you've
 sure got some explaining to do.

He pauses to clear his throat, then speaks loudly.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 This is Chip Cox. And you screwed
 up my name on the cover of my book-
 ON THE COVER! It's Chip Cox-&
 that's C-O-X-not some porn surname!

He shakes his head in frustration as his mother enters.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 I won 6 straight French Open
 Championship singles titles and you
 can't even get my damn name right?
 What in THE Hell is your problem?!!

Chip's anger increases as he listens to the other end.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Funny? You thought it was
 funny?...I'll sue you for every
 cent you've got-which is probably
 all you've got...
 (pauses)
 do that and get back to me ASAP!
 (pauses)
 I don't have email. Call me at...

The line goes dead & he stares at his mom in disbelief.
 Suddenly the phone rings again. Chip picks it up.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Malcolm? You better have answers!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. AMERICAN SYMMETRY PUBLISHING, CINCINNATI - DAY

American Symmetry, a sketchy vanity press, occupies a rundown
 office on the fourth floor of an aging downtown building.
 MALCOLM MORDECAI (37), as disheveled as the office, talks:

MALCOLM
 We do. You looked at the book yet?

CHIP

Why would I after this screw-up?

MALCOLM

Well, if you did, you'd have found your name correctly spelled all the way through the book. The mistake was just on the dust jacket.

CHIP

How could you do this to me?

MALCOLM

The kid who runs our printing press in Kentucky saw the "it takes balls" and searched you on the internet. He thought you'd think it was funny-and help sell more books.

CHIP

What? He's never even heard of me?

MALCOLM

He's only 24. He could care less about a boomer's tennis story. He read it and thought it was comical.

(beat)

Fortunately, we haven't printed dust jackets and we'll fix it at no charge. Satisfied?

CHIP

(sighs)

I guess...

MALCOLM

The first book run of a hundred copies with a new dust jacket will arrive soon. Sorry for the delay.

CHIP

Don't let it happen again and it's NOT funny. My name is not a joke-I will go down in history!

MALCOLM

Yea...you've gone down all right...

Chip hangs up and returns to the breakfast table.

LOVEY

Are you OK, son?

CHIP

The millenniums or melon balls, or whatever they are, don't even know who I am...

(impatiently)

Mom where are my Fruity Pebbles?!

LOVEY

The Breakfast of Champions...

CHIP

And can you get me the milk please?

LOVEY

Sure.

She retrieves the Fruity Pebbles and milk and as she puts it on the table near Chip, the phone rings again.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

I'm closer-I'll get it-

(with irony)

and I'll move the refrigerator your way, too-if that'll help you...

The phone rings and Lovey answers.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

Hello? Chip? Ummm. Let me see...

LOVEY (CONT'D)

(in a whispery aside)

It's President Underhill.

While Lovey answers the phone, Chip pulls a box of Lucky Charms from the pantry and pours milk on his cereal, while reading the comics on the back of the box.

Chip hears Lovey say "Underhill" and he overflows the bowl...

CHIP

(Frantically whispers)

Oh, shoot...ummm, mom..tell him I'm at a tennis lesson in Calabasas.

LOVEY

Ummm. Chip isn't here. I'll have him call you later today. Buh-bye.

She hangs up, then gives her son an "urge-to-kill" look.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

Calabasas?

CHIP

Sure. My student could be anybody.

Lovey puts her hands on her hips, exasperated.

LOVEY

More like nobody! Your lying is...
sinful... and drives me bonkers!

CHIP

Oh, mom--

LOVEY

Don't you "oh, mom" me!" You're
more deceit than decent anymore...

CHIP

Here she comes...

LOVEY

Call Underhill today, and I'll
check that you did... tomorrow!

Chip sighs, then begins eating his cereal.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

And before you retreat to your
rancid RV cocoon, please clean the
milk off the table! Now, I'm going
back to church...to keep praying
for you. By the way, Father Fenwick
was asking me when yer gonna get
your ass back to mass!!!

Chip gags on a bite of cereal as she leaves.

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

A power cord connects his RV to the garage, an ersatz
shrine to the champion Chip of his youth.

INT. GARAGE

Several trophies are displayed, including "CANOGA ACADEMY
INVITATIONAL 1969." And "SAN DIEGO OPEN CHAMPION 1972."

INT. CHIP COX'S RV, VAN NUYS - MOMENTS LATER

Chip, in his RV, falls asleep and has a terrifying nightmare.

EXT. BEL AIR COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Men in suits emerge from the country club to confront Chip and Lacey. They are followed by Nike-logoed tennis players on Center Court. Chip, noticeably pale and skinnier than at the French Open, stands at attention, his lips quivering.

Lacey is dismissive of Chip and manages to wear a skimpier outfit than her French Open attire. She waves sheepishly.

The audience shouts out protests like "no" and "don't retire"

Chip bravely waves them quiet.

OTTO

You were the singles tennis king.

The crowd cheers. Chip skeptically waves. Otto hushes them.

OTTO (CONT'D)

But you were a poor sportsman.

The crowd boos. Chip peers downward. Otto hushes them again.

OTTO (CONT'D)

You cheated-and your steroid use is an embarrassment to Americans. You are hereby banned from competing in all tennis tournaments.

The crowd initially boos at this most severe punishment.

OTTO (CONT'D)

Someday, we hope you learn from this and will compete again but you must test negative for steroids-& prove to be a good sportsman.

Chip's hangs his head in shame while Lacey shifts away from him and towards Otto-as a slow military snare drum is heard.

The leader of the suits steps forward.

PHIL KNIGHT

You have not represented Nike to our lofty standards-therefore you are no longer associated with us.

Two announcers describe this extraordinary event. Phil rips the Nike logos off of all of Chip's tennis attire.

ANNOUNCER

Folks, Phil Knight is stripping Cox of his Nike swoosh-thus forfeiting his multi-million endorsement deal-literally the harshest punishment levied against any pro athlete.

ANNOUNCER #2

Prison may be more harsh...

ANNOUNCER

It may be...I mean.. tough to say..

Phil Knight then forces Chip to surrender his Nike headband. He calls the suits and other Nike-logoed players to attention and has them about-face for the purpose of disgracing Chip.

Phil takes Chip's Nike racket and splits it in half and then hands it to him. As Chip is about to leave, Phil points at his Nike tennis shoes. Reluctantly, Chip takes his shoes off and hands them to Phil, who drops them in a plastic bag.

Then, as Chip is about to walk off by himself, Phil points at his Nike socks. Chip also removes his socks and drops them in the bag. He then hobbles gingerly off, barefoot, on the rough crushed brick-clay court.

Phil laughs a slow demonic laugh as he displays ripped logos.

PHIL KNIGHT

You're pathetic!

Lacey also mocks Chip and cuddles up to Otto. Unified, they point in Chip's direction and chortle maniacally at Chip.

Chip suddenly hears a loud noise in his nightmare.

INT. LOVEY COX HOME - DAY

Chip's Mom knocks frantically on the window of the RV.

LOVEY

Chip...CHIII-P! What are you doing?

Chip suddenly wakes up and he's covered in sweat. He wails.

CHIP

PHIL KNIGHT! Bad Night!! NO!!!

Chip is in a crazed state as his mom continues yelling.

LOVEY

Chip! It's 1pm and you've been in here all day! President Underhill is on the phone again and he said it's urgent. Please come in-now!

CHIP

Uuuugh. Ooo, okay. Ummm. Coming.

INT. LOVEY COX'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Chip picks up the phone and calls the President.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL (V.O.)

Chip, I need you over here now.

CHIP

No can do, PU...teaching a lesson.

Chip cradles the phone and yells to a non-existent person.

CHIP (CONT'D)

You're doing great! Remember, eye on the ball! Keep it up!

The President scoffs as he looks at Chip through binoculars.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

Really? And how's the serve coming along for...who are you teaching?

Chip ponders and then blurts out a nonsensical name.

CHIP

Oh umm...it's..uh..Mrs. Cocktoksen?

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

No it's not. And I know you're not teaching a lesson. I can clearly see you in your mom's kitchen NOW! ...and what happened to your hair?!

Chip looks out the window to see President Underhill staring at him through binoculars and wagging a finger at him. Chip simultaneously covers his head and ducks below the window.

CHIP

"Uumm... what do you want?"

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

Come to my office-now!!!

Chip hangs up, momentarily stares at the phone, grabs his wig, and adjusts it as he looks into the mirror.

CHIP

Remember. You were good enough, big enough and, gosh darn it, people used to like you...

CHIP (CONT'D)

Mom, I'm going over to the club to see the Emperor. See you in a bit.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Even though it is across the street, he drives to the club in his RV and parks in the spot reserved for "Washed Up Pro". He exits the RV and the camera flashes to the RV vanity plate "ACE UV HEARTS". He totes his staple digital tape recorder and stops to look at the statue of himself from 1975.

He admires it, rubs the flat stomach of it under the Nike shirt-which has a small piece of tape covering the shape of the Nike logo. He says something into the recorder and then salutes it and walks toward the clubhouse.

Seeing Chip talking to himself, members are confounded.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - SECRETARY'S OFFICE

STEPHANIE the secretary sits at her desk when Chip walks in. She smiles. Chip walks right up to her desk.

CHIP

Hello darling!

Stephanie is not thrilled & rolls her eyes. Chip leans in..

CHIP (CONT'D)

I know you have feelings for me
Steph. I get it. It's so obvious!!

Stephanie looks at her computer screen, on it is a calendar for the President, and on today's date it says "FIRE CHIP".

STEPHANIE

He's ready to see you now, Chip.

Chip enters a door.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

The President sits smugly as Chip enters.

CHIP

Hey there, what's up El Presidente?
Uh, looks like my statue needs some
attention out there. I made a note
of it and a couple of other things
on my recording device. I will give
it to the secretary to get it
transcribed for you, ok?

The President looks sternly at Chip.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

No.(pause) Sit down Chip.
We need to talk about... you.
(pause)
People aren't requesting you for
lessons anymore. That and tennis
seems to be losing its momentum to
...Pickleball...of all sports.

Chip smirks at him.

CHIP

People are clamoring for me. I have
lessons lined up...

The President cuts him off.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

No you don't-and you and I both
know it. Dane, the Mentalist is the
only instructor that is making any
money for us and most of IT
involves pickleball strategy. As
President of the club, it's my job
to oversee income and expenses- and
profit.

CHIP

(in disbelief)
Dane? The so-called Mentalist is
the furthest thing from a PROPHET!
Heck, at least I was a lead altar
boy...and remember what I did? Six
time French Open CHAMPION?!

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

My God-listen to yourself. That was
decades ago! You are PATHETIC - and
definitely NOT prophetic!

(MORE)

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL (CONT'D)
 Besides, that was then...and we
 need to be more contemporary-here
 and now.

CHIP
 OK... so you want me to go
 TEMPORARY...I can do that-and then
 work back to full-time, right?

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL
 You aren't making sense of our
 conversation. I'm done with you!!!

CHIP
 What? You'd move on from the guy
 who virtually built this club-me?!
 And what about my statue?!!

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL
 Take your damn statue..it's more a
 statue of YOUR limitations anyway..

CHIP
 Are you nuts? You'd just get rid of
 me-and my likeness-just like that?!

Chip tries to snap his fingers but he can't make it work. The
 President glares at Chip.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL
 Face it-you're washed up, Chip.
 You're a fake, a liar, a loser-and
 STILL trying to hide your baldness.

Chip puts his hand to his hairline.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL (CONT'D)
 And that gut suggests you haven't
 been on the court in too long...

Chip sucks in his belly.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL (CONT'D)
 And your logo-less gear, means you
 still haven't found a new sponsor..

Chip puts his hand on his logo-less hat.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL (CONT'D)
 All told-it's time for you to go!

CHIP

Go where? Got someplace better lined up for me? The new club in Calabasas?

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

Chip, you aren't even listening.

CHIP

What?

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

You are not making this easy on me or you. I kept you on as an instructor way too long. Not any more. (pause) In exchange I'm gonna give you these Amazon glasses. They will help you with your vision. Maybe you can finally get a glimpse of reality. The glasses have a recording device to replace your old digital. It will also answer and does more-like Alexa in your RV.

CHIP

Alexa?...there are no girls in my RV! And you know what? I'm still hopeful Lacey will come back to me.

PRESIDENT UNDERHILL

Jeez Chip, take a fast from your past...Lacey's been married to Otto for 25 years...anyways, take these glasses...that's my best offer and our remuneration...just please go..

Everything is quiet. Chip's swagger now resembles a hobble-his championship smile is now hidden by a grimace-his kinetic energy diffused. Chip slinks dejectedly out of the office.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Chip passes Stephanie and suddenly runs to the bathroom.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, BATHROOM

Chip blubbers and sobs in the bathroom.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Stephanie hears Chip crying in the bathroom and feels for him

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, BATHROOM

Chip tosses his wig in the trash and cries until he is somewhere between dry-heaving and hyperventilating. He calms himself down, retrieves his wig from the trash, and uses it to wipe his tears. He then places the wig back on his head. He stares into the mirror looking for something to inspire him... He tries to gather himself.

CHIP

You are still...a...champion.

He musters a smile, then leaves the bathroom and walks out wordlessly toward the secretary.

STEPHANIE

Chip I'm very sorry...

CHIP

Thanks a lot...

At Stephanie's desk two security guards are waiting for him. Chip exits and the guards follow.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

Chip walks outside and sees his statue being removed by several of the grounds crew members. He begrudgingly accepts their offer to take his statue with him.

SECURITY GUARD

Where do you want-you?

CHIP

Shotgun-why not? No back seat
drivers for me-or of me...thanks

They promptly load the statue, with considerable difficulty, into the front passenger seat of Chip's RV.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - CONTINUOUS

Chip glances over to the mirror image of himself opposite him in the front seat. He takes off his wig and puts it on the statue. Chip wears a logo-less hat and takes a deep breath.

CHIP

Let's go ACE! I'm no headcase! I'm still in the race! Time to save face! I'm no disgrace! I'll find my place! And I don't need NO mace!

Chip, bolstered by his self-talk, strolls into the club.

INT. LOVEY COX'S KITCHEN - LATER

Lovey picks up the phone.

LOVEY

Hello?

We hear a deep, raspy, faint voice from the other end.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

Yes.. who's askin'?

Same voice.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

You said Rocco? My husband-my dead, deadbeat husband-used to talk about a Rocco at night in his sleep... Okay, I will leave Chip a message.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Chip hears a loud commotion that merits his attention as he and the guards walk past several vacated tennis courts. At the end court a small crowd is gathered. He hears the odd plunk of a solid pickleball paddle hitting a plastic ball. The action emits laughter and cheering from the players and fans in attendance. Chip approaches the tennis court fence. He watches the pickleball game and initially scoffs at the sport and shakes his head in disgust. He turns to walk away and swears under his breath at the sport that is stealing his players, dried up his lessons, and cost him his job. As he walks away, he hears two MEN in their late 20's talking outside the fence.

GUY 1

Going to the tourney this weekend?

GUY 2

You know it.

GUY 2 reveals his pickleball shirt.

GUY 2 (CONT'D)
Did you get yours?

GUY 1
Yes! I can't wait!

Chip approaches them.

CHIP
So what's this pickle game anyway?

They both look at him, undaunted.

GUY 1
ONLY America's fastest-growing
sport

Chip feigns shock.

CHIP
Really? What's the tournament
you're talking about?

GUY 2
It's already full. But this flyer
has the schedule of events for the
rest of the year.

Guy 2 hands him a flyer and they resume their conversation.

GUY 2 (CONT'D)
(To his buddy)
He looks kinda familiar, right?

Chip walks away while reading the flyer aloud:

CHIP
(reading to self)
Pickleball Tournament Series across
the USA...Winners qualify to go to
Indian Wells for the National
Pickleball Championship in
November...Prize money is...

Chip's squints his eyes as he adjusts to his new glasses. He excitedly scans the flyer's prize money section.

CHIP (CONT'D)
(to himself)
One. million. dollars for the
winners!! Sign me up!!

He smiles and tucks the flyer into his pocket.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(to himself)

I may be banned from competing in tennis, but not pickleball! Same sorta deal as tennis: crush it!

He looks to the Security Guards behind him.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Can I take a minute here, fellas?

The security guards nod in agreement.

Chip waits till the duffers finish their match. He asks one if he can play the winner.

PLAYER

Hey-where do I know you from?
Aren't you our former tennis pro
Cox?...I heard you just got fired?

Chip smirks at the recognition, wondering how they already know this news. Probably already on that stupid internet.

CHIP

I'm not fired from playing the
tickle-balls or whatever you call
it.. give me your best, bi-atches!

INT. TENNIS FENCE

Chip slowly limps onto the court, and is handed a small, almost square shaped paddle. He looks at it, intrigued. Chip is new to the game, but with another amateur, his old championship form is craving to emerge.

THE DUFFER

So with Pickleball, we refer to the
kitchen area as near the net, and
the no-volley zone is where
volleying is prohibited...

Chip adapts quickly and despite being de-conditioned with bad knees he still has quick hands and can pound the ball. He and the duffer easily beat the other team. Chip sneaks a paddle and a few balls into his tennis bag and happily returns home to his mother's house across the street.

INT. LOVEY COX'S KITCHEN - LATER

Lovey and Chip, seated at the kitchen table, talk about his current dilemma: he probably clinged to tennis for too long.

LOVEY

How did it go with Mr. Underhill?

CHIP

OK, Ma. We talked about pickle ball. It may be my new calling.

She laughs.

LOVEY

Pickle ball?! How can you take anything with a name like that seriously?

CHIP

Sure it's a weird name, but this pickle ball is growing. And best of all-I'm not banned from playing it.

LOVEY

You're almost 65 years old? This sport better have a seniors tour!

CHIP

I'm sure it does, mom. Tennis is all I've known...until now. This pickleball thing may be best shot.

LOVEY

Really?

CHIP

Yes-really! It's about time I shake off my pride... and ride my glide... to the other side!

Chip does an awkward shuffle. Lovey shrugs.

LOVEY

I think it's a little late in the game for THAT, but if this is what you want, Chip-then just go do it!

Lovey starts to leave the kitchen.

LOVEY (CONT'D)

If there was a patron saint of pickles I'd pray to it for you,
(pauses)

(MORE)

LOVEY (CONT'D)
 You know I love you...I'm going to
 lay down for awhile, Chip

Lovey exits but Chip calls after her...

CHIP
 I'm gonna make you proud of me
 again mom. I Promise! Love you,too.

Chip unzips his gym bag and eyes the Pickleball paddle and balls inside. He gazes out the window at the empty courts.

INT. TENNIS COURT - LATER

Chip sneaks back into the club and practices his pickle ball serves. Without a partner all he can do is practice-which he does until he's dripping in sweat. Chip feels much better about himself as he sits on a bench and watches the sunset.

EXT. LOVEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Chip approaches his mother's house, he notices a squad in the driveway. He frantically runs up to the house.

INT. LOVEY'S HOUSE

Paramedics are in the house as Chip bursts through the door.

CHIP
 What's going on?! Where's my mom?!!

One of them points in the direction of Lovey's room and Chip rushes up the stairs to her room.

INT. LOVEY'S ROOM

Chip enters her room; Lovey lays lifeless in bed, clutching rosary beads in one hand and his lucky tennis shorts in the other. Old photos of Chip's championships are propped next to her. He is devastated. Two paramedics are also in the room. Chip looks at his mom as tears flow down his cheeks.

CHIP
 (quietly)
 Can I please have a minute alone
 with my mom?

They freeze.

CHIP (CONT'D)
OUT NOW-PLEASE!!!

They respectfully leave the room. Chip starts to sob, gently. He grabs his lucky tennis shorts and pulls up a picture. He crawls into bed next to his mom and hysterically cries.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Oh, mom...I can't believe this is
happening. What am I going to do?
You are my one true love and
supporter in every way...God Bless
you...oh... my...God...

Chip without kleenex blows his knows in his lucky shorts.

INT. OUTSIDE LOVEY'S ROOM

Chip exits the room where the paramedics wait.

CHIP
What happened to mom?

One of the paramedics chimes in.

PARAMEDIC 1
Can't diagnose. Received a call and
got here right away, but she was
already gone.

Chip nods- humbled and chagrined.

CHIP
Thank you for trying-really...

EXT. LOVEY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lovey is transported on a stretcher and Chip says a last
goodbye. Chip waves to the paramedics as they leave.

INT. LOVEY'S HOUSE THE NEXT MORNING

Chip sulks around the house in his bathrobe; it is eerily
quiet without his mom. The phone suddenly rings on the wall;
Chip ignores it but the ringing draws his attention to a
nearby notepad on the counter. Scribbled on the pad is: CHIP
CALL ROCCO. URGENT. Chip fades in to a horrific memory...

INT. DARK ROOM - FLASHBACK

Rocco sits behind a table; only his hands can be seen. Chip sits on the other side of the table.

ROCCO

This brings your debt to 500 large- including what your old man owed us before he met his demise. You don't want that, too, do you?

Chip looks nervously around.

CHIP

I know we owe you, but I'm the best tennis player ever! I've won this tournament 5 times in a row. I will win again and pay you back-easy. Winner winner chicken dinner!!

Rocco pulls out a large gun and sets it on the table.

ROCCO

For your sake, I hope so.

Chip nervously laughs.

INT. LOVEY COX'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Flashback and Chip is still staring at the notepad.

CHIP

Oh shit! Not Rocco again!

Chip grabs the keys to his RV and heads to the nearest bar.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Chip sits at the bar, commiserating with the Bartender.

CHIP

After all I've been through I'm trying to figure out if I'm out of my mind-or just full of crap.

BARTENDER

If it helps, I'd say you're both.

CHIP

That's what my bookie...and my mom...used to say...

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

I have half a notion to take a stab at this pickle ball game. Ever heard of it?

BARTENDER

Yep. Sort of a combination of ping-pong and tennis for the silver sneakers crowd.(pause) With your pedigree you'd almost be illegal.

CHIP

Already did the illegal route with tennis and that didn't end well-so pickleball just might be my big break. I need to do what I used to do-something major-like win a Major! (pause) I gotta make some money. I just heard there's a pickleball tournament that pays a MILLION dollars...but I need a doubles partner to qualify.

BARTENDER

Wow...I can't believe they're paying that kind of money! Do you have a partner in mind?

CHIP

Kinda. There's an old Russian tennis rival of mine, who was really good...as good as I ever played against. But, I don't know what continent he's on, what kind of shape he's in and... and I think he probably still hates my guts...

BARTENDER

(sarcastically)

OK...uh... sounds...uh real promising...good luck with that...

EXT. STARBUCKS - LATER

Chip jumps the corner of a curb in his RV to a handicap space closest to the door to use their wifi. Halfway between two parking spaces, he removes his new glasses and looks at them. He fumbles with them, clearly not technologically savvy.

CHIP

Lexus, can you hear me? Call Boris.

Lexus responds.

LEXUS (V.O.)
I hear you. Who is Boris?

Surprised by the reply, Chip shakes his head with bemusement.

CHIP
Boris Baryshnikov-Russian tennis
player.

LEXUS (V.O.)
According to wikipedia: Boris
Baryshnikov, is a former tennis
champion from the Soviet Union. He
beat the infamous Chip Cox in the
French Open in 1978 and currently
lives in a commune in upstate New
York. Baryshnikov is in foreclosure
for failing to pay taxes.

Chip mumbles under his breath.

CHIP
(to himself)
Me? Infamous? Boris-former tennis
champ! What the HELL is going on?

He takes a deep breath and calms himself.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Call Boris Baryshnikov.

Lexus beeps.

LEXUS (V.O.)
Locating...

Chip awkwardly looks around. Lexus stays silent. He nods at a
random stranger as they pass by his RV. He waits impatiently.

CHIP
(to himself)
Is this thing on?

He fumbles with the glasses and drops them to the floor of
the RV. He picks them up just in time to hear...

LEXUS (V.O.)
Connecting....

Chip looks at the device, amazed and confused.

INT. BORIS BARYSHNIKOV'S OFFICE - DAY

Boris sits in his office, near a green, gold, and red banner reading "PEOPLE'S DISPENSARY," while talking with a REPRESENTATIVE of the Margaritaville Housing Development.

REPRESENTATIVE

I understand Boris, but my hands are tied with this.

Boris places his hand on his head in frustration.

BORIS

So if do not come up with total amount...what happens?

REPRESENTATIVE

The bank will repossess the property because you owe taxes.

BORIS (PRONOUNCING THE SAME)

Texas? We in New York- never been to Texas. Why owe Texas?

The representative chuckles, removes papers from a briefcase and hands them to Boris, who reads over the pronouncement and becomes increasingly more despondent...

BORIS (CONT'D)

Why you laugh at Boris? This is not why I come to America.

The representative adjusts her skirt.

REPRESENTATIVE

You gave it your best, Boris. Your commune is a great property-but it's not working...We are looking at developing a resort here called Margaritaville Resorts. Jimmy Buffett is the founder-his slogan is it's always 5 0'clock somewhere- Have you heard of him?

Boris stares incredulously at the representative.

BORIS

Same guy with great music?! Da. I am big fan and so are most of fellow commune-ists...But how do I get money?

REPRESENTATIVE

I have no answer for that. We even consulted the expert marijuana law firm of Thunderbong and Lighthouse with no luck...you deserve more than nothing for your effort.

She stands up and heads to the door, then turns back to Boris

REPRESENTATIVE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry Boris ...I wish we could've made this work...

The Representative leaves and the phone rings. Boris answers.

BORIS

Da. Boris here.

There is some squawking on the other end of the phone.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Chip? *The* Chip Cox? It's been very long time since we talk. Yet not long enough...why you call me now?

INT. CHIP COX'S RV, VAN NUYS - CONTINUOUS

Chip sits in his RV talking through his beloved "Lexus".

CHIP

Hey Boris. I know it's been a while ...I, uh...just happen to be heading to New York in a couple days to complete a business deal I'm working on. I heard you have some financial problems and was thinking maybe I could help you? And I was hoping we could maybe...catch up?

INT. BORIS BARYSHNIKOV'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Boris stares at his phone in disbelief.

BORIS

Catch up? I no like ketchup...I no like you either.

CHIP

We can fix that. You will see. We can both make money with what I want to talk with you about. It will be great! I'll see you soon.

Boris hangs up the phone and looks out over his property.

INT. LOVEY COX'S GARAGE - LATER

Chip rummages through old boxes. While singing to himself:
"I'm leaving in an RV- don't know when I'll be back again..."

CHIP

(to himself)

I am gonna convince Boris to join me in a great adventure...that's all...Come on?! Where is it?!

Chip ultimately finds what he's searching for: a crumbling old box with a label that reads: ROAD TRIP MUSIC. Chip smiles. He rips open the box but is confused by what he sees. Several cassette tapes with the words "THE ALCHEMIST" are inscribed on the side. He shuffles through more of the tapes and finds "Man Searches for Meaning" written on the side. He sees a "Best of Buffett" tape and grabs that, too. He then finds and begins reading a hand written note from his mother.

LOVEY (V.O.)

Chip, I know you love your music, but I added a few tapes I think you can learn a lot from. Please listen to them, and take them to heart.

Chip pauses as he goes to the next page.

LOVEY. (V.O. CONT.)

Son, I'm not sure when you'll read this-probably after I'm gone. Sorry but I'm not leaving you much in the way of material things. I left my home and savings to the church. Father Fenwick said they really need it to help out with some legal issues. He said you'd understand... so I took his word for it. No worries about my funeral-got a good discount cause I pre-paid it. The director said that would put me on heaven's waiting list. Oh, and please make sure Father Fenwick says my mass and not Father Leo-he's kinda dull.

(MORE)

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

Lastly, I'm still very sorry about your name. Apparently your father lost a bet so he had to name you Dick Cox. That sucked because there were already plenty of Dicks around. I wanted to give you a fighting chance so that's why I called you Chip. All from a lost bet. You can thank your father for that...I will always love you! Mom

Chip gets emotional after reading it and gazes at a picture of him holding a trophy and his mom standing next to him.

CHIP

(quietly)

Thanks, Mom. I'll always be your baby Cox.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - MOMENTS LATER

Chip throws a box of tapes on the floor behind the passenger seat along with a gym bag full of clothes. He fires up the RV. He looks at his statue seated next to him in the passenger seat and is ready for a new adventure!

CHIP

Cox will rise up and meet this challenge! The ace-ship will ascend across country with my likeness as a co-pilot!

He laughs out loud to himself. The RV travels all of 10 feet when suddenly it sputters and stops.

EXT. Chip COX'S RV

Chip's jumper cables are connected to a neighbor's car. He again fires up the "Aceship".

CHIP (CONT'D)

I love the smell of...

The RV dies.

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV

Chip has a small gas can and he mumbles to himself while he pours gas in the tank.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - CONTINUOUS

Chip, fully expecting the RV to falter, hits the gas and is finally off...

EXT. OLD ROAD - DAY

Chip's RV bumps down the road, passing neighborhoods and a cityscape. "On the Road Again" plays and he sings along.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Chip pops in "The Alchemist" tape into the tape player.

CHIP

Okay Mom-let's see what you've got!

The book plays and he turns it up, initially underwhelmed.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Chip drives past a sign that reads, "WELCOME TO NEVADA," and smiles. The Alchemist plays in the background, and he mumbles along with it-reciting the words and phrases as he listens.

CHIP

And, when you can't go back, you must worry only about the best way of moving forward.

Chip is comforted by his mom's book and looks affectionately at a picture of her taped to the dashboard.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Thanks, Mom.

INT. CHIP'S RV - LATER

Chip's RV rumbles through the Las Vegas Sunset Strip. He is mesmerized by the lights and has started singing the quotes from the Alchemist book.

CHIP

People are capable, at any time in their lives, of doing what they dream of.

EXT. NEBRASKA - LATER

Chip's RV passes a sign reading "WELCOME TO NEBRASKA" and then starts to sing lines from the book on tape, "A Man Searches for Meaning."

CHIP

Those who have a 'why' to live, can
bear with almost any 'how'...

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - NIGHT

Chip is exhausted and can barely stay awake. He holds his head out the window to fight off his fatigue, and randomly yells to wake himself up and smacks his statue to stir him.

CHIP

I feel great!!!
(pausing)
Jeeminey! What in Sam hell is wrong
with me?! Cruisin' in the "Aceship"
and my only help is the stoney
baloney next to me?! Wake up!!!

EXT. INDIANA

Chip's RV passes a sign that reads "WELCOME TO INDIANA."

INT. CHIP COX'S RV

Chip is now full on opera singing the quotes and words to the books he has heard. Chip is speeding in the commuter lane and is promptly pulled over by a state trooper.

TROOPER

Well, lookie here at what I've
got. I've been waiting for you all
day.

CHIP

I got here as fast as I could!

TROOPER

Yer almost as fast as I got ya on radar...

(pauses)

Aren't from around here are you?

CHIP

Not quite. I'm from LA and am on a quest to reunite with a former tennis rival of mine-a Russian tennis player who lives in a New York commune now.

TROOPER

Figured you'd have a wild ass tale.

(pauses and looks oddly at the statue in the passenger seat)

What's up with the statue? You trying to fudge a ride in the commuter lane?

CHIP

No...that's just me. I was once the best tennis player on the planet.

TROOPER

Right...let me see your license.

Chip hands him the license and the officer looks at it oddly and then back at Chip. He does a double take.

TROOPER (CONT'D)

You sure that's you? Chip Cox?...Why...I remember you..but boy..you really look different now.

CHIP

You saying I look better?

TROOPER

(pauses)

Let's just say...you don't look like your statue anymore.

CHIP

Well from the looks of you I doubt your mom ever won any Mrs. Indiana beauty pageants either...

TROOPER

You trying to earn yourself a ticket?! Your speeding and falsifying a passenger with a statue of yourself and driving in the commuter lane are justifiable for me to lock you up for a spell..

(Notices Chip's book on the dashboard)

And what's that book on the dash?
Sounds pornographic to me. Why,
you've got enough infractions...

CHIP

Officer, that's the wrong book
cover but it's all mine and it's
gonna be a best seller-I'll send
you a free copy. And I'll do
whatever you need me to do with the
statue-aside from giving it to you.

TROOPER

(Pauses) Now yer trying to bribe
me, too...really?!!

(pauses)

OK...Put the statue in the back
seat and lay it down face first-
it's creepy anyway-and get the hell
out of Hoosier-land! Yer from
California all right...

CHIP

Thanks a lot, officer. Really.

TROOPER

Sure. And you might want to fix
your hair. It's lopsided.

CHIP adjusts his wig on the statue and resumes driving.

CHIP

It would be an honor. And thanks.

EXT. INDIANA

INT. CHIP COX'S RV

Chip is now full on opera-singing the quotes and words to the
books he has heard.

EXT. NEW YORK

Chip's RV passes a sign that reads "WELCOME TO NEW YORK"

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Chip is grunting in pain-from self actualization to survival.
He holds himself to relieve his urge to pee,

CHIP

Gottaaa beee...gotta peeeeeeeeeee...

His navigation yells some directions at him.

NAVIGATION (V.O.)

Turn left.

Chip is startled and slams the wheel and turns left, cutting off another vehicle. They honk at him and he yelps:

CHIP

I'm BEYOND bloated bi-atch and I think I've got daily diarrhea!!!

The navigation chimes in again.

NAVIGATION (V.O.)

Arrived at your destination.

EXT. COMMUNE - DAY

The RV pulls up and Chip opens the door and jumps out. The RV is still running and continues to slowly roll and bumps into a wall where it stops.

Chip desperately runs into a nearby door.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Chip pees for a prolonged time with a uncharacteristically healthy stream...he is pleased with his performance and proudly strolls out of the bathroom talking to himself...

CHIP

Now that was what I'd call a dream stream! You still got it my man!!

He sees a few folks lounging around the commune, smoking joints, studying his dilapidated RV. Chip approaches them.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Where can I find Boris?

They look at him quizzically and several chuckle and reply to him in Russian. Chip shakes his head.

CHIP (CONT'D)

No, no... Where is Boris?

They repeatedly respond in Russian. Chip tries again.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Donde esta Boris?

They all appear confused with Chip. He repeats louder.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 DONDE ESTA BORIS?!!!

A chorus of laughter ensues. He dismisses them and starts to explore the commune grounds. Eventually he sees Boris in the distance. Chip shouts out his name and strides toward him.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 BORIS! It's me, Chip!

A few people look over to him in a confused, stoned-state. Boris turns round and sees Chip and continues shoveling feces into a wheelbarrow. Chip laughs as he approaches.

Chip and Boris size up each other, taking into account what many years have done to them.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Boris?

BORIS
 Da? Chip?

They look at each other for a delayed moment. Chip attempts a hug and Boris steps back. An extremely awkward hug and then..

CHIP
 Sorry I missed our re-unions..

Boris nods his head. Chip smells Boris and grimaces.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 I always thought you smelled funny,
 but this...this is too much. A new
 scent...why-you reek of shitty pot!

They both laugh.

INT. BORIS BALINIKOV'S HOUSE - LATER

Boris hands chip a small bowl with food in it, and a large glass of water. Chip nods his appreciation.

BORIS
 We use manure as fertilizer to
 grow marijuana crops.

Chip looks confused.

CHIP

So why are you foreclosing? You seem to be doing well here with almost nothing, Boris.

BORIS

Having nothing makes me happy, but a lady from "taxes" said we need to pay her or they will sell our commune to build new development. Why "taxes", I do not know-never been there...

Chip takes another bite of his food, he shakes his head.

BORIS (CONT'D)

The marijuana is good money...but not quite enough. You right though-spirits high- sometimes too high!

Chip snorts.

CHIP

I'm sure they are...Well, Boris, I believe there is a reason for us to come together again.

Boris eyes Chip skeptically.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I am here to help you.

BORIS

How you do that?

CHIP

Pickleball. Heard of it?

Boris stares blankly at Chip, who smiles. Boris stares again.

BORIS

No tickle my balls. No thank you.

CHIP

No. Not tickle ball-pickleball. It is a sport-like a tennis and ping pong combination.

Boris looks at him again. Chip continues.

CHIP (CONT'D)

There is a Pickleball tournament coming soon. It's for seniors like us and there is big prize money...

BORIS

No. I not play some silly sport
that never heard of, or played...
called pickleball...for money.

CHIP

Please, Boris.

BORIS

First, never even heard of sport-
and look at you-you out of shape!

Chip is about to say something when Boris continues.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Second, we are too old-and you walk
with limp.

CHIP

Not too old for pickleball.

Boris stares at him.

CHIP (CONT'D)

We will win the seniors doubles
championship. And pick up some
endorsements...and I can get Nike
back and.. maybe you can, too.

Boris shrugs.

BORIS

It is beneath me to accept sponsor
who endorse you. Want nothing but
save commune-and spread communism.

CHIP

Come on, man!

BORIS

Third.

Chip sighs.

CHIP

There's more?

BORIS

Third, listen to you. You not team
player-never were. You not know
how to work together.

Chip has heard enough. He draws Boris an amateurish, crappy
diagram of what the winnings would mean for the commune.

CHIP
 Save the commune, better farm
 equipment, a clinic, licensed deal
 for marijuana...and perhaps...

Boris is now intrigued, but still very skeptical.

BORIS
 Perhaps what?

CHIP
 A chance to help communism take
 hold in America...

This stirs Boris's interest as it is his primary life
 purpose-he seriously pauses to think about Chip's proposal.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 We will be champions-I know it!

Boris nods his head hesitantly-but affirmatively.

BORIS
 Da.

Chip smiles.

CHIP
 Come with me.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - LATER

Chip walks with Boris to an abandoned tennis court in the
 commune. He feigns optimism.

CHIP
 Looks nice.

BORIS
 Spasibo.

CHIP
 Bless you.

Chip drops his gym bag, and dramatically unzips it. He pulls
 out two paddles. He turns to Boris.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Welcome to our future.

Chip extends a paddle to Boris, who looks at Chip and then
 grasps it from him. Boris feels a certain power pulse through
 his veins, and quickly inhales and exhales.

BORIS

Just because am trying to survive
capitalism doesn't mean I like you.

Chip glances at Boris to say something, then pauses.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Haven't picked up racket since
leaving...Russia.

CHIP

You were a tennis...

Chip looks awkwardly at Boris, who is now staring at Chip.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Finalist...

Boris shakes his head, throws down the racket and walks away.

BORIS

Forget this. You never change, Chip
Cox. Still look out for number one-
me your number none. Dasvidanyia.

CHIP

Boris, wait!

Chip grabs a ball and serves it, hitting Boris in the back.
Boris turns and glares at Chip, who serves another ball to
him. Boris grabs a paddle, picks up the ball and returns it.
Chip smiles. Boris, still unhappy, is nonetheless curious.

BORIS

(Pauses)

Shit... OK...tell me about sport.

CHIP

Okay-that's the spirit!!...Let's
start with the court-it's about a
third of a tennis court size.

BORIS

And...

CHIP

You play with a wiffle ball.

Chip holds up one of the balls.

CHIP (CONT'D)

The net is lower than your scrotum.

Boris hits the ball over to Chip.

BORIS

Go on.

CHIP

Some players are even older and aren't as hungry as we are.

BORIS

Why? Are we hungry?

CHIP

We want to win more than them. We have both been away from competing for long-but we are still winners!

Chip measures out the pickleball court and slowly teaches Boris the game. The Russian adjusts quickly. Soon, he is up to his old tricks, hitting lasers from the baseline.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Our opponents will fall flat on their faces from both of our aces!

Boris stares blankly at Chip.

BORIS

What is plan-how we get money?

Chip shuffles a bit. Boris sees that he is stalling.

CHIP

We have to win matches to qualify for the California championship...

BORIS

And...?

CHIP

The tournaments are all across the country. We will have to travel in my RV. Unless you have a nice car?

Boris glances at Chip's RV in the distance.

BORIS

No. No car. I have nothing...
Nothing brings me happiness.

CHIP

What? Nothing brings you happiness?
Com'n, Boris, that's not possible.
What do you pay taxes with?
Nothing? Your weed?

(pauses)

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

Playing again will bring you joy!
Let's play for the commune-and for
your commune-ists.

Boris perplexed, hesitates.

CHIP (CONT'D)

We just have to reach a certain
number of points by winning the
tourneys. If we do that-WHEN we do
that-we qualify for the national
championships-where we will win...

CHIP (CONT'D)

Because we have something nobody
has even heard of-cause it's never
existed-we have the power of TEAM-
SHIP!

BORIS

Never heard of that and is weird
coming from you-but will try.
(pauses)
We will leave when?

CHIP

We will take two days to get to
Florida...We'll need to leave soon
so you will need to get your
affairs in order.

Boris rolls his eyes.

BORIS

You one who had affairs-not
me...and no time to practice?

Chip smiles sheepishly and they continue practicing

CHIP

You know me...always
working..always practicing...

Boris eyes Chip suspiciously-this is not the Chip he recalls.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV

Chip and Boris are riding in the RV.

CHIP

Hey Boris, While driving out here, I've been doing lots of thinking and want to talk about some real, deep stuff with you. Maybe we can learn from each other.

BORIS

You? Thinking? Learn from each other? Ha! What you talk about?

CHIP

First, something I know we can agree upon-a great story about a battle between a Russian and an American and the best movie of all-time. It reminds me of us: Rocky 4!

BORIS

Rocky 4?! Why that? What about it?

CHIP

It made a huge impaction on me!It was definitely the most important Russian-American movie ever made. It taught me so much.

BORIS

Really? Do you know that movie is like joke to Russians? Ivan Drago who fight Rocky not even Russian.

CHIP

Come on-what are you talking about? He's more Russian than you are.

BORIS

You ignorant, Chip. That was Swedish actor, Dolph Lundgren, playing Russian boxer.

CHIP

So you mean to tell me that was all make believe? One of the most influential movies of all time?

BORIS (SIGHS)

So this is what you call deep?

(pauses)

I'll tell you what's deep-a well in my small Siberian village that our goat fell in and ruined our water.

CHIP

Goat? You had a goat? That is what everyone called me- G-O-A T! And ruined water, man I get it: Perrier dropped my sponsorship and I had to start drinking tap water again.

BORIS

(sarcasm)

I'm glad we have so much in common.

CHIP

Me, too. I knew this would work out for us! We have many similarities. Learn your way in the USA!

BORIS

Da...think we are both men...let us listen to music now...please...

Boris rummages through tapes, pops in Jimmy Buffet playing "Cheeseburger in Paradise" and they sing along loudly.

CHIP

I love Jimmy Buffett! His songs are so real and personal. His are the only shows I've ever been to-37 Buffet concerts and counting! No need to see anybody else after you've seen Buffett-the full meal!

BORIS

I like him but not quite THAT much. You know Jimmy has resort development named Margaritaville? They are working with "Texas" to take over my commune?

CHIP

What-Jimmy Buffett in a commune? No way... Wait, you do grow weed there..hmmm...makes sense now with his band the Coral REEFERS!...

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - LATER AT THE US OPEN IN NAPLES, FL

SUPER: 2 days later

Boris and Chip stand against a wall stretching. They are minutes away from their first match as pickleball teammates.

CHIP

Boris, we can take these ladies...

Boris shakes his head.

BORIS

I read program. They called Pickle
Ticklers and returning champs...

Chip finishes his stretch, slides on some sunglasses and
takes a step towards Boris.

Chip and Boris run onto the court; one man in the stands
claps for them and Chip plays to that person. Then two older
women-their foes-take to the court.

Chip looks on incredulously at the woeful competition.

CHIP

They must've been the only entree
in last year's tourney...

Boris and Chip deliver several shots toward the opponents.
Chip sneaks up to the net and slams a lob shot. His mojo
ignites: he needlessly starts trash talking.

CHIP (CONT'D)

That is a recipe for disaster-don't
bring your weak sauce here!

Chip slams another hard shot. He let's them hear it again.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Call me poach master general, baby!

Boris slams the ball and it curves around one of the women,
who dives for it. She hits the ground hard and Boris runs
over and assists her to her feet. She is grateful to Boris
for being a good sport and thanks him. Chip is incensed!

CHIP (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

Boris shakes his head. Covered in sweat, they finish off the
ladies and win their first match! Chip grabs a towel and
wipes himself off. The towel is completely drenched.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Not too shabby for an old guy.

Boris shrugs it off and goes over to chat with opponents.

INT. Room - LATER

Chip and Boris anxiously wait as a man is counting money.

MAN

Here ya go - \$100. Congratulations!

He hands them five \$20 bills. Their first earnings as a team!

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Alexa rings on his dashboard and his glasses at the same time. He looks into his side mirror at Boris pumping gas.

CHIP

Hello?

We hear muted chatting on the other end.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Oh hi Tom, how are you?

Chip views Boris still pumping gas and returns to the call.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Hmmmmmm...

Chip checks the mirror and notices Boris has gone and is entering the gas station. He sighs.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Ya know I'm doing these tournaments to help promote my book sales...

More mutters.

CHIP (CONT'D)

And with Boris along for the ride, it will drum up even more press...

The muttered chatter from the other end interrupts him.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Just make sure it gets done.

Boris enters the RV as Chip finishes his conversation.

BORIS

Who was dat?

Chip, startled by Boris, tries to compose himself.

CHIP

Uh, the tournament director for our next stop confirming our entry.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

He couldn't believe we're playing together-nobody even knew you were alive, let alone in the USA.

Boris looks at Chip for a moment-he changes the subject.

CHIP (CONT'D)

What took so long?

Boris holds up some snacks and smiles. Chip grabs a snack, immediately opens it and stuffs his face. Boris displays a \$20 bill to Chip, who looks at Boris, confused.

BORIS

Twenty for you, twenty for me. The rest goes to this thing we drive.

Chip smiles.

CHIP

I like your politics! Is that communism, socialism, or patriotism?

BORIS

Maybe all three!

CHIP

OK. I'm confused now. I miss California. And the girls there.

BORIS (CONT'D)

You not change much-or enough-Chip. But change can happen yet. Me? Nothing against California girls but prefer Olga reading "Communist Manifesto" wearing babushka-and good Russian vodka!

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - LATER AT ANOTHER NIGHT TOURNAMENT

Chip and Boris return volley after volley, Boris keeps slamming the ball right next to the line. But the pair poses them their first challenge. Chip and Boris are exhausted.

CHIP

They're like telemarketers-they keep callin'! Pickle me Elmo!

The ball hits the court and heads in a different direction as the opponent futilely extends his paddle and grimaces. Chip yells in victory!

CHIP (CONT'D)

Know why they call me Mr Maternity?
Cause I always deliver-babys!!!

After their prize money is received, they head to the players' tunnel. GIZMO stands in the tunnel. He sports dreadlocks, a beard and turquoise lenses in his glasses. His clothes are very colorful, including bright green shoes, hamburger logo'd pants and shirt, and a flowing red cape.

GIZMO

Gents.

Chip and Boris look up and it's hard not to notice him.

CHIP

Can we help you?

GIZMO

Name's Gizmo. You guys look pretty good out there, but still have a ways to go. You ever need a coach, or pointers from a legend, let me know. I pay forward when I can.

They both nod, then smile as they walk past Gizmo.

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV

Boris stands outside the RV shaking his head. The RV is rocking and sexual noises and shouts of "Pickle Me" are audible from the RV. Boris knocks on the door.

BORIS

Chto za chert...

The door opens and a woman in her 60s exits. She adjusts her bra-less top, winks at Boris, and continues walking.

CHIP

Uh... Boris...that was Doris.

Chip playfully waves goodbye. Boris shakes his head.

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - DAY

Boris and Chip are standing in the middle of a tennis court that has been converted into a pickle ball court. Chip and Boris are sweating profusely but are enjoying the notoriety! After yet another convincing win, they are congratulated.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Chip and Boris eat and share an awkward moment. Suddenly a fan of Chip's walks up to the table with a book in her hand.

FAN

I can't believe you guys are playing together again after what happened at the French Open! I didn't even know you both were still breathin'! Then I heard about Chip's book...and here you are! Can't wait for your book signing!

Boris gazes at Chip with surprise. Chip relishes signing the fan's notebook—just like the old days! He smiles at her as she proceeds to leave and she turns back and waves at him.

Boris hasn't stopped looking at Chip.

BORIS

What that about?

Chip smiles nervously at him.

CHIP

I wrote a book...uh-it's coming out next year and she heard about it.

Boris stares at Chip again as he stuffs food in his mouth.

BORIS

You write book? Ha! You know how to write your name?! What it about? You will have to tell me when book comes out. I could use laugh.

CHIP

This just shows how little you know about me. I "wrote" my book using a digital voice recorder. It's about my life as a tennis champion.

BORIS

Really? What is it called?

CHIP

"It Takes Balls To Play Tennis"

BORIS

Balls? That more me than you!

CHIP

I have balls, too, Boris.

BORIS
You only have Pickle balls...

CHIP
That's all I need!

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - NIGHT

Boris drives the RV as Chip sleeps. He sings a Russian song. When Chip wakes he looks around the RV and smells the air.

He looks to the back of the RV, then looks at Boris.

BORIS
Kakiye?

Chip looks at him, confused.

BORIS (CONT'D)
What?

Chip gets closer to Boris and smells him.

CHIP
Boris... you smell...composty.

BORIS
That fake word...

Chip dry heaves and gasps for a moment.

CHIP
Your breath is absolutely terrible.

Boris is not happy with Chip's comments. He lashes back.

BORIS
My breath may be different from yours but that doesn't mean that it "bad". At least I am good person. Can you say that about yourself?

CHIP
What's that supposed to mean?

BORIS
You have no direction with life. You have no standards-no morals.

Chip fires back.

CHIP
Yeah? And you're a commie... and
what do you have? Nothin'!

Boris smiles.

BORIS
(mutters to self)
Nothing is good...Spasibo.

CHIP
I just don't understand how you
could follow a communist
dictator... like Hitler.

Boris mutters a few words in Russian.

BORIS
Nevezhestvo...idiotizm...

BORIS (CONT'D)
Your problem is you only see
success as money-& what it buy you.

Chip looks around the RV as if Boris said something stupid.

CHIP
Yea. So..and how is that a problem?

BORIS
It clouds head...fame and fortune
never bring true happiness.

Chip scoffs at him.

CHIP
You are wrong. Money is everything!
Without it, you have nothing!! No
cool stuff. NOTHING!!

BORIS (SMILES)
Without money, you learn true
meaning of happiness.

CHIP
Happiness? So you have the key to
it? So please share.

BORIS
I don't have keys. You have keys.
(points to dashboard)
How find happiness?...we learn to
share with each other.

Chip shakes his head.

CHIP

Share with each other? Oh, I get it-you mean like the welfare mommas driving Cadillacs and getting fat off free food stamps? They are "sharing" the fruits of labor from hard working people like me? I mean, like I was? Not in my America, pal. They gotta earn it.

BORIS

You had a Cadillac, no?

CHIP

No. It was a red Corvette. It was my big red monster...It was my extra special friend after Lacey left. I had it until the IRS took it because I forgot to pay taxes.

BORIS

Again with Taxes? Why their state so special? Why they always take? My father taught me the Communist Manifesto- From each according to his ability, to each according to his need-remember that, Chip...

CHIP

Yep-I'll be sure to remember that. And you remember this-"too much of everything is just never enough" - Grateful Dead sang that.

BORIS

Why grateful to be dead?

CHIP

Nevermind. Let's just listen to some good music. Buffett? And, Who is definitely not dead-Roger Daltry and Pete Townsend are still alive.

BORIS

Yes?

CHIP

No, Who. Yes was another band...oh, forget it...

BORIS

What cause I Foreigner?

CHIP

Foreigner is great, too. But they're no Heart.

BORIS

I have Heart-you not have Heart.

CHIP

I think I have Heart here somewhere..

BORIS

You not know where Heart is?

CHIP

Check the glove box...

BORIS

Stop making sense...

CHIP

That's the Talking Heads. How about The Band?

BORIS

I like band, like Jimmy Buffett. Friends at commune love his music.

CHIP (SIGHS)

Wow. How did we get here?

BORIS

You pick me up in old VR. We drive here and have big adventure. No?

CHIP

I have an idea, let's just listen to some good music. Buffett?

BORIS

There's no Rush...

CHIP

We could jam with some Rush-the ultimate power trio-but I thought you wanted to listen to Jimmy?

BORIS

I do...

Plays Jimmy Hendrix' "Purple Haze"

BORIS (CONT'D)

That is wrong Jimmy.

CHIP

Deep purple, purple haze and purple
rain-all going through my brain...

BORIS

You very strange man, Chip...remind
me of...nobody I know. You Free.

CHIP

I love Free. You want me to play?

BORIS

No cost for free or Freebird
either..but what happened to
Jimmy...Buffett?

Buffet's "Changes in attitudes, changes in latitudes" plays
and they sing along to it.

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - DAY

Chip and Boris have just finished winning another match.
Celebrations are underway. A good-looking flirtatious woman
recognizes Chip. She is in her late 60s.

FLIRT

We are having a party-wanna come?

Chip smiles and puts his arm around her.

CHIP

We'd love to-wouldn't we, Boris?

Boris shakes his head.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Older people crowd the house, chatting and laughing. Chip and
Boris survey the scene when the flirty older woman sees Chip.

FLIRT

Hey! I'm glad you could come! I
have fresh baked garlic cloves and
prune juice if you're interested.

She gives Chip a playful jab. He is speechless.

FLIRT (CONT'D)

You can never be too regular, right?

Boris smiles and she goes to chat with someone across the room. The PUPPET MASTER, a skinny man wearing a baggy shirt, shorts and mismatched socks, approaches Chip and Boris.

PUPPET MASTER
It's Chip, right?

He shakes Chip's hand, then moves on to Boris.

PUPPET MASTER (CONT'D)
And Boris?

The two don't say anything.

PUPPET MASTER (CONT'D)
You guys are quite a pair. You played a killer match today! Some small tweaks and you could be serious contenders.

Chip scoffs.

CHIP
Whatever, kid. Why's a young guy like you at a party like this?

The Puppet Master smiles.

PUPPET MASTER
Babes. Tons of babes. I used to work the wedding and funeral circuits until I found pickleball. Man, it's a friggin' golden years gold mine-talkin' a 2 to 1 ratio!!

He turns and walks towards a small group of older women. Once he is out of earshot, Chip rolls his eyes.

CHIP
Good God - This may be the Worst after party-EVER!

BORIS
Come on Chip. It not so bad. Try having conversation with new people -learn about them.

CHIP
Maybe that's what you do at a commie/Russian party.... But this is 'merica! Let's spice this thing up with some crazy karaoke!!!

He winks at Boris.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chip is standing on a coffee table singing karaoke. A lousy singer, he is fully committed and belts "I Got You Babe". He points at smiling, random ladies in the room. The song ends and someone tries to take the microphone from him. Chip pulls the mike away and announces loudly into it.

CHIP

This next song is for my partner.

Everyone looks around for a smiling, adoring woman wondering who it is, but nobody is identified. Then, Chip catches on.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I mean my pickle ball partner...and former opponent...

He points to Boris. Everyone turns and looks at him.

CHIP (CONT'D)

BORIS!

Suddenly Captain and Tennille's song "Love Will Keep Us Together" plays and Chip sings and invites Boris to join him. Boris stubbornly resists at first, but then he sheepishly ventures up to a makeshift stage and the small audience starts to cheer. Boris takes the hook and taps the mic.

BORIS

Umm...

He clears his throat.

BORIS (CONT'D)

This next song from my youth.

Boris earnestly sings the Soviet Union National Anthem.

INT. IN THE OTHER ROOM BY THE BAR - LATER

Boris with a glass of vodka in hand, has several ladies sitting by him on the couch in rapt attention.

BORIS

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing themselves It start there.

WOMAN #1

Wow-I never thought of it that way.

WOMAN #2
That's deep stuff.

The ladies swoon over Boris.

WOMAN #1
Tell us more-where'd you learn this

BORIS
Well... I'm not sure if I should...

WOMAN #2
Please!

Chip walks in the room and sees the women fawning over Boris.

CHIP
What in the actual hell is going on
here?

Boris smiles.

WOMAN #1
Boris was talking philosophy...

WOMAN #2
Tell him Boris.

Chip looks at Boris.

CHIP
Boris? This stinky commie?

He points to Boris and he smiles.

BORIS
Humility, integrity and listening-
the ultimate aphrodisiac-da ladies?

All the ladies swoon again and they each proceed to give Boris their contact information. Chip promptly summons him and they head for the door.

CHIP
I've got your AFRO whatever
alright!Time to go Boris, we're
blowing this pickleball kitchen!

Boris looks at him quizzically, but chooses not to retort. He follows Chip out as one of the women slips her number to him.

BORIS
Dasvidaniya ladies.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Chip is pacing in what little space he has.

BORIS

I don't see problem. When you with ladies, I wait until you finish...

Chip interjects.

CHIP

Well.. that is...different.

BORIS

Different because...you Chip Cox?
And I Boris?

Chip hesitates for a minute.

CHIP

Umm.. no. It's umm...

Suddenly Alexa rings. He answers.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Hello?...uh...not a good time, Tom.

Boris stares in Chip's direction. There is a muffle on the other end of the phone.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Hey Boris-this is a personal call,
can you please step outside?

Chip smiles as he continues talking on the phone. Boris looks at Chip from outside the RV.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Wednesday? Perfect-I'll find a way.

Chip hangs up the phone and as he turns around, Boris stands in the door frame, silhouetted by the RV lights inside.

BORIS

Who is Tom?

CHIP

He's the tournament guy-getting us
our games to play.

Chip looks at the ground. Boris glares at him.

BORIS

And?

CHIP

And what? That's all he does...
that's Tom, he's the guy... the
tournament scheduling... dude.

Boris stares at him even more.

BORIS

And, when is our next tournament?

Chip suddenly realizes what he was asking.

CHIP

Ohhh... hahaha, yeah, umm, that is
the thing. It's in a few days.

BORIS

What is it?

CHIP

The Beer City Open-Grand Rapids,
Michigan.

Boris is surprised.

BORIS

Michigan? Is far?

Chip nods.

CHIP

We will leave early tomorrow
morning. And Boris?

Boris turns around.

BORIS

Da?

Chip hesitates.

CHIP

I have to tell you...

BORIS

Prodolzhat'.

Chip tries to find the words, but can't.

CHIP
 ...I am stopping at an old friend's
 place when we are in Michigan.

Boris nods.

BORIS
 Boris meet friend?

CHIP
 No, that's okay, Boris.

Boris shrugs.

BORIS
 Dobroy nochi.

Chip nods.

CHIP
 G'night, Boris.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - DAY

Chip is in the driver's seat when he sees a small blue
 "WELCOME TO MICHIGAN." sign. He smiles, and looks to the
 passenger seat and Boris is still sleeping. They drive for a
 few more hours, when the RV starts to sputter. Chip observes
 the gas gauge needle has plummeted below empty. They somehow
 manage to roll in to their destination-Grand Rapids. The RV
 shutters and Chip notices Boris has stirred and is now awake.

CHIP
 Heyo, Boris.

The RV jerks along the road. Boris is bouncing with it.

BORIS
 What is happening?

The RV comes to a stop.

CHIP
 We're here!

Chip smiles. Boris looks at him.

BORIS
 Michigan?

CHIP
 Yessir!!

They open the door to the RV and step outside.

EXT. CHIP COX'S RV

Chip and Boris notice there are signs and banners everywhere for the "BEER CITY OPEN." Chip and Boris are excited. This is clearly their biggest pickleball tournament to date.

Boris turns to Chip.

BORIS
Why we stop here?

The RV is parked haphazardly and barely pulled off the side of the road. Chip manages a nervous smile.

CHIP
The space was open?

Boris shrugs it off.

BORIS
When do you meet friend?

Chip glances at Boris, confused.

CHIP
What?

BORIS
You said you need to meet friend?

Chip suddenly realizes what he is talking about.

CHIP
Oh, right!

Chip checks his watch.

CHIP (CONT'D)
In an hour-I should get ready.

Boris nods and looks over to the nearby park.

BORIS
Will meditate in park. Come find me when done.

Chip nods.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Chip is wearing a very tight suit that fit him several years ago-not so much now. His bulging belly stretches the fabric to it's limits. Chip adjusts himself as a lady passes by. He smiles at her and she avoids eye contact with him.

LADY

Perv.

Chip continues walking past small shops when he sees a sign that reads "JAKE'S BOOKS". He opens the door and steps in.

INT. JAKE'S BOOKS - CONTINUOUS

Inside the bookstore Chip notices a small table with a stack of his autobiography book, "It Takes Balls To Play." He smiles proudly. Next to the table is a life-size cardboard cut-out of him in his prime. Chip rushes to it.

CHIP

(to himself)

You are one handsome hombre...

Chip admires himself, as JAKE the owner, approaches him.

JAKE

Hello there.

Chip turns to Jake.

CHIP

Hello. I just want to say...thank you so much for...

Jake interrupts him.

JAKE

Can I help you with something?

CHIP

Com'n...I'm Chip Cox!

Chip motions to the cut-out. Jake looks at him, then at the cut-out, then back.

JAKE

And...?

CHIP

And I have my book signing here...
In ten minutes.

JAKE
 (to himself)
 Oh, he wasn't kidding.

Jake looks back to Chip.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 My apologies, sir.

He pulls the chair out behind the table.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Have a seat. I'm sure your fans
 will be pouring in here shortly.

Chip takes a seat, and is flabbergasted by the display. He has a stupid grin on his face. Jake feigns excitement. Chip anxiously eyes the front door for customers to no avail. He begins to have doubts as Jake places a few books behind him.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Don't worry-folks will show.

CHIP
 A fan at the restaurant...she was
 so excited and could hardly wait...

Jake nods his head.

JAKE
 I'm sure she was. Listen, if you...

Jake is interrupted by the sound of a bell and the arrival of a young woman. She walks directly to Chip's table. He smiles.

YOUNG WOMAN
 I'm sposed to, uh, ask you var-I-US
 (mispronounces)
 questions and get your SIGN-a-ture.

Chip opens a book and looks to the girl.

CHIP
 Sure. Fire away-and who am I making
 out with...uh making this out...to?

The girl looks to Jake, who mouths "please" emphatically .

YOUNG WOMAN
 To me.

Chip literally writes "To Me," and signs his name in the book jacket. He hands her the book and smiles and looks to Jake.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Can I go now?

Jake nods, pulls her aside and whispers to her. Jake escorts her towards the door and slips her some bills.

The door rings as she exits. Jake, smiling looks at Chip.

JAKE

Well, you were right, she came in.

Chip is incredulous and glares at Jake.

CHIP

That wasn't her!

JAKE

Oh, then you must have at least TWO fans in Michigan.

He chuckles-and stops as Chip continues staring at him.

CHIP

Did you pay her to come here?!

Jake gives up the cheap charade.

JAKE

Look, I felt bad-an old guy like you, trying to sell his book, and..

Chip, defeated, plops down in the chair realizing the truth.

CHIP

...No one cares.

JAKE

Mr. Cox, I didn't mean to..I just..

Chip, demoralized, stands up, grabs the cut-out of himself and slowly walks out the door. The bell rings on the way out.

CHIP

I'll be back to get the books-if there's any left...that is...Jeeez

EXT. PARK - LATER

Boris is meditating in the park. He looks at his watch, then looks around the park for Chip. Boris heads back to the RV. Boris looks inside; no one is there. He notices Chip sitting on a bench with what looks to be himself. Boris is confused.

EXT. PARK BENCH

Boris walks to the bench and talks to the cardboard cut-out.

BORIS
How did visit with friend go?

Boris gets no response.

BORIS (CONT'D)
That good, eh? Was friend glad to see Chip?

Boris gets no response again.

BORIS (CONT'D)
I see. You keep your secrets, Chip.

Chip rolls his eyes.

CHIP
Boris, I'm over here.

Boris smiles.

BORIS
I know, comrade. You looked bummed in, so make joke to cheer you.

Chip looks up to Boris.

CHIP
(exasperated))
Does ANYONE care about me, Boris?

Boris sits down on the other side of the cardboard Chip.

BORIS

I do. And many people could care about you, Chip. But it hard to care for someone who take rather than give-who talks and not listen.

CHIP
What do you mean?

BORIS
Sometime you think you know it all-and expect everything from everyone-and you not give in return. I share happiness secret...

Chip is quiet. Boris doesn't say anything.

CHIP

No one knows who I am. My mom died.
I hate to say it, but Boris, you
are probably the only person that
really cares about me.

Boris smiles.

BORIS

Chip Cox-you know what you need do?

CHIP

What?

BORIS

Start giving, then you will truly
feel what it means to receive.

Boris smiles. He outstretches a hand to the cardboard Chip.
Chip smiles at him. He grabs his hand, and shakes it.

BORIS (CONT'D)

You do that. Life starts to
change. Now come, we must get
ready. We have tournament to win.

Chip can't help but smile at Boris's positivity.

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - NIGHT

Fans are screaming until Chip and Boris take the court.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please
welcome Team Cox.

The audience starts to boo loudly at them.

CHIP

(to Boris)

What are we-a couple politicians?! I
guess their beer is...BOOZE!!

Boris nods his head.

BORIS

Da.

Boris waves to the crowd and smiles. Chip adjusts himself to
acknowledge the booing. Suddenly the lights fade on the court
and the crowd goes nuts.

A blinding bright flash and a small pillar of fire blasts from the entrance as their opponents emerge: THE SHARK and a huge man called THE WALRUS. They both scream upon their arrival. Chip and Boris approach the net and the Shark extends his hand to them to exchange greetings. Chip awkwardly fist bumps the Shark's outstretched hand. Not a welcome gesture to the Shark, who simply shakes his head. Boris courteously swaps a handshakes with the Walrus.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Best of luck.

WALRUS

For you.

Boris and Chip go to the far end of the court.

CHIP

We got this, right? He is full bodied like I told you some would be. We will pick on him.

Boris nods.

BORIS

Da.

Boris turns his head, laser focused. Chip nods and looks at the opponents as well.

The announcer comes over the PA.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to the Beer City Open!

The audience cheers even more.

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

Our reigning champions, The Shark and The Walrus, are back tonight to defend their title!

The audience cheers.

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

Now let's get this match underway!

Boris serves. Chip enters the kitchen followed quickly by Boris and The Shark returns the ball. They volley back and forth-then Chip attacks!

CHIP
 I am thunder and lightning
 (screams) craack...wait for it
 (boom!)

Chip slams the ball; his placement is not ideal and the foes return the play easily. Boris and Chip alternate returning volleys as Boris continues striking the ball next to the line. Boris senses The Walrus is beginning to tire and he exploits it. Boris keeps directing his shots towards the Walrus when suddenly the Walrus loses his balance and falls.

Chip hits him with the ball.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Your gonna need a bigger sack to
 fit in that body bag.

Boris clenches his fist and raises it.

BORIS
 Yes!

Chip gives Boris a big hug. They have just won the Beer City open-clearly their best victory yet! They anxiously stand court-side ready to receive a sizable check. The Announcer grabs the microphone and declares the new champion's earnings

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 And the prize money for tonight's
 winner is...

The announcer smiles. Chip leans in to Boris.

CHIP
 (whispering)
 I bet it's six hundred
 bucks...maybe more!

Boris smiles big.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 No money...but even better!

Chip and Boris both gaze at the announcer, rubbing their hands together in anticipation. The announcer produces an overly large check. Where the amount field normally appears is inscribed: "A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF MILLER LITE."

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Get ready to party, because you
 just won... a years supply of
 Miller Lite, generously donated by
 our corporate sponsor!!!

He presents the check and shakes Chip and Boris' hands. As he does so, several people take their pictures. The Shark walks up to Chip and shakes his hand too.

SHARK

Players party, you comin'?

Chip looks to Boris. Boris nods.

CHIP

Sure. Never miss a party & it looks like we're picking up the tab.

SHARK

Yup. Thanks! See you there.

INT. PLAYERS AFTERPARTY

The party features beer drinking, of course, karaoke singing, and lively conversation. Boris mingles with Gizmo, The Puppet Master, The Unicorn, Golden Boy and others. Chip is situated by a keg drinking from a red plastic cup. He notices the Shark staring at him and he looks around, doing his best to avoid eye contact. Chip looks straight ahead, and the Shark appears directly in front of him.

SHARK

Hello.

Chip isn't sure how to respond.

CHIP

...Hi...

SHARK

Chip Cox? It's me, Sharkey from our match today. You're the former tennis champ, right?

Chip's eyes light up at the chance of having a fan.

CHIP

Yes. Why...yes I am.

SHARK

I've actually seen you play tennis. But I didn't recognize you without your long hair and huge muscles. You were once one brawny lad!

Chip is visibly chagrined.

CHIP
You saw me play-and remember me?

SHARK
Yeah, my pop used to watch you back
in the day.

Chip manages a small smile.

CHIP
Thanks.

SHARK
Tell me how you ended up playing
doubles with the Russian dude at
the French Open? That was crazy!

Chip begins telling the story. We see Boris chatting with
some fellow pickle ballers like the UNICORN and GOLDEN BOY.

BORIS
So you don't hit it very hard?

UNICORN
It's all about placement and
strategy, not brute strength.

Boris turns to Golden Boy.

BORIS
And what about you Golden Child?

GOLDEN BOY
Boy.

BORIS
Boy what?

GOLDEN BOY
It's Golden Boy. And Uni is right.

UNICORN
Hey...don't call me Uni!!

GOLDEN BOY
It's all about placement, not
speed, not power. PUHLACEMENT...and
have the Golden Axe as your paddle.

He shows it to Boris, who laughs and then strolls through a
crowd of people. He eventually finds Chip and the Shark
chatting. As he approaches he hears the end of Chip's story.

CHIP

And then the commie stole my trophy
and ran out of the stadium!

SHARK

Then what happened?

CHIP

I caught up with him. Let's just
say I used the trophy to imprint my
impression of him on his forehead.

The Shark laughs.

SHARK

My man!

Boris urgently seeks Chip's attention.

BORIS

Must tell you I learned secret to
Pickleball..need only worry about..

The Shark interrupts...

SHARK

Chip, tell me more stories about
your total domination as the GOAT!

CHIP

We have all night and we might need
it...speaking of which...we were
hoping we'd get some prize money...

The Shark smiles at him.

SHARK

Too good for Miller Lite?

CHIP

It's not like it makes me gassy.
Just that..we needed money for...

He looks to Boris.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Our RV. We have no place to stay
that doesn't smell like Boris.

SHARK

Don't have anyone to stay with?

Boris interjects.

BORIS

All Chip's ladies have expired or retired. After all-it is past 8pm.

The Shark lights up.

SHARK

It would be my honor to host you at the Shark Bite Lounge-my pad!

INT. SHARK'S MOBILE HOME

Shark throws a few magazines and empty beer cans from the couch and reveals a mountain of Miller Lite.

SHARK

It's not much, but stay here for the night and have all the beer you want from last year's winnings.

Boris sits on the couch and quickly falls asleep. Chip grabs a blanket and puts it over Boris.

CHIP

(whispering)
Dobroy nochi, comrade.

Chip sits next to Boris; a beer in hand and his eyelids get heavy. As he dozes off, he slips into a flashback/ nightmare.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CAR - DAY

Chip sits in the passenger seat of his dad's car in front of an Italian restaurant. A younger Rocco sits at a table in the restaurant and stares at Woody and Chip in the car. Rocco motions to Woody to join him and Chip starts to go, too.

WOODY COX

Not you, son...stay here. I'll be right back. Have some bidness here.

Chip watches as Woody enters the restaurant. He sits next to Rocco and soon they start yelling at each other. Chip looks on concerned. A few of Rocco's men emerge and stand Woody up. Chip helplessly watches as a man slams Woody's face onto a plate of spaghetti. It splashes on Rocco, who gathers his men. Chip cries out in the car....

CHIP

DAAAAADDD!!!!

END FLASHBACK

INT. SHARK'S MOBILE HOME

Chip jerks awake.

CHIP

Dad!!!

He looks over to Boris, who's still sleeping on the couch. Chip checks his phone: It's 5 AM. He pushes Boris, who stirs. Chip takes the blanket off him and Boris wakes.

BORIS

What in name of Stalin...

CHIP

We need to get up.

BORIS

Why?

Chip throws a garden hose on Boris-along with a gas can.

CHIP

We need gas to travel.

EXT. LONELY ROAD - LATER

Chip and Boris walk around the mobile home park randomly searching for cars with accessible gas tanks. After a couple failed attempts they locate a car that will suffice.

BORIS

So we just take gas?

CHIP

No. Boris, we are sharing the gas with them-just like you said.

BORIS

No. I never say that.

Chip opens the gas tank and motions to Boris.

CHIP

The hose?

Boris stands still, socially distanced from the car.

BORIS

I will not do this-it is Illegal?!!

Chip walks towards Boris and pleads his case.

CHIP

Boris, we need gas, we're out of money. There is no other way.

BORIS

We can find other way.

Chip grabs Boris by the shoulders, Boris stares at him.

CHIP

Boris, there once was an ideological and social political movement. It's aim was to set up a better version of society. A society where nobody owns anything and everybody shares everything.

Boris stares at Chip in disbelief. They both announce:

BOTH

Communism!!

Boris nods his head.

BORIS

Da. Let's do this.

Boris hands Chip the hose, then shoves it into the gas tank. Boris looks at him confused.

BORIS (CONT'D)

Now what?

Chip makes a nervous smile.

CHIP

You have to suck it out.

Boris' eyes go wide.

BORIS

Suck? Does gas get in mouth?

CHIP

It might.

Boris shrugs his shoulders. Boris sucks on the end of the hose. He keeps sucking. Nothing happens.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Keep going-suck it-almost there...

Boris swallows some gas, sticks the hose into the empty gas can and it flows. Boris looks at Chip and spits out the gas.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Nasty?

BORIS

Too weak. Russian vodka much stronger.

Chip looks at him strangely. Boris smiles and Chip pours the balance of the gas into the RV's tank.

CHIP

Well, that's the last of it.

Boris looks to Chip.

BORIS

How many cars we do?

Chip counts on his fingers.

CHIP

Four... I think. How you feeling?

Boris belches loudly.

BORIS

Better-after American beer and gas you more interesting- Let's go!

Boris and Chip climb into the RV.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Boris drives as Chip has his feet up on the dash.

BORIS

Where is next match?

CHIP

The championship qualifier in Sun City, Arizona. A long trip ahead...

CHIP (CONT'D)

(pause)

Since we have the time, let's talk about other IMPORTANT stuff-like your Vodka versus our Bourbon.

BORIS

Am expert on Vodka. Know nothing about bourbon.

CHIP

Bourbon is like America's vodka- until Tito's came along.

BORIS

What is Tito's?

CHIP

A vodka made in Austin, Texas.

BORIS

Taxes? Don't tell me about taxes again. No more Taxes!

CHIP

Tito's makes the world's best Moscow Mules.

BORIS

You insult Russia! How dare you use Moscow name with Vodka from Texas?

CHIP

Sorry-didn't know you were so sensitive about Vodka.

BORIS

No more than you about money.

CHIP

Touche.

Chip pauses. A moment of surface enlightenment.

CHIP (CONT'D)

You know.. I used to be so blessed.

BORIS

What you mean?

CHIP

I was rich. I had EVERYTHING-a big house, a Corvette, Lacey...

BORIS

So to be blessed to you is having money and lots of...stuff?

CHIP

Of course. Can't live on nada. Look at all that beer in the back.

(glances at stacks of cases of Miller Lite)

What can you do with that? We needed money-not beer-to fill the tank.

BORIS

(angrily)

We have been through this before. That beer is not nothing. It has value. I traded 5 cases for vodka at last gas station.

(pauses)

Stop vehicle.

CHIP

What's the matter?

BORIS

Stop-now. I mean it...

Chip pulls the RV over to the side of the road.

CHIP

What's wrong, Boris?

BORIS

Am bloated a lot with daily diarrhea. First, puke, then talk.

Boris jumps out of the RV and vomits. He finishes.

BORIS (CONT'D)

How you ask me such question?

CHIP

Why are you so upset?

BORIS

I tell you why! I may work in deep shit but have depth-something you not have. You more foreign than me!

CHIP

And why does that concern you?

BORIS

Because you friend...don't know if I can do this if this who you are!

CHIP

Who do you want me to be?

BORIS

I just want you to be Chip Cox. My Pickle ball partner and friend, who is more than just making money-and love-to blue haired groupees!

CHIP

Ok. I'll try, Boris...and you'll see...it'll be...after I pee..

Boris begrudgingly acquiesces.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

The RV is silhouetted a few feet from Chip and Boris. They sit on a golf green in their underwear soaping themselves up.

BORIS

Who we playing?

CHIP

Oglesby and Upgrove- solid players.

BORIS

You done with soap?

CHIP

Yep.

Suddenly the hiss of the sprinklers can be heard.

BORIS

Here it comes.

The sprinklers douse Boris and Chip, who run around them to get rinsed off-laughing and enjoying the moment.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Chip drives and Boris sits in the passenger seat.

BORIS

Prize money?

CHIP

May it be more than beer this time!

Chip and Boris share a bag of chips. Chip looks down at it.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Where did you get these?

Boris smiles.

BORIS
Found them.

Chip spits it out.

CHIP
We don't eat food we found.

BORIS
Speak for self. Am hungry. Not grow
up like you. My dad was tool and a
dime-maker-not a dollar maker.

INT. CHIP COX'S RV - LATER

Chip, driving, is falling asleep. He suddenly calls to Boris.

CHIP
Boris - slap me on the face.

Boris reaches out and slaps him. Chip wakes up for a minute,
then continues driving. He starts to nod off again.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Do it. Again. Harder!!

Boris slaps him again. Chip shakes it off.

CHIP (CONT'D)
I'm sick of tired!

BORIS
Petrol, found food-am fueled again!

CHIP
(sings)
Don't get fueled again!!!
(pause)
Let's talk about our pickle ball
strategy... If you anticipate the
return shot you can move into
position and cover the angle of it.

BORIS
I agree. But we must remember that
placement is key- not strength.

CHIP

This is where we differ, comrade.

BORIS

We must play as one...you had big,
fake muscles before and hit ball
very hard. Now? Not so much...

Chip smiles.

CHIP

We haven't lost yet, comrade.

They see a sign that reads. "Flagstaff."

CHIP (CONT'D)

Arizona. We're almost there.

EXT. SUN CITY TOURNAMENT

A prominent retirement community perfectly manicured with nature's finest ornamentals is abuzz with an excited crowd in anticipation of the tournament. Fans flock around the makeshift vendor tents. Pickleball paddles, balls, and other gear sell briskly. A plethora of beer and food vendors also line the streets. Chip and Boris make their way towards an entrance that reads "Players Only".

As Chip dresses, Boris is seated on a bench in a trance.

CHIP

Boris? We need to get ready.

Boris shakes his head.

BORIS

Don't know if can play.

CHIP

You must-look what I brought us!

Chip pulls out their new uniforms—each has a shirt adorned with their respective country's flag. They are pressed and look immaculate. Boris stands up and begins to fall backwards but catches himself. Chip notices this but ignores it.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I need you out there, man.

Boris nods absently and grabs the uniform.

EXT. PICKLEBALL COURT - LATER

A crowd has gathered as Chip and Boris take the court. Their opponents MAC OGLESBY and STAN UPGROVE are poised on the other side of the net. The announcer takes the microphone.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Ladies and Gents We Welcome you to
the Sun City Vlastic Classic
Pickleball Tournament Finals
presented by Morts Mortuary!!!

Chip scoffs and looks to Boris.

CHIP
(whispering)
Wow-that's a mouthful!

Boris is already sweating and his face is pale.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The winner of this match will go to
the senior Pickleball finals world
championship at Indian Wells!

Chip is getting pumped up. The referee approaches center court and motions for the teams to come together. The two teams approach each other and extend handshakes. Chip shakes their hands firmly and glares at them; Boris limply reciprocates; Mac and Stan express concern.

MAC
You sure you're all right to play?

Chip takes this as a taunt.

CHIP
Me? I am fine... Are you all right
to play, Stan? I can get a deal for
you to buy a wheelchair in town.
Cause it looks like you need one.

MAC
It's Mac, and I'm primed and in the
best shape of my life.

Mac and Stan stare at Boris, who is barely up-right.

STAN
Seriously, is he okay?

Chip flexes at Stan.

CHIP

Yeah-he is fine-like Arizona wine!

Stan and Mac say nothing and start heading back to their side of the court. Chip continues.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Hey guys. I saw you warming up. I also saw a for sale sign in the pro shop. You might want to buy yourselves a real serve and volley game with some of your prune juice.

He looks to Boris.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Let's crush these geezers.

Boris takes in a few shaky breaths.

BORIS

Da... Game on.

Mac serves to start and Boris makes a dive for it, but his reflexes are off and too slow. Mac serves again and this time Boris feebly returns it. Mac and Stan rush to the kitchen and attack the net. Boris and Chip try their best, but they are clearly outmatched.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

It's been brought to my attention that Chip Cox has recently published an autobiography. If you missed his book signing in Michigan-and it sounds like everybody did-you can catch him here after the match.

Boris stares at Chip; the referee hands the ball to Boris as it's his serve; he slams the ball right on the line. It's returned easily by Mac and Stan. Boris' serve isn't working and he continues to look like he's ready to pass out, but he pushes on. Chip yells at Boris each time he misses.

CHIP

Come on Boris, you gotta get there!

Chip begins to sweat profusely and also misses shots. Mac and Stan are simply superior to Chip and Boris-and barely break a sweat. The announcer calls out the obvious.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 This is a grossly one-sided affair.
 Hard to tell, but it appears that
 Team Cox is under the weather-and
 not easy to do in Arizona!

Team Cox loses in straight sets. They are totally humiliated.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Boris, barely awake, is perched over a garbage can ready to vomit. Chip paces back and forth.

CHIP
 You weren't even trying, Boris!

BORIS
 Trying? I always trying...

Boris vomits into the garbage can.

CHIP
 And that...that's from all the food
 you found...

BORIS
 And drink gas-for US...

CHIP
 We are screwed. We needed this
 victory to qualify for Nationals.

He holds up a small wad of cash.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 And this is all we got from losing!

Boris eyes Chip and utters words in Russian and Chip scoffs at him. Boris spits into the garbage can and Chip proceeds to split the money, dropping half of it into the same can.

BORIS
 You no see friend in Michigan. You
 had book signing.

Chip looks down at the ground.

CHIP
 Not really. I mean, yes...but no
 one showed up, anyway...

Boris wipes his mouth. He stands up, facing Chip.

BORIS
That's it. I done. I quit.

CHIP
Done, done-er? Boris I need you...

Boris cuts him off. As he speaks, he starts to walk away.

BORIS
Da. You humiliate me on court. You lie to me. You not listen to me. Behind my back, you plan pickle ball trip to sign book. You not care about me or my commune. You only care about YOU! Goodbye!

INT. OUTSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM

Boris reaches for the door handle & turns and walks away.

CHIP (WITH SUBTITLES IN ENGLISH)
Pomnite, eto kasayetsya
razmeshcheniya, a ne sily.

Boris turns and sees Chip. He is shocked.

BORIS
Da? When you learn Russian?!!

Chip nods and smiles weakly.

CHIP
My mom had some self-learning tapes. I listened to them while I was driving out to see you.
(pause)
Boris, you're right-and believe it or not, I've been listening to you. I'm a selfish, egotistical, cocky jerk... and I am very sorry-really.

Boris looks down at his feet.

CHIP (CONT'D)
I don't really care about the tournament anymore...I'm just trying to pay off my debts, too, that I never told you about. I was too proud-but I am broke, too...

This gets Boris' attention.

CHIP (CONT'D)

And...I really do care about you.
You're the only real friend I have.
You tell me the truth and hold me
accountable when nobody else
would...I've been a pretty lousy
friend to you-and I'm really sorry
about that.

(pauses)

I love you man. Will you please
give me...us...another chance?

Chip looks up hopefully. Boris hesitates, takes a step
towards him and embraces him. Although a different hug, a
sign and tender display of brotherhood, nonetheless.

BORIS

Well, no doubt it's been an
adventure, comrade. For the love of
commune-and communism-I give you
chance. We have need and I have
ability to play better...and we
know we NEED the money.

Behind them, Mac and Stan show up.

MAC

Well, well, well. Frick and Frack.
Love and Hate. Capitalist and
Communist. Sweaty and stinky.
Loudmouth and pukey. What a team!

Chip and Boris turn around, surprised at who they see.

CHIP

Hello there.

STAN

You guys played your hearts out..

BORIS

Da. No. I played my guts out!

They all laugh.

STAN

I've played sick before, too. You
killed it for the bad shape you
were in-but you still need to know
more about teamwork and winning.

BORIS

(nodding to CHIP)
 If you teach Chip and he is willing to listen and learn, I will give him last shot at this silly game-even though we not qualify for nationals. We can still compete and have fun together.

MAC

We will and want to help you with your game. Even though we know you can be a jerk, Chip, we really love the sport and savor your famous tennis shootout back in '78.

STAN

Legendary stuff. You have great potential in this sport.

CHIP

Thanks-that means a lot.

EXT. PICKLEBALL COURT - LATER

The two teams face each other on opposite sides of the court.

MAC

Serving. Forget the spins, just get the ball in play-deeper the better.

Mac hits the ball where Boris and Chip must move.

MAC (CONT'D)

Make them move.

Stan attacks next and gives some advice as well.

STAN

And if your opponent has a weak backhand-exploit that.

He hits it on the weak side of Chip.

STAN (CONT'D)

Any weakness, exploit it.

MAC

For service return-return the ball to the center-it makes the opponent confused. Who's going to return it?

STAN

Try to land the ball within a foot of the baseline on your return. Keep them back, and get to the net.

Chip and Boris soak it all in.

MAC

The third shot-well, the game really starts here. The side drop shot's a very tough shot, but very effective! You're hitting the ball from the service return to the backhand side of your opponent where it just drops over the net. Then both of you follow it to the net, like this. You master this, you master the game..and your foes.

Mac and Stan demonstrate.

MAC (CONT'D)

Now you try. Do what I said to do.

Chip ignores the strategic advice and pounds the return up the middle. Mac and Stan both go for the ball simultaneously and run into each other-their heads colliding. Chip looks on wide-eyed and runs up to Mac and Stan. They both lay on the ground unconscious.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Mac and Stan sit on the DOCTOR'S bench, rubbing their heads. The doctor examines their charts on a clipboard.

DOCTOR

Well gents, it looks like you suffered simultaneous concussions.

Mac and Stan are shocked.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You will be fine in a week to ten days, but in the meantime, no physical activity for you two, ok?

The doctor stands up and leaves.

CHIP

I'm so sorry.

Mac and Stan manage weak smiles at Chip and Boris.

MAC

It's OK-it was an accident-and know what? Maybe this was meant to be.

STAN

Not gonna hate fate...

BORIS

Am sorry...

MAC

Our doctor says we are going to be fine eventually but we can't play in this week's National Tournament. You two will have to play for us-since you won the silver medal at our tournament and are next in line

Mac smiles.

BORIS

No way-this means we're playing?!

Chip hugs Boris and shouts in joy!

CHIP

Thanks Mac and Stan-and Boris-for this chance! We won't let you down.

EXT. INDIAN WELLS

Chip and Boris head to the tunnel entrance that says "Players Only." People take pictures and videos of them as they enter.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chip and Boris hear the crowd outside as Chip pumps himself up by talking to himself. A darkened figure, Rocco, enters.

ROCCO

Cox? Dick Cox?

Chip turns around and sees Rocco standing in the Locker room. He stares at him in disbelief.

ROCCO (CONT'D)

Mind tellin' me what you're doing' at this ping-pong match for nonnos?

Chip looks up and sees the man from his nightmares.

ROCCO (CONT'D)

You still owe 500 large for your lousy bets and your deadbeat dad.

Two of Rocco's thugs step into the locker room. Rocco smiles.

CHIP

I know what I owe. We will win and when WE win, you'll get your dirty money. Bet on it!

Rocco smiles, then starts to laugh and his thugs join along.

ROCCO

What? When you win...this match? Do you know that...

He is suddenly cut off by OTTO entering the locker room.

OTTO

Excuse me, Cox, before we get started, you need to pee in this cup for drug testing. If there is anything illegal about you...

Otto leans in close to Chip.

OTTO (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Any infraction, sideways looks, complaints, or BS... I will immediately disqualify you.

Chip grabs the cup and then he whispers to Otto.

CHIP

(whispering)

You better call this fair. You ruined my career...my life... my Nike stuff...you stole my fiancée...everything may be gone...But we're not done yet...

Otto pulls away but Chip isn't finished.

CHIP (CONT'D)

And we need that one million-dollar prize. Half to pay off my debts, and half for Boris' commune....

Lacey overhears this and laughs.

LACEY

One MILLION?

Chip and Boris see her and Otto is just as confused as Lacey.

LACEY (CONT'D)

Who told you one million? It's ONLY one-THOUSAND in prize money for seniors and ten-thousand for the winners of the Pro division.

Chip isn't sure what to say and pulls the flyer out of his pocket. Lacey shows him the flyer. She points to the amount.

LACEY (CONT'D)

Do you not know what a comma is used for? Or are you blind?
(pauses)
You always were an idiot.

Chip sends an apologetic glance to Boris. Otto and Lacey head out of the locker room and Chip begins panicking.

CHIP

What? No way! That is not possible!
We're done...I'm finished...oh no..

OTTO (HEAD REFEREE)

Time to start the match, they are ready for you! We will see you out there after we test your urine.

He directs Chip and Boris toward the court.

CHIP

We are screwed. I'm a genuine loser...disgraced again...

Boris grabs him and then slaps Chip!

BORIS

No!!

Chip stares at Boris.

BORIS (CONT'D)

We have come this far, you have need and we have ability. We play this for honor-and redemption!

Chip pauses for a moment, gathers himself, and takes a deep breath. He then nods his head and stands up.

CHIP

Honor and redemption? Really?...
You're right, Boris!! Let's do it!!

Boris smiles.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Not like I need my balls anyway.

They head out of the locker room together.

EXT. THE ANNOUNCER CHIMES IN.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen. Welcome to the Margaritaville National Championship Men's Doubles Senior Championships. We have a change in the program as we have a substitute team after the withdrawal of Mac & Stan. Your finalists are now Team Cox vs. The French Picklers!

ANNOUNCER #2 (V.O.)

Like understudies in a Broadway show, it's time for Chip and Boris to fill in for the leads. But are they ready to step up?

Chip looks to Boris with a sudden burst of adrenaline.

CHIP

Let's win this! For the glory of the pickle!

Otto takes center court.

OTTO

Let's get this match underway!

The announcer echoes his thoughts.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, Let's get reaaaaddy to Piiiicckkkllleee!

INT. PICKLEBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

The teams take the court- Team Cox. As they enter there are plenty of cheers for them. Boris is somewhat surprised, but Chip soaks it in. The two stare towards opponents' gate. Two mature men stroll on to the court, wearing French berets and shirts with the Eiffel Tower imprinted on them. Their pants are black knickers. The crowd goes wild. Boris turns to Chip.

BORIS

Oh, my. We are playing the dreaded
French Picklers!

Chip nods. The two make their way to the net. The FRENCH
PICKLERS approach the net; they all shake hands.

CHIP

Nice outfits. Did your mom make
them for you? Tell her I'm sorry I
wasn't able to call her back!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Looks like Chip Cox is in rare form
today and already attempting to get
under the skin of the opponents.

Boris pulls Chip away. The French Picklers look confused and
walk back to their service position.

ANNOUNCER

Wow. Look at Lacey's...shoes... and
that ring! Somehow they have gotten
bigger 40 years later.

Lacey waves. The French Picklers begin with a nice serve, but
Boris makes quick work of the return, landing it down the
middle, as Mac and Stan had instructed them. Mac and Stan sit
in the audience & Mac turns to the person seated next to him.

MAC

I taught him that move!

Chip and Boris give their opponents everything they bargained
for. Boris handles the baseline rallies until the French
Picklers run out of breath.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Team Cox is really shining today,
folks. They are giving the Picklers
everything they've got!!

Chip tiptoes to the kitchen line repeatedly, barely missing
it as he drives the ball up the middle, deep in the court.

CHIP

You familiar with Linda Ronstadt?
She has a song. It goes like this:
(singing) Bluuuuuee by yooooou!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And there is another! The Picklers
are getting pickled!

This causes multiple unforced errors as their opponents can't figure out who will return the shot. Chip holds the ball. He takes a breath, he looks to Boris, who nods.

CHIP

What's that sound you hear?
 "woot, woot" Yep, I think I
 hear it too-it's the victory train
 coming to pick us up! All aboard!!

Chip tosses the ball in the air and lightly serves; the Picklers are not expecting this. His placement is perfect and the Picklers are unable to return it. The announcer goes wild and the crowd erupts!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And the final set is over -- Team
 Cox wins with an ACE! What a
 remarkable way to end the
 tournament! TEAM COX WINS!! TEAM
 COX WINS THE SENIORS DIVISION!!

Boris races over to Chip and hugs him. They celebrate and then congratulate the French Picklers on a tense match.

CHIP

No hard feelings fellas, I do the
 trash talking to pump myself up.

PICKLER

Je compris. Oui. Oui

CHIP

Yes. You're right! We WE! I get it.

Chip, in shock, looks up in the stands, where Rocco and his enforcers are vigorously clapping. Rocco wags his fingers, points to his groin, and smiles and gives the okay sign.

In the next box is Phil Knight. He is surrounded by legendary Nike tennis player Andre Agassi and other dignitaries. They are all clapping. Phil points to his logo on his shirt and to Chip and Boris and gives Chip a thumbs up signal.

Chip is baffled, but waves back to them.

Otto and Lacey present the trophy and the check for \$1,000 to Chip and Boris, who gratefully accept and address the crowd:

CHIP (CONT'D)

Wow-it's been a long time since I
 have been on this big of a stage.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

And Lacey-you are looking good, babe...a long time ago,I won a match but lost my sponsor, my respect, my fiancée, and my winning streak. But that was only the beginning. I went from being an undefeated champion to being... totally defeated. I lost my job-my career-my house-my mom...and...

(rubs his head)

my hair.

(laughter)

Tonight, we coulda lost, but won because I had lots of lessons to learn before I could ever really win again. Now, doubles pickle ball provided me the chance to find humility and team-ship again with my friend and teammate, Boris.

(pause)

Boris, trusted me and came on this journey with me. He taught me about teamwork and selflessness. He showed me that, while "me" is in team, so is "meat" and when we "meet" there are two people. And when you have two people, that is plural, so it becomes "we" and the french dudes said it best twice - "we, we." That is a tribute to both of us-Boris and me. It is also the same as "us", and with "us" that is 2/3 of USA, so we are together in the USA...which, is, really, great, right?

Stunned silence by the crowd as they try to grasp what Chip has just said. Boris proceeds to take the microphone.

BORIS

My friend Chip, he has come long way. He is good person who like all of us is still learning. Me, I learn about USA in 40 years. Not perfect, but better than nothing. Thank you for a chance for US to make something out of nothing.

Audience applause.

Rocco and his cronies start making their way to the court.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ugh oh. Do we have another on-court
confrontation at center court?
Where is Lacey when we need her?

Lacey waves to the crowd as Rocco and his enforcers approach
the court, Phil Knight and his entourage cut in front of them

PHIL KNIGHT

Hi, you might remember me-I'm Phil
Knight. We stripped Chip of his
Nike sponsorship many years ago.

Chip nods, then suddenly jumps back.

CHIP

Yes. Kinda hard to forget you. I'm
not wearing any Nike logo stuff. I
promise...except...maybe..

He reaches into his shorts and pulls up the top of his Nike
logo jock strap. Phil quickly backs away.

PHIL KNIGHT

That's all right-please keep it on.

Chip tugs and pulls it, dancing around until he gets it
right. He then sneaks a whiff of his hand. Phil continues.

PHIL KNIGHT (CONT'D)

You don't know it, but we have been
following you as we have a unique
opportunity for you to consider.
Since pickleball is an emerging
sport and you seem to have changed
your ways and now embrace teamwork,
Nike would like to have you wear
our brand again and be our
sponsored players. But we need both
of you to sign with us to be our
goodwill pickle ball ambassadors.

Boris stares at Phil.

BORIS

Why me?

Phil explains.

PHIL KNIGHT

We need you to wear and promote
Nike to help us reach our audience
in Russia and Eastern Europe.

CHIP

Mr. Knight, there is nothing I want more than to wear my Nike gear again. It would be an honor-I'm in!

Chip looks to Boris, who hesitates as he considers the offer as beneath him as a committed communist.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Come on Boris. You taught me so much. I'll never forget what you said that night on the road. It changed my life.

BORIS

What? Wash your jockstrap?

CHIP

Good one. You know that I will never wash that jockstrap. The Nike logo may be faded but it's all I have from the glory days.

BORIS (CONFUSED)

I don't remember.. what did I say?

CHIP

When you said, "From each according to his agility, to each according to his knees..."

Boris rolls his eyes.

CHIP (CONT'D)

It changed my perspective on life! Even though I'm no longer chiseled and have bad knees, I still have my agility-and we won with pickleball! Time to change your perspective, too

He looks into Boris' eyes.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Accept the endorsement and save your commune.

(pause)

You can make Russia great again!

BORIS

...Again?

CHIP

Yes!..In honor of all the great Russian leaders...Let's just do it!

Boris shakes his head with bemusement. He extends his hand to Phil Knight, who has Chip and Boris both kneel to crown them with Nike headbands.

As Chip and Boris walk off the court arm in arm. Lacey bounces up to them, ever the opportunistic flirt.

LACEY

Will you guys be at the players' party?

They both ignore her. She is not used to this treatment.

LACEY (CONT'D)

So, what are you guys gay now?

Boris turns to her.

BORIS

So, is bad to be friends?

CHIP

It's OK, Boris. She doesn't get it.

He turns to Lacey.

CHIP (CONT'D)

You can say we are happy together.

Chip slaps Boris on the back. Lacey takes Otto's hand, turns to walk away and shouts back to Chip and Boris.

LACEY

See you there!

INT. PLAYERS AFTER PARTY

Chip is seen talking with Rocco and his enforcers. They are all smoking cigars and celebrating.

ROCCO (TO CHIP)

We bet big and you delivered. Your debts are paid.

Boris is seen talking to a representative from Margaritaville and then shaking hands. He walks over to Chip and whispers in his ear. Chip nods and smiles. They shake hands.

BORIS

(Turns to the crowd)
Am happy to say I accept position
as onsite Manager and will be part-
owner of the Margaritaville Resort
in New York! No more life filled
with nothing - will be eating
cheeseburgers in paradise!

CHIP

And I'm going with you-I get to
stay for free and play pickleball
every day. Better than nothin!

BORIS

Wow-what a Journey this has been!

CHIP

I love Journey. Don't stop
believin'! Hey, gimmie a beer, I'm
sure that it's 5 o'clock somewhere!
Better a cold one than a cold war!
Now, we need a good song to WRAP
this thing up...

BORIS

Rap-different music but also like.

CHIP

Would you also like.... some Jimmy
Buffett??!!!

Boris smiles at Chip.

Boris and Chip cue up the music and sing "Margaritaville".
After they sing the chorus the rest of the players join in.

WHEN CREDITS ROLL THE BACKGROUND MUSIC IS THE TURTLE'S
"HAPPY TOGETHER"

FADE TO BLACK. THE END.